

Click on the bookmarks icon on the left of the PDF Reader
for quick access to each article.

Wesleyan Theological Journal

Volume 16, 2 – Fall – 1981

A Response to "The Devotional Use of Scripture in the Wesleyan Movement" <i>Stephen Harper</i>	7
Point Of Contact: A Response to Dennis F. Kinlaw's Interpretation of Charles Williams <i>Leon O. Hynson</i>	11
A Problem of Unfulfilled Prophecy in Ezekiel: A Response <i>Alvin S. Lawhead</i>	15
The Holy Spirit in the Hymns of the Wesleys <i>Timothy L. Smith</i>	20
Response to Dr. Timothy Smith on the Wesleys' Hymns <i>T. Crichton Mitchel</i>	48
Holiness in Hebrews <i>Wayne McCrown</i>	58
The Interplay of Christology and Ecclesiology in the Theology of the Holiness Movement <i>Paul Merritt Bassett</i>	79
Early Wesleyan Views Of Scripture <i>Daryl McCarthy</i>	95
The Use of the Aorist Tense in Holiness Exegesis <i>Randy Maddox</i>	106
Book Reviews	119

Editor
Lee M. Haines

Digital texts copyright 2008
Wesley Center Online
<http://wesley.nnu.edu>

A RESPONSE TO "THE DEVOTIONAL USE OF SCRIPTURE IN THE WESLEYAN MOVEMENT"

STEVEN HARPER

Dr. William Vermillion has presented a stimulating, helpful, and challenging paper.¹ His historical overview has reminded us of our devotional roots. His analysis of our present situation has challenged us to integrate devotionalism with the totality of theological disciplines, and to make such wholistic devotion visible in our educational institutions. Dr. Vermillion has made it clear that Wesleyans have a distinctive contribution to make in this important area. And his remarks are particularly appropriate in light of the Association of Theological Schools' emphasis on spiritual formation in theological education.² Thus it is that in the span of a relatively few pages Dr. Vermillion has focused our attention on a number of things we need to hear, and I thank him for that.

The purpose of my response is not to critique, but rather to expand the paper in the particular area of Wesley's devotional use of the Bible. So I would like to direct our thoughts to two areas: the roots of Wesley's devotionalism, and some of the general principles related to his use of Scripture.

With respect to roots, Dr. Vermillion has shown Wesley's indebtedness to Pietism. But the debt does not stop there. His devotional use of Scripture is also rooted in the classical Protestant tradition with its emphasis on Scripture as the ultimate authority in matters of faith and practice. He commented that he followed the Bible "in all things, both great and small."³ This fact largely accounts for why Wesley could read widely in a variety of traditions without losing the focus of his own theology. He also stood with Luther and Calvin in relating the authority of Scripture with the living witness of the Holy Spirit who applies the truth of the Bible to the believer.⁴ In addition Wesley was nurtured from childhood by the Puritan tradition which wedded divine sovereignty and ethical responsibility under the umbrella of scriptural authority.⁵ Finally, he was rooted in the Anglican tradition, particularly as it was expressed in the Articles of Religion, the Homilies, and the Book of Common Prayer. When we consider Wesley's devotional life in general, and his use of the Bible in devotion in particular it is essential for us to see the broad base of tradition which informed his

devotionalism. This fact should remind us that our devotionalism must never become equated with the latest expressions of "pop spirituality." It must be enriched by the range of experience which tradition supplies.

With respect to the principles of Wesley's devotional use of the Bible, I must point out that Dr. Vermillion's paper includes a number of them. What I want to do is to more directly lift some of them out and make additional comments upon them.

The first principle is Wesley's systematic use of the Bible in devotion. Dr. Vermillion has pointed out Wesley's general rule of reading from both the Old and New Testaments each day. But what did he read, and how? The answer comes from Wesley's unpublished diaries.⁶ There we see him following the pattern set forth in the Table of Lessons of the Book of Common Prayer. This contained readings from the Old Testament (including the Apocrypha), the Epistles, and the Gospels. Interestingly, Revelation was completely omitted. By using this lectionary Wesley was able to read through most of the Old Testament in a year, and to read through the New Testament several times.

In 1732 Wesley felt the need to read through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Accordingly, he altered his devotional schedule to include almost eight months' worth of such reading. He does not appear to have abandoned the use of the lectionary, but rather read consecutively as one of his first devotional acts after rising.⁷ But whether Wesley was using the lectionary or reading consecutively, the underlying principle was the systematic study of Scripture. Only by doing this could one know "the whole counsel of God."

The second principle is application. This is clearly seen in Wesley's recommendations in the preface to the Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament.⁸ But it was also expressed in at least three other ways. First Wesley examined himself by what he read in the Bible.⁹ At one point in his life this examination was expressed in an elaborate system at the back of his diaries. Second, on the basis of self-examination, he made appropriate resolutions. These were often recorded in the opening pages of his diaries, but they also appear throughout the diaries, especially at his monthly review pages.¹⁰ This phase of Wesley's devotionalism was particularly rooted in the Anglican and Puritan traditions. Thirdly, he applied what he learned by sharing it with others, either informally or through preaching.¹¹ His diaries are salted with occasions when he read devotional works to others for their edification, and he often expounded upon the lectionary text for the day.¹² For Wesley, the Bible had not been fully encountered until it had been conscientiously applied.

If time permitted, it would be enlightening to expound upon Wesley's principle of wholistic devotion. He never isolated his use of Scripture from his life of prayer, his reading of other devotional material, or his use of the other means of grace. This principle provided a richness in Wesley's devotional life which he could not have had if he had limited himself to one source of inspiration.

Wesley was not without some expressions which seem quaint in comparison with the above principles. For example, he practiced bibliomancy throughout his lifetime.¹³ And he used Scripture cards which contained a text on one side and a verse from a hymn on the other.¹⁴ These random

encounters with the Bible were always peripheral in comparison with the principles previously mentioned. But they must be included in a full examination of Wesley's devotional use of Scripture.

Perhaps the best words for summarizing Wesley on this theme are those from the Book of Common Prayer. These words were often on his lips and constantly on his heart:

Blessed Lord, who hast caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy Holy Word we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ.¹⁵

AMEN

Notes

1William Vermillion, "The Devotional Use of Scripture in the Wesleyan Movement, *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 16:1 (Spring 1981), pp.51-67.

2David E. Babin, et al., *Voyage, Vision, Venture: A Report on Spiritual Development* (Dayton, OH: American Association of Theological Schools, 1972).

3Nehemiah Curnock, *The Journal of the Reverend John Wesley, M.A.*, 8 vols. (London: Epworth Press, 1939), 5:169 (June 5, 1766). Hereafter referred to as JWJ.

4Colin W. Williams, *John Wesley 's Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), p.37.

5Robert Monk, *John Wesley: His Puritan Heritage* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), p.26.

6The unpublished diaries of John Wesley are now located in the Methodist Archives at the John Rylands Library in Manchester, England. At the time of this writing they are in the hands of Dr. Richard Heitzenrater at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, Texas. Dr. Heitzenrater is in the process of transcribing the diaries so that they can be published in the definitive edition of Wesley's Works currently going forward under the editorship of Dr. Frank Baker at Duke University. The series is being published by Oxford University Press.

7John Wesley, *Oxford Diary*, 2:115-39; and *Oxford Diary*, 3:1-16 (January-August, 1732)

8John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament*, 3 vols. (Bristol: William Pine, 1765), 1:ix.

9The practice of self-examination was begun as a result of Wesley's reading Jeremy Taylor's *Rules and Exercises of Holy Living*. Accordingly, Wesley prepared various sets of questions for self-examination. He modified these throughout his lifetime, but stayed with the basic practice. An example of these questions can be found in the Jackson edition of Wesley's Works, 11:203-37.

10 Wesley's use of resolutions also goes back to his reading of Taylor. The resolutions span the total range of human experience, for Wesley's conception of holiness was life-embracing: personal and social holiness. His resolutions reflect this same totality of concern.

11 Frank Baker, "John Wesley and the Bible" in *Historical Highlights*, June 1976 (Brunswick, GA: Commission on Archives and History of the South Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church), pp. 6-7.

12 Examples of this practice may be found in the Jackson edition of the Works, 6:107,118,125; 7:384,397,410. In addition to these references in the sermons which are related to the Table of Lessons, one should also note the numerous references in the Journal to his practice of expounding on the lesson for the day.

13 JWJ, 1:161, 192, 472; 2:89, 97, 103, 106, 157-68, 175, 201, 290-91, 300, 324, 328, 336, 447. These are only some of the references in the Journal to this practice.

14 *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 1:15-25; 4:6-8, 40-43; and 29:136-38.

15 *The Book of Common Prayer*, Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent

POINT OF CONTACT: A RESPONSE TO DENNIS F. KINLAW'S INTERPRETATION OF CHARLES WILLIAMS

LEON O. HYNSON

My initial response to Charles Williams's profound exercise in imaging is that of the stranger in a strange land. I have taken a pilgrimage, journeying down a relatively unmarked way. There have been remote indications of a previous encounter with the surrounding phenomena which combine in a hazy surrealism, a kind of London fog which conceals more than it reveals. Dennis Kinlaw's sensitive interpretation of Williams¹ begins to mark out the lineaments of Williams's imagery in an attractive manner. I find it intriguing that the writer of this essay, so eloquent and winsome in the presentation of the faith along more classical orthodox lines, and so informed by years of exposure to that style of communication, should give such high praise to novelists, poets, and playwrights, and professors. Is it possible that this gentleman is a literature professor who has come into this society in the image of Dennis Kinlaw? Obviously not! This is the president of Asbury College in all of his reflective ontological dignity.

The "prejudice of education" (to use Mr. Wesley's phrase) leads me at first to look with narrowed eye upon the literary person (Williams) who would write an exotic interpretation of Christian history-The Descent of the Dove (subtitled A Short History of the Holy Spirit in the Church-and an extended series of novels which apparently seek by indirection and inference to present the reality of Christ. Presumably (so I thought) these efforts would resemble a Karl Barth writing Out of the Silent Planet (C. S. Lewis gets the credit for that). Surely such a work by Barth would "fall like a bombshell on the playground of the theologians" (to quote a German Catholic's comment regarding Barth's commentary on Romans). But in fact my prejudice turns out to be mistaken. Williams has grasped some profound insights and conveyed their truth in images that surprise the "unsuspecting reader."

One of the more attractive illustrations of Williams's imaging is discovered in The Descent Into Hell in a chapter entitled:"The Doctrine of Substituted Love." To understand the image the reader should be aware of the familiar reference to "co-inherence" in Williams's thought. The concept

which originated in Christian theological discussion concerning the divine Trinity, conveys the sense of unity, or, the interpenetration (Greek-*perichoresis*; Latin-*circuminsessio*) of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Williams uses the term to speak of humanity's union with Adam in the Fall, with Christ in His reconciling act upon the Cross, and the unity of the Church.

The Christian community is described as "Companions of the Co-inherence."²

With this concept in mind we follow Williams's idea of substituted love in a conversation between Pauline Anstruther and Peter Stanhope. Pauline shares with Peter her tormenting fear of meeting an exact likeness of herself. Apparently she is terrified by the thought of seeing herself in its true light. When Peter asks the basis of her terror she simply repeats her fears. Stanhope suggests that she ask her friends to carry her fear. Uncomprehending, she rejects the suggestion as nonsense. Finally, Stanhope convinces her to follow his counsel. The sequel to this conversation shows the co-inherence of Peter and Pauline in her fear-filled life.

He recollected Pauline; he visualized her going along a road, any road; he visualized another Pauline coming to meet her. And as he did so his mind contemplated not the first but the second Pauline; he took trouble to apprehend the vision, he summoned through all his sensations an approaching fear. Deliberately he opened himself to that fear, laying aside for awhile every thought of why he was doing it, forgetting every principle and law, absorbing only the strangeness and the terror of that separate spiritual identity. His more active mind reflected it in an imagination of himself going into his house and seeing himself, but he dismissed that, for he desired to subdue himself not to his own natural sensations, but to hers first, and then to let hers, if so it should happen, be drawn back into his own. But it was necessary first intensely to receive all her spirit's conflict. He sat on, imagining to himself the long walk with its sinister possibility, the ogreish world lying around, the air with its treachery to all sane appearance. His own eyes began to seek and strain and shrink, his own feet, quiet though actually they were, began to weaken with the necessity of advance upon the road down which the girl was passing. The body of his flesh received her alien terror, his mind carried the burden of her world. The burden was inevitably lighter for him than for her, for the rage of a personal resentment was lacking. He endured her sensitiveness, but not her sin; the substitution there, if indeed there is a substitution, is hidden in the central mystery of Christendom which Christendom itself has never understood, nor can.³

This passage from Williams echoes the Pauline witness of personal faith: "that I may know Him, and the fellowship of His suffering"(Philippians 3:10). In a manner similar to Jesus' parables, Williams's image captures the imagination and draws the spectator into the arena of decision. Here is the point of contact.

But what is the content of the decision? How is the unsuspecting reader

moved from the image to the reality? I find it difficult to discover, with a few exceptions, more than abstract configurations (images?) which touch the ground of our being but do not guide to the grace and truth which are in Jesus Christ. I am dissatisfied with the way the content of the image secures the participation of the reader in the reality. It is surely not evident that the image moves one to the ultimate reality which is Jesus Christ. In *Descent Into Hell* the question arises concerning the meaning of the Chorus in the play to be dramatized. Debating the question, Mrs. Parry asks: "What will the audience make of the Chorus?" "It's for them to make of it what they can," Adela responded. "We can only give them a symbol."⁴ Williams's imaging seems to allow for a relativity of interpretation according to the particular existential bent of the reader. "It's for them to make what they can of it."

There is much in Williams's effort to attract the attention of the reader and to appeal to his/her spirit with the symbols of the faith. Those who understand and take seriously Wesley's theology of prevenient grace will know that there is a divine undercurrent flowing through the experience of every person. No one is destitute of divine influence. The soil of consciousness and experience in everyone has been disturbed by the plough of the Gracious Husbandman.

What then will bear the "unsuspecting reader" to the reality of faith? Unless there is a spiritual motion behind the image, ordinarily (though not always) mediated by the interpreting believer, the reader is not likely to move to the person to which the image points. There must be an interpreter like Philip who, led by the Spirit, intercepts the reader and asks: "Do you understand what you are reading?" The answer is given: "'How can I unless someone guides me?' And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him." There followed Philip's interpretation of Isaiah's image of the Christ and the dawning of the divine light for the Ethiopian (Acts 8:30-35).

The story of Philip and the Ethiopian illustrates well the need for the interpreter. Look at the issue in different terms. I have been impressed and moved by Dr. Kinlaw's interpretation of Williams, more than by Williams's presentation. I have required an interpreter to see the power of the image in Williams. Kinlaw has illuminated Williams and has given his writings an evident Christian content and force which Williams seems to lack. My problem is to discover how the unsuspecting pagan moves from the image to the reality if one lacks the mediation of the Christian guide.

In a more positive manner, recognition is given to Williams's way of balancing the Way of Negation with the Way of Affirmation. Evangelical, including Wesleyan, theology has consistently preferred a theology of salvation, with its backdrop of the Fall, sin and estrangement, to a theology of creation which affirms the goodness of everything God has created; affirming human possibility while insisting upon the saving remedy of the Cross for human sin. Of course the Fall distorts and tragically diminishes the glory of creation, plunging humanity into sinful helplessness. That, however, is not the last word, for God has acted decisively in His prevenient grace to initiate reconciliation and restoration. Prevenient grace grants to fallen man a quality of humanity which we, buying into the Augustinian anthropology far more than the Pelagian, have failed to accentuate.

Walter Brueggemann has written an essay, "The Triumphalist

Tendency in Exegetical History."5** in which he concludes that four important theologies are found in Scripture.

1. Creation-which accents human strength, ability, resourcefulness, possibility.
2. Salvation-stressing man's sin; weakness, and fallibility.
3. Wisdom-describing man's judgment, reason, ability to "talk faith with sense."
4. Royal-presenting human ability to govern life, to rule or direct.

The dominance of an Augustinian bias, with its residual Manichaean heresy, in orthodox anthropology, and the failure to incorporate the dimension of human response/responsibility, has resulted in a lessened sense of the value of the human. The incarnation of Jesus Christ should have taught us to see God's valuation of the human and natural which is His creation. We have erred in the direction of gnosticism and Platonism. Probably this has permitted some of us to exploit the natural order somewhat along the lines described in Lynn White's critique.6** (Some popular gospel songs have grasped the gnostic heresy and have "sanctified" it to present an unbiblical spirituality very much akin to the elitist spirituality which Paul addressed in I Corinthians 2.)

Wesleyan theology will do well to accept the correlation between creation and salvation found in Wesley (but largely undeveloped).7 Dr. Kinlaw's attractive presentation of the incarnational motifs (images) in Charles Williams's thought will encourage us to study the theology of creation grounded in Scripture, and carried along in Christian history, albeit like a subterranean stream. Hopefully, this interpretation of Williams, within this scholarly community, will press us back to our roots in Wesleyan history. If this happens, we will discover that, for Wesley, salvation results in a quality of human-ness inaugurated in Christ, the second Adam, which initiates and develops to maturity the authentic humanity of the creation *imago dei*.

Gratitude to Dr. Kinlaw for his warm interpretation of Williams is a given in this entire response. He has conveyed a spirit of creativity that should challenge those of us who tend to approach our task in a too scholastic or wooden manner.

Notes

1Dennis Kinlaw, "Charles Williams' Concept of Imaging Applied to the 'Song of Songs,' " Wesleyan Theological Journal, 16:1 (Spring 1981), pp.85-92.

2Charles Williams, The Descent of the Dove: A Short History of the Holy Spirit in the Church, dedication page.

3Charles Williams, The Descent Into Hell, " pp. 100-01.

4Charles Williams, The Descent Into Hell, pp.14-15.

5Walter Brueggemann, "The Triumphalist Tendency in Exegetical History," Journal of the American Academy of Religion (December 1970), pp.367-80.

6See Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," Science, 155 (1967):1203.

7See my essay, "Creation and Grace in Wesley's Ethics," Drew Gateway, 46:1-3 (1975-76), pp.41-55.

**A PROBLEM OF UNFULFILLED PROPHECY IN EZEKIEL:
A RESPONSE
ALVIN S. LAWHEAD**

The quality of Dr. David L. Thompson's paper¹ is such that there are no major criticisms to be offered in response. I can only offer a few minor observations and then move on to suggest a further consideration as an alternative solution to the problem. For the most part then, this response will speak to a basic assumption in Dr. Thompson's paper which I would question, and using this as a point of departure, move in a new direction and to a different conclusion.

There are but two minor observations concerning items within Dr. Thompson's paper. The first one concerns the syntax problem in the Masoretic Text (MT) of Ezekiel 26:12 where there is a sudden shift from the singular pronouns to the plural pronoun. Attention is called to the fact that the LXX retains the singular pronouns throughout this section and the suggestion is made that this is possibly an example of textual corruption in the MT. But this witness of the LXX must not be elevated over against the MT plus the other ancient versions which agree with the MT. Since the witness of the LXX stands alone on this point, its witness must not be given undue weight. However, I concur with Dr. Thompson's final conclusion that the tentative nature of Old Testament criticism makes it difficult to decide confidently.

The second observation is one of agreement with Dr. Thompson's criticism of Payne, Feinberg, et al, in their extreme concern to demonstrate the absolute accuracy of prophetic utterances. Dr. Thompson refers to the well-known biblical test referring to the fulfillment of prophecy as a criterion of its genuineness (Deut. 18:22). In Deut. 13:1-3, the test is carried further and is relevant to our understanding of the problem of nonfulfillment. "If a prophet arises among you . . . and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder which he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, 'Let us go after other gods' . . . you shall not listen to the words of that prophet...." As R. B. Y. Scott observes, "... failure of a prediction may serve as a negative test, but its fulfillment is no guarantee of genuineness if the substance of the prophetic message departs from the basic tenets of Yahwism."²

The basic assumption and major thesis of Dr. Thompson's paper is that Ezekiel 26:7-14 is a prediction by Ezekiel that Nebuchadnezzar would utterly annihilate the city of Tyre. His assumption that this overthrow of Tyre was in terms of a literal and exact understanding of Ezekiel 26:7-14 is reflected throughout the paper as he speaks of "utter destruction";³ "thoroughly destructive conquest";⁴ "conclusion that Ezekiel envisioned the complete destruction of Tyre at the hands of the Babylonian 'King of kings'"⁵ "the prophet earlier saw the Babylonian himself as conquering Tyre, looting her costly wares and valuable real estate, and sweeping her remains into the sea";⁶ and "If . . . the island stronghold was taken with anything approximating the fierceness and finality which Ezekiel predicted."⁷

Also indicative of his approach to Ezekiel 26:7-14 is the introductory statement that "We will consider the type of prediction which appears to have expected literal fulfillment."⁸ Here is a presumption followed consistently and logically throughout the paper that the literal interpretation of Ezekiel 26:7-14 is the only possibility. It is only on this basis that Dr. Thompson can see Ezekiel 29:18-19 as the prophet's response to nonfulfillment of his earlier prediction. But I would propose another way of viewing the initial prophecy which then of necessity changes the relationship between the two pericopes of Ezekiel under consideration.

Dr. Thompson quotes with approval from John Bright that a negotiated surrender of Tyre to Babylon probably followed the thirteen year siege, with the survival of the city as a semi-independent state. This, of course, sets up the problem of non-fulfillment, but only if one insists on a literal interpretation of the prophecy. But if the passage may be given another interpretation, it would then harmonize with the known historical facts and the problem of non-fulfillment would have become non-existent.

The basic problem we are faced with stems from our attempt to interpret Old Testament prophetic, poetic language. It is universally accepted that the O. T. Oriental mind is far different from the 20th Century Occidental mind. Accordingly, we stumble over the symbolism and poetic references which the Hebrew could take in stride. This problem is seen in the extreme when we observe the mangling process utilized by some in their approach to apocalyptic writing. Herein every symbol, figure and number is scrutinized, analyzed, categorized, and compartmentalized with investigative, scientific niceties worthy of a watchmaker's craft. The end result is often a paralysis of analysis and an overlooking of the main truth of the passage. An example of this approach from another area of biblical studies is the methodology frequently employed in the International Critical Commentary, where the emphasis is so often placed on minute details of textual criticism that the great truths of Scripture are ignored and lost to sight.

We need then to recognize in Ezekiel 26:7-14 the presence of symbolism and hyperbole, and allow this to influence our interpretation of this passage. Eichrodt identifies the character of this passage in these words referring to verses 10-12:

. . . a full-length description of a thundering attack by war chariots through the breaches made in
the city wall, and the

subsequent thorough plundering and destruction of the city. This is quite regardless of the fact that Tyre's position on an island made all such events hardly conceivable.⁹

Such hyperbolic language then is not to be regarded literally. W. F. Lofthouse reminds us that the form of this prophecy is almost entirely poetical,¹⁰ and Eichrodt says of vv. 9-11, "It may be correct to conjecture that vv. 9-11 quote an old battle song, and are not without some poetic power."¹¹

This same scholar refers to the entire passage of Ezekiel 26:7-14 as a "war-song."¹² Thus, I suggest that we are not to take literally the description of Nebuchadnezzar's capture of Tyre as related in Ezekiel 26:7-14. The siege of thirteen years did bring Tyre under Babylonian domination, but it was without the usual repayment of rich booty from a city that was violently and suddenly overthrown. Ezekiel simply employs typical prophetic description of the fall of a city in O. T. times. This use of vivid imagery, symbolism, and hyperbole is well known in prophetic predictions. The classic illustration is the prophecy on Pentecost found in Joel 2 which includes unusual phenomena occurring in nature (blood, fire, columns of smoke, a darkened sun, a moon turned to blood), all of which are included in Peter's quotation of this passage in Acts 2:19-20. As a good Jew, with a Hebraic mind capable of taking such symbolic language in stride, he does not stumble over it.

Prophetic statements of judgment and doom, such as we have in Ezekiel 26:7-14, are subject to moral conditioning and response on the part of those involved. R. B. Y. Scott claims that on this basis "we may see how some prophetic predictions could remain unfulfilled, while others were fulfilled in essence though not literally."¹³ To illustrate this, he then cites several examples in Scripture, including our two passages in Ezekiel, which, as Dr. Thompson has rightly suggested, do not fit this category since there is no suggestion of a moral change or response on the part of Tyre. However, Scott goes on to mention that another point to be remembered is that these predictions just mentioned are usually clothed in the language of poetic imagery and hyperbole which only the most prosaic literalist could insist on taking as exact description.¹⁴ If, then, we recognize Ezekiel 26:7-14 as fitting into this category of poetic imagery and hyperbole, the exegete is relieved of the necessity of a literal interpretation and assignment of this description of Tyre's demise to either the time of the Babylonian excursion or the conquest of Alexander. The prophetic intention of this passage is simply to announce the divine purpose to bring down Tyre as an expression of divine judgment.

Not only is it important to be guided in our interpretation of prophetic utterances by the recognition of poetic symbolism and hyperbole, but we also need to bear in mind a more general consideration of the nature and purpose of prophecy. Von Orelli has observed:

The prophet in general spoke to his hearers in such a way as could be understood by them and could be impressed on them. It is therefore not correct to demand a fulfillment pedantically exact in the form of the historical garb of the prophecy. The main thing is that the Divine thought contained in the prophecy be entirely and completely realized.¹⁵

That the literal interpretation of Ezekiel 26:7-14 is not necessary to the truth of the historical situation described must be given full recognition. This does not negate the position taken by Dr. Thompson, that the passage refers exclusively to Nebuchadnezzar; it only points out that we need not think that Ezekiel predicts a complete devastation of Tyre at the hands of the Babylonians. In this light, the prophecy was not literally fulfilled, nor was it expected to be as witnessed by the fact that in 29:17-20, Ezekiel offers no apology or correction. Some have been offended that a literal fulfillment of the original prediction did not take place, as reported by Eichrodt concerning Van den Born who sees the transference of the threat to Egypt (29:17-20) which was not fulfilled upon Tyre (26:7-14) as a "cynical performance unworthy of Ezekiel."¹⁶ But this is to miss the basic and fundamental truth inherent in all O. T. prophecy—that it is the pronouncement of the will of God who is active in the affairs of men to bring to pass His will and purpose. Eichrodt speaks of this general objective of prophecy in reference to Ezekiel 29:17-20 and states:

We find here a decision with regard to a problem of really crucial importance: the uncertainty whether a prophecy ought to be regarded as an infallible disclosure of divine truth, if it falls short of being literally fulfilled. It is plain that Ezekiel is far from indulging in any anxious effort at reappraisal. His predictions have another objective than that of anticipating beforehand the exact details of the course history is going to take, since like all other prophetic utterances they are subordinated to their general objective. This is to make his contemporaries aware ... of the Lord of all history's unshakable will to reign.... The prophets look up and out to the central fact of God's revealing act, which is the accomplishment of his lordship and in describing the road to it they make use of the means available in their time and in their world.... He carries his plans home and attains his objective with all the freedom of the Creator; so while prediction can make statements clarifying the plan and assuring us of its existence, it can never determine the exact line it will take or calculate before its individual stages.... It remains true that the Lord is on the march to set up his kingdom throughout the whole world, to humble the powers of this world, and prepare his salvation for the believing people of God.¹⁷

Since the literal sense of Ezekiel 26:7-14 did not come to pass, are we not forced to choose between two alternatives: 1) non-fulfillment of the literal sense, and 2) re-interpretation of the passage in a non-literal, more general manner? I opt for the latter. Thus, we are suggesting a more general view of the nature of prophecy overall, and for Ezekiel 26:7-14 in particular much the same as Eichrodt's suggestion. Accordingly, the second passage from Ezekiel 29:17-20 is, as Dr. Thompson suggests, simply a comment upon the fact that Nebuchadnezzar's arduous labors in the thirteen years siege of Tyre were ill-repaid.

A. B. Davidson notes in his commentary that Ezekiel 26:7-14 was not literally fulfilled, but that this is not necessarily to be expected of prophecy.

In this particular instance, the humiliation of Tyre by Babylon was morally as good as its ruin, and thus is the fulfillment of the moral consideration of prophecy. He also claims that prophecy is ideal in expressing particular details. Speaking of predictions of both redemption and calamity he states:

. . . it must be maintained that the prophets imagined the fulfillment as they describe it. This however, is part of their idealism; the moral element is always the main thing in their prophecies. What they predict is the exhibition of Jehovah's moral rule of the world; the form in which they clothe this exhibition may not be quite that given in history.¹⁸

Thus, we conclude that the Kingdom of God, which is the ultimate goal of God's activity among men, and is the central focal point of prophecy, comes not only by grace, but also by judgment-and this is illustrated in Ezekiel's pronouncement concerning Tyre. What we have tried to suggest is a more general view of the nature of prophecy in the light of God's total purpose for the world, and not the completely literal interpretation of specific passages. Such a hermeneutic is in keeping with the approach hinted at by Dr. Thompson in the conclusion of his paper.

Notes

- 1David L. Thompson, "A Problem of Unfulfilled Prophecy in Ezekiel: The Destruction of Tyre," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 16:1 (Spring 1981), pp. 93-106.
- 2R. B. Y. Scott, *The Relevance of the Prophets* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1968), p. 12.
- 3Thompson, "A Problem," p. 97.
- 4Thompson, "A Problem," p. 97.
- 5Thompson, "A Problem," p. 99.
- 6Thompson, "A Problem," p. 99.
- 7Thompson, "A Problem," p. 95.
- 8Thompson, "A Problem," p. 93.
- 9Walter Eichrodt, *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), p. 371.
- 10W. F. Lofthouse, *The Book of Ezekiel in The Century Bible*, ed. W. F. Adeny (Edinburgh: T. C. and E. C. Jack, 1907), p. 212.
- 11Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, p. 371.
- 12Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, p. 370.
- 13Scott, *Relevance*, p. 11.
- 14Scott, *Relevance*, p. 11.
- 15C. von Orelli, "Prophecy," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, James Orr, General Editor, Vol. IV (1915).
- 16Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, p. 409.
- 17Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, pp. 410-11.
- 18A. B. Davidson, *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel in The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, A. F. Kirkpatrick, General Editor (Cambridge: The University Press, 1916), p. 208.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE HYMNS OF THE WESLEYS

TIMOTHY L. SMITH

(All rights reserved to author)

John and Charles Wesley were the leaders of a spiritual awakening in England that during its first decade, from 1738 to 1747, gave structure to Methodist theology and awakened Christendom to the promise of the sanctifying Spirit. Both the Wesleys were thoughtful and compassionate preachers. Both were also fine poets and singers. Along with scores of sermons, essays and tracts, they wrote and published together during those ten years a series of volumes entitled Hymns and Sacred Poems. In these, they hoped to teach the people through singing the scriptural promises of hallowing grace.

In 1746, the two brothers published a slim volume for Pentecost Sunday called Hymns of Petition and Thanksgiving for the Promise of the Father. The title was drawn from Jesus' words to the eleven apostles, "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you," recorded in Luke 24:49, and in Acts 1:4. In each of the thirty-two hymns the theme of the old covenant's promise of the new, fulfilled in the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, was interwoven with biblical teachings about the righteousness that flows from faith. These teachings were drawn from St. Paul and other New Testament writers as well as from Moses, the prophets, and the Hebrew psalms, whose theology Jesus had expounded to the eleven on the evening of Easter Day. The texts for the Pentecost poems themselves, however, were taken from John 7:37-39, and John 14-17. In these passages Jesus had promised and prayed the Father to send the Holy Spirit to comfort and sanctify those who knew Him, trusted Him, loved and obeyed Him.¹

Clearly, John and Charles Wesley meant these hymns on the promise of the Spirit to teach biblical theology, and to do it more effectively because the people sang in joy what they were being taught. Where in all Christian literature appears a lovelier description of the way God's "Spirit of grace" brings sinners to contrition, than in the following lines:

Thou dost the first good thought inspire;
The first faint spark of pure desire
Is kindled by Thy gracious breath;
By Thee made conscious of his fall,
The sinner hears Thy sudden call,
And starts out of the sleep of death.²

Another hymn exhorted,

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.

Here was manifest the central theme of the Wesleyan revival, on which John Wesley and George Whitefield never disagreed: the gift of the lifegiving presence of the Spirit of Christ in the experience of the new birth.³

In the majestic series of six poems on Jesus' words, "When he [the Holy Spirit] is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment [John 16:8]," the authors declared all the work of the hallowing Comforter. He convicts unbelievers, including the so-called "Christian world," of sin. In pardoning love He brings them "the righteousness of faith," in which "grace doth more than sin abound." After that moment of forgiving grace, there comes by faith another: the same Holy Spirit sets up in the hearts of true Christians:

. . . the everlasting throne,
The inward kingdom from above,
The glorious power of perfect love.⁴

The first of these six poems began with the prayer,

Convince, convert us, and inspire;
Come, and baptize the world with fire.

These two lines summarized the whole work of redemption, beginning with the decisive events of conviction, conversion, and inward sanctification. The Wesleys believed those events were central to the lifelong process by which God renews in His children the image of His holiness and love. The message of the hymn widens to include at last, in both judgment and glory, all of humanity. The series ended on a note of hope:

Thy great millennial reign begin,
That every ransom'd child of man,
That every soul may bow the knee
And rise, to reign with God in Thee.⁵

The doctrine of a "second benefit" of purity and perfect love-the promise that the Holy Spirit whom we receive in the new birth as a "guest" would "in our heart abide"-was central in these Pentecost hymns, especially the half-dozen based on John 14.6 Hence such lines as the promise,

Who Jesus' word obeys,
And keeps His kind command,
Communion closer still shall know
And dwell with God in Him below, . . .

and the prayer,

The length and breadth of love reveal,
The height and depth of Deity,
And all the sons of glory seal
And change, and make us all like Thee.⁷

By this point in Wesleyan history, however, the doctrine of a second moment of inwardly sanctifying grace, following the first one, the new birth, scarcely needed elaboration. Wesley's last Oxford sermon, preached August 24, 1744, was on "Scriptural Christianity," that is, the Christianity of the church of Pentecost. It was the last he preached there because the officers of the University would not bear the evangelist's insistent question whether they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Wesley had declared the sermon's text, Acts 4:31, implied all Christians should seek this grace. Moreover, in the same year as the publication of these Pentecost hymns, the first volume of John Wesley's *Sermons on Several Occasions* appeared. It contained such discourses as the one called "The First-Fruits of the Spirit," which expounded the distinction he believed Romans 8 sustained between the sanctification begun in regeneration and that made inwardly complete by the fulfillment of the promise, "the God of peace sanctify you wholly."⁹ The previous year, his *Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* demolished the critics who had argued that "Christians are not now to receive the Holy Ghost." Although the long essay muted his teaching of two moments of hallowing grace, Wesley recited the doctrines, prayers, and homilies of the Church of England and the writings of the Early Church Fathers to support his argument that the Comforter whom Jesus had promised after the Last Supper would, in the Master's words, abide with His disciples "forever."¹⁰

Indeed, the forming of these poems into prayers, to be prayed in song by earnest Methodists asking for the apostles' grace at Pentecost, would have been absurd if the authors had believed that on that day the outpouring of the Holy Spirit triggered some dispensational mechanism guaranteeing that thereafter all believers would experience in the hour of their justifying faith the fullness of the Holy Spirit.¹¹ If that is the teaching of Scripture, Wesley was mistaken. Likewise mistaken were all those Christian thinkers from the Church Fathers onward who identified Pentecost with confirmation, not baptism, and who seem never to have been able to think of being baptized or filled with the Spirit except as a crucial event in the spiritual pilgrimage begun when they were born of the Spirit to new life in Christ.

The doctrine Wesley thought scriptural appears most winsomely here in the great hymn of salvation,

Spirit of Faith, Come down
reveal the things of God.

The hymn attributed each stage in grace, the entire order of salvation by

faith, to the Holy Spirit. In the last stanza, it pictured one who had earlier declared,

I know my Saviour lives,
He lives, who died for me,
My inmost soul His voice receives,

praying that the same Holy Spirit would breathe in (as Wesley often explained the word "inspire" to mean), or

Inspire the living faith, . . .
The faith that conquers all,
And doth the mountain move,
And saves who'er on Jesus call,
And perfects them in love.¹²

But the drama of salvation in this volume for the season of Pentecost is played out on a grander stage that binds eternities together, as does the biblical doctrine of the Holy Spirit. An untitled hymn toward the end declared the ancient Hebrew doctrine of the creating Spirit, in words that should move the heart of any Christian theologian. And it united that teaching, as Christians from the beginning have, with that of the sanctifying Spirit who recreates a ruined race in all the image of God's love. The hymn's words make more of mine superfluous:

Author of every work Divine,
Who dost through both creations shine,
The God of Nature and of grace,
Thy glorious steps in all we see,
And wisdom attribute to Thee,
And power, and majesty, and praise.

Thou didst Thy mighty wings outspread,
And brooding o'er the chaos, shed
Thy life into the impregn'd abyss,
The vital principle infuse,
And out of nothing's womb produce
The earth and heaven, and all that is.

That all-informing breath Thou art
Who dost continued life impart,
And bidd'st the world persist to be.
Garnish'd by Thee yon azure sky,
And all those beauteous orbs on high
Depend in golden chains from Thee.

Thou dost create the earth anew,
(Its Maker and Preserver too,)
By Thine almighty arm sustain.
Nature perceives Thy secret force,
And still holds on her even course,
And owns Thy providential reign.

Thou art the Universal Soul,
The plastic power that fills the whole,

And governs earth, air, sea, and sky.
The creatures all Thy breath receive,
And who by Thy inspiring live,
Without Thy inspiration die.

Spirit immense, eternal Mind,
Thou on the souls of lost mankind
Dost with benignest influence move
Pleased to restore the ruin'd race,
And new-create a world of grace
In all the image of Thy love.¹³

In the religion of the Wesleys, creation theology and salvation theology had become one, in grace. And grace, for them, had become a synonym for the presence and action of the hallowing Spirit-in the universe, and in the lives of God's children.

The summation of salvation theology found in this volume of Pentecost hymns was crucial in the development after 1772 of John Fletcher's understanding of Christian perfection.¹⁴ I wish in the light of it to review the teachings about the Holy Spirit in the several volumes the Wesley brothers wrote and published in the preceding years under the title Hymns and Sacred Poems. And I will compare them briefly with the volumes of hymns which they wrote and published separately during the same decade.

But first I must deal with the question whether these hymns are indeed an index to the thought of John Wesley, or simply a demonstration of the poetic skill of Charles. A long rhetorical tradition has it that John was the preacher and Charles the poet of early Methodism. And an equally long tradition sustains the notion that the slight difference of sensibility between them-what John called his brother's tendency to flights of imagination in which he used mystic language imprecisely-eventually opened up a small but growing separation in their understanding of the doctrine of Christian perfection.

These long-established traditions are without foundation in anything the brothers either wrote or were reported to have said in the years before 1760.¹⁵ Moreover, we have no firm ground upon which to attribute to one brother more than the other any of the poems that appeared between 1738 and 1747 in the jointly-authored volumes. To their dying day, the two Wesleys kept their agreement never to indicate which one had been responsible for the original text of the poems that had first appeared under their joint authorship. No manuscript has survived to show that they kept a private record or even shared a remembrance of which one wrote the first draft of any one.¹⁶

And textual analyses aimed at determining authorship have not dealt at all adequately with the close kinship of scriptural exegesis and metaphor in the hymns to that appearing in John Wesley's first three volumes of sermons, all preached and published during the decade.¹⁷

But even if the question of literary authorship could be resolved largely in favor of Charles, John Wesley in his prefaces to the several jointly authored volumes specifically

commended as his own their biblical and doctrinal content. His selection and further editing in 1780 and 1782 of what he thought were the best of them for his Collection of Hymns for the People Called Methodists, the permanent treasury of Wesleyan song, further

assures us that their theology as well as their poetic power had in his view stood the test of time.

In the first of the volumes titled Hymns and Sacred Poems, published in 1739, the "Hymn to the Holy Ghost" began with the stanza

Come Holy Ghost, all-quickening fire,
Come, and in me delight to rest!
Drawn by the lure of strong desire,
O, come and consecrate my breast;
The temple of my soul prepare,
And fix Thy sacred presence there!

In a medley of scriptural references which interlaced pentecostal and Pauline metaphors, the hymn celebrated first the work and witness of the Holy Spirit in regeneration-

My peace, my life, my comfort now,
My treasure, and my all Thou art!
True witness of my sonship Thou,
Engraving pardon on my heart:
Seal of my sins in Christ forgiven,
Earnest of love and pledge of heaven.

-then cried out for His sanctifying fullness:

Come then, My God, mark out Thy heir,
Of heaven a larger earnest give,
With clearer light Thy witness bear,
More sensibly within me live.
Let all my powers Thy entrance feel
And deeper stamp Thyself the seal.¹⁸

The next hymn in the volume, "On the Descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost," altered from a poem originally written by Dr. H. Moore, began with the story of Acts 1 and 2. "His faithful flock," languishing for "their absent Lord," wait humbly until

The promised Grace and rushing wind
Descends, and cloven tongues of fire.

The hymn then became a prayer of present-day believers for purity of heart, as the following stanzas show:

Father! If justly still we claim
To us and ours the promise made,
To us be graciously the same,
And crown with living fire our head. . .

The Spirit of refining fire,
Searching the inmost of the mind,
To purge all fierce and foul desire,
And kindle life more pure and kind....

The Spirit breathe of inward life,
Which in our hearts Thy laws may write.

Then grief expires, and pain and strife;
'Tis nature all, and all delight.

Grant this, O Holy God, and true!
The ancient seers Thou didst inspire;
To us perform the promise due,
Descend and crown us now with fire.

These lines affirmed what Wesleyans have ever since thought Jesus reiteration of the "promise of the Father" and Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost declared: that being filled with the sanctifying Spirit was the central promise of both the Old and New Testaments, and the privilege of all believers striving against inward sin. The little-noticed preface to the volume made the same point, though less explicitly, in the context of Wesley's rejection of the "solitary religion" of the mystics in favor of "social holiness."¹⁹

The lines also harmonized with the hymn that appeared earlier in the volume, titled "Acts I, 4, 'Wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me.'" Stanzas one and four distinguished clearly being "washed in the fountain" of Christ's blood from the inward renewal in the "light and liberty of love" that the "promised Comforter" imparted. The first and sixth stanzas paralleled John Wesley's three discourses on the opening section of the Sermon on the Mount, preached repeatedly the summer and fall of the great revival year, 1739. The seventh anticipated his exposition of John 8:37-38 in his sermon on "Christian Perfection," published early in 1741:

1. Saviour of men, how long shall I
Forgotten at Thy footstool lie!
Wash'd in the fountain of Thy blood
Yet groaning still to be renew'd;

2. A miracle of grace and sin,
Pardon'd, yet still, alas, unclean!
Thy righteousness is counted mine;
When will it in my nature shine?

4. Why didst Thou the first gift impart,
And sprinkle with Thy blood my heart,
But that my sprinkled heart might prove
The light and liberty of love?

6. See then Thy ransom'd servant, see;
I hunger, Lord, I thirst for Thee!
Feed me with love, Thy Spirit give;
I gasp, in Him, in Thee to live.

7. The promised Comforter impart,
Open the Fountain in my heart;
There let Him flow with springing joys,
And into life eternal rise.

8. There let Him ever, ever dwell
The Pledge, the Witness, and the Seal.
I'll glory then in sin forgiven,
In Christ my life, my love, my heaven!²⁰

Another hymn entitled simply "Acts II, 41," echoed the Wesleyan teaching that the multitude who became believers at Pentecost did not at that time receive the full renewal in love the company in the upper room did, but its foretaste: the assurance of pardon and the witness of the Holy Spirit to their adoption and incorporation into the body of Christ.

In many a soul the Saviour stirred,
Three thousand yielded and believed.

Likewise, the "Hymn for Whitsunday," the old English word for Pentecost, expressed gratitude that the Saviour's prayer for the coming of the Comforter is partially answered whenever repentant sinners receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. That gift brings them the beginnings of inward holiness, which John Wesley always declared was the mark of the new birth, of new life in Christ.

Never will He then depart,
Inmate of a humble heart
Carrying on His work within
Striving 'til He cast out sin.²¹

The closing hymn of the volume, on Jesus' words of promise the night of His betrayal, is titled "John XVI:24. Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." John Wesley had declared this unqualified promise, reiterating the one in chapter 14, "Ye shall ask what ye will," to refer only to perfect love. The poem expressed clearly the believer's hope for "liberty," for "perfect love" and, putting it in the first person, for

All the joy, and peace and power,
All my Saviour asks above.

The sixth stanza prayed:

Since the Son hath made me free
Let me taste my liberty,
Thee behold with open face,
Triumph in Thy saving grace,
Thy great will delight to prove
Glory in Thy perfect love.

The closing stanzas rested this hope for inward holiness upon the joyous experience of what Jesus in the text had encouraged His dismayed apostles to expect "in that day" when "He, the Spirit of truth" should come:

Heavenly Adam, Life Divine
Change my nature into Thine;
Move and spread throughout my soul,
Actuate and fill the whole.
Be it I no longer now
Living in the flesh, but Thou.

Holy Ghost, no more delay;
Come, and in Thy Temple stay;
Now Thy inward witness bear,
Strong, and permanent, and clear.

Spring of Life, Thyself impart,
Rise eternal in my heart!²²

The preface to the second volume of Hymns and Sacred Poems, published late in the year 1740, contained John Wesley's first comprehensive description of the place of a second moment of sanctifying grace in the experience of heart purity. That description, and the scriptural foundation upon which the poems which followed declared it to rest, was the keynote of the Methodist doctrine of salvation from that year until the founder's death a half-century later. He made it the centerpiece of his statement of the doctrine in his Plain Account of Christian Perfection, reprinting it there with only minor editorial clarifications.

The salvation wrought by the Holy Spirit, the preface of 1740 declared, "is no other than the image of God fresh stamped on our heart," and "a renewal of believers in the spirit of their minds, after the likeness of Him that created them [Col. 3:10]." God has "now laid the axe unto the root of the tree, purifying their hearts by faith [Luke 2:9 and Acts 15:9]," and "cleansing all the thoughts of their hearts by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit." Only after believers have the continual witness of the Holy Spirit that they are heirs of God [Rom. 8:17] and "joint heirs with Christ," Wesley wrote, are they able to bear the Spirit's disclosure of "all the hidden abominations" of their inward sin, "the depths of pride, self-will, and hell." They cry, then, for a "full renewal" in God's image, in "righteousness and all true holiness" [Eph. 4:24]. Then God

remembers His holy covenant and He giveth them a single eye and a pure heart; He stamps upon them His own image and superscription; He createth them anew in Christ Jesus; He cometh unto them with His Son and blessed Spirit, and, fixing His abode in their souls, bringeth them into the "rest which remaineth for the people of God."²³

The hymns in this second volume expounded carefully the entire range of scriptural events and metaphors to which the Wesleys thereafter appealed to sustain the promise of entire sanctification by faith. In simple numbers and extent, the expositions which grounded that promise in the atonement, in full inward cleansing by the blood of Jesus, were more numerous.

But they scarcely overshadowed the strong ones which declared that believers are perfected in love by being filled with the Holy Spirit, as the apostles were at Pentecost. Here appeared for the first time the well known poem that Wesleyans have for a century or more sung beginning with the fourth stanza:

Jesus, Thy all-victorious love
Shed in my heart abroad;
Then shall my feet no longer rove
Rooted and fixed in God.

Stanzas seven through nine pointed to John the Baptist's prophecy that Jesus, the Christ, would baptize with "the Holy Spirit, and fire."

O that in me the sacred fire
Might now begin to glow,

Burn up the dross of base desire,
And make the mountains flow!

O that it now from heaven might fall,
And all my sins consume!
Come, Holy Ghost, for Thee I call,
Spirit of burning, come!

Refining fire, go through my heart,
Illuminate my soul,
Scatter Thy life through every part,
And sanctify the whole.²⁴

The ideas, the language, and the imagery of the preface to the 1740 volume, however, were most clearly reflected in the great "Hymn to God the Sanctifier." Its first and last stanzas began with the words borrowed from the opening line of "Come, Holy Ghost, all-quickenning fire." These stanzas stressed in turn, as the body of the hymn did, the two dimensions of grace dispensed at Pentecost: the gift and witness of the Spirit in the regeneration of those who repent and believe the Gospel

Now to my soul Thyself reveal;
Thy mighty working let me feel,
And know that I am born of God;

and the experience of His sanctifying fullness that empties believers of "pride, self-will, and hell," of "hate, envy, jealousy," and of all evil desires.²⁵

Precisely parallel was the hymn "Groaning for the Spirit of Adoption." Its title referred only to what the first three of the six stanzas contained—a plea for the witness of the Spirit to the new birth. That witness brought "the Spirit of power within, of love, and of a healthful mind," of "power to conquer inbred sin." (Wesley always taught, as in his sermon on "The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption," that regeneration brought victory over, but not the destruction of, the "inbred enemy.") The last two lines of stanza three celebrated the answer to this petition:

He comes! And righteousness Divine
And Christ, and all with Christ is mine!

The poem then became a further prayer for heart purity, in which St. Paul's phrases reinforce pentecostal promises from the writings of St. John and St. Luke:

O that the Comforter would come,
Nor visit as a transient guest,
But fix in me His constant home,
And take possession of my breast,
And make my soul His loved abode,
The temple of indwelling God!

Come, Holy Ghost, my heart inspire,
Attest that I am born again!
Come, and baptize me now with fire
Or all Thy former gifts are vain.

I cannot rest in sins forgiven;
Where is the earnest of my heaven?

Where the Indubitable Seal
That ascertains the kingdom mine?
The powerful stamp I long to feel,
The signature of love Divine:
O, shed it in my heart abroad,
Fulness of love, of heaven, of God!²⁶

Numerous hymns thus described or celebrated both works of the Spirit's sanctifying grace. The one entitled simply "Matthew v,3, 4, 6" summarized, stanza by stanza, the meanings John Wesley attached to those three verses of Scripture in his discourses on the Sermon on the mount, preached repeatedly in 1739 and 1740: pardon and the experience of "the kingdom of an inward heaven"; the assurance or witness of the Spirit to regeneration ("And I receive the Comforter"); and perfect love:

Where is the blessedness bestow'd
On all that hunger after Thee?
I hunger now, I thirst for God!
. . . Fill me with Thy righteousness.²⁷

Other hymns dealt with only one or the other of these two moments in grace. The poem whose seventh stanza became the first one of the ever popular "O for a thousand tongues to sing My great Redeemer's praise" is entirely about the new birth. Although its imagery is largely of Christ and His atoning sacrifice, in stanza four the author testified,

Then with my heart I first believed
Believed with faith Divine;
Power with the Holy Ghost received
To call the Saviour mine.²⁸

By contrast, the great third hymn of the series of four on one of John Wesley's favorite texts, "Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption," expounded the experience of heart purity in thoroughly pentecostal terms. Stanzas one, five, and six read:

Jesu! my Life, Thyself apply,
Thy Holy Spirit breathe,
My vile affections crucify,
Conform me to Thy death.

Scatter the last remains of sin,
And seal me Thine abode;
O, make me glorious all within,
A temple built by God.

My inward holiness Thou art,
For faith hath made Thee mine;
With all Thy fulness fill my heart,
'Til all I am is Thine!²⁹

The longest poem, titled "The Life of Faith, Exemplified in the

Eleventh Chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews," began with reference to the twelfth chapter's opening lines:

Author of Faith, Eternal Word
Whose Spirit breathes the active flame
Faith, like its Finisher and Lord,
Today as Yesterday the same.

Succeeding sections affirmed in unequivocal language that the Old Testament saints described in chapter 11 experienced justification by faith precisely as New Testament Christians did. And the final stanzas declared that the fulfillment of the promise the patriarchs did not completely realize occurs in Christians who experience "The Christ, the Fullness in the Soul," and in whom "the Holy Ghost abides."³⁰

The last hymn in the volume for 1740 was entitled "Hebrews iv. 9. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." It is the best index we have to the content of John Wesley's sermon on "The Rest of Faith." He preached that sermon the first time to the Kingswood miners on June 1, 1740, again two months later at the first service held in the new meetinghouse in London, "the Foundery," and thereafter in many places. In the hymn, the imagery of pilgrimage and promised land predominates, as the text would dictate. The climactic stanzas, however, do not point, as the Epistle to the Hebrews does, to the blood of the "new covenant" by which believers may "enter into the holiest." They appeal, rather, to the promise of Pentecost in John 14:15-23 and to St. Paul's words in Ephesians 1:13 declaring that believers are to be "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise":

Come, O my Saviour, come away,
Into my soul descend;
No longer from Thy creature stay,
My Author and my End....

Come, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
And seal me Thine abode;
Let all I am in Thee be lost,
Let all I am be God!³¹

In the two years before the appearance in 1742 of the third volume of Hymns and Sacred Poems, John Wesley's preaching and published writings made all the world aware that he believed a "second moment" of inwardly sanctifying grace was an integral part of the process by which the Holy Spirit perfected God's children in love.³² In April 1742, his brother Charles scandalized Oxford with a sermon before the university published at once, inquiring insistently of faculty and students,

Hast thou "received the Holy Ghost?" If thou hast not, thou art not yet a Christian.... Dost thou know what religion is? That it is a participation of the divine nature; the life of God in the soul of man; Christ formed in the heart; "Christ in thee, the hope of glory? . . . righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."³³

This point made, from the text of Ephesians 4:14, "Awake thou that

sleepest, and arise from the dead," the preacher-poet explained that the succeeding words, "and Christ shall give thee light," referred to the further experience of the same Holy Spirit's sanctifying fullness. The "Promise of the Father," given through Isaiah and Ezekiel and reiterated by Jesus after His resurrection, was fulfilled at Pentecost. In a paragraph on Peter's response to the three thousand who asked what they should do to be saved (Acts 2:38), Charles urged his audience, "Receive this [the remission of sins] . . . and thou art justified freely through faith. Thou shalt be sanctified also through faith that is in Jesus." The world cannot receive either the witness or the fullness of the Spirit because, as Jesus said before the crucifixion, it neither sees nor knows Him. "The indwelling Spirit of God," the preacher continued, "is the common privilege of all believers, the blessing of the gospel, the unspeakable gift, the universal promise, the criterion of a real Christian." To deny "this inspiration, this receiving of the Holy Ghost, and being sensible of it" and to deny "the being moved by the Spirit or filled " with Him, he cried, is to "deny the whole Scriptures; the whole truth, and promise, and testimony of God."³⁴ Modern Wesleyans, not being acquainted with this sermon as Charles's contemporaries were, have not suspected that the last two stanzas of "Come, Holy Ghost, Our Hearts Inspire," are cryptic prayers for the second work of grace.

None should have been surprised, therefore, to find the preface of the third hymnbook, published in 1742, declaring that entire sanctification was the theme of many of the poems in the volume. Here appeared the one entitled "The Promise of Sanctification" that Charles had written late in 1740 on Ezekiel 36 to accompany the published version of his brother's famous sermon, "Christian Perfection." Twenty-four years later John reprinted in *A Plain Account* the two following stanzas of it, to remind critics of what had been the hymnbook's central theme:

Chose from the world, if now I stand,
Adorn'd with righteousness divine;
If, brought into the promised land,
I justly call the Saviour mine;

The sanctifying Spirit pour,
To quench my thirst and wash me clean,
Now Saviour, let the gracious shower
Descend, and make me pure from sin.³⁵

Another poem, attributed long afterwards to John, interpreted the Lord's Prayer as a plea for holiness. It reappeared four years later attached to his sixth discourse on the Sermon on the Mount. "Spirit of grace, and health, and power," the stanza addressed to the Holy Spirit ran, "Inflame our hearts with perfect love."³⁶

The long section in the 1742 volume headed "seeking entire sanctification" began with a "Hymn for the Day of Pentecost." It affirmed that the promise of being filled with the Spirit belongs to all who have received Him, as did the three thousand who were converted on that day. "The Spirit comes, and sinners live," an early line put it; and from that moment they wait in hope that He will make their hearts "His loved, His everlasting home." In this hope, they pray

Lord, we believe to us and ours
The apostolic promise given....
Now, Lord, the Comforter bestow,
And fix in us the Guest Divine.

Assembled here with one accord
Calmly we wait the promised grace,
The purchase of our dying Lord,
Come, Holy Ghost, and fill the place.³⁷

The succeeding hymn, also for Pentecost Sunday, carried precisely the same message, though its use of the term "sinners" to refer to all who did not yet enjoy "settled comfort, perfect love, everlasting righteousness," and of the words "saved from sin," as John Wesley's habit had recently become, to mean being delivered from inbred sin, might confuse readers steeped in twentieth-century Wesleyan language. The keys to interpreting these phrases, and so the poem, are the words referring to perfect love and to the Spirit's permanent indwelling. For during these years both John and Charles Wesley inclined, as

John recalled later, toward the idea that the sealing of the Holy Spirit in entire sanctification constituted an assurance of final perseverance. Hence the hymn's closing lines:

Father, behold we claim
The gift in Jesus' name.
Him, the promised Comforter,
Into all our spirits pour,
Let Him fix His mansion here,
Come, and never leave us more.³⁸

The Pentecostal theme appeared several times in this variation, as in the polemic hymn entitled "Let God be true, and every man a liar," aimed at all who believed "no perfection is below, no love that casts out fear." Two early stanzas read

Thou shalt on me Thy Spirit pour,
And make the sinner clean;
In confidence I wait the hour
When I shall cease from sin.

I trust that to the life Divine
Thou wilt my soul restore,
And I shall in Thine image shine,
And I shall sin no more.

The ninth stanza showed this hope becoming faith:

I shall be perfected in love
For Thou hast spoke the word,
The servant cannot be above,
But shall be as, his Lord.³⁹

The rich variety of biblical texts and allusions in this volume might seem to the uninitiated proof only of active poetic imaginations. They reflected in fact the close study of Scripture that long had bound the two Wesleys to each other and to their Lord, and the careful expositions of

passages that were central to their sermons and tracts on Christian perfection.⁴⁰ Many of the hymns referred to being filled and several to being baptized with the Spirit. Scores of them referred unambiguously to a second moment, a second blessing, of sanctifying grace, using such terms or metaphors as the indwelling Spirit, Christ enthroned within, refining fire, Christian liberty, full redemption, salvation from sin, heart purity, cleansing by the blood of Christ, renewal in the image of the Creator, perfect love, and "all the mind that was in" Christ Jesus.⁴¹ The beautiful "Prayer for Holiness," whose refrain at the end of each stanza read "Help me Saviour, speak the word, and perfect me in love," asked in the seventh,

Lord, if I on Thee believe
The second gift impart;
With the indwelling Spirit give
A new, a loving heart.⁴²

Notable for the richness of these biblical allusions is the widely loved hymn,

O for a heart to praise my God,
An heart from sin set free!
An heart that always feels
Thy blood So freely spilt for me!

An heart resign'd, submissive, meek,
My dear Redeemer's throne,
Where only Christ is heard to speak
Where Jesus reigns alone....

My heart, thou know'st, can never rest,
Till Thou create my peace,
Till of my Eden reposset,
From self and sin I cease.

Titled simply "Psalm li. 10: 'Make me a Clean Heart, O God,' " this hymn draws far more from the apostle Peter's sermon at Pentecost that declared God's covenant with David fulfilled in Christ's enthronement, I think, than from the picture of a morally fallen king that the psalm conjures up.⁴³

The hymnbook for 1742 also displayed the roots of the doctrine of Christian perfection that the two brothers had long since come to believe were found in the Old Testament. The volume opened with a long poem on the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, which

the New Testament makes the source of John the Baptist's preaching. A dozen or more on other Old Testament texts followed it. They demonstrate how wrong were those of us who have until recently supposed the Wesleys did not ground their doctrine of Christian perfection in the teachings of Moses and the prophets. One on Genesis 3:15 expounded the curse upon Satan at the Fall as in fact a promise to Eve of a recovery of Eden through her seed, the Son. The writer prayed:

O, reveal Thy Son in me,
Bring the perfect nature in,
Now destroy the enmity,
Now consume the Man of Sin.
. . . Make my soul Thy pure abode,
Fill'd with all the Deity,
Swallow'd up and lost in God. 44

Two poems from texts in the prophecy of Isaiah united the rhetoric of atoning blood and sanctifying Spirit. The one entitled "The Fourth Chapter of Isaiah" prayed

O that the grace were now applied!
Bring in, dear Lord, a purer flood;
Open the fountain of thy side,
And purge out all our tainted blood....

The judging, burning Spirit inspire,
O let Him to His temple come
And sit as a refiner's fire,
And all our sin condemn, consume.⁴⁵

The other, inspired by Isaiah 32:2, "And a man [Jesus Christ, the Wesleys believed] shall be as an hiding place," implored

Let Thy merit as a cloud
Still interpose between;
Plead the atonement of Thy blood
Till I am cleansed from sin.

Weary, parch'd with Thirst, and faint
Till Thou abiding Spirit breathe
Every moment, Lord, I wait
The merit of Thy death.⁴⁶

And little wonder; for the Wesleys saw clearly, as Christians in all ages have, the connection between Jesus' promise of the Comforter and His prayer for the sanctification of His disciples (recorded in John 14-17) and the events of Pentecost. Especially pervasive were the changes on the theme of Jesus' words at the beginning of that promise, "He is with you and shall be in you." Consider such verses as the following:

For with me art Thou, and shalt be within.⁴⁷
With me He dwells, and bids Thee come;
Answer Thine own effectual prayer.⁴⁸

With me, I know, Thy Spirit dwells,
Nor ever shall depart
Till in me He Himself reveals
And purifies my heart.⁴⁹

With us, in us, here below;
Enter and make us free indeed.
. . . with me now Thy Spirit stays,
And, hovering, hides me in His wings. . . .
Till all the stony He remove,
And in my loving heart resides.⁵⁰

Holy Ghost, the Comforter
The gift of Jesus, come. . . .
Present with us Thee we feel,
Come, O come, and in us be
With us, in us live and dwell To all eternity.⁵¹

This theme from the Gospel of John is central also to the poem expounding St. Paul's word to Titus concerning "the grace of God that bringeth salvation" (Titus 2:11-14), the text of which was printed on the title-page of the 1742 volume. Scorning the notion that God would "bid the guilt depart, and leave the power behind," the writers affirmed that

Faith, when it comes, breaks every chain,
And makes us truly free;
But Christ hath died for thee in vain,
Unless He lives in thee.

Then, grandly, they asked, in words memorable to those reared amidst Wesleyan hymnody, "What is our calling's glorious hope, But inward holiness?" Give me, the singers prayed, "a faith that roots out sin, and purifies my heart." The closing stanzas linked all this to the promise of the indwelling Spirit:

When Jesus makes my soul His home,
My sin shall all depart;
And lo! He saith, "I quickly come,
To cleanse and fill thy heart!"

Be it according to Thy word!
Redeem me from all sin;
My heart would now receive Thee, Lord;
Come in, my Lord, come in!⁵²

Similar Pentecostal imagery dominated the poem based on Jesus' word in Mark 11:22-24, promising a faith so great as to enable a believer to "say unto this mountain, Be thou removed." John Wesley thought this passage referred to the prayer of faith for sanctification and linked it to Jesus' word on the Comforter in John 16:24, "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." The metaphor appeared earlier in the line "make the mountains flow" in the well-known "Jesus, Thy all-victorious Love," quoted above.⁵³ Here it reads:

It shall be so; I do not doubt,
The mountain shall depart;
Sin shall be shortly all cast out
Of my believing heart. . . .

I have the things for which I pray
And fervently desire,
Jesus, take all my sins away,
Baptize me with Thy fire.⁵⁴

The hymn in the 1742 volume that seems most fully to incorporate all the scriptural themes the Wesleys used in preaching heart purity, however, expounds Jesus' words as recorded in Luke 12:50, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." In its stanzas, the proper baptism of Jesus, which all His followers require, consists in being baptized "with the Holy Spirit, and fire," with "love, mighty love," which is the "Spirit's seal":

An inward baptism, Lord, of fire
Wherewith to be baptized, I have,
'Tis all my longing soul's desire;
This, only this, my soul can save.

Straiten'd I am till this be done:
Kindle in me the living flame,
Father, in me reveal Thy Son,
Baptize me into Jesus name.

Transform my nature into Thine
Let all my powers Thine impress feel,
Let all my soul become Divine,
And stamp me with Thy Spirit's seal. . . .

Love, mighty Love, my heart o'erpower;
Ah! Why dost Thou so long delay?
Cut short the work, bring near the hour,
And let me see Thy perfect day.⁵⁵

I think the care with words that we see in these hymns not only made the two brothers fine poets but made them admirable biblical theologians as well.⁵⁶ The precision of their poetic expression of scriptural ideas grew out of their respect for both clear thinking and honest exegesis. It reflected also their life-long relish of openness, of close mutual criticism, nurtured since their Oxford days in an atmosphere of Christian as well as fraternal love. They wrote poems for joy, but not merely for fun; they intended by them to teach divinity, and so to enrich the vision of truth in which their people worshiped God.⁵⁷

This intention prompted John to prepare on his own a volume of Hymns on the Lord's Supper, published in 1745, the same year he issued in three parts his Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion. Each hymn in the volume, like the climactic section of each argument in the Appeal, aimed both to deepen wonder at the sacrifice of Christ and to strengthen faith in the sanctifying power that flowed from it through the Holy Spirit. One selection must stand here for all-number 31,

O Rock of our salvation, see
The souls that seek their rest in Thee.

Its governing image—the wounded side of the dying Christ, flowing water and blood—unfolded in lines that anticipated in close detail those of August Toplady's sublime "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me," published thirty-one years later. Only with Wesley, the message was imparted holiness, purity of heart, and perfect love:

. . . Beneath Thy cooling shadow hide,
And keep us, Saviour, in Thy side;
By water and by blood redeem,
And wash us in the mingled stream.
The sin-atoning blood apply,
And let the water sanctify,
Pardon and holiness impart,
Sprinkle and purify our heart,

Wash out the last remains of sin,
And make our inmost nature clean.

The double stream in pardon rolls
And brings Thy love into our souls;. . .
We here Thy utmost power shall prove
Thy utmost power of perfect love.⁵⁸

By some special kind of poetic irony, six generations of American Wesleyans have sung Toplady's hymn, long the nation's favorite, in blissful disregard of its author's staunch Calvinism and of his possible debt to their founder's forgotten words. They read Methodist meanings into Toplady's grander lines, remembering John Wesley's teaching that water in biblical symbol nearly always stands for the sanctifying Spirit. Nineteenth-century holiness teachers were never any more able than Wesley or St. Paul had been to think of the Holy Spirit apart from Jesus, whose name was "Emmanuel"-God with us. They cried,

Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath, and make me pure.⁵⁹

Two years later Charles also published a volume of his own, called Hymns for Those That Seek and Those That Have Redemption in the Blood of Jesus Christ. John liked them so well that by 1782 he had placed twenty-four of the total of fifty-two in his long-standard Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists. Among them was the perennial favorite of Wesleyans from that day to this,

Love Divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down.

The sharpest analytical scalpel cannot divide its doctrine of the Son from its prayer to the Spirit:

. . . Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love Thou art,
Visit us with Thy salvation
Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit,
Into every troubled breast,
Let us all in Thee inherit,
Let us find that second rest.
Take away our power of sinning,^{*1}
Alpha and Omega be,
End of faith as its Beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

¹ *The words "power of sinning" were changed to "bent to sinning" after the Wesleys had decided, in the late 1750's, that the experience of perfect love did not guarantee final perseverance.

Come, Almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.

Allusions to what all Methodists by then recognized as key texts from which the Wesleys proclaimed the second work of sanctifying grace appear on every line of this great poem.⁶⁰

What remains are two footnotes, elevated here into the text so readers won't have to turn to the fine print below. A close search of the two volumes of Hymns and Sacred Poems that Charles Wesley wrote alone and published at Bristol in 1749 shows no departure at all from the meanings and the metaphors of the poetic language the two brothers used when writing together about the Hallowing Spirit-and no innovations in the use of scriptural texts. A prime example appears in the first volume in part three of the long poem on Isaiah 26. It recounts, in the form of a testimony, the experience of one who in "anguish, agony, and grief" labored to be truly "born again," as were those saints of old in whom God was glorified:

Shepherdless souls they wander'd wide,
'Til call'd and perfected in One.

The testimony ends with a declaration of faith that

The Spirit that raised Him from the dead
Shall raise us all with Christ our Head,
And hallow and baptize with fire.⁶¹

John Wesley declared in his Plain Account of Christian Perfection that he "quite approved" the principal hymns in the section of Charles's second volume dedicated to "those that wait for full salvation"; and he quoted, as an example, the lines Jesus, our life, in us appear,

Who daily die Thy death;
Reveal Thyself the finisher;
Thy quick'ning Spirit breathe.⁶²

In 1755, John Wesley published the first part of his common-sense commentary on the Scriptures titled Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament, weaving it on the frame of Pietist John A. Bengel's commentary, published in Germany thirteen years earlier. Wesley brought to that task all his immense skill in Hebrew and Greek, all his knowledge of texts hammered out in three decades of shared study, and all his desire to teach plain people the way to righteousness. Seven or eight years later Charles Wesley published his explanatory notes on the Scriptures, drawing upon both his own and his brother's learning and experience. But Charles expressed their theology of salvation in poetry, in two volumes of Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures, containing 2030 poems.⁶³

The younger Wesley's power with words was never more firmly bent to his purpose to teach divinity.

By April, 1765 Charles had composed five additional manuscript volumes, chiefly on texts from the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. He revised them lovingly no less than eight times before his death in 1788. These manuscripts his brother revised again and authorized Walter Churchey to publish. "Many," John Wesley wrote Churchey, "are little or nothing inferior to the best of them that have been printed," though he had "corrected or expunged" those "that savor a little of mysticism," as had been his life-long practice.⁶⁴ The additional poems raised the total of Short Hymns, as they appear in Osborn's edition, to 1609 on Old and 3491 on New Testament texts. To read the fine hymns on Jeremiah 31, Ezekiel 36, John 14 (thirty-one on this chapter alone!) and Acts 1-2, or on the occasions when each of the four Gospels quotes John the Baptist's declaration, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit," is to see how persistent was the vision of Pentecost in the Wesleyan proclamation of heart purity.⁶⁵ That vision clearly lay at the center of the great revival of the years 1759-1762, during which the first edition was prepared. And that revival, as all students of the subject know, set the tone of Wesleyan religious culture in England and America for the next half-century.

One final observation. The relationship of music to religion lies deep in the history of all cultures-Hindu, Chinese, and Greek, as well as Hebrew and Christian. The point of convergence has often been mystic experience. That the Wesleyan proclamation of Christian perfection, cast in the words of Jesus and Paul that declare the new man in Christ is to be "filled with all the fullness of God," fanned mystic sparks into musical flame should not surprise us. We properly marvel, however, that in the hands of these two men, the hymnody of holiness always makes sense-beautiful, biblical sense. Their understanding of the gospel was steeped in Scripture and reason-or, perhaps we should say, in reasoning about scripture. They understood living faith to bring a knowledge of the Lord that was not gnostic at all, but moral, and consistent with the long centuries of the Christian quest for righteousness and perfect love.⁶⁶

Notes

1John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns of Petition and Thanksgiving for the Promise of the Father* (Bristol: 1746; reprinted in *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, coll. and arr. G. Osborn; 13 vols.; London: 1869), 4:162-204.

2John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns of Petition*, 4:199.

3John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns of Petition*, 4:168; cf. The hymn on John 16:1-4, p. 180, and on John 16:18, p. 185. See also John Wesley, sermon, "On the Death of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield (1770), in *John Wesley, Works*, 14 vols. (London: 1872, reprinted, Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1978), 7: 179 (section III, 4); and *John Wesley, Journal*, ed. Nehemiah Curnock, 8 vols. (London: R. Culley, 1909-16), entry for July 6, 1739, and

Curnock's accompanying Note, 2:242, concerning Whitefield's preparation, and Wesley's editing, of his sermon "The Indwelling of the Spirit."

4John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns . . . for the Promise of the Father* (1746), pp. 185, 187, 190.

5John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns . . . for the Promise of the Father*, pp. 184, 190.

6John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns . . . for the Promise of the Father*, pp. 172-79, the quotation being from p. 173; cf. 200-01, and the last hymn in the volume, 203-04.

7John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns . . . for the Promise of the Father*, p. 178.

8John Wesley, sermon, "Scriptural Christianity" (1744), in his *Works*, 6:48; and *Wesley, Journal*, August 24, 1744.

9John Wesley, sermon, "The First-Fruits of the Spirit" (1745), *Works*, 6:88, 91, 96-97.

10John Wesley, *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* (London: 1744), *Works*, 8:76-106 (Part I, sections V-1 through V-27), the quotation being from p. 76. The poem, "Primitive Christianity," attached to John Wesley, *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* (London: 1743), in *Works*, 8:43-45, shows the ecumenical spirit in which Wesley affirmed all these doctrines of "perfect charity." It is the poetic link between the first and the *Farther Appeal* (1745), as the last Oxford sermon, published in 1744 is the prose. The poem makes explicit the teaching of a second moment of sanctifying grace that was muted in the *Appeals*, in the last two stanzas of Part I and the second of Part II. The latter reads:

The few that truly call thee Lord,
And wait thy sanctifying word,
And thee their utmost Saviour own,
Unite, and perfect them in one.

Compare the poem, "An Act of Devotion," published at the end of Part I of *A Farther Appeal* in *Works*, 8:155.

11As argued variously in Frederick D. Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit. The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1971), and James R. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit. A Reexamination of the New Testament Teaching . . .* (Naperville, Ill.: A. R. Allenson, 1970).

12John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns . . . for the Promise of the Father* (1746) pp. 196-97, reproduced in John Wesley, *A Collection of Hymns for the People Called Methodists*, 3rd ed. (London: 1782; facsimile reprint, London [1889?]), p. 86.

13John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns . . . for the Promise of the Father*, p. 199.

14Timothy L. Smith, "How John Fletcher Became the Theologian of Wesleyan Perfectionism, 1770-1776," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 16:1 (Spring 1980), p. 73.

- 15 John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection . . .* (London: 1766, reprinted, with a few insignificant verbal changes, several times before the author's death in 1791), Works, 11:391-93, is decisive on the point. Cf. John Wesley, *Journal*, December 16, 1776, December 10, 1788; John Wesley, "Preface" (1779) to *Collection of Hymns* (1782) in Works 14:340-41; and John Wesley, St. Ives, September 16, 1762, to Miss Furley in Works, 12:207.
- 16 See Osborn's note on the question of authorship in John and Charles Wesley, *Poetical Works*, 7:xv-svi. The Wesleys seem to have ignored John Fletcher's awkward assumption in 1771 that the "Pentecost hymns" displayed Charles's doctrine and not John's; in any case, Fletcher knew differently by 1774, when he published *An Essay in Truth, as I think I have shown in "How John Fletcher Became the Theologian of Wesleyan Perfectionism, 1770-1776,"* WTJ, 16:1, pp. 73-76.
- 17 Henry Bett, *The Hymns of Methodism*, 3rd edn. (London: Epworth Press, 1946), pp. 21-33; J. Ernest Rattenbury, *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns* (London: Epworth Press, 1941), p. 337.
- 18 John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (London: 1739), reprinted in *Poetical Works*, 1:164-66. This volume reached a 3rd edition by the end of 1739; see Osborn's preface to *Poetical Works*, 1:xvi. The third line of the second stanza
- quoted here reads "True witness of my sonship now" in John Wesley, *Collection of Hymns* (1782), p. 368.
- 19 John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1739), pp. 166-66; stanzas 12-14 link Pentecost with the renewal of the whole earth in righteousness and the coming of Christ's kingdom over all. The preface appears in John Wesley, Works, 14:320-21.
- 20 John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1739), pp. 96-96. Cf. John Wesley, *Journal*, entries for July 21, August 26, and October 19, 1739; John Wesley, "The Sermon on the Mount." discourses I, II, III (1739). in Works, 5:247-93; and John Wesley, sermon, "Christian Perfection" (1739), Works, 6:17 (section II, 26).
- 21 John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1739), pp. 171-72, 188-89.
- 22 John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1739) p. 193. John Wesley, *Plain Account* (1766), p. 370, quotes the stanza beginning "Heavenly Adam" to illustrate his early belief in entire sanctification. John Wesley, sermon, "Christian Perfection" (1739), Works, 6:17 (section II, 26) expounds Gal. 2:20, on which the stanza's last two lines are based, teaching heart purity; and his *Plain Account*, p. 377, quotes that exposition. On Wesley's exposition of the promise in John 16:24, "that your joy may be full," see John Wesley, *The Character of a Methodist* (1742) in Works, 8:342, which in turn is quoted and interpreted in his *Plain Account* (1766), p. 371, as referring to entire sanctification.
- 23 John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (London: 1740), preface, reprinted in *Poetical Works*, 1:197-204. This volume became parts 3 and 4 of the fourth and fifth editions of the Wesleys' *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1739),

its preface appearing in the third part of the combined editions, published in 1743 and 1756, according to Osborn, *Poetical Works*, 1:xvii. Cf. Wesley, *Plain Account*, pp. 380-81, where the words "He remembers his holy covenant" were omitted. My readings of the scriptural allusions in the four clauses quoted here are Matt. 6:22; "he stamps," etc., either Eph. 1:14 or 2 Cor. 2:22 [see John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* (London: 1755, and many subsequent editions), comments on these two verses]; "he createth," etc., 2 Cor. 5:17; John 14:17, 19, 23; and Hebrews 4:9.

24John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1740), pp. 205-372, *passim*, and for the quoted hymn, pp. 328-29.

25John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1770), pp. 240-42. The lines quoted here, and those in the preceding paragraph, appear in the versions of the two hymns that John Wesley chose to publish in his *Collection of Hymns* (1782), pp. 333-34, 346.

26John and Charles Wesley *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1740), pp. 307-08. Note that in the second line of the second stanza quoted here the word "attest" is a different and much stronger word than "witness." Its usage here attests that the author is not thinking of the full assurance of regeneration, but of the further demonstration of the authenticity of the seeker's experience of the new birth in his being baptized "with fire."

27John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1740), p. 258. Cf. "Blessed are they that mourn," pp. 330-31, for another hymn on the same passage, with the same message; and above, n. 20.

28John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1740), p. 300.

29John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1740), p. 284. Cf. "A Prayer Against the Power of Sin," page 271, verse 14: Thy powerful Spirit shall subdue unconquerable sin;

Cleanse this foul heart of mine, and make it new
And write Thy law within;

and John Wesley, *Collection of Hymns* (1782), pp.328-29, containing all but the sixth stanza. The elder Wesley selected each of the hymns quoted in this and the preceding paragraph for the earliest general songbook used widely among Methodists: *John Wesley, Hymns and Spiritual Songs Intended for the Use of Real Christians of All Denominations*, eighth ed. (London: 1761 [first ed., London: 1753]; see pp. 18 (no. 11), 37 (no. 25), 42 (no. 30), and 63 (no. 40).

30John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (London: 1740), in *Poetical Works*, 1:209, 221, and *passim*. Cf. The abbreviated version in John Wesley, *A Collection of Hymns*, p. 95, containing the same first stanza.

31John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1740), pp. 370-72; John Wesley, *Journal*, June 1 and August 1, 1740. Wesley, *Plain Account*, p. 382, quoted nine stanzas of this hymn, including the two printed here.

- 32In addition to the preface to *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1740), pp. 197-204, the key documents of these two years are: Wesley's sermon, "Christian Perfection" (1739); and the two tracts, John Wesley, *The Character of a Methodist and The Principles of a Methodist* (London [1742]), both reprinted in his *Works*, 8:340-47 and 359-74. In addition, John Wesley's repeated preaching during these years of his first three discourses on the Sermon on the Mount and the sermons entitled "The Law Established by Faith" (1741) and "The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption" (1739), would have instructed Methodists, at least. On the coupling of process with moments of grace in Wesley's doctrine, see Harald Lindstrom *Wesley and Sanctification* (Stockholm: 1946), pp. 174-78.
- 33Charles Wesley, sermon, "Awake Thou that Sleepest" ([London: 1742]), in John Wesley, *Works*, 530.
- 34Charles Wesley, "Awake Thou," 5:32-34.
- 35John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (London: 1742), in *Poetical Works*, 2:preface, 45-48, and, for the hymn, 319-22. Both the preface and the second of the two stanzas quoted here appeared in Wesley, *Plain Account*, pp. 383-86, and the hymn, of course, in John Wesley, *Collection of Hymns* (1782), p. 374.
- 36John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742), pp. 335-36; and, on John's authorship, John Wesley, *Standard Sermons*, ed. Edward H. Sugden, 2 vols. (London: 1921), 1:445.
- 37John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742), pp. 227-28. The last line alludes to Matt. 10:24-25, always a key text in John Wesley's exposition of Christian holiness.
- 38John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742), pp. 229-31; John Wesley, *Collection of Hymns* (1782), p. 87. Cf. *Plain Account*, pp. 426, 442, for Wesley's statement that he changed his mind about final perseverance around 1758-59.
- 39John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742), pp. 285-86; and cf. p. 46, for the comment in the preface on the reference of the last line to Matt. 10:24-25; Luke 6:40; and John 13:16. [The preface is reproduced from the 1745 edition in John Wesley, *Works*, 14:329.] The comment mirrored Wesley's use of Luke 6:40 to teach the experience of heart purity in his sermon, *Christian Perfection* (1739), *Works*, 6:16-17 (sections II:21, 22, 24). And it anticipated his use of I John 4:17, "as he is, so are we in this world," as a testimony of "living men who were wholly sanctified," in *Minutes of the Conferences . . .*, August 2, 1745, in Albert C. Outler, ed., *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 153.
- 40A remarkably consistent series of biblical "litanies," as I have called them, stands at the center of John Wesley's presentation of the doctrine of perfect love. The scriptural passages to which these refer provided the great preponderance of material for the hymns on holiness. These litanies appeared in his writings in chronological order, as follows: preface to *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1740), pp. 198-202 (reproduced also in *Works*, 14:323-25); sermon, "Christian Perfection" (1739), *Works*, 6:16-19- preface to *Character of a Methodist* (1742), *Works*, 8:342-46; *An Earnest*

Appeal (1743), 8:21-22, 40-41; John Wesley, *Minutes of Some Late Conversations Between the Rev. Mr. Wesley and Others* ([London: 1747]), in *Works*, 8:294-96; John Wesley, *A Letter to the Reverend Doctor Conyers Middleton, Occasioned of His Late "Free Inquiry"* ([London: 1747]), in *Works*, 10:72-73; John Wesley, "Thoughts on Christian Perfection" (1759), in *Outler, John Wesley*, p. 289; and John Wesley, sermon (see *Journal*, November 3, 1761), "On Perfection," *Works*, 6:413-17. All but the last of these were summarized or extensively transcribed in 1766 in his *Plain Account*.

41For the last of these, see "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742), pp. 276-77; and cf. the long poem on Isaiah 28:16, Part II, stanzas 1-2, 5, and Part III, stanza 5, in the same, pp. 330-34.

42John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742), p. 275. In John Wesley, *Collection of Hymns* (1782), p. 336, the last line quoted reads "A new, a contrite heart."

43John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742), pp. 77-79. The version in John Wesley, *Collection of Hymns* (1782), p. 324, altered the last line quoted here to read "from every sin I cease."

44John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742), pp. 49-89, and *passim*, the quoted one appearing on pp. 67-68; cf. pp. 249 (stanzas 8-9), 257, 281. Contrast my own initial misperception of this matter, in Timothy L. Smith, "The Cross Demands, The Spirit Enables," *Christianity Today*, 23 (February 1978): 26; and John N. Oswalt, "John Wesley and the Old Testament Concept of the Holy Spirit," *Religion in Life*, 48 (Autumn 1979): 283-291.

45John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742), p. 249. I was also mistaken (in Smith, "The Cross Demands," p. 26) in supposing that the merging of these two ways of speaking came about when American Wesleyans integrated Charles G. Finney's teaching about Pentecost into their traditional rhetoric of cleansing and the cross.

46John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742), p. 207.

47John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742), p. 179, and John Wesley, *Collection of Hymns* (1782), p. 196. Nehemiah Curnock, the modern editor of John Wesley, *Journal*, 1:477n., attributed this hymn, "My Father, My God, I Long for Thy Love," to John Wesley and suggested it may date from the months following his experience at Aldersgate. Substantial evidence of the general point here is John Wesley's explication of the text of John 7:38 in his sermon "Christian Perfection" (1739) published the year before (see his *Works*, 6:10-11); and the comments on John 14:17-23 in John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* (London, 1755, and many subsequent editions).

48John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742), p. 197. Only a poet overwhelmingly concerned to guard the doctrine of the Trinity would have composed these tortured lines.

49John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742), p. 243.

50 John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742), pp. 256, 272, and John Wesley, *Collection of Hymns* (1782), pp. 287, 301.

51 "Hymn for the Day of Pentecost," John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742), p. 229; John Wesley selected this one for both the *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1753), p. 119, and *Collect on of Hymns* (1782), p. 471. The first stanza implored

Father of our Dying Lord,
Give us that for which He prays,
Father glorify Thy Son;
Show His truth, and power, and grace,
And send the promise down.

52 John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742), title page, and pp. 304-05. The last stanza begins, "Come, then, Thou heavenly guest, Into Thy temple come." Cf. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come!" stanza 12, in the same collection, p. 365; "Unto the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans," Part III, stanzas 1-2, p. 361. The theme persisted in Charles Wesley, *Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures*, 2 vols. (London: 1762), reprinted in John and Charles Wesley, *Poetical Works*, 12:13, and again by John Wesley in *The Arminian Magazine* (London) 3 (May 1780): 282-83, under the title "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

53 John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1740), p. 329, quoted above, p. 12. Cf. also the last stanza of the oft-sung hymn, "Spirit of Faith Come Down," first published in John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns for the Promise of the Father* (1746), *Poetical Works*, 4:197.

54 John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742), pp. 308-09.

55 John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742), pp. 196-97. The word "o'erpower," in the last stanza, is a synonym for, "overwhelm," one of the proper translations of the Greek word for "baptize."

56 At least one sister wrote poetry, as did their father. See S[amuel] Wesley, *The History of the Holy Bible From the Revolt of Ten Tribes to the End of the Prophets . . .*, 2 vols. (London: ["printed for John Hooke"], 1716). A spot-check of the elder Wesley's hymns on Jeremiah 3, Ezekiel 36, Hosea, and Joel shows no kinship at all, however, to the poems of Charles Wesley on these passages, cited below, n. 60.

57 Mark A. Noll, "Romanticism and the Hymns of Charles Wesley," *The Evangelical Quarterly* (Exeter, England), 46(Oct.-Dec., 1974):212-15.

58) John Wesley, *Hymns on the Lord's Supper . . .* (Bristol, 1745), in John and Charles Wesley, *Poetical Works*, 3:238-39. Cf. the closing stanza of hymn no. 33, p. 240. Toplady published the text of the hymn we know as "Rock of Ages" under the title "A Living and Dying Prayer for the Holiest Believer in the World," in the *Calvinistic Gospel Magazine* for March 1776 attaching it to his article on the moral law of God. In that article, he rejected all compromises with the standard of absolute holiness in this life and therefore proclaimed that the Christian's righteousness must be imputed, not imparted.

- 59 On water as the symbol of the sanctifying Spirit, see Wesley, *Plain Account* p. 435, and the hymn on John 7:37-39, in John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns . . . for the Promise of the Father* (1746), p. 171. Cf. [National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness], *The Double Cure, or Echoes from the National Camp-Meetings* (n. p., n. d.; [Philadelphia? [c.] 18901).
- 60 Charles Wesley, *Hymns for Those That Seek, and Those That Have Redemption in the Blood of Jesus Christ* (London: 1747), reprinted in John and Charles Wesley, *Poetical Works*, 4:219; Richard Green, *The Works of John and Charles Wesley: A Bibliography*, second ed. (London: Methodist Publishing House, 1906), entry no. 105.
- 61 Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 2 vols. (Bristol: 1749), I, in John and Charles Wesley, *Poetical Works*, 4:290-91.
- 62 Wesley, *Plain Account*, pp. 391-92. His specific exceptions to particular "mystic" phrases in other sections of these two volumes constitute the strongest possible assumption of full responsibility for the ideas and expressions of the hymns they jointly authored. Cf. generally the pentecostal themes in Charles's second volume, in John and Charles Wesley, *Poetical Works*, 5:295, 305, 315 (a hymn linking John the Baptist's prophecy to both Pentecost and perfection in love), and 317-18 (on Ephesians 4:8, 11, linking Paul's words to Peter's sermon at Pentecost, and likewise to being "wholly sanctified" and "Derfected in love").
- 63 Charles Wesley, *Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures*, 2 vols. (London: 1762), preface, in John Wesley, *Works*, 14:334; Green, *Bibliography*, item No. 214.
- 64 John Wesley, *Journal*, December 10, 1788; John Wesley, n. p., 1789, to Walter Churchey, in *Works*, 12:438.
- 65 Charles Wesley, *Short Hymns on . . . the Holy Scriptures*, I . nos. 1336, 1354, 1392, 1456, 1457, in John and Charles Wesley, *Poetical Works*, 10:34, 41, 58, 82-83; and II nos. 20-22, 782-3, in *Poetical Works* 10:146-48, 445-46 II, nos. 1200 and i627, in *Poetical Works* 11:127-28, 326; and II, nos. 2092-93, 2096, 2353-54, 2367-69, in *Poetical Works*, 12:12-15, 135-36, 142-43.
- 66 For his rejection of gnosticism, on the ground of its antinomian tendencies, see John Wesley, "An Answer to the Rev. Mr. Dodd," probably written in the 17609, in *Works*, 11:453.

Response to Dr. Timothy Smith On The Wesleys' Hymns

T. CRICHTON MITCHELL

To say the least, it is gratifying to have a theologian-historian of Dr. Timothy L. Smith's stature and caliber devoting so much time and serious study to the hymns of the Wesley brothers (see preceding article). He joins a very small coterie of gifted scholars who have placed Wesleyanism, Wesley students, and Christendom in their debt: men like Bernard Manning, Newton Flew, Ernest Rattenbury, Frank and Eric Baker, Findlay, Linklater, Sangster, Samuel Chadwick, and perhaps half-a-dozen others; no more than twenty in all, strung out across the past seventy-five years.

These are all theologians of distinction; some of them are historians too, of high repute, and one or two of them connoisseurs and masters of classical literature who have attempted to rouse the world of Evangelical Arminians to the wealth of biblical insight and devotion, and the treasuretrove of scriptural teaching we have in the hymns of the people called Methodists.

The hymns of the Wesleys are like some large jewel being examined by a bunch of experts, each of which has his own angle of the treasure and is prepared to facet the gem with his own tool and according to his own light.

(1) There was Henry Bett, concerned to show the value of the hymns in terms of Hebrew and Greek Scriptures of Old Testament and New Testament, the Church Fathers, and the classical writers of medieval and Reformation times.¹

(2) There was Ernest Rattenbury whose interest was in terms of evangelical doctrine and Christian worship.²

(3) R. Newton Flew forsook his history of doctrine and New Testament theology for a little and concentrated on the delightful and subtle intricacies of the meters and structure of the hymns.³

(4) Dear old Luke Wiseman, himself a Methodist music man of no mean ability, has a passionate concern to rehabilitate the hymns of Charles in the heartland of evangelism from which less passionate and more prosaic people had exiled them.⁴

(5) George Findlay was a little bit like Jude, he set out to write about one facet of the hymns and ended up writing about another! But he did beautifully succeed in demonstrating that there is little of the modern whine about these hymns and much of the New Testament battle-cry! He yells vigorously "The Sword of the Lord and of Wesley!"⁵

(6) Frank Baker's mission more resembles that of an over-office man who knows his way and can explore the main streets and mind tracks of a crowded city or quiet field. In my books he is the master of them all, and, in terms of my original metaphor, he seems concerned not to ruin the gem by over-dividing.

But until now no scholar of comparable stature has arisen from within the holiness ranks to demonstrate so surely the Pentecostal motif in the hymns of the Wesley brothers.

Roy Nicholson might have done so: certainly he had no difficulty in demonstrating to this Society that Charles Wesley's hymns adequately expounded and expressed the doctrine and experience of perfect love.⁶ But he did so without regard to chronology or questions of authorship, and with examples drawn entirely from popular hymnals. But Dr. Smith has gone at least two steps farther:

(1) By observing carefully the chronology of the hymns he uses; and,

(2) By showing that the hymns relate entire sanctification to the Pentecostal baptism and not merely to the general area of Christian holiness.

The reason for this narrowing of the field of research is probably the debate, among specialists in doctrine, with reference to the question as to whether or not John Wesley related Pentecost and entire sanctification, a debate that to me seems merely academic, of small profit, and rather boring.

To come to grips meaningfully and not merely enjoyably with the Wesley hymns you must be a good reader. You must also have a sense of wonder at the grace and love of God. "One characteristic of the good reader is his capacity to enlarge his being by entering into the perspective of the poet. He is thus able to see with other eyes, imagine with other imaginations, to feel with other hearts as well as his own." And, account for it as you care, or may, or can; whether or not you like Charles Wesley, his hymns will leave you panting for spiritual breath. And this will be so whether you survey his work as to quality, quantity, variety, popularity, extent, or influence. It gives you a chin-dropping eye-popping sense of the Incredible. Incredible divine love and grace, with utterly incredible possibilities, communicated through an incredible poetical celebration of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," who, by His incredibly abundant mercy has begotten us again to a life of hope through the most incredible and astonishing of all the great incredibles, "the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"!

It was necessary to Dr. Smith's purpose, and it was characteristically smart of him, to limit this essay to what might be metaphorically described as a rockpool on the shoreline of Charles Wesley's Pacific of praise, prayer, and personal experience. For the four volumes of the Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley form a convenient and concise unit of research: they have a coherence and clear chronology and a historical context that gives them special claims to be studied in relation to the Pentecostal motif.

They were written and published during the years of "the inextinguishable blaze," when "a spark of grace had set the Kingdoms on a blaze." They were being circulated and sung at a time when the gales of God were blowing across the religious life of England with purging,

bracing, and re-energizing force; aerating religion, and bearing away from multitudes of lives lusts and unholy lifestyle like withered leaves of the fall. It was a great time for living and right thrillingly did Brother Charles celebrate it!

We simply must remember the Pentecostal thrill as well as the Pentecostal theology. What you have in Brother Charles is not only a biblical, evangelical, experiential and thoroughly trained and equipped theologian, but a man amazed! Here is no phlegmatic, inanimate Scottish professor picking his words with tweezers and gingerly placing them in the silver ornamental claws of fashionable speech; or tacking them down with definitive pins to systematic backgrounds, like beautiful but dead butterflies. You have a man amazed: a man with a dancing heart: you have that all too rare specimen-a theologian who thinks and prays and sings! And don't you forget it! For if you do you will be about one million and one miles from even beginning to understand Brother Charles.

This dimension of historical context and personal rapture is surely a real part of the chronology of the hymns.

I submit also that unless you bring to them a heart-hunger for holiness, or a soul soaked in "wonder, love, and praise," you are probably not yet where you can most adequately appreciate the Pentecostal hymns of Charles Wesley. For is it not manifestly plain that the spirit of Pentecost is the Spirit of astonishment even before He is the Spirit of power? Certainly it would seem so from the record of that "Bridal day of earth and sky" as Charles puts it, that "White" or "Whit" Sunday of the Church when a hundred and twenty persons assaulted heaven with songs and praises about "the wonderful works of God," and shocked the representatives of a dozen world areas into naked incredulity!

Charles Wesley's Pentecostal symbol is an exclamation mark! And in my opinion no wonderless soul need attempt to unlock the meaning and power of these Pentecostal hymns-for he alone who has an exclamation mark for a key will enter. The others will gather, not the song, but merely the syntax!

But Dr. Tim has shown clearly that the same

. . . care with words . . . not only made the two brothers fine poets but made them admirable biblical theologians as well. . . . The precision of their poetic expression of scriptural ideas grew out of their respect for both clear thinking and honest exegesis. . . . They wrote poems for joy, but not merely for fun; they intended by them to teach divinity, and so to enrich the vision of truth in which their people worshiped God. . . .⁷

In John's introduction to the hymns he is careful to remind us of this, and also of the fact that only a few of the hymns are of his composing; and they are few indeed if one omits the

translations. As he wrote in the famous Preface:

. . . As but a small part of these Hymns is of my own composing, I do not think it inconsistent with modesty to declare, that I am persuaded no such Hymn Book as this has yet been published in the English language. In what other publication of the kind have you so distinct and full an account of scriptural Christian-

ity? such a declaration of the heights and depths of religion, speculative and practical? . . . so clear directions for making our calling and election sure; for perfecting holiness in the fear of God?⁸

John Wesley confesses his conviction that Charles has a claim to recognition as an authoritative theologian of holiness.

This familiar but too frequently forgotten or distorted fact should be laid beside its bedfellow, i.e. that the four volumes used by Dr. Smith were issued over the signatures of both

brothers, thus showing the approval of both on the language employed to present the Baptism of the Spirit and heart purity.

In these four volumes there are no fewer than thirty expressions that describe the radical cleansing of the heart, many, if not most, in the figure of fire. In my opinion, Dr. Smith is absolutely correct when he says that:

. . . the expositions which grounded that promise [of sanctification] in the atonement, in full inward cleansing by the blood of Jesus, were more numerous. But they scarcely overshadowed the strong ones which declared that believers are perfected in love by being filled with the Holy Spirit, as the apostles were at Pentecost.⁹

He could have added that there are many more "strong ones" that combine the symbols:

Send us the Spirit of Thy Son
To make the depths of Godhead known,
To make us share the life divine;
Send Him the sprinkled blood t' apply,
Send Him our souls to sanctify,
And show, and seal us ever Thine.

In endeavoring to observe the chronology of the hymns, Dr. Smith has, in my opinion, given us a convincing approach to the hymns on Pentecost. Whether his findings would require modification or even alteration if he were to extend research into later years, especially those years when the brothers lovingly debated the nature of perfect love, would be another matter, but I think Dr. Smith has established his thesis that the Pentecostal baptism motif is in these early volumes synonymous with the purifying of the heart.

Another question that raises itself on one elbow is whether the poetical works of Charles, as edited or censored by John are admissible in the current, and to me profitless, debate. There are those scholars who will want to exclude any consideration of the hymns: some, I suspect, because Wesleyan hymnody is strange country to them; others will simply rule out poetry as a means of teaching theology, thus showing how unlike John they are.

Perhaps Dr. Smith would not care to be as adamant as W. E. Sangster and say:

. . . in their wholeness and as finally approved and published [the hymns] expressed the mind of John even more than the mind of Charles....¹⁰

But Dr. Smith may certainly be satisfied that the four early volumes express John's mind as assuredly as they express that of Charles. Too many so-called Wesleyan scholars know no more of Brother Charles than is contained in the ever-shrinking Wesley content of the average hymnal. But to know "Love Divine all loves excelling. . . ." and "O for a thousand tongues," and "O for a heart to praise my God....," while pleasant and better than ignorance, is not to know the sweep, the force, and the surging tides of biblical truth and Christian wonder in these hymns. And in any case, even these tops of the Christian pops are all too often misquoted and thus distorted, and otherwise mutilated by those infallible creatures-the editors of our hymnals!

Brother Charles needs, not a reference or two, a chapter or two, a paper or two with a response or two, nor even a volume or two; he needs a shelf of volumes. Apart from thousands of quotations, hints, allusion, etc. in scores of hymns not written expressly to expound Bible passages, there are five volumes devoted to poesyising select passages of Scripture. And there is a sixth volume, four-fifths of which is on select Psalms. Dr. Smith has done well, in the interests of chronology and the possible development of Charles Wesley's thought, to confine his work to the first four volumes of the Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley.

Frank Baker of Duke has clearly demonstrated that a true understanding of the message of Brother Charles requires that we scrutinize also his letters, his journal and the few sermons we know to be Charles's; nevertheless Dr. Smith has in my opinion established his proposition and done what he set out to do, namely, to show that in their published hymns the Wesleys have maintained a strong connection between the Pentecostal baptism and the thorough purging of the regenerate heart; that the hymns go on to rejoice in the tenancy of the pure heart by the Pentecostal Spirit of Christ.

Dr. Timothy has elsewhere declared John to be "the first genuinely Biblical theologian." He has been supported by Dr. Outler, who said of John "His chief intellectual interest, and achievement, was in what one could call 'a folk theology': the Christian message in its fullness and integrity, 'in plain words for plain people.'"¹¹

I have slightly less than no idea just how you are going to classify Charles: I have already quoted John's attempt, but in my opinion you have in Charles Wesley a close approximation to James Denney's ideal: "If evangelists were our theologians, and theologians our evangelists, we should be nearer the ideal."

Off the beaten track of Wesley studies there are many reminders of the importance of an understanding of Charles Wesley's hymns for an understanding of Wesleyan theology.

The distinguishing note (of Methodist worship) is that of the sheer joy of the believers who have been justified by their faith in Christ . . . they are "laeti triumphantes." The element of adoration and union with Christ in His triumph over sin, suffering, death, and the devil is provided in the praise. For this purpose Charles Wesley's hymns were superbly fitted. A religion of the heart could want no better media for its expression. . . . "¹²

Anyone who hopes to adequately understand and interpret Charles Wesley's hymns without himself being first of all

lost in wonder, love, and praise

would have as much success as he who would hold water in a sieve or fatten a greyhound.¹³ He will of course require a reasonable knowledge of Greek, a familiarity with English literature, and a good grounding in Wesleyan theology, but first of all he must be a man with a dancing heart.

Charles Wesley told Byron of Manchester that he, i.e. Charles, did not write for the critic but for the Christian, evoking the familiar retort:

When you tell me that you write not for the critic but for the Christian, it occurs to my mind that you might as well write for both, or in such a manner that the critic may by your writing be moved to turn Christian rather than the Christian turn critic.

That was a year before the conversion of Charles and two years previous to the publication of the first volume referred to by Dr. Smith. Twenty years later, John Wesley does a little bragging-of a sanctified nature of course-on the "unspeakable advantage" which the Methodist people enjoy:

I mean even with regard to public worship, particularly on the Lord's Day. The church where they assemble is not gay or splendid, which might be a hinderance on the one hand; nor sordid or dirty, which might give distaste on the other; but plain as well as clean. The persons who assemble there are not a gay, giddy crowd, who come chiefly to see and be seen, not a company of goodly, formal, outside Christians, whose religion lies in a dull round of duties; but a people most of whom do, and the rest earnestly seek to, worship God in spirit and in truth. . . .¹⁴

After describing the Methodist advantage in their form of public prayer, Wesley comes to the hymns his people sing:

When it is seasonable to sing praise to God, they do it with the spirit, and with the understanding also; not in the miserable, scandalous doggerel of Hopkins and Sternhold, but in psalms and hymns which are both sense and poetry; such as would sooner provoke a critic to turn Christian, than Christian to turn critic. What they sing is therefore a proper continuation of the spiritual and reasonable service; being selected for that end (not by a poor humdrum wretch who can scarce read what he drones out with such an air of importance, but) by one who knows what he is about, and how to connect the preceding with the following part of the service.¹⁵

And then this, for our music directors addicted to the disembowling and amputating habit:

Nor does he take just "two staves," but more or less, as may best raise the soul to God; especially when sung in well-composed and well-adapted tunes . . . by a whole serious congrega-

tion . . . all standing before God, and praising him lustily and with a good courage.¹⁶

My assessment must not be understood as a total acceptance of Dr. Smith's thesis, or at least his method. Some questions rattle about in my mind.

(1) While the chronological approach is undoubtedly necessary and realistic, it may also be somewhat ambiguous, especially when we deliberately limit the field. In my opinion, and despite the conclusions of Heitzenrater, the overwhelming bulk of the hymns are by Charles Wesley. Did Charles later modify his position? What effect on Dr. Smith's conclusion would result from a critical approach to the discussions of the brothers on perfect love?

(2) Ought we not to give more earnest heed to the immediate revival context of the hymns written between 1738-1748? And should we not also catch the spirit of revival prevalent 1739-1743?

(3) We do have many significant hymns written much later than the first four volumes, hymns that also seem to closely relate Pentecostal fire and power with the destruction of sin, heart purity, and perfect love.

(4) Do not most of the hymns used by Dr. Smith express desire rather than realization?

(5) Should not those hymns published by Charles, without the approval of John, also be studied? Is it perhaps too much to deduce John's doctrine from his use of the red, or even the blue, pencil?

(6) Do the letters that passed between the brothers, but especially Charles, and John Fletcher also beg to be entered as admissible arguments?

Nevertheless, my heart goes with Dr. Smith. I salute him, (although he will not be much enriched by my salute!) for blowing some fresh breath onto the embers of the holiness movement's interest in the Wesley hymns, and for the rather splendid contribution he has made and continues to make towards demonstrating the necessity and efficiency of the Wesley hymns in the expounding and communicating of the Wesleyan distinctive in its relation to Pentecost.

And we had better listen! For it remains as true as ever that the hymns our people sing will eventually turn out to be as important as the sermons they hear. It was so with the Reformers; it was also so with the revivalists, and it will be so with the modern holiness movement. All the "learned papers" ever read at the Wesleyan Theological Society will avail little if we teach our people to sing something different from the Wesley distinctive. Give the people junk to sing and you will

have religious junkies on your hands. "Let me make a nation's songs," growled Carlyle, and "I care not who makes its laws!"

"Be filled with the Spirit, singing-"wrote Paul; and again "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, singing-." If Dr. Smith can rouse the Holiness Movement, or at least make it knuckle its eyes, to see something of the wealth and weaponry lying so largely unused in this Wesleyan hymnody-he will have served his generation well. It was not his purpose to review the field of the theology of the Wesley hymns, but we thank him for the work he has done. Let us remember brethren, that for every person who reads a couple of Wesley sermons in a lifetime, there are thousands who sing one or two Wesley hymns every Lord's Day!

And I repeat, let us remember, that these Pentecostal hymns were written in Pentecostal language, by men who understood Pentecostal meanings, who were grasped by the Spirit who came at Pentecost, in the radiant and joyous spirit of Pentecostal men, commending and expounding Pentecost as they understood it. And the language of the hymns indicates that the baptism of Pentecost is a baptism of purging, purifying flame.

Dr. Smith's well-chosen examples were all written and published in the early stages of the Revival. I would submit an example from the later period:

Thou God, that answerest by fire,
On Thee in Jesus' name we call,
Fulfill our faithful heart's desire,
And let on us Thy Spirit fall:
Bound on that altar of Thy cross
Our old offending nature lies,
Now for the honour of Thy cause
Come. and consume the sacrifice.

Consume our lusts as rotten wood,
Consume our stony hearts within,
Consume the dust, the serpent's food,
And lick up all the streams of sin,
Its body totally destroy,
Thyself the Lord, the God approve,
And fill our hearts with holy joy
And fervent zeal, and perfect love!

O that the fire from heaven might fall
Our sins its ready victim find,
Seize on our sins, and burn up all
Nor leave the least remains behind!
Then shall our prostrate souls adore,
The Lord, He is the God, confess,
He is the God of saving power,
He is the God of hallowing grace!

Thus does the Eternal Spirit of Burning, who knows no limits of time or space, the God of fire in the bush that burned but was not consumed, the God of fire that consumes all He cannot look upon, the God of fire that purifies, enlarges, and enflames the surrendered heart, the God of Elijah and Carmel, of Peter and Pentecost, become the Spirit of purging, purifying flame in the Wesleys and in me!

With admiration and genuine appreciation to Dr. Smith for so beautifully and efficiently opening our eyes a little bit further to a much neglected aspect of the Wesleyan message of heart holiness, I close with my own favorite among the Pentecostal hymns of Charles Wesley:

O Thou who camest from above
The pure celestial fire to impart,
Kindle a flame of sacred love
On the mean altar of my heart;

There let it for Thy glory burn
With inextinguishable blaze,
And trembling to its source return
In humble prayer, and fervent praise.
Jesus confirm my heart's desire
To work, and speak, and think for Thee:
Still let me guard the holy fire,
And still stir up Thy gift in me:
Ready for all Thy perfect will,
My acts of faith and love repeat,
Till death Thy endless mercies seal,
And make my sacrifice complete.

And that was written as a comment, not on Luke 12:49, but on Leviticus 6:13! Let us one and all pray with Brother Charles:

Come, Thou Spirit of burning, come,
Comforter through Jesus given;
All my earthly dross consume
Fill my soul with love from Heaven!

For, indicating the reasons for the Pentecostal gift of the Holy Spirit, Charles Wesley wrote:-

To make an end of sin,
And Satan's works destroy,
He brings His Kingdom in,
Peace, righteousness, and joy:
The Holy Ghost to man is given:
Rejoice in God sent down from heaven.

The cleansing blood to apply,
The heavenly life display,
And wholly sanctify,
And seal us to that day.
The Holy Ghost to man is given,
Rejoice in God sent down from heaven!

Notes

1Henry Bett, *The Hymns of Methodism*, 3rd ed. (London: Epworth Press, 1945).

2Ernest Rattenbury, *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns* (London: Epworth, 1941). See also Rattenbury's other works.

3R. Newton Flew, *The Hymns of Charles Wesley* (London: Epworth Press, 1953).

4Frederick Luke Wiseman, *Charles Wesley: Evangelist and Poet* (London: Epworth Press, 1933; Charles Wesley and His Hymns, Bi-Centenary Manual No. 6 (London: 1909).

- 5George Findlay, *Christ's Standard Bearer* (London: Epworth Press, L 1956).
- 6Roy S. Nicholson, "The Holiness Emphasis in the Wesleys' Hymns," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 5(1970):49-61.
- 7Timothy L. Smith, "The Holy Spirit in the Hymns of the
Wesleys," *WTJ*,16:2 (Fall 1981), p.37.
- 8John Wesley, "Preface," *A Collection of Hymns, for the Use of the People Called Methodists* (1780), in *The Works of John Wesley*, 14 vols. (rep. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959),14:340-41.
- 9Smith, "The Holy Spirit in the Hymns," p. 28.
- 10W. E. Sangster, *Path to Perfection* (London: Epworth Press, 1935).
- 11Albert C. Outler, ed., *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. vii. 12Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England. Watts and Wesley to Maurice*, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford Press, 1961).
- 13Rattenbury, *The Euangelical Doctrines*.
- 14John Wesley, "A Letter to a Friend," *Works*, 13:216-17.
- 15Wesley, "A Letter to a Friend," p. 217.
- 16Wesley, "A Letter to a Friend," p. 217.

Other Sources

- Baker, Frank. *Charles Wesley as Revealed by His Letters*. London: Epworth Press, 1948.
- Slaate, Howard Alexander. *The Arminian Arm of Theology*. Washington: University Press of America, 1977.
- Wesley, Charles. *Representative Verse of Charles Wesley*. Edited with an Introduction by Frank Baker. (London: Epworth Press, 1962).

HOLINESS IN HEBREWS

WAYNE G. MCCOWN

It is commonly recognized that perfection has a prominent place in the Epistle to the Hebrews.¹ On the other hand, the role of sanctification (in relation to perfection) has received little attention. Moreover, what (brief and piecemeal) treatments may be found are quite unsatisfactory.² The doctrine may not have suffered too badly as a consequence, but the Epistle certainly has. Both will be well served by a specific study of holiness in Hebrews.

A Greek Word-Study:

The prominence of the subject in Hebrews is reflected in the frequent use of holiness terminology. Our English translations reflect that usage in four key words: sanctified, holy, mature, and perfect.³ Underlying these four, the Greek has but two roots: *hagios*, sanctified and/or holy; and *teleios*, mature and/or perfect. Moreover, these are used as fairly synonymous terms, as reflected in their occurrence side by side in Hebrews 10:14 and by the exchange of terms and tense in the parallel affirmation of 10:10.⁴

By one sacrifice he has perfected (perfect tense) those who are being sanctified (present participle).

By that sacrifice we have been sanctified (perfect participle + present tense).

Ultimately, then, we have to do with a single (but complex) subject. "There is an intimate relation between sanctification and the perfection to which it leads."⁵

1. Two nouns based on the root *hagios* are used in Hebrews. *Hagiotes* in Hebrews 12:10, is usually translated holiness. *Hagiasmos*, in Hebrews 12:14, is variously translated as holiness or sanctification.⁶ (In the Greek, these are not two concepts but one. It appears, in English, that the two are independent concepts. But they are not. Rather, holiness and sanctification are alternate translations, each of which expresses an aspect of the underlying Greek word.)

Each of these two noun forms is used appropriately.⁷ The first describes holiness as a quality. The second depicts holiness or sanctification as an

action or process. Both texts presume holiness as an essential attribute of God,⁸ in which Christians are to share. These two texts belong together, not only by reason of context but in terms of interpretation. Their consonance and connection is indicated by F. F. Bruce, in his commentary on Hebrews 12:14:

"The sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord" is . . . no optional extra in the Christian life but something which belongs to its essence. It is the pure in heart, and none but they, who shall see God (Matt. 5:8). Here, as in verse 10, it is practical holiness of life that is meant. . . . Those who are called to be partakers in God's holiness must be holy themselves . . . , the beatific vision is reserved for those who are holy in heart and life.⁹

2. The adjective *hagios* (sanctified and/or holy) occurs 17 times in Hebrews. It has a threefold application, in reference to the divine Spirit, the sanctuary (or tabernacle), and the saints of God. All are designated as sanctified and/or holy by reason of their special identification and association with God.

Like the rest of the New Testament, Hebrews customarily describes God's Spirit as the Holy Spirit.¹⁰ This qualifier is frequently used in the Scriptures and represents an important attribute of the divine Spirit.¹¹ As J. B. Phillips says, in his paraphrase of I Thessalonians 4:8: "It is not for nothing that the Spirit God gives us is called the Holy Spirit."

The sanctuary (or tabernacle) also is described as sanctified and/or holy-in a peculiar sense. For sanctuary, in Greek, is simply *hagios* in neuter form: i.e., the "holy (thing)." Moreover, the Greek text reflects the various degrees of holiness associated with the different parts of the tabernacle, as evidenced in Hebrews 9:1-3. The tabernacle generally, including the courtyard, is referred to in the singular as the "sanctuary."¹² The plural form of the word is used in reference to the "holy place,"¹³ and two plural words are used to describe the "holy of holies."¹⁴ Thus, while the whole area is specially consecrated unto God and therefore holy, there is an exponential increase in holiness beyond that (almost bursting the limits of grammar), as one approaches and enters into the presence of God.

Finally, the people of God are described as sanctified and/or holy, i.e. saints. This usage, again, is not peculiar to Hebrews; it is common throughout the New Testament.¹⁵ Hebrews 3:1 qualifies the appellation, and helps us to understand who is included: "brothers in the family of God, who share in a heavenly calling" (NEB).¹⁶ The author is addressing the whole Christian community. Everyone who has responded to the call of the gospel, and is committed to following Christ, is included.¹⁷ This designation of all believers as "saints" highlights the calling and grace of God in Christian experience,¹⁸ the Christian community as God's peculiar possession,¹⁹ and the consecration of God's people in obedience and faithfulness to His Word.²⁰

3. The verb *hagiazō*, usually translated to "sanctify," is a derivative from the root *hagios*.²¹ To sanctify essentially means to make holy. And that is the sense in which this verb is always used in Hebrews. In fact, the New International Version translates it to "make holy" in five of seven

occurrences.²² "In each case moral renewal, ethical righteousness and cleansing from sin is implicit."²³

This verb is used in Hebrews primarily to describe the purpose and efficacy of Christ's death.²⁴ "Christ's atoning sacrifice is very clearly depicted as a means of sanctification in Hebrews. . . . He achieves sanctification for the sanctified by his offering (10:10, 14)."²⁵ Jesus suffered "to make the people holy through his own blood" (Heb. 13:12). "We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ" (Heb. 10:10), "because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy" (Heb. 10:14). "Not only is the guilt of sin removed by the sacrifice of the Cross, but everything is given in the perfection of that act to bring believers in Christ to their promised goal."²⁶

In Hebrews, the verb to sanctify and/or make holy is closely associated with forgiveness, cleansing, and purification.²⁷ While the contexts in which these terms are employed is frequently cultic and symbolic, these cultic symbols point to the realities of personal spiritual experience. Hebrews 9:13-14 illustrates the author's use and conception:

The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

"The emphasis is on the one final and adequate offering of Christ, its availability to those sanctified and its sufficiency for their perfection."²⁸ The sanctifying death of Christ is an act of grace. Its efficacy has no parallel, as a cleansing and enabling spiritual experience.

It is an inward and spiritual purification that is required if heart-communion with God is to be enjoyed . . . [there] are those practices and attitudes which belong to the way of death, which pollute the soul and erect a barrier between it and God. But their pollution is removed from the conscience by the work of Christ, so that men and women, emancipated from inward bondage, can worship God in spirit and in truth. This is the "perfection" which the ancient ceremonial was unable to achieve.²⁹

By appropriation of this gracious provision, we are enabled, authorized, and exhorted to enter into God's presence, as worshipers. "Therefore brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus . . . let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts cleansed from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:19-22).

While the balance of emphasis in this Epistle falls on the side of inward holiness, the last phrase of Hebrews 10:22 also specifies outward holiness. Not only is a clean heart required, but a pure body.³⁰ Accordingly, in Hebrews 13:4, the author exhorts the Christian community: "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge

the adulterer and all the sexually immoral." I Thessalonians 4:3-7 constitutes an excellent commentary on this subject.³¹

It is God's will that you should be holy; that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

It is God's will that we be holy in heart and life. And He has made provision for our sanctification, in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her," we read in Ephesians 5:25-27, "to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless."

4. The verb *teleioo*, usually translated "to perfect,"³² occurs nine times in Hebrews, more than in any other book of the Bible. ³³ In addition, the adjective and three related nouns appear five times and are translated in a similar fashion in all but one text (i.e., Heb. 5:14).³⁴ Obviously, perfection was a concept with which the author felt comfortable, even if we are not.

In the majority of instances, the term is used to describe the efficacy of the new covenant by comparison with the old.³⁵ For example, while it is affirmed that the Law "can never by the same sacrifices year after year . . . make perfect those who draw near" (Heb. 10:1), Jesus Christ "by one offering . . . has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14).

The Law could not perfect the worshiper's conscience. Indeed, "the law made nothing perfect" (Heb. 7:19). It appointed as priests men who were subject to weakness and sinners themselves (Heb. 5:2-3). Thus, perfection was not possible through the Levitical priesthood: "If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come—one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron?" (Heb. 7:11). God has now ordained as our priest His Son "made perfect forever" (Heb. 7:28).

The surprising element is the declaration that Jesus had to be "made perfect."³⁶ "It was not Christ's moral character or relationship with the Father that needed perfecting."³⁷ As God's Son, He was sinless and holy with a "perfect heart" like Noah, Abraham and Job.³⁸ It is affirmed of Him, that He "has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin" (Heb. 4:15). So the reference is not to some imperfection of moral character which had to be remedied. Rather, God's Son had to be "made perfect" as the Pioneer of our salvation. To qualify, it was "necessary for Him as the Son of Man to offer up to God the sacrifice of a perfect humanity."³⁹ Having "entered into our conditions of life, the way to glory for him lay through sufferings, death and resurrection."⁴⁰ In order to serve as a merciful and compassionate high priest, making intercession for us before God, He had to become like us, to experience our state of dependence, our temptations, our sufferings, and our fear of death.

R. Newton Flew deduces the following lessons for us: "The meaning of the humanity of our Lord for the author's doctrine of perfection is, first that the perfection must be wrought out by struggle in the time process, second, that His achievement in the time process carries with it the promise of our own."⁴¹ "[Christian] perfection rests upon the perfect life and perfect achievement of Jesus Christ."⁴² Similarly, B. F. Westcott finds "three distinct applications" in reference to the Person and work of Christ: (1) Jesus was "made perfect" in His humanity (Heb. 2:11; 5:9; 7:28); (2) Jesus' perfection "through suffering" is the ground of His sympathy as our high priest and intercessor (Heb. 2:17-18; 4:15); (3) Jesus perfects us "through fellowship with Himself" (Heb. 10:14; 11:39-40; 12:23).⁴³

5. The sense of fulfillment or completion is always present in the concept of perfection as found in Hebrews. "*Teleios* and *teleioo*, the main forms for 'perfect' and 'to perfect' respectively, come from the root *telos* which means end or goal. This meaning lies behind virtually all usages of the terms in this family."⁴⁴

In the familiar words of Hebrews 12:2, Jesus is affirmed to be not only the Pioneer, but also the Perfecter of our faith. This appellation is attached to a metaphor which describes the Christian life as a race to be run with perseverance. The author appeals to the example of Jesus, who endured/ persevered and is now "sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." That is to say, He has already finished the race and entered into God's presence as our Forerunner.⁴⁵ Note, in this connection: "There cannot be a great distance separating the Forerunner and those who follow, otherwise He would not be our precursor. The Forerunner and those who follow are a company: both are set out on the same course He opens up the way and they follow."⁴⁶

Thus, a perfection not attainable previously has been inaugurated through the Person and work of Christ. The repeated sacrifices decreed by the Law have reached their end in the one sacrifice offered by Christ.⁴⁷ The Levitical priesthood has been superseded by a superior one.⁴⁸ And our high priest has entered "a greater and more perfect tabernacle,"⁴⁹ for He has passed through the heavens and entered the very presence of God.⁵⁰ Jesus Christ is the consummation of the Law and the prophets,⁵¹ the Levitical priesthood and the sacrificial system.⁵² "God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect" (Heb. 11:40).

6. As noted above, in Hebrews 5:14, the adjective *teleios* is usually translated "mature" rather than "perfect." Rightly so, for the context draws a contrast between babes and "them that are of full age" (KJV). The author chides his readers for not showing the growth and maturity which might naturally be expected. He describes as mature one who has a knowledge of God's word and a developed capacity for moral discernment.⁵³

It is this stage of growth which the author has in view when, in Hebrews 6:1, he exhorts his readers, "Let us go on to maturity (or, perfection)." This goal is in view: the knowing and doing of God's will. For this author, that is the mark of the mature Christian; that is the meaning of Christian perfection. "His last prayer is for their perfection-that God may furnish them with everything for doing His will and may create in their lives through Jesus Christ what is well-pleasing in His sight (xiii. 21)."⁵⁴

The Gospel of Rest:

The terminology of sanctification and perfection occupies a prominent place in Hebrews. But it does not occur at all in chapters 3-4. Nonetheless that passage is probably the most favored by holiness preachers. Why?

The use of Hebrews 3-4 as a holiness text is generally based on an allegorical interpretation of the passage. That is not to say this text is especially singled out for such treatment. The allegory itself is a common one in holiness circles. Its basis is a presumed analogy between Israel's experience as a nation and each Christian's spiritual pilgrimage.⁵⁵ Israel was first delivered from bondage, and only after a period of wandering in the wilderness entered into the Promised Land victorious over her enemies. Normal Christian experience follows a similar pattern. In the first work of grace, God grants deliverance from the bondage of sin. Customarily by, there follows a period of struggle, characterized by ups and downs, and wandering in relation to God's perfect will. But the Christian is exhorted to move beyond that stage, to victory over inbred sin. Thus, beyond the state of inner turmoil, he/she is promised spiritual rest, as a second work of grace.

There is none of this, as such, in Hebrews 3-4. But, since the passage is based on an Old Testament text describing Israel's experience in the wilderness, the customary allegory with Christian experience is presumed.

1. It is to be noted that Hebrews 3-4 constitute a sermon on the text of Psalm 95:7-11.⁵⁶ This text is quoted in full, at the top of the sermon, in Hebrews 3:7-11. Moreover, it is referred to again and again throughout the passage.⁵⁷ Five times the word "Today" resounds in these chapters, like a peal from the text of Psalm 95:7. Indeed, these two chapters in Hebrews are structured around this Old Testament text, its interpretation and application.

Three questions of interpretation (implicit within the Psalm itself) are discussed by the author: (1) Who is the audience described in Scripture? (2) What is this "rest" promised by God? (3) What is the day to which the psalmist refers?

In Hebrews 3:16-19, a series of questions about the original audience are considered, and a characterization drawn. Who heard God's voice and rebelled? They were those whom Moses led out of Egypt. With whom was God angry for forty years? It was with those who sinned against Him and died in the wilderness. To whom did God swear they would never enter His rest? It was to those who disobeyed; they did not enter because of unbelief.

What is this "rest" spoken of in the psalm? It is a divine promise which still stands.⁵⁸ The original audience to whom the promise was offered did not enter, because of unbelief and disobedience.⁵⁹ So, the preacher concludes, the promise continues unfulfilled: it still remains for some to enter.⁶⁰ Moreover, this rest is a rest like God's; indeed, it is an entrance into God's rest.⁶¹

What is the day to which the psalmist refers?⁶² Obviously, it is a day subsequent to the original promise. That is to say, Joshua's entry into the Promised Land did not constitute its fulfillment. For sometime later, the promise is reaffirmed through David. Moreover, the "Today" announced in Scripture is a divinely appointed day of rest. It is identified with the seventh day of creation, when God rested from all His labors. And It is called a sabbath for the people of God, a day of rest from all labors.⁶³

2. In his interpretation of Psalm 95, the author keys on the concept of rest, which he interprets as three-dimensional: physical, spiritual, and heavenly. The preacher acknowledges the realization of physical rest as a possible interpretation, in his allusion to Joshua in Hebrews 4:8. It is true that "rest" is used to describe Canaan as the Promised Land of settled peace.⁶⁴ But, clearly, that experience/dimension of rest did not constitute a realization of the full intent of the divine promise. For the psalmist (who is identified as David) addresses the divine promise to a people already in possession of the Promised Land. So an allegorization of that dimension of the promise falls short of the vision of Hebrews 3-4. Psalm 95 (verses 1-7a), frequently used as a call to worship, summons God's people into His presence. Similarly, the preacher invites his readers into the presence of God. His final word in this passage is an exhortation which coincides with the psalmist's appeal: "Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). Drawing near to God in worship constitutes, as it were, a spiritual entrance into the heavenly sanctuary. "The man who has believed in Christ Jesus has entered into his rest the state of happiness which he has provided, and which is the forerunner of eternal glory."⁶⁵

But the author, who is a Christian believer, also views the divine promise from the perspective of its fulfillment in Christ. Jesus has already finished His earthly labors and entered into heaven, the place of God's abode.⁶⁶ And, we, too, are partakers of a heavenly calling,⁶⁷ having our eyes fixed on Jesus, who is our Forerunner.⁶⁸ Ultimately, the promise will be fully realized only when that final "Today" is called,⁶⁹ and we too enter our heavenly abode.⁷⁰

The entrance into God's eternal rest, however, lies open only to those who believe.⁷¹ "The chief concern of the writer is to show (1) that this rest is available by faith, (2) that it will be missed unless there is faith, and (3) that it is presently available by faith."⁷² Thus, we are called upon, here and now, to spiritual diligence and persevering faith. "Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest," the preacher exhorts (Heb. 4:14). We are partakers of Christ, only if we hold onto our confidence until the end.⁷³ The Christian life is a lifelong pilgrimage of faith.⁷⁴

3. The wilderness generation is presented as a type, or exemplar.⁷⁵ Israel's fate stands as a warning: Do not take this course. All three hortatory statements in this sermon strike the note of anxious concern, "lest anyone fall by following the same example of disobedience" (Heb. 4:11, NASB).⁷⁶ Taken as a whole in the context of Hebrews, the sermon stands as a stern admonishment against apostasy.

It is closely related in thought to 5:11-6:12 where spiritual immaturity is denounced, and the readers are exhorted with great earnestness to "press on unto perfection." Likewise in this segment of the letter the danger of arrested progress is emphasized by the historic precedent of the Israelites en route from Egypt to Canaan. Their tragic example is constantly kept before the readers as a challenge and warning. . . .⁷⁷

Other parallel passages include Hebrews 2:1-4; 10:19-39; and 12:1-29.78

What was the Israelites' problem? They hardened their hearts (in rebellion against God). "Their hearts," the Lord said of them, "are always going astray, and they have not known my ways" (Heb. 3:8-10). Similarly, the author forewarns his Christian audience, "that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God . . . so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness" (Heb. 3:12-13).

The antidote to this problem, obviously, is a cleansed heart, by which we may draw near to God "in full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10:22). Note that one of the special provisions of the new covenant is evoked at this point: "The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this⁷⁹. . . This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds" (Heb. 10:15-16)⁸⁰ The provisions of that promised covenant have been enacted through the death of Jesus Christ. By His sacrifice offered once-for-all, our sins are forgiven and our hearts may be cleansed "from a guilty conscience" (Heb. 10:22; cf. 10:1-2). By that offering, we are "made holy" (Heb. 10:10, 14), cleansed "so that we may serve the living God" (Heb. 9:14). Thus, sanctification of the heart provides the remedy to the spiritual condition exemplified by the wilderness generation, and endangering the Christian community addressed by Hebrews.

The Epistle as a whole aims for the reactivation of faith in Christ, spiritual vitality, and progress forward. The author takes a serious view of the spiritual condition of his friends and readers. Despite their good beginnings, they now stand in danger of drifting away from the way of salvation, to their ruin and utter loss. They have grown disheartened and discouraged, in the persistence of persecution, the length of the way, and their familiarity with the Word. A tendency now exists (especially on the part of "some") to slackness, doubt, even apostasy.⁸¹ They need to examine their hearts, lest they fall prey to unbelief and sin. They need to draw closer to God, and receive of His grace. They need to press on and enter into the fullness of what God has promised His people.

A choice is presented: "*pistis* (faith) or *hamartia* (sin)-i.e., obedient pursuit of the promise in pilgrimage with God's people, or disobedience to the promise, and thus a falling away from it, the pilgrimage, and God's people."⁸² The wilderness generation offers an example of disobedience; shrinking back, they lost out on the promise. But that did not obviate God's Word: "the promise . . . still stands" (Heb. 4:1)!

The preacher points out that we too have received the Word of the gospel, and the promise of entering God's rest (physical, spiritual, and heavenly). But it will do us no good, as was true in Israel's case, unless in hearing we "combine it with faith" (Heb. 4:2, RSV).⁸³ What is required is not only an affirmative response to the divine Word of promise, but tenacious perseverance on the way entered.⁸⁴ Shrinking back is tantamount to sin, and leads to apostasy from God.⁸⁵ Daily, we must say "yes" to God.

Moreover, we are to exercise care and concern for one another. As a holy community, we are to "take care lest anyone" should have an evil, unbelieving, hardened heart (Heb. 3:13, NASB). We are to be careful lest anyone seem to be falling short of entering God's rest (Heb. 4:1). Special attention is to be given to those who fall behind. Four times in this passage

alone the author expresses his concern for an indefinite but all-important "anyone" (or, "someone" within the congregation).⁸⁶ Ultimately, Hebrews 3-4 aims for reflexive incitation within the Christian community. We are directed to exhort and encourage one another on a regular, daily basis.⁸⁷ We are charged especially with the responsibility of oversight for those who are in danger of collapsing or relapsing.⁸⁸

That is the essential message, which we frequently miss because of our preoccupation with something else. But that is to miss an important component in the doctrine of holiness. Why allegorize the Word to teach something else?

The allegorical approach is not necessary and does an injustice both to the text of Hebrews and the doctrine of sanctification. The rest described in Hebrews 3-4 is not itself the experience of sanctification as a second work of grace.⁸⁹ Rather, rest is portrayed more comprehensively as an entrance into God's presence, for which sanctification of heart and life is the necessary condition or prerequisite. The believer experiences only a measure of rest here and now (in the spiritual dimension), as a foretaste of the heavenly blessings of the age to come.⁹⁰ The teaching of these two chapters is consistent with the larger theology of holiness in Hebrews.

Some Great Holiness Texts:

The Epistle to the Hebrews contains some great holiness texts, which bear plainly and directly on the subject of Christian sanctification and/or perfection. The three most prominent texts have been selected for our consideration here, and will be presented in the order of their appearance in the Epistle.

1. Hebrews 6:1,⁹¹ "Let us bear on towards perfection."⁹² As noted previously, most modern versions translate the noun *teleiotes* here as "maturity" rather than "perfection." The King James Version, of course, does not: Surprisingly, it never uses the terms mature or maturity.⁹³ This may account, in part, for the lack of attention to that aspect of holiness by some of our spiritual progenitors. But now we may be in danger of having gone to the other extreme, in our eagerness to avoid the word perfection.

Admittedly, maturity is the dominant idea in context. The exhortation of Hebrews 6:1 answers to the diagnosed need in the preceding paragraph.⁹⁴ But, in the Greek language, maturity and perfection are not two distinct realities. (Of course, they are distinguished in English, and frequently developed as independent concepts. However, they are but alternative translations of one and the same word in Greek.) Thus, to speak of Christian perfection here is to describe the realization of Christian maturity. And to point to maturity as requisite in Christian experience is to posit perfection as the goal of the Christian life.

It also should be noted that the noun used here is generally understood to refer to perfection in Colossians 3:14, the only other occurrence in the New Testament. There love is described as "the bond of perfection" (KJV), or "the perfect bond of unity" (NIV, NASB).

The exhortation of Hebrews 6:1 has a parallel (more evident in Greek than English) in Hebrews 6:11, where the author expresses his concern for the readers: "We earnestly desire each of you to show diligence with respect to the full-bearing of the hope, until the end."⁹⁵ (The word translated "end,"

telos, represents the Greek root from which we derive maturity/ perfection.⁹⁶) This is the most direct statement of any in the Epistle respecting the author's intense and personal wish for each of his readers. Although he chides them for their lack of growth,⁹⁷ he is persuaded of their salvation, on the evidence of their ministry within the Christian community.⁹⁸ But he earnestly desires that they should move forward (lest they go backward),⁹⁹ and give evidence of zeal with respect to "the full assurance of hope."¹⁰⁰ Later in the same context, that hope is linked to an entrance into the inner shrine of God's presence.¹⁰¹

Thus, the author thinks of Christian maturity and/or perfection in a comprehensive manner, as the full realization of Christian hope. But he also believes there are evidences of progress along the way.

In Hebrews 5:11-14, he charges his readers with backwardness, pointing to their lassitude and consequent immaturity. By now they should be teachers of God's Word, in view of the lapse of time since their beginning in Christianity. But instead, there has set in a mood of self-complacency and lethargy. Consequently, they are still lacking in both knowledge and discernment. So their situation is likened to that of beginning pupils or even nursing infants. Concern that they still stand too near the beginning, and in fact may be tending toward retrogression, provokes the strong warning of Hebrews 6:1-8. The appeal, an urgent one, is for progress forward. The outrageous nature of relapse and the impossibility of re-entering the Christian life are portrayed vividly and sternly. The author does not intend to acquiesce in the weaknesses of his audience. They certainly should not require instruction again on the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. It is high time to move on from the beginning of the Christian life towards maturity.

It is assumed that no other alternative but advance is open to the author, nor to his audience. The possibility even exists that this door has closed for them in their lassitude. The warning is stern, and startling.¹⁰² Because of their dullness of hearing, clarion tones are needed to arouse his readers. The author has observed their spiritual lethargy, their indifference towards further progress, and by strong words he urges them to face the possible outcome of their "drift."¹⁰³ Consistent with his theology of the Christian life, he declares: You cannot simply stay where you are. The Christian life is a pilgrimage of faith, a race in which if you are not moving forward, you will fall behind and eventually lose out altogether. "In short, spiritual advance is imperative. The best safeguard against a retreat is an advance, since a static status quo is impossible in Christian living."¹⁰⁴

Thus, he exhorts his readers not to be "sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Hebrews 6:12, NASB). Abraham is a case in point: he exemplifies the certainty of a hope which rests on God's promise, and the requisite forward-looking patience in awaiting its fulfillment.¹⁰⁵

These are the attributes associated with Christian maturity and/or perfection. Maturity is not depicted as a state of being, but as a stage of growth. Perfection is not described, in this context, as a "second crisis" per se, ¹⁰⁶ but as a goal to be pursued.¹⁰⁷

2. Hebrews 10:14. "By one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy" (NIV). This text declares the efficacy of Christ's

sacrifice for the complete salvation of man. Through His death, as John Wesley says, He "has done all that was needful in order to their full reconciliation with God.¹⁰⁸ Adam Clarke interprets the verb "perfect" here as synonymous with God's promise to "forgive their sins. " Christ, he declares, "has procured remission of sins and holiness."¹⁰⁹

Christ's sacrifice is distinguished from the earlier sacrifices of the Levitical order, in several respects: (1) It represented the death not of bulls and goats, but of a perfect human life.¹¹⁰ (2) It fulfilled God's desire for a sacrifice of perfect obedience to His will.¹¹¹ (3) It inaugurated a new covenant between God and His people, founded on better promises.¹¹²

In offering Himself, Jesus offered a perfect sacrifice.¹¹³ Thus, there is no need for repeated and continuing sacrifices.¹¹⁴ His sacrifice atones for all sin for all time.¹¹⁵ Its validity is eternal in character.¹¹⁶ Moreover, it is efficacious to deal with the sin question once and for all.¹¹⁷ It provides not merely for ceremonial or symbolic cleansing, but deals with the issues of the inner conscience.¹¹⁸

In the words of F. F. Bruce, "Three outstanding effects are thus ascribed to the sacrifice of Christ: by it His people have had their conscience cleansed from guilt; by it they have been fitted to approach God as accepted worshipers; by it they have experienced the fulfillment of what was promised in earlier days, being brought into that perfect relation to God which is involved in the new covenant."¹¹⁹

The special feature of the new covenant highlighted by Hebrews is the forgiveness of sins.¹²⁰ This experience the author interprets in the most profound manner, as touching the very conscience and consciousness of man.¹²¹ The sacrifices offered under the Law, of course, could never wash away the inward stain of sin on the human soul.¹²² They were not able to "clear the conscience of the worshiper" (Heb. 9:9) ¹²³ The guilt of sin remained. The blood of animals sprinkled on these ceremonially unclean, the author states "sanctify them so they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, he goes on to assert, "will the blood of Christ . . . cleanse our consciences" (Heb. 9:13-14).

Those who are sanctified are those whose sins have been forgiven and whose hearts have been cleansed. The blood of Christ avails for our cleansing from a guilty conscience, so that we may draw near to God "with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10:22).

To be made holy is to be made perfect. This is declared, in Hebrews 10:10 and 10:14, to be both an accomplished fact and a fact presently being realized.¹²⁴ It has been accomplished "through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10). By His death, Jesus has made provision for our sanctification. That sacrifice is an event accomplished once for all time, and will not be repeated. It was offered on our behalf, to deal with the problem of sin in its most profound dimensions.¹²⁵

On the other hand, by that one sacrifice, He has made perfect forever "those who are being made holy" (Heb. 10:14). This text speaks of the present appropriation and realization of sanctification in the lives of God's people, and implicates the need for cooperation on our part.¹²⁶ It comes at the end of a statement which affirms how Christ completed His task in obedience to God's will.¹²⁷ Immediately following, the author states, "The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this" (Heb. 10:15). The next paragraph

inaugurates the major exhortatory section of the Epistle, which addresses the issues of living the Christian life and what God expects of us.¹²⁸

3 . Hebrews 12:14, " Pursue after . . . the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord" (NASB). As noted earlier, sanctification is no optional extra in the Christian life, but something essential. It is to be both experienced and evidenced here and now. As the Apostle Paul declared, in addressing the practical issues of living the Christian life in the midst of a pagan society: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification...." (I Thess. 4:3). Only the pure in heart shall see God.¹²⁹

Moreover, in Hebrews 12:14, sanctification and/or holiness is depicted as the Christian's ongoing pursuit in life. The imperative form of the verb used here has its parallels in the writings of Paul. Consider, by way of example, the following: (1) I Corinthians 14:1, "Follow the way of love," or as the Berkeley Version renders the phrase, "Make love your great quest"; (2) I Thessalonians 5:15, "Always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men" (NASB); (3) I Timothy 6:11 and 2 Timothy 2:22, "Pursue righteousness. . .

The translations of the verb in Hebrews 12:14 are varied: "Follow" (KJV); "pursue" (NASB); "strive for" (RSV); "make every effort" (NIV); "seek eagerly for" (MLB); "aim at" (NEB). Whatever the preferred rendition, there are two notions implicit in this exhortation: goal (or, aim) and effort (or, diligence). Our own paraphrase, added to the list, would read: "Make holiness your great quest in life."¹³⁰

This imperative is in the present tense, implicating an ongoing endeavor.¹³¹ An experience, instantaneously realized, is not in view here.¹³² This becomes evident when we consider the other object of the verb alongside sanctification and/or holiness: "Pursue peace with all men and holiness. . . ." ¹³³ Certainly, we perceive the pursuit of peaceful relations with one another and with others outside the Christian community as a life-long quest. It is not expected that we should fulfill that command in an instant or in a single encounter.

Calvin comments, "Unless we follow peace energetically we shall never hold on to it, for many things happen every day which give rise to discords. This is the reason why the apostle bids us follow peace, as though he were saying that it is not to be cultivated now and again when it is convenient for us, but it is to be striven for with the utmost zeal so that it is kept among us."¹³⁴ The same may be said for the pursuit of holiness. To paraphrase: Unless we follow holiness energetically we shall never hold on to it, for many things happen every day which give rise to temptation. This is the reason why the apostle bids us follow holiness, as though he were saying that it is not to be cultivated now and again when it is convenient for us, but it is to be striven for with the utmost zeal so that it is kept among us.¹³⁵

The essential point for us to understand is this: The exhortation, "Pursue sanctification," is not exhausted in a particular work of grace. There may be (and are) distinct crises in Christian experience, or stages of growth in holiness. But the imperative . . . still applies! Having experienced the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit (in the experience of the cleansing of heart, mind, and conscience), the believer is then challenged to lead an honorable life void of offense before God and man,¹³⁶ to purify oneself even as Christ is pure,¹³⁷ to press on towards the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus.¹³⁸

Finally, it should be observed that holiness, in this context, has social as well as personal dimensions.¹³⁹ The author, in the preceding paragraph, has spoken of holiness in relation to the personal experience of discipline at the hand of God.¹⁴⁰ But he follows with an address describing our responsibility for others in the community who give evidence of falling short of God's grace.¹⁴¹ Concern and correction are important at this point, because the health of the community is at stake.¹⁴² One immoral (profane) or godless (irreverent) person can "cause trouble and defile many" (Heb. 12:15).¹⁴³ Since, "without holiness no one shall see the Lord," this is a matter not to be taken lightly. "Let us make no mistake about it: our final salvation hinges on holiness."¹⁴⁴

Hebrews does not offer us a systematic treatment of the doctrine of holiness. But it does offer us a number of important materials on the subject, and some profound insights. Unfortunately, we have frequently done injustice both to the Epistle and to the doctrine by forcing the data, to suit our own particular scheme. That is not necessary, nor is it good. Hebrews is a thoughtful and profound epistle, which can stand the test of close, critical scrutiny. And the doctrine of holiness is so prominent in the Epistle, that it can be neither ignored nor eschewed.

Notes

¹See esp. C. Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux* (Paris: Librairie

Lecoffre, 1953), 2:224: "One may say that the leading ideas of the Epistle to the Hebrews are evoked within that of 'perfection'; George Allen Turner, *The More Excellent Way* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Light and Life Press, 1952), p. 112: "The whole epistle is an exhortation to 'go on to maturity' or perfection"; Hugh Montefiore, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (NY: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 104: "His call to Christian maturity and perfection, grounded in the perfection of Christ, is the major ethical theme of the Epistle."

²E.g. Donald S. Metz, *Studies in Biblical Holiness* (Kansas City, Mo: Beacon Hill Press, 1971), pp. 135-141; a notable exception is George Allen Turner, *The New and Living Way* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1975), pp. 204-218.

³Merely adjectival forms have been cited; cognate noun and verb forms are also used. Two additional terms (occurring less frequently) contribute to the conception of perfection: *amemptos* (Heb. 8:7) and its cognate *amomos* (Heb. 9:14) have the meaning "blameless"; and KJV renders the verb *katartizo* (in Heb. 13:21) to "perfect," although the modern versions translate it to "equip" (RSV, NASB, NIV). See Turner, *New and Living Way*, pp. 206-207. Other relevant soteriological terminology also is used: see Wayne McCown, "Such a Great Salvation," *An Inquiry into Soteriology from a Biblical Theological Perspective*, eds. John E. Hartley and R. Larry Shelton (Anderson, Indiana: Warner Press, 1981), p. 170.

⁴See Marcus Dods, "The Epistle to the Hebrews," *The Expositor's Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1961), 4:344.

5Turner, *New and Living Way*, p. 211.

6Cf. RSV: "Strive for . . . the holiness without which no one will see the Lord"; NASB: "Pursue after . . . the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord."

7See J. Harold Greenlee, *A Concise Exegetical Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 3rd ed., rev. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1963), p. 19.

8Note TDNT, 1:100: "[holiness] contains the innermost description of God's nature."

9F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964), pp. 364-65. Cf. Otto Michel, *Die Brief an die Hebraer* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), p. 451.

10Hebrews 2:4; 3:7; 6:4; 9:8; 10:15. The Holy Spirit is also described in Hebrews as the "eternal Spirit" (9:14), and the "Spirit of grace" (10:29).

11See R. A. Torrey, *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: 1968), pp.56-59; John Owen, *The Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1971), pp. 55-58.

12 Hebrews 9:1, to *hagion*.

13Hebrews 9:2, *hagia* (literally, "holies," or "holy [things]"); cf. 8:2; 9:8, 12, 24, 25; 10:19; 13:11.

14Hebrews 9:3, *hagia hagion* (literally, "holies of holies").

15There are more than 60 occurrences; see elsewhere in Hebrews 6:10; 13:24.

16Except as noted otherwise, &riptide quotations are from the NIV.

17Jean Hering, *L'Épître aux Hébreux* (Paris: Delachaux & Niestle, 1954), p.38. Cf. Turner, *New and Living Way*, p. 70: "It designates all those who are 'in Christ' and not necessarily those possessing special sanctity. In other words, any true Christian is a 'saint,' a 'holy one' in the New Testament sense."

18TDNT,1:107: "For it is not by nature but by divine calling that Christians are *hagioi*. . . ."

19Cf. I Peter 1:9, "You are a chosen people, . . . a holy nation, a people belonging to God. . . ."

20Ernst Kasemann, *Das wandernde Gottesvolk*, 2d ed. (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1957), p. 6.

21TDNT, 1:111.

22Hebrews 2:11 (twice); 10:10, 14; 13:12. In Hebrews 9:13; 10:29 it is translated as "sanctify."

23Turner, *A New and Living Way*, p. 212.

24See R. Newton Flew, *The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1934), p. 74.

- 25TDNT, 1:112-
- 26Flew, *Idea of Perfection*, p. 74.
- 27Cf. Hering, *L'Épître aux Hébreux*, p. 96.
- 28Turner, *A New and Living Way*, p. 212.
- 29Bruce, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 206-07.
- 30Cf. John Wesley, "Sermon LXXVI: On Perfection," *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd ed. (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press, 1979), 6:414.
- 31See Wayne McCown, "God's Will . . . For You. Sanctification in the Thessalonian Epistles," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 12(Spring 1977):27-29.
- 32Cf. TDNT, 8:84: "The findings suggest . . . for teleioioo [the meanings] of teleios, 'whole,' 'complete,' 'perfect.' "
- 33Hebrews 2:10; 5:9; 7:19,28; 9:9; 10:1,14; 11:40; 12:23. Cf. Colin Brown, *Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1971), 2:63.
- 34Teleios, Hebrews 5:14 ("mature"); 9:11 ("perfect"); teleiosis, Hebrews 7:11 ("perfection"); teleiotes, Hebrews 12:2 ("perfecter"); teleiotes, Hebrews 6:1 ("maturity"; cf. KJV, "perfection").
- 35See Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux*, 2:214.
- 36Cf. Turner, *New and Living Way*, p. 209: "The perfection of Jesus is one of the unique features of this presentation."
- 37Delbert R. Rose, "Christian Perfection, Not Sinless Perfection," *Insights into Holiness*, comp. Kenneth Geiger (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press, 1963), p. 116.
- 38Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux*, p. 222; Paul B. Overland, *The Nature and Attainability of Christian Perfection* (Portland, Oregon: Western Evangelical Seminary, 1980).
- 39H. Orton Wiley, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press, 1959), p. 189.
- 40Wiley, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 188.
- 41Flew, *Idea of Perfection*, p. 81.
- 42Flew, *Idea of Perfection*, p. 78.
- 43B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1973), pp. 65-67.
- 44Turner, *New and Living Way*, p. 205.
- 45Cf. Hebrews 6:18-20.
- 46Chrysostom, MPG, LXIII, 171. See also in *The Nicene and PostNicene Fathers, First Series* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1956), 14:419.
- 47Hebrews 9:23-28.
- 48Hebrews 7:26-28.
- 49Hebrew9 9:11.
- 50Hebrews 4:14-16.

51Hebrews 1:1-4.

52Hebrews 10:8-10.

53Cf. Turner, *New and Living Way*, p. 213: "The personal 'perfection' or maturity called for in Hebrews 5:11-6:4 is spiritual and intellectual discernment"; Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux*, 2:146: "The originality of Hebrews is the accent put on intellectual progress as a condition of moral perfection."

54Cf. Flew, *Idea of Perfection*, p. 90.

55See Laurence W. Wood, *Pentecostal Grace* (Wilmore, Ky.: Francis Asbury Publ. Co., 1980), p. 13.

56See Carl Clemen, "The Oldest Christian Sermon (Hebrews III and IV)," *The Expositor*, 5(1896):392-400. It is described as a "homily" by James Moffatt, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1924), 43. Hebrews 3-4 may represent a "midrash" on Psalm 95: see Michel, *Der Brief an die Hebraer*, p.

182, n. 2; Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux*, 2:62. The two primary characteristics of rabbinic midrash were "the attachment and constant reference to Scripture," and "the adaptation to the present": see Renee Bloch, "Midrash," *Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplement V*, col. 1266. Cf. Adison G. Wright, *The Literary Genre Midrash* (Staten Island: Alba House, 1968): "When the word midrash is deliberately contrasted with another word, it very clearly means that traditional literature whose structure is such that it explicitly and implicitly starts with a text of

Scripture and comments on it" (p. 48, n. 31); "The primary aim was to make the Bible relevant, to make the Bible come alive and serve as a source of spiritual nourishment, refreshment and stimulation" (p. 65).

57Hebrews 3:13, 15, 17-18; 4:3, 5, 7.

58Hebrews 4:1.

59Hebrews 3:19; 4:2, 6.

60Hebrews 4:6.

61Hebrews 4:9-10. See H. E. Mueller, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: an Exegetical Commentary* (Portland, Oregon: Western Evangelical Seminary, 1956).

62See esp. Hebrews 4:7-10.

63Hebrews 4:9: Here the author describes the "rest" (hatapausis) of the Psalm as a sabbatismos.

64See, e.g., Deuteronomy 12:9-10; I Kings 8:56.

65Cf. Hebrews 10:19-22. Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary* (NY: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1942), 6:711.

66Note that when He had finished His earthly labors, Jesus sat down at the right hand of God: Hebrews 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12-13; 12:2; cf. 4:10. See G. Campbell Morgan, *God's Last Word to Man* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1974), pp.57-58: "Christ has entered into rest, as God entered into rest. God entered into His rest as Genesis reveals, when His creative work was accomplished. Jesus entered into His rest when His work of redemption was accomplished"; cf. Turner, *New and Living Way*, p. 84.

- 67Hebrews 3:1; cf. 4:14.
- 68Hebrews 2:8-10; 6:18-20; 12:1-2.
- 69Hebrews 4:13-14; cf. 10:24-25, 35-38.
- 70The conception of rest in Hebrews 3-4 implicates the idea of a resting place or settled abode: see W. R. Hutton, "Hebrews iv, 11," *Expository Times*, 52(1941):316; TDNT, 3:627-28. *Katapausis* appears elsewhere in the NT (in an OT quote) only in Acts 7:49, where it is translated "my resting place" (NIV), "place . . . for my repose" (NASB), "place of my rest" (KJV, RSV). The larger context has reference to the place of God's habitation, whether tabernacle or temple or heaven. In the immediate context, these two lines are parallel:
 What kind of house will you build for me?
 Or where will my resting place be?
- Flew, *Idea of Perfection*, pp. 75-76: "The writer defines his subject as the world to come. . . . We have received a kingdom which cannot be shaken (xii. 28). Our search is for the city to come (xiii. 14). There the people of God have their sabbatismos, their sabbatic rest (iv. 9)." Cf. Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux*
- 2:71: "the earthly promise is the figure of a heavenly repose"; Moffatt, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 53: "Rest throughout all this passage . . . is the blissful existence of God's faithful in the next world."
- 71Hebrews 4:3, "We who have believed [aorist tense are entering that rest [present tense]. . . ."
- 72Turner, *New and Living Way*, p. 216.
- 73Hebrews 3:6, 14; 4:15. Cf. John Calvin, *Hebrews and I & II Peter* trans. William B. Johnston (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1963), p. 49: "Because the completion of this rest is never attained in this life, we must always be striving towards it. Thus believers enter in, but on condition that they continuously run and press on."
- 74See esp. Kasemann, *Das wandernde Gottesvolk*, Erich Grasser, *Der Glaube in Hebraerbrief* (Marburg: N. G. Elwert, 1956).
- 75Cf. Hebrews 4:2, 6, 11. Hebrews uses the word *hupodeima* (4:11; cf. 8:5; 9:23) in the sense of a model see TDNT, 2:32-33.
- 76See also Hebrews 3:12 (NASB), "Take care, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart leading you to fall away from the living God"; Hebrews 4:1 (NASB), "Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you seem to have come short of it."
- 77Turner, *New and Living Way*, p. 216.
- 78See Wayne McCown, *The Nature and Function of the Hortatory Sections in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1974), pp. 157-59.
- 79Cf. Hebrews 3:7, 12-13.
- 80Cf. Hebrews 8:6-10.
- 81See Otto Kuss, "Der Verfasser des Hebraerbriefes als Seelsorger," *Auslegung and Verkündigung* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1963), p. 332.

82Kasemann, *Das wundernde Gottesuolk*, p. 27.

83See Calvin, *Hebrews*, 46: ". . . the Word brings its power to bear on us only when faith gives it entrance. It is the power of God unto salvation, but only to those who believe (Romans I. 16)." Similarly, John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament* (NY: Eaton and Mains, n.d.), p. 570: "It is only when

it [i.e., the Word] is mixed with faith, that it exerts its saving power. "

84Hermann Strathmann, *Der Brief an die Hebraer* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1953), 24.

85Cf. *Hebrews* 10:39. See also Kasemann, "Hebraer 4, 14-16, Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 1:303.

86*Hebrews* 3:12, 13; 4:1, 11.

87See esp. *Hebrews* 3:12-13; cf. 10:24-25.

88*Hebrews* 4:1, 11; cf. 12:15-17.

89Contra Richard S. Taylor, "Epistle to the Hebrews," *Beacon Bible Commentary* (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press, 1976), 10:51-52; Charles W. Carter, "The Epistle to the Hebrews," *Wesleyan Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1966), 6:64-66. Cf. Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament* p. 571: The rest mentioned in *Hebrews* 4:3 is "the eternal rest in

heaven"; Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary*, 6:710-11.

90Cf. Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary*, 6:711.

91Though Wesley preached a sermon from this text (see n. 34 above), he makes no attempt to exposit it; Calvin generally ignores it altogether.

92Author's translation.

93See James Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Associated Publishers, nd.).

94Taylor, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 10:71.

95Author's translation.

96See TDNT, 8:49-87; Brown, *Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 2:59-66.

97*Hebrews* 5:11-14.

98*Hebrews* 6:9-10.

99Cf. *Hebrews* 10:35-39.

100*Hebrews* 6:11, NASB.

101*Hebrews* 6:17-20.

102See J. A. Bengel, *Gnomon Novi Testamenti* (Stuttgart: J. F. Steinkopf, 1860), p. 885: "Kai parapentes (and falling away) . . . a solemn declaration, occurring so suddenly, inspiring a sense of terror."

103See *Hebrews* 2:1-4.

- 104Turner, *New and Living Way*, pp. 103-04.
- 105Hebrews 6:13-20.
- 106Contra Metz, *Studies in Biblical Holiness*, p. 135.
- 107See Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary*, 6:723: "Let us never rest till we are adult Christians-till we are saved from all sin, and are filled with the Spirit and power of Christ."
- 108Wesley, *Explanatory Notes*, p. 584.
- 109Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary*, 6:755.
- 110Hebrews 9:11-14.
- 111Hebrews 10:4-10.
- 112Hebrews 7:22; 8:6; 9:15.
- 113See Hebrews 9:14.
- 114Hebrews 9:25-26.
- 115Turner, *New and Living Way*, p. 143: "Because the objective grounds (shadowy sanctuary and beasts) of the Old Testament system were inadequate, the subjective effects were inadequate. On the other hand, under the new covenant, because of the objective basis (the real sanctuary and Christ), the subjective change in the believer (pardon and sanctification) is adequate or 'perfect.' "
- 116Hebrews 10:11-14.
- 117See Hebrews 10:18.
- 118Hebrews 9:14; cf. 10:1-2.
- 119Bruce, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 241.
- 120See Hebrews 10:15-18.
- 121Hebrews 9:14; 10:22; cf. 13:18
- 122Hebrew9 10:1-4.
- 123Cf. NASB: they could not "make the worshiper perfect in conscience. "
- 124See Michel, *Der Brief an die Hebraer*, p. 341: "What is an once-for-all event (perfected) works itself out in an onward-going process (being sanctified). "
- 125See Carter, "Epistle to the Hebrews," 6:125: Hebrews 10:14 declares "the adequacy of Christ's sacrifice for the complete salvation of man."
- 126Note Taylor, "The Epistle to the Hebrews," 10:120, "A definite and complete sanctification is declared to be the divine will, in fact a state already experienced by the 'we' of v. 10: the present participle of v.14 must be interpreted as an iterative present; hence, those who are from time to time being sanctified, one after another." None of the Greek grammars specifically support Taylor's interpretation, although it is considered by J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908), p. 127. Moulton cites Hebrews 10:10 as an "ambiguous

case" of the perfect periphrastic. Cf. A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), p. 891: "the descriptive durative is all that is true of tous hagiazomenous in Heb. 10:14 (cf. 10:10)."

127Hebrew9 10:4-9.

128Hebrews 10:19ff.

129Matthew 5:8; cf. Hebrews 12:14.

130Cf. Turner, *New and Living Way*, p. 171: "As in chapter 6, so here the reader is exhorted to give all diligence to press on the path toward perfection."

131Cf. Milton S. Agnew, *Transformed Christians* (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press, 1974), p. 164: "Note the verb 'pursue after.' It depicts a patient pursuit, an eager chase. . . . Furthermore, to 'pursue after' indicates a continuing action (the tense is present)."

132Contra Taylor, "Epistle to the Hebrews," 10:163-64.

133Cf. Agnew, *Transformed Christians* p. 164: "The double object of the pursuit is 'peace' and 'sanctification'-peace with all men and unfolding holiness before God. The two go together. They both demand effort in their achievement."

134Calvin, *Hebrews*, p. 195.

135See Agnew, *Transformed Christians*, p. 164: "Furthermore, it is only through such progressive sanctification that men really see, or comprehend, the Lord in daily life. It gives a new dimension of understanding in a day-to-day experience of Him in His holiness and in His purity. With the same goal in view,

Jesus had said, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' (Matt. 5:8)."

136Cf. Hebrews 13:18; I Thessalonians 2:10-12.

137Cf I John 3:1-3.

138Cf. *Philippians* 3:12-17.

139See Flew, *Idea of Perfection*, pp. 84-85; Hering, *L'Épître aux Hébreux*, p. 116.

140Hebrews 12:5-11. The following commentators emphasize the role of discipline in the life of holiness, interpreting Hebrews 12:14 in relation to the larger context: Turner, *New and Living Way*, pp. 169-73; Agnew, *Transformed Christians*, pp. 159-67; Cf. Gunther Bornkamm, "Sohnschaft und Leiden,"

Judentum-Urchristen-Kirche (Berlin: A. Topelmann, 1960), 188-98. Flew, *Idea of Perfection*, pp. 84-85 stresses the ethical element in holiness: "The exhortation to pursue holiness . . . occurs in a context where ethical considerations are strongly evident."

141Hebrews 12:15-17; cf. 3:12-13; 4:1-2; 10:24-25.

142Hebrews 12:12-13 have both a personal and communal application. See Moffatt, *Epistle to the Hebrews*: "The discipline . . . is viewed under an active aspect; men must cooperate with God, exerting themselves to avert

sin (v. 1) by the exercise of personal zeal and church-discipline" (p. 206); "By to whom the writer means 'those who are lame,' these crippled souls in your company" (p. 207), not merely that (part of you) which is lame.

143Cf. Ernst Kasemann, "Hebraer 12, 12-17," *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960) 1:303-07: Esau is presented as the climactic personification of a reprobate: he experienced the impossibility of repentance and the inevitability of judgment forewarned by the author (cf. 6:4-8; 10:26-31).

144Taylor, "Epistle to the-Hebrews," 10:163.

THE INTERPLAY OF CHRISTOLOGY AND ECCLESIOLOGY IN THE THEOLOGY OF THE HOLINESS MOVEMENT

PAUL MERRITT BASSETT

Introduction:

This essay is written in the context of two tensions within the theology of the holiness movement¹ that must be noted if the reader is to understand what is being presented. The first tension is created by the assumption of the holiness movement that it is thoroughly orthodox in its theology, that its doctrinal content flows well within the stream of the great channel cut by the consensus *quinquae saecularis*. The movement readily admits that *raison d'être* is the propagation of the doctrine of Christian perfection in basic fidelity to the form promulgated by John Wesley. But this doctrine the movement insists, is an emphasis from within the great tradition and not some heterodox dogma attached to an otherwise mainline theology.

It would seem that we may grant the truth of the holiness movement's claim to a site in the orthodox campground. When it is true to its own thinking, it is clearly a branch of Protestantism, with the latter's historic concern for maintaining the principle of *sola gratia*, its insistence that the ultimate theological authority be Scripture, and its claim that priesthood belongs to all believers.

Where the tension arises is at the point of emphasizing the doctrine of Christian perfection. Can that particular doctrine be emphasized as the very reason-for-being of the movement, with all of its affiliates, without affecting the rest of the dogmatic framework of the greater tradition? To what degree does the emphasis skew the remainder of the doctrinal context if any?

Obviously, in practice, the emphasis on Christian perfection does cause distortion in the rest of the theological system. The sacraments, for instance, are of minor import in the thinking of many, if not most, holiness people, while "getting sanctified" is urged on every believer. In theory, according to the principal theologies of the movement, the imbalance is not so serious. Nonetheless, the perfectionist emphasis does effect the entire system. Thus, a tension is created when, on the one hand, it is asserted that the movement is faithful to the great tradition but at the same time it is

insisted upon that a particular doctrine, defined in a unique way, be placed as the capstone of theological and practical concern—a doctrine that has not served in that way along the history of orthodox tradition.

Rubrics do tend to shape the content of what follows though their original purpose was simply to give clue to that content as a chapter heading would. So, when the rubric becomes a controlling factor, when "entire sanctification" becomes the guidance mechanism, the gyroscope (to change the figure) of the theological system, the question may fairly be raised whether Chalcedonian christology, to cite an example, remains authentically Chalcedonian christology. In a theological framework where sanctification is the systemic *raison d'être*, will the christology borrowed from a system or framework in which christology is the systemic *raison d'être* be changed in fundamental ways? Is such change inevitable? Assuming a carefully wrought inner logic to both systems, what of the danger of making an orthodox doctrine over into heterodoxy simply by connecting it to the borrowing system at points that vary from its original connection?

That is the first tension shaping this paper: the relationship of a doctrinal emphasis to the whole of Christian theology—the effect of a specialized definition of a particular doctrine viewed as systematically central on the traditional theological formulae to which it is connected. Can both be maintained in a living theological system? The second tension arises within the holiness movement itself. Two systematic theologies have shaped the formal statements of its doctrine over the past half-century, and these two are essentially different in methodology and in certain ranges of presupposition—this, in spite of their agreement on the doctrine of Christian perfection.

The first two generations of the holiness movement, from the beginning of Phoebe Palmer's leadership of the Tuesday Meetings for the Promotion of Holiness (1839) to the end of the nineteenth century, were generally nourished on Methodist theology, especially the works of Richard Watson,² Adam Clarke,³ and W. B. Pope,⁴ with Thomas Ralston's *Elements of Divinity*⁵ and (later) Amos Binney's *Theological Compend*⁶ providing summaries of "the body of divinity" for thoughtful laypersons and minimally educated ministers. Toward the end of the nineteenth century and in 1905, respectively, two more substantial Methodist theologies appeared: John Miley's *Systematic Theology*⁷ and Olin Curtis's *The Christian Faith*.⁸ These were used by the emerging holiness denominations in the educating of their clergy, but with heavy supplementation in books on Christian perfection from within the holiness movement itself.⁹

However, uneasiness grew at two points: the desire of the holiness denominations (the Nazarenes in particular) for clear identity as churches in their own right and what was seen as an adulteration of the doctrine of Christian perfection or entire sanctification in the works of Miley and Curtis. The former point was certainly more formative than the latter in the request of the Church of the Nazarene, at its general assembly of 1919, of H. Orton Wiley, then president of Northwest Nazarene College, Nampa, and a close associate of P. F. Bresee, founder of the Church of the Nazarene, that he write a comprehensive systematic theology for the ministry of that denomination.

It was not Wiley, however, but Aaron Merritt Hills, professor of theology at Pasadena College and a very well-known preacher throughout

the holiness movement, who was first to the press with a systematic theology. His *Fundamental Christian Theology*, a two-volume work, was published in 1931, and was the required theological work for ministers in the Nazarenes' "Course of Study" until 1940.¹⁰

With Hills, whose influence was very great in holiness circles long before 1931, a theological influence quite different from traditional Wesleyanism was to be impressed upon the minds of the holiness people. Hills came to the Church of the Nazarene from Congregationalism. He had studied at Oberlin under Finney and Fairchild and at Yale Divinity School under Timothy Dwight, George Fisher and Samuel Harris. He himself tells us that until his pastoral career was well launched he had read nothing in Methodist theology. He was a convinced New School Calvinist bent on combating the older Calvinism represented by Charles Hodge.¹¹ His deep and sincere commitment to Christian perfection comes by way of Charles G. Finney, not by way of Wesley. In fact, he rejects explicitly several fundamental Wesleyan doctrines, including the specifically critical concept of prevenient grace or "gracious ability."¹²

Methodologically, Hills places free agency at the center of his system with Christian perfection or entire sanctification being immediately ancillary to free will or free agency. These two doctrines, then, govern the development of the rest of his theology. We shall see later how these fundamentals-in-tandem affect the christology and ecclesiology of the

holiness movement. Suffice it here to say that in Hill's work, both his systematic theology and his earlier writings, we have a thoroughly Calvinistic, though New School, theological method in apologia for a Wesleyan-Arminian religious movement. Hills would be chagrined, of course, to be counted among the "Calvinists" because it is they whom he meant to refute. But his target was Old School Calvinism, creating a problem with his definition of "Calvinist," and, further, whatever the problems of definition, as has been clearly shown elsewhere, his theological method was fundamentally that of his opponents.¹³

Much more Wesleyan in both content and method is the theology of H. Orton Wiley, the "official" theology of most of the denominations in the holiness movement since its publication in 1940 and 1941.¹⁴ Wiley himself came to the Church of the Nazarene at about the time Hills did, but as a much younger and inexperienced man. He had been reared in the United Brethren tradition, which had been influenced deeply by both Methodism (especially in its German-speaking form) and German Lutheran Pietism. He received this theological education at what is now called the Pacific School of Religion.

In saying that Wiley's theology is much more Wesleyan in content and method than that of A. M. Hills, reference is made to two points. First is Wiley's critique (albeit implicit, not explicit) of certain elements of Hills' theology that move away from the Wesleyan theological tradition to that time, and second, Wiley's obvious reliance upon Wesleyan sources, though it is obvious as well that he is aware of others.

Wiley differs methodologically from Miley at three critical points, and in each instance goes back to earlier Wesleyan sources for direction. First, Miley insists on the inductive method as the appropriate theological method. And it is the particular data that have the higher degree of

certainty or reality or truth. Theological generalizations, for Miley, are constructs abstractions, and are therefore of limited value. They are not Atruth@ in themselves.¹⁵ Wiley is much more Platonic. The task of theology is the discovery of truth and of the "structure of truth." So while we move from the particulars to the general, it is the generals, the generalizations or constructs, that have the greatest certainty, reality or truth.¹⁶ He relies heavily here on Pope's theology, which, in turn, is clearly influenced by Watson's.

Second, Miley, insisting on the scientific character of theology, points to its empirical character, along with its perfect right, as a science, to utilize discursive reason, and to the obligation to respond to the questions posed by a scientific age.¹⁷ Wiley assigns a scientific character to theology only insofar as it does systematize its facts and seeks the relationships between them, and insofar as its "spirit is that of open, unbiased search after truth."¹⁸ His is much more a theology built upon the questions raised by the Enlightenment than upon those raised by the scientific revolution of the mid-nineteenth century. The likes of Darwin, Spencer and Huxley are barely mentioned by Wiley, let alone the epoch-making scientists and mathematicians who were his contemporaries-Rutherford, Compton, Einstein, Planck and others (some even more noteworthy than those named). Positivism and Marxism are not recognized at all, except for a brief mention of the latter.

Instead, Wiley, almost bound by his sources, reflects their struggles and is thus seen to wrestle with their enemies when sometimes these enemies are long since gone.¹⁹

Wiley's third difference with Miley, in which Wiley again goes back to a more nearly Wesleyan stance, is at the point of recognizing experience as a source for theology. Perhaps Miley's rejection of experience in this authoritarian role has to do with what the term had come to mean by the time he was writing-something like "being human in general," with more specific reference to physiological connotations.²⁰ At any rate, experience can only confirm doctrine, at best. Wiley, on the other hand, probably does not recognize as Miley had that the term "experience" had been equivocated. So he retains it as a source of authority in theology. By "experience" he means "evangelical experience," and he believes that any subjective or emotionalist tendency here is held in check by submission to the experience of the Church at large.²¹ In this way, experience is indeed a primary source of doctrine, of theology. But he means by "experience" something more nearly akin to Wesley's than Miley's definition. His debt to Pope in the section in which he considers this matter is quite apparent.

So, in addition to the New School style theology of A. M. Hills, the holiness movement also has the more traditionally Wesleyan theology of H. O. Wiley (traditional to the point of rejecting important aspects of newer Methodist theologies in favor of the traditional approaches). For a long time, the agreement of the two with respect to the centrality of the doctrine of Christian perfection tended to mask their profound differences in method as well as content. But a tension was there nonetheless, and it is one that has become increasingly clear and pressing as the pluralism of the holiness movement on so many other issues has crystallized. It is a tension between a rationalistic, rather scholastic approach to doctrine, in which the theology

itself becomes part of the received faith, and a more open-ended, experientially grounded approach in which theology is the never static expression of basic theological and spiritual commitments.

This tension is becoming quite critical in these days, and it must be recognized and reckoned with by any who would understand the theology of the holiness movement. With these tensions in mind, then, we move on to the matter at hand-the interplay of Christology and ecclesiology in the thought of the holiness movement, with a special concern for the question "Does the believer's Church, in the holiness movement, have a consistently related christology and ecclesiology?"

I. The Christology of the Holiness Movement: (Christology in Present Perspective)

A. Christology and Development of Doctrine

My colleague, Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, for whom I was a Johnny-come-lately pinch hitter at the conference at which this paper was originally read, had planned to present her paper there under the title "A Wesleyan Reconsiders 'Jesus Christ our Lord.'" That title would scare, or at least irritate, not a few of the holiness folk-probably even some holiness theologians -especially if "reconsider" means that there is a possibility that something old must be checked or corrected or that something new might be proposed.

This conservatism is not, it would seem, a result of fear that openness and reinvestigation would be or might be costly. Rather, it is consistent with the style of theologizing that Richard Niebuhr typed as "Christ against Culture." Here, any suggestion that Christian theology should, for whatever reason, enter conversation with "the world" or take into serious account secular intellectual concerns (or social concerns) in the actual formation of its own structures and systems is held in deepest suspicion. It is indeed recognized even by the most conservative that theology cannot totally ignore its cultural context, but any kind of readiness to come to terms with secular currents risks being quickly labeled "compromise." And that is simply a synonym for heresy in much of the holiness movement.

At the point of Christology, then, emphasis is placed upon the super- or trans-rational character of the doctrine (mere rationality being seen as a worldly demand, a characteristic of worldly reflection). So, for example, E. P. Ellyson, in the very first theology published by the holiness movement, says:

It is just as clearly the teaching of the Bible that Jesus Christ is human as that He is divine. It is not our purpose under this heading to try to harmonize the facts but simply to find them out. Facts do not need harmonizing. They already harmonize if they are facts. Whatever of disharmony there may appear to us to be, is the fault of our limited vision and we may believe the fact and await the enlargement of our vision to complete the harmony. Whatever the Bible teaches is fact.²²

Hills makes much the same assumption-that especially at the point of understanding what he calls the "theanthropic" character of Christ, reason

will fall short, though it must be exercised. Further, like Ellyson, Hills makes no room for experience in the construction of Christology except as he does refer to the fact that the doctrine of the "union of the two natures in the personal oneness of Christ is the Catholic doctrine. All the great divisions of the universal church have held this faith. It has come down to us from the Council of Chalcedon in an unbroken line."²³ But even here there is no recognition of the fact that the church arrived at the formula of Chalcedon by way of reflection on its experience, its tradition, not by strictly exegetical means. In fact exegesis was creating an impasse.

This means, then, that for Hills, christology is set. There has been and can be no legitimate development of christology beyond Chalcedon. Ellyson will not even draw upon the creeds for christology. He attempts to remain strictly with Scripture. Even logical development is generally absent from Ellyson's theologizing.

In Wiley, however, we find a very different way of developing a christology and we find a christology that is quite different in content from those of Hills and Ellyson. In the first place, Wiley very carefully points out the weakness of forming a christology on the basis of Scripture alone:

The textual method approaches the subject through the numerous proof/texts, classified in various ways but usually including those scriptures which refer to His Divine Titles, Divine Attributes, Divine Acts and Divine Worship. With its many advantages, this method has one distinct disadvantage - the reliance upon proof texts is always open to the objection that they may be interpreted in a wrong manner. . . .²⁴

Behind this declaration of Wiley's is his understanding of the authority and inspiration of Scripture, an understanding which we note only briefly here as critical to our understanding of his christology.

. . . in a deeper sense, Jesus Christ, our ever-living Lord is Himself the fullest revelation of God. He is the Word of God-the outlived and outspoken thought of the Eternal. Thus, while we honor the Scriptures in giving them a central place as our primary source of theology, we are not unmindful that the letter killeth but the Spirit maketh alive. Christ, the Living Word, must ever be held in proper relation to the Holy Bible, the written Word. If the letter would be vital and dynamic, we must through the Holy Spirit, be ever attuned to that living One whose matchless words, incomparable deeds, and vicarious death constitute the great theme of that Book of books.²⁵

For Wiley, Scripture is part of what he calls, "the dual source of theology," by which term he means to include with Scripture "the spiritual illumination of the Church"-i.e., tradition or experience. And it is only the *testimonium Spiritus sancti* that brings them into harmony and maintains that harmony. Further, at the heart of that work of the Spirit is the Person of Christ.²⁶ Here, christology touches the doctrine of Scripture authority and inspiration. For Wiley, Christ is the Revelation and he warns against making the Revelation and the written Word identical.²⁷ However, this does

not mean that Scripture is to be set aside in the least in the formation of christology. "The study of Christology is best approached through its presentation in the Holy Scriptures, where the great events in the life of Christ are viewed in the light of the theological significance which attaches to them."28

What does Wiley make of the great christological formulae? Are they for him, as they are for Hills, the final word of the Church on Christ's person? In beginning his chapter on the Trinity, in which he also begins to develop his christology, Wiley has this to say:

The doctrine of the Trinity is in the Bible as humid air. The cool wave of reflection through which the Church passed, condensed its thought and precipitated what all along had been in solution. While there are philosophical views of the Trinity, yet philosophical analysis probably never could have produced, and certainly did not produce it. It arose as an expression of experience, and that too, of an experience which was complex and rich. . . . It was religion before it was theology, and in order to be effective must again become in each of us, religion as well as theology.²⁹

He does not exclude from this declaration the development of christology, but, rather, explicitly makes it, too, part of that "humid air," that "expression of experience." In speaking of Arianism in particular, he says, "As the doctrine of the Trinity grew out of the doctrinal life of the Church and not out of philosophy, so it was its devotional consciousness and not its philosophy that rejected the Arian heresy."³⁰

It is this openness to seeing doctrinal development as a consequence of experience that keeps Wiley from closing the theological books on christology at Chalcedon. He readily admits, at several points, that the Chalcedonian and Athanasian formulae are basic to orthodox christology.³¹ But he also notes development in the Middle Ages via both the "Schoolmen" and the Eastern Church (especially John of Damascus) and again in the reformers of the sixteenth century.³² He hints at some new developments even in contemporary times, though he is properly tentative about them and tends to emphasize their continuity with the old to such a degree that their newness is obscured.³³ Finally, however, all must be held in abeyance:

Wiley quotes Pope:

But, after all, we must remember what the ancient Church was never weary of enforcing in relation to this subject; the nature of God is *arretos* ineffable, unsearchable and unspeakable; the Godhead can be known only by him who is *theodidaktos*, taught of God, and that knowledge itself is and will eternally be only *ek merous* in part.³⁴

"Is it any wonder, then," asks Wiley, "that the Church has not only given us a statement of the Trinity in the creed, but set its teaching to music in the matchless Gloria?"³⁵

Trinity and christology, then, are to be sung. They are both vehicles of worship and consequences of reflection. Obviously, this leaves the door ajar

for continuing christological development. Wiley has no doubt that the line from Scripture to Chalcedon is both correct and essential and fundamental but he leaves it all quite open within these boundaries and nowhere suggests that the development of christology has culminated and ceased.

B. The Lord's Supper and the Presence of Christ

What of the presence of Christ, according to Hills and Wiley? How does Christ manifest Himself in His Church? Hills' understanding of the sacraments is what has been unfairly labeled Zwinglian. That is to say, the presence of Christ in the sacraments especially in the Lord's Supper, depends entirely upon the faith of the participant. Hills warns his readers away from any strong or literal understanding of the sacraments as "means of conveying to us the blessings of the Gospel. 36

In this way, he makes it clear that he prefers what he calls "The Socinian Notion" to what he calls "The Stronger Protestant View"-and for this latter, less preferred view, he quotes Samuel Wakefield, a Methodist who was one of Watson's imitators and "American translators," to use Robert Chiles' phrase.³⁷ Here is Hills' statement of the "Socinian Notion."

The Unitarians hold that the Sacraments are quite like other religious rites and ceremonies; their peculiarity chiefly consists in their emblematic character, representing as they do spiritual and invisible things, and are memorials of past events. They are chiefly an aid to pious sentiments, and a quickener of devotional feelings and holy emotions. They are also an appointed means of professing faith in Christ, and acknowledging Him before the world. There is very much truth in this view.³⁸

Hills does speak of the possibility of receiving "a fresh sense of the presence of God" in His Eucharist, but this is totally dependent upon the communicant's act of "reach[ing] out the hand of faith and tak[ing] the blessings, so beautifully symbolized, and so dearly bought by the efficacious blood shed on Calvary's cross."³⁹

Wiley sharply criticizes this view as escaping the errors of transubstantiation and "consubstantiation," but as "nevertheless fall[ing] short of the full truth."⁴⁰ Its principal weaknesses are: (1) its failure to understand the purpose of the Eucharist, and (2) its failure to understand the meaning of the term "real." The "rationalistic" or Socinian" view, as Wiley calls it does not really grasp the sacramental character of the Eucharist i.e., its mystical (and not merely historical) connection with the original Lord's Supper. "Perpetuity" is Wiley's word for describing that bond-"The Perpetuity of the Lord's Supper."⁴¹ The purpose of the Eucharist, then, is not only testimony (an outward and visible sign of an inward and visible grace), not merely a pledge of that grace, but it is as well a means of grace-we receive the pledged grace in receiving the spiritual presence of Christ in the bread and the wine.⁴² And it is this presence that is the real mystery.⁴³ The "seal" is the confirmation that the pledge of grace is being fulfilled. The Holy Spirit is the "sealer" and this testimony is always to the person and work of Christ, so He re-presents to us the work of Christ, the

very presence of Christ-not physically or corporeally, but spiritually. So, the Eucharist becomes not simply an awakener of faith or of "holy emotion" but a means, a vehicle, of grace.⁴⁴

Thus, Wiley accepts with little amendment the "Reformed Doctrine" of the Lord's Supper. The pledges of grace are "accompanied with an invisible gift of grace."⁴⁵ And Christ is there spiritually present. Here, then, as at many critical points, the holiness movement has two legacies. Both affirm the presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper but in very divergent ways. For Hills, the presence of Christ in the Eucharist is dependent upon the same element upon which it is dependent on any other occasion-the faith of the believer alone. The sacrament, then, is not a celebration of Christ's special presence; in fact, it is not a celebration of His presence at all. It is a commemorative meal eaten principally to refresh our appreciation for what Christ has done for us. For Wiley, the presence of Christ in the Eucharist is dependent upon the promises of our Lord that attend its celebration. The faith of the participant is important, is crucial, to the appropriation of those promises and that presence. So, the Supper is the celebration of the special presence of Christ. It is a vehicle of grace.⁴⁶

C. The Life of Holiness and the Presence of Christ

Here again, the holiness movement has two very different understand-ings and guidance systems. Hills simply has no section on the ethics of the Christian life in his *Fundamental Christian Theology*. He comes closer to an extended treatment in his *Holiness and Power: For the Church and the Ministry*,⁴⁷ but only accidentally or incidentally. His only systematic consideration of the matter is in his chapter on "Conversion, or Regeneration" in the *Fundamental Christian Theology*.⁴⁸ Here, there is scarcely a word about Jesus Christ. Even where one might expect something along the lines of *imitatio Christi*, there is only a short paragraph, void of reference to Christ's work in us.

To be born of God means to resemble God. The child resembles the parent. There is a family likeness. Jesus said to wicked men: "Ye are of your father, the Devil." They had the likeness. So it is with the Heavenly Father's children; they are like Him.⁴⁹

For Hills, the Holy Spirit is the agent and animator of the life of holiness, which is sufficiently orthodox in itself. But no care at all is taken either here in the section on regeneration or in the section on the Holy Spirit as a Person of the Trinity, to anchor the Christian life in the continuing presence of Jesus Christ, with the Spirit serving as Christ's Spirit. The Spirit is seen as an independent being with an independent work. Hills is much more inclined to speak of the relationship of Spirit and Father than of that of Spirit and Son. So, while Hills is certainly within the boundaries of the great tradition in understanding the Holy Spirit to be the guide of the Christian's life and the divine presence within that life, this failure consistently to relate Spirit and Son in these matters makes both his christology and his formal ethic quite problematic.

For Wiley, the systematic position of "Christian ethics or the Life of Holiness" lies between the discussion of Christian perfection or entire

sanctification and the discussion of the doctrine of the church.⁵⁰ It is formally included in the extended consideration of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. However, Wiley makes quite clear his conviction that the life of holiness is totally dependent upon the presence of Christ. To be sure, the Holy Spirit communicates this presence, but Wiley focuses upon the presence of the Son as "the positive element in Christian ethics."

. . . Christian ethics must draw its material immediately from the Christian revelation . . . the highest revelation of God to man is in Jesus Christ as the Lord made flesh. Hence the positive element in Christian ethics is a course of life introduced into human conditions—a life actualized in human history by Jesus Christ as the God-man, and through the Spirit communicated to the community of believers. The life of Christ, therefore, whether in word, in deed, or in the spirit underlying these words and deeds, becomes the norm of all Christian conduct. His words furnish us with the knowledge of the divine will; His acts are the confirmation of truth, and His Spirit the power by which His words are embodied in deeds. With his statement as to the positive element in Christian ethics, we turn to the Scriptures as the recorded revelation of the incarnate Word, and in them we find our standards of Christian conduct together with the promised power of the Spirit by which these standards are to be maintained.⁵¹

In laying down the principles of ethics, Wiley turns to the doctrine of Christian perfection with its "dominant note" of "full devotion to God." "This devotement becomes a fundamental principle in Christian ethics. As such, it is exercised toward Christ in His divine-human nature as the mediatorial Person; and thus both as Creator and Redeemer."⁵²

In order that Christ might give His people a new commandment, and a perfect law of liberty through which that commandment could be fulfilled, He himself received a new commandment and learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having learned obedience, He presented Himself as at once the perfect lawgiver, and the perfect example of His own precepts. Here we find the unsearchable unity of His two natures in one personal Agent investing the subject of Christian ethics, as it does also, that of Christian dogmatics.⁵³

Christ Himself, then, in His continuing presence, is both example and agent of Christian ethics. Apart from that example and that agency, there is no life of holiness, no ethical life in any uniquely Christian sense. So profoundly central is the presence of Christ (in "the unsearchable unity of His two natures") to this life of holiness that Wiley includes prayer and worship as necessary and concomitants of it—Christ being the mediator of prayer and the object of worship.⁵⁴ He approvingly quotes Methodist Bishop McIlvaine: "It is the necessary tendency of true worship to assimilate the worshipper into the likeness of the being worshipped."⁵⁵

On its Methodistic side, then, the holiness movement has developed a deeply christocentric ethic which is utterly dependent upon Christ's historic and continuing presence and upon His example. But side by side

with this ethic is a pneumatological one in which Christ's role is quite unclear. Rather, the emphasis is upon some sort of spiritual power.

II. The Ecclesiology of the Holiness Movement:

How then do these two very different conceptions of the presence of Christ reflect themselves in the ecclesiology of the holiness movement? Does the movement have a unique doctrine of the Church? How consonant is that doctrine, if there be such, with the two christologies?

Hills places his ecclesiology within his discussion of soteriology, following a chapter combating the Calvinistic doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.⁵⁶ Systematically, it actually is connected to his consideration of the doctrine of sanctification. His definition of the Church reads thus:

The Church of Christ, in its largest sense, consists of all who have been baptized in the name of Christ and have made a profession of their faith in Him, and the doctrines of His Gospel. But in a stricter sense, the Church consists of those, and only those, who have a saving relation to, and vital union with, Christ, as members of His body, and who "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."⁵⁷

Following a very brief discussion of the term *ekhlesia*, Hills moves on to write concerning the duty of every true child of God to be part of the fellowship of the visible church, concerning church government, concerning ordination to ministry; concerning admission and expulsion, and concerning "the legitimate ends of church government."

What is obvious is Hill's commitment to the basic notion of the believers' church, though at the same time, he stoutly defends infant baptism, even offering refutation of those who oppose it.⁵⁸ He argues that baptism admits infants into the Church⁵⁹ but makes no attempt to harmonize the argument with either of his definitions of Church already cited.

Also to be noted is the almost complete absence of any attempt to relate christology to ecclesiology. The terms "body of Christ" and "Bride of Christ" are conspicuously absent, though he does speak (almost pro forma) of "members of His body" in the definition cited.

True, the Church emphasizes "public confession of Christ," and its unity lies in its "common faith in, and loving devotion to, their common Lord," with its aim being "to exalt Jesus as Lord of all."⁶⁰ But why there should be a church for these purposes and how this church gains and retains these privileges and responsibilities are questions left untouched.

It seems that this ecclesiology, as theologically thin as it is, is indeed consonant with Hills' christology, and with his understanding of Christ's presence. He has constructed a theology in which there is no necessary relationship between the major sections at the point of christology. If anything, Hills' theology is held together more by his pneumatology than by any other motif. And the holiness movement has reflected this sort of theology in its ecclesiology in many and profound ways. It prizes worship services in which there is "the freedom of the Spirit," it seeks leadership that is "Spirit-filled," it seeks "the guidance of the Spirit." All of these phrases are of course common coin in the Christian tradition, but the holiness movement has tended to utilize them and reflect upon them apart

from any christological reference. Even the Lord's Supper can be neglected without official or popular rebuke, but entire sanctification must not be neglected. And it must be put in pneumatological terms, as recent reaction to certain debates within the Wesleyan Theological Society has shown.⁶¹

Wiley's ecclesiology also reflects in a consistent way his own christology, including his understanding of Christ's presence.

The church . . . may be regarded as at once the sphere of the Spirit's operations, and the organ of Christ's administration of redemption. As a corporate body, it was founded by our Lord Jesus Christ, and is invested with certain notes and attributes which are representative of His agency among men. . . . It is the Body of Christ, as constituting a mystical extension of the nature of Christ, and consequently is composed of those who have been made partakers of that nature. The relation between Christ and the Church is organic. As such, it embodies and affords on earth, the conditions under which, and by means of which, the Holy Spirit supernaturally extends to men, the redemptive work of Christ. In it and from it, Christ communicates to the membership of this body, the quickening and sanctifying offices of the Holy Spirit, for the extension of His work among men.⁶²

Like Hills, Wiley insists that the Church is "the fellowship and communion of believers." Therefore, "a confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ becomes the one essential requirement for admission to the visible organization."⁶³ Nevertheless, also like Hills, Wiley believes in baptizing children. However, he tends to remove that question from the question of admittance to the Church. He speaks of infant baptism as an application of the benefits of the Atonement to the child, benefits which must be "owned" by the child himself or herself at some determinate point in the future. He insists that baptism places the child "only" in the Abrahamic covenant (cf. Gal. 3; Rom. 4:11-12; Gen. 22:18; 17:10).⁶⁴ In this way, the matter of inclusion in the church is aborted. And, in this way, the Church remains a believers' church for Wiley. Moreover, it retains its christocentric character.

Wiley's ecclesiology, then, is an extension of his christology. It is the ecclesiology which Wiley represents that lies behind most of the formal ecclesiological declarations of the holiness movement. But these are, for the most part, borrowed from early to mid-nineteenth century Methodism, and especially British Methodism as represented in the theologies of Watson and Pope. In practice, the movement has turned to the pneumatologically oriented ecclesiology represented by Hills-ian ecclesiology shaped by the exigencies of the camp meeting. This development may be the source of further, and fruitful, study, but is not central to our purpose here.

Conclusion:

We can now respond to the question "Does the believers' church, in the holiness movement, have a consistently related christology and ecclesiology?" The response is an unhappy one.

There are two basic christologies and two basic ecclesiologies operative

the holiness movement, and they are quite different from, even antithetical to, one another. A. M. Hills serves as reflector and propagator of these pairs, and for him christology and ecclesiology barely touch one another. H. Orton Wiley serves as reflector and propagator of the other, and for him ecclesiology is a logical and theological extension of christology.

At present, the tension between the two points of view is at last being articulated. But what lies in the future with respect to this important question is anybody's guess.

Notes

1By "Holiness Movement" is meant that group of denominations and congregations in North America. (along with their international missions) that affiliate with either Christian Holiness Association or the International Holiness Convention. The largest of these groups are the Salvation Army, Church of the Nazarene, The Wesleyan Church and the Free Methodist Church.

2Especially Richard Watson, *Theological Institutes*, ed. J. M. Clintock, 2 vols. (New York: Nelson & Philips 1850).

3Adam Clarke, *Christian Theology*, ed. S. Dunn (New York: 1835).

4W. B. Pope, *A Compendium of Christian Theology*, 3 vols. (New York: Phillips & Hunt 1881).

5Thomas Ralston, *Elements of Divinity* (Nashville: Morton & Griswold, (Nashville: 1847).

6Amos Binney, *Theological Compend* (Cincinnati: 1858).

7John Miley, *Systematic Theology*, (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1892, 1894).

8Olin Curtis, *The Christian Faith* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1905).

9Miley's *Systematic Theology*, for instance, was required reading in the *A Course of Study for Licensed Ministers* in the Church of the Nazarene from 1911 to 1932, although from 1916 to 1932 it is listed with Ralston's *Elements of Divinity* as an alternative. Curtis' *The Christian Faith*, while not on denominational list pertaining to ministerial education, was a standard text in theological studies at college level; from about 1911 to 1940 or later.

10Aaron Merritt Hills, *Fundamental Christian Theology*, 2 vols. (Pasadena: C. J. Kinne, 1931); hereinafter abbreviated FTC. For a more extended treatment of Hills' theology, especially as it compares with Wiley's, see this author's *AA Study in the Theology of the Early Holiness Movement*, @ *A.M.E. Zion Quarterly Review: Methodist History (News Bulletin)*, April 1975, pp. 61-84.

11FCT 1:5-6. Also cf. FCT 1:346.

12Cf. FCT 1:337-75. Hills is considered opinion is that the doctrine of

"gracious ability," so prized by most Methodists, is not consistent Methodism, and he notes with satisfaction that John Miley rejects it (1:370). Even Hills' doctrine of sanctification owes more to Finney and to Asa Mahan than to Wesley or the Wesleyans; this, in spite of Hills' sharp critique of Finney's development of the dogma (FCT 2:252-56; *Holiness and Power: For the Church and the Ministry* [Cincinnati: 1897], pp. 33-31). Cf. Bassett, "A Study in the Theology," pp. 69-71.

13Cf. note 10 above.

14H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology*, 3 vols. (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1940, 1941); hereinafter abbreviated CT. A one-volume abridgement was published by Wiley and Paul T. Culbertson under the title *Introduction to Christian Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1946); hereinafter abbreviated ICT.

15Miley, *Systematic Theology*, 1:47-54.

16CT 1:53-55; 60-62.

17Miley, *Systematic Theology*, 1:23-39.

18ICT, p. 25; cf. CT 1:60-62.

19Wiley's principal sources, except for John Miley himself, are by and large from the generation of his grandfather. W. B. Pope is cited most often in the CT (170 times), then come John Wesley (91 times), Miley (77 times), Richard Watson (73 times) and Samuel Wakefield (67 times). None of these are Wiley's contemporaries. Only Miley was alive among them when Wiley was born. On the "Wesleyanness" of Pope, see E. Dale Dunlap, "Methodist Theology in Great Britain in the Nineteenth Century," unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Yale, 1956. Robert E. Chiles, *Theological Transition in American Methodism: 1790-1935* (New York, Nashville: Abingdon 1965) says, "Pope stands out as one of the towering figures in all of Methodist theology who with remarkable fidelity recaptured the essence of Wesley's Theology" (p. 34, n. 21). Of Watson, Chiles writes, "Though he preserves the substance of Wesleyan theology, Watson compromises its spirit" (p. 49). Wakefield's *A Complete System of Christian Theology* (Cincinnati: Curts and Jennings, 1869) is among the "American translations" of Watson's *Institutes* (cf. Chiles, p. 54). Such are Wiley's credentials as a Wesleyan.

20Late nineteenth century devotional literature continually warns believers not to confuse states of grace with physical or emotional sensations. For an example of "experience" having become a bland term, cf. George A. Coe, *What Is Christian Education?* (New York: Scribner, 1929), pp. 43-46.

21CT 1:37-52. Hills simply lists experience among the false sources of doctrine (FCT 1:30), but his implicit definition of "experience" is akin to that of Miley. So, none of the three recognize the change in the term since Wesley's time. Wiley does not see that Miley and Hills work with a newer definition; Miley and Hills do not see that their definition is different from Wesley's. Wiley draws heavily upon Pope, of course. But in Pope's British context, the term retained its older meaning in theology while it did take on the newer connotations in common usage.

- 22Edgar P. Ellyson, *Theological Compend* (Chicago and Boston: 1908), pp. 37-38. This work was produced in 1905, but published in 1908 as part of the process in which the Holiness Churches of Christ in the southwest joined the Church of the Nazarene, thus creating a national denomination. Ellyson, then president of Texas Holiness University, originally a Friend, actually wrote the work in reaction to systematic theology. 23FCT 2:25. (Cf. FCT 2:22-31).
- 24CT 2:170. Interestingly enough, Ellyson's brief chapter on christology, at the point of "proving" the divinity of Christ, follows precisely the order of topics (under slightly different titles) criticized by Wiley. Cf. Ellyson, *Theological Compend*, pp. 32-36.
- 25ICT p 27. Cf. also CT 1:34-37.
- 26CT 1:35-36.
- 27CT 1:36-37. Wiley does not deny that the Bible is "the revealed Word of God. " But it is not the Revelation. Its purpose, to Wiley, is instrumental.
- 28CT 2:146-47. Note Wiley's sensitivity to the fact that the Gospels are principally theological treatises, not mere biographies. This was not the usual conservative view at the time of writing. In fact, such a sentiment could attract fusillades from the Fundamentalists.
- 29CT 1:393-94.
- 30CT, 1:415. Cf. CT 1:400-04. Also note Wiley's observation that the doctrine of the Trinity has historically and biblically had "close connection with redemption, and not merely as an abstract metaphysical or theological conception" (CT, 1:394).
- 31E.g. CT 1:39-48. Entering this discussion, Wiley says, "Being the outgrowth of experience, such confessions represent a collective or corporate experience, corrected and tested by a wider group of believers. While not authoritative in the sense of a norm of doctrine, they are an outgrowth of the religious life which owes its origin to Jesus Christ through the Spirit, and must therefore be regarded in a subsidiary sense as true sources of theology" (1:39). Also cf. CT 1:422 and 2:157. In this note and nn. 32 and 33, references to CT 1 are to Wiley's Trinitarian section, in which his christology is begun; references to CT 2 are to his more developed and specific christology.
- 32CT 1:416-17. Also cf. CT 2:155-68.
- 33CT 1:422-38. Also cf. CT 2:167-68.
- 34Pope, *Compendium*, 1:286, quoted in Wiley, CT 1:438-39.
- 35CT 1:439.
- 36FCT 2:293.
- 37Cf. FCT 2:293; Chiles, *Theological Transition*, p. 54.
- 38FCT 2:293.
- 39FCT 2:293.
- 40CT 3:204-05.

41CT 3:205-08.

42CT 3:155.

43CT 3:169.

44CT 3:158-59.

45CT 3:169. The phrase is from Wiley's discussion of baptism, but is clearly applicable to his doctrine of the Eucharist.

46It is under these terms that some in the holiness movement have revived John Wesley's understanding of the Eucharist as a "converting ordinance." That is to say, an unbeliever, coming in confession and repentance, may in faith receive Christ as Saviour in partaking of the elements.

Wiley himself seems to have held this view but did not think it appropriate to propagate it in CT. He nowhere refers to Wesley in his discussion of the Supper. He does draw heavily upon Richard Watson.

47A. M. Hills, *Holiness and Power: For the Church and the Ministry* (Cincinnati: M. W. Knapp, 1897).

48FCT 2:197-213, esp. 211-13.

49FCT 2:212.

50CT 3:7-100.

51CT 3:10-11.

52CT 3:24.

53CT 3:25.

54CT 3:40-46.

55CT 3:45-46.

56FCT 2:282-95. Actually Hills speaks of the church itself only on pp. 282-92. The rest of the chapter is given over to a general statement on the sacraments.

57FCT 3:282.

58FCT 2:325-30.

59FCT 2:326-28.

60FCT 2:283.

61Cf. *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, vols. 13-15 (1978-1980), *passim*.

62CT 3:103.

63CT 3:124.

64CT 3:185-89.

EARLY WESLEYAN VIEWS OF SCRIPTURE

DARYL MCCARTHY

John Wesley

The great founder of Methodism was by his own admission *homo unius libri*, a man of one book.¹ To some it will seem pretentious to ask the question-what was John Wesley's doctrine of Scripture? Surely his attitude toward the Scripture is obvious. But it is important in light of the present battle over the doctrine of Scripture to demonstrate in clear terms and with close reference to his own writings, what actually was Wesley's view of the Scripture. Since later Wesleyans would be greatly influenced by John Wesley's teachings, it is important to examine his views concerning the origin, inspiration, and inerrancy of the Scripture and the practical results of his doctrine of Scripture.

Wesley frequently affirmed his belief that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." At the beginning of a sermon on 1 Cor. 13:1-3 he declared that since we know God is the source of all Scripture, we know the Word therefore to be "true and right concerning all things."² He referred to Scripture as the "oracles of God."³ He as well made frequent appeals to 2 Tim. 3:16. Wesley set forth a brief, simple apologetical argument for divine inspiration of the Bible with the initial proposition being that there are five possible sources of the Scriptures: "good men or angels, bad men or devils, or . . . God." He systematically eliminates all the other choices but God. His conclusion is that "the Bible must be given by divine inspiration."⁴ To be sure men were involved in the transmission of God's Word. Wesley refers to the writers of the Bible as "men divinely inspired."⁵ But still God is the Source and the ultimate Author of the Book. It was He who moved upon the "holy men of old."

Wesley affirmed his belief in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures in a series of letters to a "John Smith."

I am as fully assured today as I am of the shining of the sun that the Scriptures are of God. I cannot possibly deny or doubt it now; yet I may doubt of it to-morrow; as I have heretofore a thousand times, and that after the fullest assurance preceding.

Now, if this be "a demonstration that my former assurance was a mere fancy," then farewell to all revelation at once.⁶

This statement can only be understood in the context that one of the major issues with which Wesley dealt was the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit. He taught that one could know that he was a child of God through the inward witness of the Holy Spirit. To this Mr. Smith countered that some people who had claimed to have had such a witness, later doubted or denied any such witness. Thus, Smith claimed, any certainty of this so-called "knowledge" was destroyed. Wesley rebutted this argument by pointing out that just because today a person really knows and cannot doubt or deny that he is a Christian by the witness of the Spirit does not mean he may not doubt that fact tomorrow. But the fact that he begins to doubt the fact later on, does not destroy the fact that he did know before. Expressed another way, it is possible for the Spirit to cease to bear witness to the person's salvation, which would obviously be the case if the person fell from grace.⁷ To bring his point home with more force Wesley laid aside all his arguments from Origen, Chrysostom, et al., and made the statement quoted above concerning the Scriptures. In essence Wesley was saying, "Just because tomorrow I can doubt the Scriptures as being from God, does not change the fact of the matter, viz., they are from God." Being the unabashedly honest man he was, Wesley admitted to having doubted the Bible many times. Most honest scholars have had questions concerning the divine origin of the Scripture arise many times in the process of their investigation of the Bible.

Wesley's comments on this matter in a later letter (July 1747) to Mr.

Smith further illuminates his intentions.

The facts, whether asserted or denied, are still invariable. . . . I am fully convinced to-day that the Scriptures are of God as that the sun shines. And this conviction (as every good gift) cometh from the Father of lights. Yet I may doubt of it to-morrow. I may throw away the good gift of God.⁸

His point is that one can doubt anything regardless of how certain he has been of it previously. Yet that does not change the truth of the matter.

Wesley once made the statement that he did not like the word "infallible." He was replying to a letter from Mr. Smith when he said, " 'Infallible testimony' was your word, not mine: I never use it; I do not like it."⁹ However it must be noted that the discussion is not about the infallibility of the Bible. The case which Wesley was attempting to prove was that it is

possible for a person to believe he is a Christian, to feel that he is, to think he has the witness of the Spirit-and yet not be. In what sense is the witness of the Spirit to the individual concerning his salvation infallible? Wesley replied that in no sense at all is it infallible. It is too easy for finite fallible human beings to think they have the witness when in actuality they do not. But this in no sense denies the infallibility of the Scriptures.

In a letter to the editor of Lloyd 's Evening Post Wesley protested concerning some remarks which had been made on a new edition of the Koran. He rejected the objections which had been made to the Mosaic creation account and to God's preference of the Jews. He responded to the suggestion that the devil could have invented the sacrificial system, to the

argument that prophecy negates free will, and to the claim that "only the words of Christ Himself are the pure, original Scriptures." He went on to proclaim,

I cannot but repeat the observation, wherein experience confirms me more and more, that they who disbelieve the Bible will believe anything. They may believe Voltaire! They may believe the Shastah! They may believe a man can put himself into a quart bottle.¹⁰

Wesley's own clear statements confirm his belief in the inerrancy of Scriptures. In 1776 Wesley commented in his Journal on Jenyn's tract *Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion* by saying though it was an admirable piece, it was hard to tell whether Mr. Jenyn was a Christian, a deist, or an atheist.

If he is a Christian, he betrays his own cause by averring that "all Scripture is not given by inspiration of God, but the writers of it were sometimes left to themselves, and consequently made some mistakes." Nay, if there be any mistakes in the Bible there may as well be a thousand. If there be one falsehood in that book. it did not come from the God of truth.¹¹

Thus Wesley in unequivocal terms denies any other position concerning Holy Scripture but that of inerrancy.

In his remarks on Matthew 1:1 in his *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, concerning possible problems in the genealogy of Jesus, Wesley affirms that the genealogies are inerrant in all they affirm.

If there were any difficulties in this genealogy, or that given by St. Luke, which could not easily be removed, they would rather affect the Jewish tables than the credit of the evangelists; for they act only as historians, setting down these genealogies as they stood in those public and allowed records. Therefore they were to take them as they found them. Nor was it needful they should correct the mistakes, if there were any. For these sufficiently answer the end for which they are recited. They unquestionably prove the grand point in view, that Jesus was of the family from which the promised Seed was to come. And they had more weight with the Jews for this purpose than if alterations had been made by inspiration itself. For such alterations would have occasioned endless disputes between them and the disciples of our Lord.¹²

Wesley was simply saying what most defenders of inerrancy would say, viz., that the Bible is inerrant in what it affirms. But it should be noted that he did not say there were definitely mistakes in the genealogy. Rather, he merely recognized the possibility of mistakes-not on the part of the inspired authors, but in the Jewish records. He did not feel that his biblical critical knowledge at that time warranted a definite statement either way concerning genealogical problems. Wesley affirmed that Matthew and Luke were inspired as they reported the traditional genealogical tables of the Jews which may have been in error. Thus, Wesley, while recognizing

problems and gaps in our understanding, affirmed in unequivocal terms once more, the inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures. As he stated, " 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,' consequently, all Scripture is infallibly true."13

John Wesley's practical use and view of the Bible in his ministry only provides stronger demonstration for the reality of his belief in the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible. He constantly referred to and exhorted his people to be "Bible-Christians."14 Deriders of the Holy Club called them "Bible-bigots" and "Bible-moths" who "fed upon the Bible, as moths do upon cloth."15 In fact John Wesley went so far as to repeatedly warn against using frivolous modern terms, but rather to use Bible terminology so far as is possible. He called himself a "bigot" to the Bible and Bible language.16

He preached that "all who desire the grace of God are to wait for it in searching the Scriptures." Thus hearing, reading, and meditating upon the Scriptures serve as a means of grace.17 Yet he condemned in strong terms the fanaticism that led some to claim that Christians should read only the Bible. He pointed out that if one does that, then to be consistent one must do away with all sermons.18

The preaching of Christian perfection raised a furor among other schools of theology. Inevitably the charge arose that the Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification was unscriptural. In his reply to such accusations the founder of the revival of holiness indicated his solid position that the Bible is to be our sole rule of faith and practice.

I therein build on no authority, ancient or modern, but the Scripture. If this supports any doctrine, it will stand; if not, the sooner it falls the better. Neither the doctrine in question nor any other is anything to me, unless it be the doctrine of Christ and His Apostles.... I search for truth, plain Bible truth. . . .19

In another letter he affirmed that "The Scriptures are a complete rule of faith and practice; and they are clear in all necessary points."20 He especially emphasized the supremacy of the Scriptures in response to the mystics who promulgated the doctrine that the private guidance of the Spirit was more important than the rule of the Bible.21 He was most concerned that his followers not be taken up with fanatical legalism but rather instructed them to "enjoin nothing that the Bible does not clearly enjoin. Forbid nothing that it does not clearly forbid."22

Wesley's hermeneutic was direct and uncomplicated.

The general rule of interpreting Scripture is this: the literal sense of every text is to be taken, if it be not contrary to some other texts: but in that case the obscure text is to be interpreted by those which speak more plainly.23

He quoted Clement of Alexandria to support his assertion that "the Scripture is the best expounder on itself." 24 He freely admitted that not all Christians agree on the interpretation of many passages, but pointed out that this is certainly not proof that they are not true Christians. Tongue-in-cheek, he asserts that it is a proof only that we should "no more expect living men to be infallible, than to be omniscient."25

One of the strongest indications of the value Wesley placed on the Bible comes in the training and demands on the Methodist preachers. The founder of Methodism declared that one cannot be a "good Divine" without being a "good textuary." A minister of the Word ought to "know the literal meaning of every word, verse, and chapter..." He also demanded that his preachers have a knowledge of the original languages of the Bible.²⁶

It is evident that John Wesley, the great founder of Methodism and the fountainhead of the movement which bears his name held an extremely high view of the Holy Bible. While recognizing that our understanding is fallible and our interpretations may differ, he held unequivocally that the Bible comes to us by the inspiration of God and is consequently infallible and inerrant. His doctrinal position was demonstrated in practical terms in his many sermons, letters, and exhortations. Wesley, while warning against what is now termed "bibliolatry," did preach that the Bible was a means of grace and was to be our sole rule of faith and practice.

Adam Clarke

Adam Clarke (1760-1832), the great commentator and prominent leader in early Methodism, held a very high view of Scripture. His commentary, which was his greatest work (published in parts between 1810 and 1825), evinces a high regard and devotion for the Word.

Clarke frequently affirmed his belief in the plenary inspiration and infallibility of Scripture. In his creed which he adopted early in his Christian life and maintained throughout his career he stated his position:

The Sacred Scriptures or Holy Books . . . contain a full revelation of the will of God, in reference to man; and are alone sufficient for every thing relative to the faith and practice of a Christian, and were given by the inspiration of God.²⁷

In a sermon on Romans 15:4 he declared, "We must ever consider these Scriptures as coming from God, as divinely inspired, and as containing his infallible truth."²⁸ His article "General Account of the Sacred Writings" affirms his acceptance of the sixty-six book canon and states that the Bible is "the only complete directory of the faith and practice of men."²⁹

In his commentary Clarke presents two principles in favor of the divine inspiration of the Bible. First, the Scripture teaches the inspiration of the Holy Spirit concerning itself. The fact that the Gospels and Acts were written several years after the events forces us to believe that Jesus' promise of the instruction of the apostles by the Holy Spirit in recalling His words (John 14:26), was indeed fulfilled in a very real way. Also the Scripture addresses itself variously as the Word of God, the commandment of God, the wisdom of God, the testimony of God, the gospel of God, the gospel of Christ, and the mystery of His will. The second principle was that the apostles themselves were assured of the inspiration and assistance of the Holy Spirit of Truth as is indicated in several passages, e.g., Zech. 1:6; 1 Pet. 1:12; 2 Pet. 1:1; 1 Cor. 2:10, 12, 13.³⁰

Clarke denied the mechanical dictation theory however. Even though he taught that "the words contained in it [Scripture] were inspired by the Holy Spirit into the minds of faithful men. . . ." ³¹ he insisted that his doctrine of inspiration was not a system of mechanical dictation, but was

contrary to such a theory. In cases in which the writers already had knowledge about the subject matter, the only inspiration required was that which . . . will assure us of the truth of what they wrote, whether by inspiration of suggestion, or direction only; but not for such an inspiration as implies that even their words were dictated, or their phrases suggested to them by the Holy Ghost. . . . Although this might be done in some cases, as in 1 Cor. 2:13. The inspiration of the Holy Spirit kept them from "error in their reasonings" and from making invalid doctrinal inferences from the Old Testament which would be contrary "to the true intent and meaning of them." Mechanical dictation is refuted by: (1) the fact that the writers were "hagiographers, who are supposed to be left to the use of their own words;"(2) the variety in style and solecisms; and (3) the author's own words in Scriptures which indicate a clear freedom of human expression, as in cases in which uncertainty, doubt, or ignorance are evinced (e.g., Rom. 15:24, 28; 1 Cor. 1:16;16:5; 2 Cor. 1:15-17; etc.).³²

However, in his comments on 2 Pet. 1:20, 21, Clarke indicates that the Scripture writers were sometimes

. . . carried away, out of themselves and of the whole region, as it were, of human knowledge and conjecture, by the Holy Ghost, who, without their knowing anything of the matter, dictated to them what to speak, and what to write, and so far above their knowledge were the words of prophecy, that they did not even know the intent of those words. . . .³³

Thus a greater degree of inspiration was necessary when the authors were to write about things they had little or no natural knowledge concerning, than when they were writing about things with which they were quite familiar.

Clarke strongly believed in the eternal applicability of God's Word. In his practical suggestions on how to read the Bible he advised Christians to read it as the very word of God Himself because God "considers it as much his word now as he did when he first spoke it."³⁴

Clarke stoutly defended the canonicity and textual purity of the Scriptures. The canon as we have it is complete and totally authentic. The Scriptures have been transmitted to us "without addition, defalcation, or willful corruption of any kind." He refers to 2 Tim. 3:16-17 in support of this. The textual variants are not significant enough to lead to any doctrinal error or obscurity or confusion in moral practice. "All is safe and sound,-all pure and holy, it is ... the unadulterated gospel of Jesus Christ...." With regard to supposed contradictions, he admits a problem over 1 John 5:7 which he did not feel was yet fully settled. But he did feel that the Joshua 21:35-36 problem is solved by 1 Chron. 6:78-79.³⁵

Finally, Clarke affirmed the inerrancy of Scripture. In his article on "The Principles of the Christian Religion," he stated, "The Bible . . . is a revelation from God himself and declares his will relative to the salvation of men . . . men may err, but the Scriptures cannot; for it is the Word of God himself, who can neither mistake, deceive, nor be deceived."³⁶ He frequently and approvingly quoted the saying concerning Scriptures that they have "God for their Author, salvation for their end, and truth, without mixture of error, for their matter."³⁷ In his Commentary he categorically stated that

"The apostles were assisted and preserved from error by the Spirit of God; and therefore were enabled to deliver to us an unerring rule of faith." The Holy Spirit did not permit them "to err in the delivery of what was thus indited in his name or which they had written as apostles of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ."³⁸ Clarke took inerrancy of Scripture as meaning that it is without error in what it affirms as matter of fact, and not necessarily inerrant in what it does not affirm. For instance, the chronological sequence of recorded events may not be necessarily contained in historical accounts, unless such chronological sequence is itself affirmed. Furthermore, in the recording of conversations it is not necessary to have "the very words" but the "true intent and meaning" of the exact words. However, John 14:20 does promise exactness in the recording of Jesus' exact words.³⁹

Richard Watson

Richard Watson (1781-1833), the first systematic theologian of early Wesleyanism, propounded a doctrine of Scripture which was quite identical to that of John Wesley and Adam Clarke. Interestingly enough, in *Theological Institutes*, Watson developed no systematic doctrine of Scripture and inspiration. He treated revelation extensively but only in an apologetical manner and not a doctrinal manner. The only specific *Institutes* reference to the inerrancy of Scripture comes as almost an aside remark (which we shall examine shortly).

However, in his *Conversations for the Young*, he develops a more lengthy treatment of inspiration. He defines inspiration as meaning-"The sacred writers composed their works under so plenary and immediate an influence of the Holy Spirit, that God may be said to speak by them to man, and not merely that they spoke to men in the name of God, and by his authority."⁴⁰

From this base Watson developed several principles concerning inspiration of Scripture in this "Conversation."

(1) The Bible is inerrant. The doctrine that God spoke via Scriptures to men and not merely that the authors of Scripture spoke by God's authority "secures the Scriptures from all error both as to the subjects spoken and the manner of expressing them." Watson drew no qualifying lines and made no equivocation on the subject. Later in this same "Conversation" he affirms that the Holy Spirit exerted sufficient influence upon the whole of Holy Writ that as it was being written by human authors "it became truth without mixture of error."⁴¹ Scriptural phrases such as "The Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake," "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the Prophet," and such verses as 2 Peter 1:21 affirm the inerrancy of the words in the Word of God.

(2) The term "Scriptures" is used in the Bible as applicable not only to the Old Testament writings but also to New Testament material and treats the books written under divine inspiration as a special class of writings and as a collective whole.⁴²

(3) The apostles claim inspiration not only with regard to their general topics but also inspiration with regard to their very words. Such inspiration was provided for by the Lord when He promised the Spirit would "guide them into all truth" and that when they were called upon to testify, the

very words would be given them. Paul as well claimed verbal inspiration in 1 Cor. 2:13. Thus, as has often been said, the inspired waters were indeed "the penmen of the Holy Ghost."⁴³

(4) The differences in style and individual traits can be accounted for by the fact that while the Holy Spirit guided the men by suggestion or even overruling the selection of certain words, He still permitted the men to write with their own styles and unique personalities. "The verbiage, style, and manner of each was not so much displaced, as elevated, enriched, and employed by the Holy Spirit...." There is as well an evident "previous fitness" of each of the writers for their particular subject areas." Thus Paul's abilities fitted him to write on doctrine and practice while Luke was better equipped to write on history.

(5) We may assume that there were varying degrees of the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the writers as they wrote. Certainly the recording of commonly known historical events did not require a high degree of inspiration or a miracle of memory. Their plenary inspiration consisted in this:

that they were kept from all lapses of memory, or inadequate conceptions, even on these subjects; and on all others the degree of communication and influence, both as to doctrine, facts, and the terms in which they were to be recorded for the edification of the church, was proportioned to the necessity of the case, but so that the whole was authenticated or dictated by the Holy Spirit with so full an influence, that it became truth without mixture of error, expressed in such terms as he himself ruled or suggested.⁴⁵

Elsewhere in his Conversations Watson argues that since Christ declares that the Old Testament is divinely inspired, "the same arguments which prove the Messiahship of Christ, and the inspiration of the Apostles, prove, consequently, the truth, the uncorruptness, and the authority of all the books of the Old Testament...."⁴⁶ In his sermon "The Oracles of God" he declares that since the Scriptures are from God, their truth and wisdom is as "demonstrable" as the wisdom and holiness of God Himself.⁴⁷

Besides these five principles from the Conversations, we must look at the only direct reference to the inerrancy of the Word in the Theological Institutes which comes in a reply to the objection that the Bible is not accurate enough to be judged by scientific standards; it was not written as a science textbook. It comes in a discussion concerning objections to the Mosaic account of creation.

If Moses professes by Divine inspiration to give an account of the manner in which the world was framed, he must describe the facts as they occurred; and if he has assigned a date to its creation out of nothing, that date, if given by an infallible authority, cannot be contradicted by true philosophy.⁴⁸

While Watson couches his points about the creation in hypothetical rhetorical terms, it is the principles which he recognizes which are of significance. We see that he believed (1) that the Bible writers "must describe the facts as they occurred"; (2) that the information contained in the Word was given by "an infallible authority"; and (3) therefore, such facts

could not be contradicted. The Bible must be factually correct in all matters about which it speaks. It is inerrant in science and history, as well as in matters of faith.

Watson defended the textual purity of the manuscripts not only in his lengthy treatment in the Institutes but also in his Conversations. He claimed that the textual variants do not affect the credibility or integrity of the text and that the Bible is the most "critically correct" and "satisfactorily perfect" of any ancient work.⁴⁹

In various sermons and articles Watson stated several practical principles concerning the Scripture.

(1) As "the expression of the mind of God" and "a perfect revelation of the truth," Scripture is accompanied and used by the Holy Spirit in a powerful manner in the hearts of men.⁵⁰

(2) The salvation of the world is to be gained by "the ministry of the Word."⁵¹

(3) Scripture helps make the messages of conscience and natural revelation more understandable.⁵²

(4) "The only standard of doctrine" is the Scripture.⁵³

(5) "Every course of conduct" can be universally and easily judged by the rule furnished by Scripture.⁵⁴

(6) The Scriptures are the source of all true moral knowledge and influence.⁵⁵

(7) The Christian's response to Scriptural revelation is to be found in "full submission to its authority."⁵⁶

Summary

Thus, we have seen that the early Wesleyans unanimously and unequivocally affirmed their belief in the divine inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures. Mechanical dictation is rejected by all, though Wesley does not deal with this particular view quite as clearly as do Clarke and Watson. There is a strong emphasis among all of them on the practical role and functions of the Word both in the community of believers and in their individual lives.

All three are especially clear in their affirmation of the inerrancy of Scripture. Wesley averred that "if there be any mistakes in the Bible, there may as well be a thousand. If there be one falsehood in that book, it did not come from God." Clarke declared that "men may err, but the Scriptures cannot- for it is the Word of God himself, who can neither mistake, deceive, nor be deceived." "The apostles were assisted and preserved from error by the Spirit of God." Hence, Scripture is "truth, without mixture of error." Watson defended the doctrine that God's authority "secures the Scriptures from all error both as to the subject spoken and the manner of expressing them" and spoke of the Bible as being "truth without mixture of error."

Let us close our study of the early Wesleyan views of Scripture by meditating upon a portion of one of the worshipful poems the Wesleys penned concerning,

"The Word of God."
The Word of God by all confess'd,
Of truth the' indubitable test
My perfect rule I own;
The Word which doth His mind reveal
To those who would perform His will
And worship Him alone.⁵⁷

Notes

- 1John Wesley, *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, 8 vols., ed. John Telford (London: Epworth, 1931), 4:299.
- 2John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 14 vols. (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1872; rep. ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 8:45-46.
- 3Wesley, *Works*, 14:252.
- 4Wesley, *Works*, 11:484.
- 5Wesley, *Works*, 10:90.
- 6Wesley, *Letters*, 2:92.
- 7Wesley, *Letters*, 2:89.
- 8Wesley, *Letters*, 2:103.
- 9Wesley, *Letters*, 2:59.
- 10Wesley, *Letters*, 6:120-23.
- 11John Wesley, *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, 8 vols., ed. Nehemiah Curnock (London: Epworth Press, 1909; rep. ed. 1938), 6:117.
- 12John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* (rep. ed., London: Epworth Press, 1958), p. 15.
- 13Wesley, *Works*, 5:193.
- 14Wesley, *Works*, 5:54, 137; 6:30, 100; 7:74, 331; 8:349.
- 15Richard Green, *John Wesley, Evangelist* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1905), pp. 76-77.
- 16Wesley, *Letters*, 5:313.
- 17Wesley, *Works*, 5:192-93.
- 18Wesley, *Letters*, 4:91, 93; 6:130.
- 19Wesley, *Letters*, 3:157-58.
- 20Wesley, *Letters*, 2:325. Cf. *Works*, 10:90.
- 21Wesley, *Letters*, 2:117.
- 22Wesley, *Letters*, 8:192. Cf. *Works*, 5:136.
- 23Wesley, *Letters*, 3:129; 5:328.
- 24Wesley, *Works*, 10:94.
- 25John Wesley, *Wesley's Standard Sermons*, ed. Edward H. Sugden, 2 vols. (London: Epworth, 1951), 2:154.
- 26Wesley, *Works*, 10:482-83, 490-91.
- 27J. B. B. Clarke, ed., *An Account of the Infancy, Religious and Literary Life of Adam Clarke*, 3 vols. (London: T. S. Clarke, 1833), 1:172.
- 28Adam Clarke, *Miscellaneous Works*, 13 vols. (London: T. Tegg 1839-45), 6:420.
- 29Adam Clarke, *Works*, 12:80, 83, 122.

- 30Adam Clarke, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, 6 vols. (New York: Abingdon, n.d), 5:11-12.
- 31Adam Clarke, *Works*, 12:132.
- 32Adam Clarke, *Commentary*, 5:9-10
- 33Adam Clarke, *Commentary*, 6:883.
- 34Adam Clarke, *Works*, 11:416.
- 35Adam Clarke, *Works*, 6:388, 415.
- 36Adam Clarke, *Works*, 12:132.
- 37Adam Clarke, *Works*, 11:406.
- 38Adam Clarke, *Commentary*, 5:9, 11.
- 39Adam Clarke, *Commentary*, 5:10.
- 40Richard Watson, *The Works of the Rev. Richard Watson*, 12 vols. (London: John Mason, 1834-37), 6:11.
- 41Watson, *Works*, 6:11, 14.
- 42Watson, *Works*, 6:12.
- 43Watson, *Works*, 6:12.
- 44Watson, *Works*, 6:13.
- 45Watson, *Works*, 6:14
- 46Watson, *Works*, 6:81.
- 47Watson, *Works*, 4:47.
- 48Richard Watson, *Theological Institutes*, J. M'Clintock, ed., 2 vols., 26th ed. (New York: Carlton and Lanahan, n.d.), 1:248.
- 49Watson, *Works*, 6:173.
- 50Watson, *Works*, 4:82-83.
- 51Watson, *Works*, 2:9-10.
- 52Watson, *Works*, 1:464.
- 53Watson, *Works*, 12:199.
- 54Watson, *Works*, 4:464.
- 55Watson, *Works*, 4:460-61.
- 56Watson, *Works*, 4:400.
- 57G. Osborn, comp. *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, 13 vols. (London: Wesleyan Methodist Conference Office, 186), 13:258-59.

THE USE OF THE AORIST TENSE IN HOLINESS EXEGESIS

RANDY MADDOX

The purpose of this article is twofold. First, I will present a brief historical review of the way in which the aorist tense has been used by many holiness advocates. Then I will summarize the current grammatical understanding of the aorist tense and suggest some of the implications for holiness exegesis.

Historical Survey

When one reads recent holiness proponents who make reference to the aorist tense in connection with their exposition of holiness, he finds them speaking almost in unison. They assert that the aorist tense is an indicator of the "crisicnature" of sanctification. To quote W. T. Purkiser, the aorist tense is "another impressive line of evidence for the instantaneousness of sanctification. . . ."1 Wiley expresses himself by stating that ". . . when the aorist is used, it denotes a momentary, completed act without reference to time."2 And, more recently, Richard Howard has stated that "the basic significance of the aorist aktionsart is that it depicts a crisis act in distinction from a progressive process"3 (emphasis is Howard's). All three of these men happen to represent the Church of the Nazarene, but similar statements can be found in other circles of holiness advocates as well.4 The essence of these accounts is that the use of the aorist tense proves that a certain action is of an instantaneous, once for-all character. From where does this understanding come? When one checks the references listed for support, he does find reference to some Greek grammars; but they are normally of only an introductory level or of a relatively old date.5 Also, it is noticed that most of the references are very abbreviated, not considering some of the important contextual relationships in the original source. The overall impression is that the authors get their basic idea from somewhere other than their own study of the Greek grammars. This is confirmed when it is observed that in their exposition of the use of the aorist tense they all lean very heavily on a chapter in Mile-Stone Papers by Daniel Steele 6 and on a book by Olive Winchester that is self-admittedly written in defense of Steele.7

In these two books then, we have the primary exposition of the understanding of the aorist tense in holiness circles. Therefore, I will deal with them, understanding that any conclusions I reach will reflect on the other books that use them for a source. Steele in his article which I believe to be the first of its kind in holiness circles, uses as his primary source on the aorist tense an intermediate Greek grammar by W. Goodwin.⁸ He quotes Goodwin on the aorist tense to the effect that "the aorist indicative indicates simple momentary occurrence of an action in the past time."⁹ He then proceeds to infer from this that the aorist always refers to a momentary, once-for-all action.¹⁰ In this inference he has missed the point of Goodwin's statement by confusing the difference between (a) speaking of something as a whole in the simplest possible manner, and (b) actually implying that the event is instantaneous. Goodwin did not mean to imply that the latter was always the case as is seen when he says that the aorist must be conceived as having "none of the limitations as to completion or repetition."¹¹ My point is that Steele's thesis, which has become almost a maxim in some holiness circles, is based primarily on an inadequate understanding of one statement in an intermediate grammar that was written before the turn of the century and before the extraordinary amount of work that has taken place in Greek grammar during this century.

The one objection that can be raised against this analysis is the book by Winchester. For in this book we find reference to some of the leading Greek scholars of our time by a proficient Greek instructor who believes she has supported Steele's thesis. I would start my discussion of this book by first saying that it is the only serious grammatical approach to this issue of which I am aware. However, it makes the same false assumption as Steele that the "manner of speaking" of an aorist tense can be equated with the "manner of reality." This is most evident in her discussion of A. T. Robertson whom she refers to as the leading authority of her time. In particular she illustrates

this in her discussion of what Robertson called the constative aorist. In essence the constative aorist is a use that views a process which took a period of time to complete from a "bird's eye view." The point is that this type of aorist normally does not refer to a crisis action. Winchester finds it impossible to deny that this type of aorist does occur.¹² However, she assumes this is a minor usage and not characteristic of the fundamental significance of the aorist.¹³ She does realize that the nature of the verb is important in deciding the significance of the aorist but feels she can conclude by quoting Robertson that, essentially, the aorist tense ". . . always means point-action."¹⁴ Unfortunately, she does not quote the next sentence in Robertson where he adds, "The tense has nothing to do with the fact of the action, but only with the way it is stated."¹⁵ Moreover, Robertson argues that the constative aorist is the most common type of aorist in the New Testament and is the one that truly defines the nature of the aorist,¹⁶ as opposed to Winchester. At first the difference may seem slight, but it is the difference between expecting the aorist to be referring to a crisis event unless it can be proven otherwise or the reverse of only assuming crisis content in the aorist when the context demands it. The first position has been that of the majority of holiness proponents. The second is the position of the leading Greek grammarians and, I believe, the one true to the Greek language. I will attempt to show this by now turning to a brief summary of

the significance of the aorist tense as found in many of the important recent grammars.¹⁷

Grammatical Summary

The first step in describing the aorist tense is to compare it with the other main tenses. Robertson's summary is helpful at this point:

The three essential kinds of action are thus momentary or punctiliar when the action is regarded as a whole and may be represented by a dot (.), linear or durative action which may be represented by a continuous line _____, and the continuation of perfected or completed action which may be represented by this graph .____. ¹⁸

The aorist tense is essentially the first kind of action described, which is represented by a dot. However, a very important distinction must be held in mind. The point is not meant to suggest a temporal quality of singleness, for time is not essential to the aorist. The action of the aorist is timeless (outside of the indicative mood) and is best defined as action in "its simplest form."¹⁹ Indeed, the Greek term *aoristos* means "undefined." As Turner expresses it, "Sometimes the aorist will not even express momentary or punctiliar action but will be non-committal; it regards the action as a whole without respect to its duration."²⁰

At this point some clarity can be gained by confronting an apparent assumption of the approach to the aorist tense taken by the holiness proponents referred to above. While it is seldom expressed explicitly, there is evident in much of their discussion the assumption that the present tense is the fundamental or ground tense in the Greek language (evidently because the lexical form is in the present tense) and that the use of the aorist tense is always for purposes of emphasis. On the contrary, it can be shown that the aorist tense is the ground tense, expressing simple action, and that the present and perfect tenses are the ones utilized for emphasis. Robertson himself expresses this view, both regarding logical priority ²¹ and its actual usage. He summarizes:

As I see it, the aorist preserved the simple action and the other tenses grew up around it. It is true that in the expression of past time in the indicative and with all the other moods, the aorist is the tense used as a matter of course, unless there was special reason for using some other tense. It gives the action "an und für sich."²²

Further confirmation of this is found in the *mi* conjugation verbs. This is the oldest conjugation of the verb, comprised of the elementary stem of the verb plus the personal pronouns.²³ The important point for our purposes is that the stem of this conjugation is found in the aorist tense, not the present-which utilizes a reduplication in its form. Here the aorist is the base form morphologically as well as logically. Also, comparison with other languages such as Hebrew and Sanskrit will show a similar phenomenon. This should establish Robertson's point that one should see the aorist as primarily the most simple way to express a verb, without meaning to imply anything as to its continuity or lack thereof.

Having thus established the basic meaning of the aorist, it is important to differentiate three shades of emphasis which can be found within this basic meaning. Moulton summarizes this well when he defines the aorist as punctiliar action which:

. . . represents the point of entrance (Ingressive, as *balein* "let fly," *basileusai* "come to the throne"), or that of completion (Effective, as *balein* "hit"), or it looks at a whole action simply as having occurred, without distinguishing any steps in its progress (Constative, as *basileusai* "reign," or as when a sculptor says of his statue, *epoiesen ho deina* "X. made it").²⁴

Moulton illustrates this distinction with the graph: A -->--- B, denoting motion from A to B. Emphasis on A is characteristic of the ingressive idea. Emphasis on B is characteristic of the effective, and the constative would be "the line reduced to a point for perspective."²⁵ A convenient example of each of these can be found in the first chapter of the Gospel of John. The ingressive is no doubt found in *egeneto* (1:14) which suggests the beginning of the incarnated life. The effective is found in the use of *elabomen* (1:16) referring to the completion of the activity of receiving. And the constative use is obvious in *eskenosen* (1:14) where the whole of Jesus' life is summarized. More explicit and detailed lists of examples of these three shades of meaning can be found in both Moulton²⁶ and Robertson.²⁷

The question which now arises is how one determines which of these three shades of meaning is to be understood in a particular passage. Robertson sums it up by saying that we must consider the "total result of word (meaning, rm), context and tense."²⁸ That is, the context and the meaning of the word are the primary categories (assuming the tense is aorist). Here Burton is helpful when he points out that the ingressive aorist belongs primarily to verbs which denote the continuance of a state (such as *sigain* "to be silent"; *sigesai* "to become silent"). And that the effective aorist belongs to verbs which denote effort or attempt (such as *koluein* "to hinder"; *kolusai* "to prevent," i.e. "to succeed in hindering").²⁹ The constative is the predominant use in the Greek of the New Testament and embraces most of the remaining verbs.

In dealing with the constative idea, another point needs to be made. We have already seen that it refers to the way one "sees" the action, not to the activity itself. Thus one can speak of a forty-six-years construction of the temple in the aorist (John 2:20) or of a single act such as the anointing of a man's eyes (John 9:6). The decision between these alternatives cannot be made on the basis of the tense alone but rather primarily from the context and in some cases from the meaning of the verb. Thus, for example, if one were to say, "I shot the gun," in Greek using the aorist tense, it would be impossible to determine if only one shot were fired or if more than one, unless the context specified. This point is of crucial importance to our investigation.

Before leaving the subject of the constative aorist, one more point should be stressed. This is the growing predominance of the constative usage in New Testament Greek. Moulton deals with this at length in the context of a discussion on the relation of the constative aorist to the use of perfective

prepositions.³⁰ His primary point is that the use of the perfective prepositions usurps much of the realm of the ingressive and effective aorists in regular verbs, leaving the verb simplex with primarily the constative meaning in its occurrences. Also, the number of aorists referring to single actions is said to decline.³¹ The result of all this is that we must give the constative aorist much more emphasis in exegesis than has usually been done.

We have now finished summarizing the essential meaning of the aorist. This would apply to the use of the aorist in the indicative (where the idea of past time is added to the concept of aorist aspect), as well as to the imperative and subjunctive, infinitive and participle. There are, however, two special usages we must discuss briefly before closing this section.

The first special usage is that of the aorist participle in the predicate position. As is well known, this is usually translated as a circumstantial or supplemental clause, showing action prior to the action of the main verb to which it is related. However, both Robertson and Moulton show several examples where the aorist participle shows action that is simultaneous with the action of the main verb.³²

The second special usage is in regard to prohibitions in Greek. It has come to be accepted as a rule that the present prohibition implies the cessation of an activity already underway while the aorist prohibition refers to the forbidding of an action prior to its inception. Robertson and Moulton both agree with this general rule;³³ however, they stress that the writings of Paul do not seem to be totally amenable to this distinction.³⁴ This is especially true regarding the present imperative where it seems hard to believe, for instance, that he means to imply that Timothy was neglecting his "charism" in 1 Timothy 4:14. The most widely accepted solution proposed to this problem is that the present prohibition is not aimed so much at the forbidding of a present action as at the enjoining of a negative action, as per Gildersleeve.³⁵ Thus *me poiei* which is normally translated, "Stop doing!", may be translated, "Do not do, as you are in danger of doing!" or "Continue not doing!" However, I would add a caution that such renderings should be utilized only when they are shown to be necessary by the contextual inappropriateness of the usual rendering.

Exegetical Investigations

With this summary of the meaning of the aorist tense in mind, we can now return to our primary question—What is the significance of the aorist tense in the area of holiness exegesis? To answer this question it is beneficial to first present a brief excursus on the doctrine of holiness. Following Turner ³⁶ I recognize four basic aspects that are found in some form in holiness thought. The first aspect is that of positional holiness, or the holiness derived from association with the Divine. This aspect is accepted by virtually all of Christianity. The second aspect (logically the last) is that of final glorification or the belief that the eschatological goal for man is perfect conformity to God's will. This too is universally accepted. The third aspect is one that is more distinguishing of holiness groups, namely the belief that there should be a growing expression of actual holiness in the person who is already positionally holy. That is, the holiness movement takes seriously the demands of the gospel for a change in the life of the Christian. The final aspect is the crucial one that has become the

demarcation line between the holiness movement and other members of the Christian fellowship. Essentially, this aspect is the assertion that there is some sense in which the Christian can be completely or "entirely" holy in this life. It is crucial, however, to note that this perfection" of holiness is normally conceived of in terms of commitment and not faultless expression.³⁷ Also, it must be noted that the "completeness" of this experience is normally asserted through the endorsement of a second "crisis" in the life of the believer at which time he makes the total commitment to God.

The question of our investigation is whether the aorist tense can indicate the action of a verb expressing holiness to be of this "crisis" nature. We have seen that it does not do so in and of itself. The only way that such an interpretation could be made is by a careful consideration of both the tense of the verb, the meaning of the word, and the context. Therefore, to attempt to answer the question, I will now undertake an analysis of several of the key passages put forth by Steele and others as proofs of their position and determine if these passages really suggest this idea. During these investigations I will make other general reflections on the relation of the aorist tense to the doctrine of holiness as well.

I will first consider the passages which utilize the word *hagiazo*, "to sanctify." As one works with this word, he becomes aware that it has two major shades of meaning. In an active sense it means to consecrate or dedicate an object or person (including one's self to divinity. In the New Testament this sense is limited to the activity of God and Jesus. Thus in John 7:17 Jesus prays for God to "sanctify" the disciples through the truth. Since this is a verb expressing effort, it is probably best seen as an effective aorist. This use of the aorist stresses fulfillment. It need not however imply crisis-fulfillment, for no implication as to the precedents of the fulfillment is made.³⁸ Jesus' use of the aorist shows that He believes the request can reach a stage of fulfillment, though not necessarily in an instantaneous act. The same meaning is probably found in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, where Paul prays for God to "sanctify" the Thessalonians completely. Especially when viewed in its eschatological context which is very evident here, Paul is referring primarily to the actuality of this being fulfilled. The question, of course, is whether he is here using a parallelism with the next statement, thus making "final glorification" (the second aspect of holiness given above) the meaning of "sanctify." However this is decided, Paul's assumption of the possibility of fulfillment cannot be denied.

The second main sense in which *hagiazo* can be used is the passive one. This is the sense used when it is applied to men. In this sense it means primarily to be in a state of holiness.³⁸ As such, the aorist form is best seen as stressing the ingressive aspect. Thus, in John 17:19 when Jesus says the is that His followers might be sanctified, the emphasis seems to be that they might enter the state of being holy. Again, one can maintain the actuality of the entry from the use of the aorist tense, but he cannot insist that it was a crisis entry. Indeed, in this particular passage the concern appears to center on the present actuality with no reflection on the precedents, as is suggested by the usage of a present punctiliar periphrastic form of the verb. The question that now arises is what type of holiness is referred to here. Kittel 40 expresses the opinion of most exegetes that it is primarily the positional holiness of salvation brought

about by relationship to Jesus (see 17-23). He bases this on the uses of *hagiazo* in Hebrews, where this meaning is evident. However, I would point out that this verb can have a fuller meaning than that, as is evidenced in Revelation 22:11 where the holy encouraged to continue being holy (*hagiastheto*) or in 1 Peter 1:15 where Peter encourages the ones called by Him who is holy (*hagion*) to become holy (*genethetic hagioi*) in all conduct.⁴¹ Given this meaning, the passive uses of *hagiazo* in the aorist tense could suggest not only the actualized entrance into a state of dedication to the Divine, but also growth in conformity to that Divinity. Indeed, this fullness of meaning in the verb tends to enlarge its aoristic usage into that of a constative which could view the entrance, growth, and even the culmination of that growth as a whole without singling out any part for emphasis. I would maintain that this meaning is found at least in Ephesians 5:26.

Another important Word in holiness exegesis is *katharizo*, when it is used in a moral sense. This term means to cleanse or make pure and thus is a verb expressing effort. As such, it should be understood as an effective aorist on analogy with the active use of *hagiazo*. Such an analogy is strongly suggested by Ephesians 5:26 where the two words are used in apposition. Given this interpretation, Acts 15:9 would refer to the completed nature of the purification of the hearts of Cornelius and his companions. And, the context of Acts 10:44-48 would suggest that it was arrived at in a momentary event. Regarding the nature of the fourth aspect of holiness, however, this passage is of little help for it most likely refers to the purification of justification.⁴² The use of *katharizo* in Ephesians 5:26 is analogous to that of Acts 15:9.

The only other use of *katharizo* which demands investigation is that in 2 Corinthians 7:1 where Paul exhorts the Corinthians to purify themselves from all defilement of the flesh." I take this to be a definite example of a constative aorist because of the context. In the first place, the word for defilement (*molusmos*) refers primary to impurities relating to association with idols.⁴³ Also, there is the parallel use of the present participle *epitelountes* which suggests a continuing activity. Thus, the command is a summary of the previous section where Paul has shown the incompatibility of Christians associating with idols.⁴⁴ The Corinthian Christians are told to constantly avoid participation in the pagan rituals. The verb no doubt implies the beginning of that avoidance, but its emphasis is on the whole process that is involved.

For the remainder of the passages which I will consider, the verbs utilized vary in meaning, so I will arrange my discussion by presenting the verse representing inceptive, effective and constative emphases, in that order.

Probably the best example of an inceptive aorist is found in Romans 12:1 where Paul beseeches his listeners to "present" (*parastesai*) their bodies as a living holy sacrifice to God. Since the verb denotes the state of standing alongside of or in the presence of something, the emphasis expressed by the aorist is the entrance into that state. However, it is understood that such an entrance will carry with it a continuing lifestyle. This was shown explicitly when this theme was presented earlier in Romans 6:19. In this verse Paul had told the Roman Christians to present (aorist)

themselves as servants to righteousness in the same way they had presented (aorist) themselves as servants to uncleanness. That a continuing state of existence is the point of this "presentation" is shown in verse 22 when Paul says that the result (*karpos*) of this servanthship to God will be sanctification (*hagiasmos*) or, as Kittel defines it, the sanctifying lifestyle.⁴⁵ Thus, the command to present oneself to God is a command to enter decisively into a relationship with God which is then characterized by a holy lifestyle. The use of the inceptive aorist shows that the completeness and actuality of such an entrance are assumed as being possible. While the aorist itself does not guarantee that this entrance is understood as crisis in nature, the context of the aorist participles in 6:22 and the striking contrast between the present and aorist imperatives in the parallel verse 6:13 lead even Moulton to see this verse as expressing the "once-for-all surrender to God."⁴⁶

Galatians 5:24 presents an example of the effective aorist when Paul says that those who are of Christ have crucified (*estausosan*) the flesh with its passions and lusts. Since this verb is primarily a verb of effort, an effective aorist would be expected. The context helps confirm this, for Paul's point is that an end has been reached to the old lifestyle. Thus, the use of the aorist here signifies the culmination of a process (probably of a significant period of time due to the meaning of the word and in light of the list of those things which are given up, 5:19-21). The emphasis is that no matter how long it may have taken, this process has reached its goal-in this life. From this point the Christian carries on a lifestyle characterized by the fruits of the Spirit. Again, the emphasis is on completeness, not necessarily crisis action. Of course, one could talk of crisis in terms of a necessary final point in the process of "crucifying"-a use of the term congenial to Wesley but not as strong as what some holiness advocates would claim.

Another obvious example of an effective aorist is 1 Thessalonians 3:13 where Paul speaks of the Thessalonians being established (*sterizai*) in holiness at the Parousia. It is important to note that the term "holiness" (*haziosune*) used here speaks of an absolute quality, not a character of lifestyle (as in Romans 6:22).⁴⁷ Most likely, Paul is referring to the eschatological holiness which will characterize all who stand in the immediate presence (*emprosthen*) of God. The culmination implied in the aorist is not one reached in this life but rather at the Parousia. However, there is a very important exegetical note to make here. This holiness is the result (note the use of *eis* with the infinitive) of a lifestyle characterized by an increasing love for others (v. 12). Thus, the holiness of glorification is linked directly to one's present lifestyle (for other effective aorists, see Gal. 4:19 and Eph. 4:13).

Turning to the constative aorist, we enter the realm where most of the aorist verbs of the New Testament should be classified. It will be remembered that in this usage the action of the verb is viewed as a whole without distinguishing any part as more important. As such, this usage may refer to a single crisis action or to a prolonged or repeated action which is viewed as a whole. The decision as to which is dependent on the meaning of the verb and the context.

An example of a constative aorist that probably refers to a "crisis" action is 2 Corinthians 1:22. where Paul speaks of the one who "sealed" us

(sphragisamenos). Both the meaning of the word and the context (for example, the use of *arrabona* "first installment") suggest this refers to a decisive moment, namely, the time of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The use of *chrisaz* in the parallelism of the previous verse would further support this interpretation.

Probably more important are the many examples where the "fuller" usage of the constative aorist is present. For example, in Colossians 1:9 we find Paul praying that the Colossians be filled (plerothete) with the recognition of Christ's will in all wisdom and walk (peripatesai) in a manner worthy of the Lord. Both the meaning of these verbs and the context which spells out all that is involved in walking in a worthy manner suggest strongly that the action of the verb is not conceived of as taking place instantaneously. Rather, it is the product of a growing relationship with God through Christ. The significance of the aorist is that it can summarize the entire activity in its simplest form. To interpret it as referring only to the initiatory aspect of that relationship, as many holiness advocates have been prone to do, robs it of much of its rich meaning and also can turn it into an unrealistic standard, suggesting that the maturity implied in the superlative adjectives is achieved instantaneously.

One more example of a constative aorist will be sufficient to illustrate its significance. In Romans 13:14 Paul exhorts the Roman Christians to "clothe themselves" (*endusasathe*) with the Lord Jesus Christ. While the meaning of the word could support either an instantaneous or a continuing activity, the context strongly suggests seeing this as a pleonistic constative usage. In the beginning of Chapter 12 Paul had encouraged the Romans to enter a relationship with Christ that would produce a new lifestyle as we saw above. Then he went on to give a list of positive and negative admonitions as to the character of this lifestyle. In our present verse he is summarizing by encouraging the Romans to embrace these characteristics in their daily lives and to "stop making provision for the lusts of the flesh" (see below in reference to this phrase). The meaning of "clothe yourselves" is to embrace the life of "walking in the daylight" (*peripatesomen*, v. 13). The aorist used here is to view that entire process as a whole, including both its initiation and its daily enactment. (For other constatives, see Eph. 4:22-24, Titus 2:14 and Col. 3:12).

The special usage of aorist participles in the predicate position to show simultaneous action is of extreme importance to holiness exegesis. One of the key verses cited to show that the coming of the Holy Spirit (and with it holiness of life) was subsequent to justification is Acts 19:2, where Paul asks some disciples of John if they received the Holy Spirit "after" they believed (*pisteusantes*). However, this could also be rendered "when you believed" as we have seen above. To insist on the idea of subsequent action based only on the aorist exceeds the evidence. The decision can be made finally only in light of an understanding of the normal New Testament "order of salvation," which is a matter of debate at present. (Similar analyses would be in order for Eph. 1:13 and Eph. 5:26).

The final aspect to be investigated in this paper is the use of prohibitions. Actually, I am not so much concerned with the aorist prohibition as with the present. However, since their significance is defined in contrast to one another, the investigation is justified. Also, the importance to holiness

exegesis makes this point crucial. Primarily, the question is whether certain present prohibitions in Paul really mean to cease an activity presently in progress. As we have seen, Paul is the main New Testament author concerning whom this is a matter of question.

One of the prohibitions in question is Romans 13:14. Is Paul here telling the Romans to "stop making provision for the lusts of the flesh," or rather "to continue not making provision for the lusts of the flesh?" While the second meaning is possible, it should not be considered probable-particularly in light of the detailed list of ethical mandates immediately preceding this Verse and the repeated emphasis on the need for proper behavior in the Christian life. One is forced to believe that there must be some misconduct sparking this response. The problem this raises for holiness exegesis is that this letter is addressed to the "saints" (hagiois) in Rome (1:7). If one assumes this means those who are "entirely sanctified," then how could they be sinning? The usual solution is to see the term "saints" as referring to positional holiness and to see Paul here exhorting the Roman Christians to the deeper commitment of entire holiness. However, one could also see it as an encouragement to avail oneself of a grace already potentially present in his life without suggesting any new gift of grace is necessary. The main point is to take the command seriously.

This problem is even sharper in Colossians 3:9 where the people addressed are not only called saints but are also said to have been filled (or fulfilled, *pepleromenoi*, 2:10) with Christ. These same persons are exhorted to "stop lying to one another" since they have put off the old man with his practices and put on the new man. The context renders this example incapable of being anything but a negative command. Thus one is left with no alternative but seeing that those who have made the initial entrance into the new life with Christ and have put off the old life with its practices still have need of improvement and of encouragement to act like the chosen people they are (v. 12).

Conclusion

Finally we are prepared to answer our initial question, "What is the significance of the aorist tense for holiness exegesis?" The first thing that should be repeated is that it cannot be used in and of itself to prove that an action was of a crisis nature. While the presence of the aorist makes such an interpretation possible, it becomes probable only when the meaning of the verb and the context support it. In our analyses we have seen that there are a few cases where such an interpretation is defensible, but that this is not the primary emphasis in the majority of cases. This should not be construed, however, as meaning that the presence of the aorist tense is insignificant. It does carry a strong implication of completeness, especially in the ingressive and effective aorists, and this is one of the major points of holiness doctrine that its advocates are seeking to defend-its availability in this life in some form. We should not let a realization of the falseness of one implication of the aorist tense blind us to the other true implications.

Equally important is the understanding of the primary meaning and the widespread use of the constative aorist. The practice of interpreting the majority of aorists as crisis aorists robs them of much of their meaning. When Paul tells the Ephesians to take off the old man, be renewed in the

spirit of their minds, and put on the new man from God (Eph. 4:22-24), he is commanding more than just a moment of commitment and cleansing. He is prescribing an entire lifetime characterized by denial of the past and empowerment in the present through God's renewing presence. The command includes the initial commitment, however that may have been arrived at, but it goes much further and portrays the entire range of expressions of that commitment in the disciple's life. To be sure, all of these emphases are not spelled out explicitly in the aorist, but the use of the constative aorist shows that one is to include all that is involved in the meaning of the verb, whatever that is determined to be.

Thus, a proper understanding of the aorist tense can be very instrumental in helping to find a balance in the present debate between the crisis and the process of sanctification in holiness thought. Instead of being the weapon of only one side, it is really the vehicle of both. Or, more accurately, it shows that the distinctions between crisis and process are not arrived at or defended on the basis of grammar but rather on the basis of thorough theological exegesis and psychological analysis. The assumption that the writers of the New Testament used a grammatical device like the aorist tense in such a specialized sense to reflect a subtle psychological and theological distinction that was really only made within the last two centuries is absurd. We should not try to read our theological refinements back into the text, but rather seek to understand the import of the text as it stands and then make sure that our distinctions are amenable to that import.

In closing, I would say that this understanding of the aorist tense should in no way be seen as lessening its importance in holiness exegesis. If anything, it increases this importance by the removal of many false restrictions on the meaning of certain texts. Responsible exegesis must still take the aorist into consideration, for it does carry with it some important implications. All I have argued is that the implication commonly assumed by holiness advocates is not the only or even the most common of these implications.⁴⁸

Notes

1W. T. Purkiser, *Conflicting Concepts of Holiness* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1953), p. 34.

2H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology*, 3 vols. (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1940), 2:447.

3Richard Howard, *Newness of Life* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1975), p. 170.

4See Charles E. Brown, *The Meaning of Sanctification* (Anderson, IN: Warner Press 1945).

5Purkiser refers to W. H. Davies; Howard refers to C. F. D. Moule and Blass and DeBrunner.

- 6Indeed, Brown, *The Meaning of Sanctification*, quotes the whole chapter.
- 7Oliver Winchester, *Crisis Experiences in the Greek New Testament* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1953).
- 8William W. Goodwin, *A Greek Grammar* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1894). 9Goodwin, *Grammar*, p. 54.
- 10Daniel Steele, *Mile-Stone Papers* (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1876), p. 66. 11Goodwin, *Grammar*, p. 270.
- 12Winchester, *Crisis Experiences*, p. 27.
- 13Winchester, *Crisis Experiences*, p. 29.
- 14Winchester, *Crisis Experiences*, p. 29.
- 15A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), p. 833.
- 16Robertson, *Grammar*, pp. 829ff.
- 17I drew on the following sources (which are listed somewhat in order of importance): A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek NT*, pp. 823-90. J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, pp. 109-35. Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, pp. 68-80. E. D. Burton, *Moods and Tenses*, pp. 16-31, 59-70. C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book*, pp. 5-20. Blass-DeBrunner, *A Greek Grammar*, pp. 171ff.
- 18Robertson, *Grammar*, p. 823.
- 19Robertson, *Grammar*, p. 824.
- 20Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek, Vol. III* of James Hope Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1963), 3:59.
- 21Robertson, *Grammar*, p. 830.
- 22Robertson, *Grammar*, p. 831.
- 23Robertson, *Grammar*, p. 306.
- 24Moulton, *Grammar*, (1909), 1:109.
- 25Moulton, *Grammar*, 1:130, footnote.
- 26Moulton, *Grammar*, 1:115ff.
- 27Robertson, *Grammar*, pp. 831ff.
- 28Robertson, *Grammar*, p. 847.
- 29Ernest DeWitt Burton, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1976), p. 17.
- 30Moulton, *Grammar*, 1:115ff. See also Robertson, *Grammar*, p. 828.

- 31Moulton, Grammar, 1:115-18.
- 32Robertson, Grammar, p. 860ff.; Moulton, Grammar, 1:131; see also Burton, Syntax and Tenses, par. 132ff.
- 33Robertson, Grammar, p. 852; Moulton, Grammar, 1:122-23.
- 34Robertson, Grammar, p. 854; Moulton, Grammar, 1:124.
- 35Quoted in Robertson, Grammar, p. 854.
- 36George Allen Turner, *Christian Holiness* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1977), DD. 15-18.
- 37For more on this distinction, see Purkiser, *Conflicting Concepts*.
- 38Review Robertson's distinctions, Grammar, pp. 829ff.
- 39Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 1:111-12. Hereafter referred to as TDNT.
- 40TDNT, 1:111-12.
- 41On this distinction, see Howard's thesis in *Newness of Life* regarding the relation of the imperative and the indicative in Paul, pp. 134ff.
- 42F. J. Foakes and Kirsopp Lake, eds., *The Beginnings of Christianity*, 5 vols. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1942), 1:337ff.
- 43TDNT, 4:736.
- 44Philip Hughes, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, *New International Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962), p. 257.
- 45TDNT, 1:113.
- 46Moulton, Grammar, 1:113. I am indebted to Dr. Alex Deasley for this reference.
- 47TDNT, 1:114.
- 48For an intriguing article that shows how the aorist tense has been inappropriately used by such leading New Testament scholars as Jeremias, Leon Morris, and R. Schnackenberg, see Frank Stagg, "The Abused Aorist," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 91(1972):222-31.

BOOK REVIEWS

Books on the Holy Spirit and on various movements which emphasize His person and work, books on Wesley and Wesleyanism, books on the holiness movement and its social and historical relationships, books on sanctification and holiness—all of these are multiplying before our eyes. It is impossible within the limitations of this Journal to adequately review all of the books which would be of interest to members of the Society. But we have had a growing conviction that the Journal should help keep members aware of the most significant publications. With this issue we are attempting to make a beginning. There follow editorial reviews of eight books which should be of direct interest to the Society. Several are written in whole or in part by members of the Society. While some are written from positions which vary widely from that of the Society, none can be ignored in terms of importance to our interests.

Milton S. Agnew. *The Holy Spirit. Friend and Counselor*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1980. 158 pp.

Colonel Agnew begins with a study indicated by the book's title, a study of the "mystic" member of the Trinity, primarily from Scripture; he concludes that the Holy Spirit is the "Executive" or "Administrator" of the Trinity. The rest of the book is given to combating what the author believes to be erroneous understandings of how the Spirit works in the church and in individual believers, and to establishing and clarifying what he believes to be the scriptural view. Approximately one-third of the book is given to responding to the charismatic movement. While he gives strong commendation to the real accomplishments of the movement, he seeks to refute its distinctive presuppositions. In a surprising departure from the traditional views of those holiness writers who understand Spirit-inspired "tongues" always to be bonafide human languages, Agnew believes that the biblical gift of tongues has been withdrawn from the church. The author identifies baptism with the Holy Spirit with entire sanctification. The book ends on a very practical note, dealing with the frailties of sanctified humanity and the ongoing walk in the Spirit.

Frank Baker, ed., Letters I, 1721-1739, Vol. 25 of *The Works of John Wesley*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980. 763 pp.

One can only respond in awe to the scope and labor involved in the Oxford Edition of the Works of John Wesley. Of the projected thirty-four

volumes this is the second to be published. It is the first of seven volumes of letters which will be incorporated in the set. It covers the period from Wesley's late teens through the years at Oxford and in Georgia, and past Aldersgate to the beginning of his field preaching. Without a doubt, the seven volumes will provide the student of Wesley with more ready access to the "feelings" of the Oxford don as expressed in his letters than ever before. This volume begins with 140 pages of introduction, covering virtually every conceivable aspect about correspondence and mails in the eighteenth century, about the people Wesley corresponded with, about Wesley as he is seen in his letters, and about the letters themselves-the details of editing them and their literary value. Following the introduction are hundreds of Wesley's letters from the 1720's and 1730's, interspersed in the proper sequence with full or partial letters written to Wesley. This volume concludes, as will each of the seven, with an appendix listing all letters known to have been written by Wesley, or for which strong evidence exists that they were written, during the period covered. For this period 2,150 are listed. All of those seeking to know John Wesley and his message will need to read his letters. We are forever indebted to those whose superb scholarship and prodigious labors have made these materials available.

J. Kenneth Grider. *Entire Sanctification. The Distinctive Doctrine of Wesleyanism*. Kansas City, MO.: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1980. 147 pp.

Dr. Grider views entire sanctification as the clearest term and the most distinguishing aspect of the message proclaimed by the holiness movement. He holds that the holiness movement has come to differ from John Wesley's teaching at two points: (1) In its teaching that entire sanctification is effected by the baptism with the Holy Spirit; (2) in its teaching that original sin is cleansed away only in an instantaneous crisis, with any "progressive sanctification" referring to something other than this expulsion of carnality. He believes that these two departures from Wesley are scriptural, and that this kind of correction is thoroughly Wesleyan since Wesley also amended his earlier understanding of sanctification. The book concludes by attempting to answer questions frequently asked about entire sanctification.

Melvin Easterday Dieter. *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century. Studies in Evangelicalism*, No. 1. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1980, 356 pp.

The author's doctoral dissertation at Temple University has been slightly revised in this form which will be more readily available to the average reader. Dr. Dieter sees in the pre-Civil War American holiness revival a fusing of historic pietism, of the immediacy of American revivalism, and of Methodist perfectionism. He traces the post-Civil War holiness revival as it intensified in America and spread to Europe; he holds that it permanently stamped its emphasis on the thought and life of all of evangelical Protestantism around the world. He follows it until the movement institutionalized in a multitude of holiness sects at the close of the nineteenth century. *Studies in Evangelicalism* is a series edited by Donald W. Dayton and Kenneth E. Rowe which seeks to explore the roots and

development of evangelicalism in all of its forms and in its interaction with related groups. Dr. Dieter's work is especially fitting as the initial volume of the series since he holds that contemporary evangelicalism cannot be understood in isolation from the holiness movement of the past two centuries.

George M. Marsden. *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism, 187-1925*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980. 306 pp.

Marsden traces fundamentalism from its origin within the respected evangelical establishment of the post-Civil War era, through its dark valley of the 1920's when it was "laughed out of court," to its reorganization and resurgence as a significant factor in the neo-evangelicalism of the 1950's and later. He sees it as an essentially religious movement which nevertheless was shaped by cultural factors. In his own words, "Three themes recur in this work." First is the paradoxical tendency of fundamentalism to identify at times with the "establishment" and at other times with the "outsiders." The second is the tensions produced within the movement by a mixture of early revivalism and pietism with "holiness" teachings (particularly Keswick and D. L. Moody forms) in the context of a largely Reformed tradition philosophically and theologically. The third is the tension between trust and distrust of the intellect. Marsden gives surprisingly thorough coverage to the relationship of the holiness movement (Wesleyan, Keswick, and Pentecostal branches) to fundamentalism. His analysis will provide a starting point for holiness historians in studying the interaction of fundamentalism and the holiness movement.

Paul A. Mickey. *Essentials of Wesleyan Theology: A Contemporary Affirmation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980. 185 pp.

This book is a commentary on the "Junaluska Affirmation," which was drawn up in 1975 by members of the Good News Movement in the United Methodist Church. The Affirmation was intended to be a confession of faith by the Good News people both to their fellow Methodists and to evangelicalism at large. The Affirmation's authors included such familiar names as Dennis F. Kinlaw and Frank Bateman Stanger. It is a beautiful statement of faith. Dr. Mickey's commentary takes up the Affirmation section by section, and virtually phrase by phrase. He quotes John Wesley frequently and John Calvin perhaps even more frequently. Approximately one-fifth of the book is given to the section on "The Holy Scriptures" and particularly to the question of inspiration and authority. "Accurate" and "accuracy" are the words chosen in the Affirmation in preference to "infallible" and "inerrant." Dr. Mickey promotes this choice on the basis that the essential meaning is the same, "accurate" is a positive and affirming term rather than a negative and defensive one, it more faithfully reflects the divine/human interaction, and it is more fitting to Wesley's concept of sanctification. The concept of inspiration expounded is plenary and dynamic. The most obvious weakness of the commentary relates to entire sanctification as a crisis. While the Affirmation makes repeated references to perfection, holiness, and sanctification, and the commentary refers to both "crises" and progression, there is nowhere a clear statement about the crisis. The

final section of the Affirmation and commentary do restore a Wesleyan emphasis by attempting to deal briefly with ethical matters including social concerns.

Theodore Runyan, ed. *Sanctification and Liberation. Liberation Theologies in Light of the Wesleyan Tradition*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1981. 255 pp.

Most of the eleven chapters were presented originally to the Sixth Oxford Institute on Methodist Theological Studies, held at Lincoln College, Oxford, in the summer of 1977. Three of the contributors are WTS members: Donald W. Dayton, Nancy A. Hardesty, and Timothy L. Smith. And to those Journal readers introduced to a comparison of Wesleyanism and liberation theology by Dr. Harold B. Kuhn's paper in the Spring 1980 issue, this book provides a stimulating sequel. There is certainly no common thread of agreement through the chapters. Some writers find varying degrees of correspondence between Wesley's doctrine of sanctification as both an individual and a social perfectibility in this present age on the one hand and liberation theology on the other. Dr. Runyan goes so far in the introduction as to say "that the anthropology implicit in Marx's doctrine of alienated labor can provide a helpful perspective-in spite of the seeming contradictions-from which to view the anthropology implied in Wesley's doctrine of sanctification." Other writers concentrate on Wesley's doctrine, or his social concern, or the social concern of his followers. Some writers virtually ignore Wesley and sanctification and concentrate on various phases of liberation. Latin American liberation theology is represented by one Latin American theologian and a sympathetic North American observer. Two British Methodists provide analysis and a history of British views of sanctification. One American writer analyzes Wesley's view of holding property as essentially stewardship. Two articles deal historically with sanctification and social concern in the American holiness and evangelical streams. Other articles touch on women's liberation, American black theology, and mainstream Methodism's impact on Africa.

Lawrence W. Wood. *Pentecostal Grace*. Foreword by Robert E. Coleman. Wilmore, KY: Francis Asbury Publishing Company, 1980. 276 pp.

The author holds that the twofold sequence of Israel's redemption through the Exodus from Egypt and the Conquest of Canaan was part of a divine pattern seen again in Jesus' resurrection (Easter) and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost); in the believer the sequence is justification and sanctification. But the Exodus-Conquest theme as here presented is not to be confused with traditional allegorizing. Dr. Wood is attempting to deal with many questions which are being discussed in Wesleyanism today: Can Pentecostal language be used as descriptive of Christian perfection? Was Wesley open to such usage? Is Christian perfection realizable in this life? In what sense is Christian perfection a second work of grace? Is circumcision of heart related to Christian perfection? Does Christian perfection involve a radical cleansing from inbred sin? Is original sin to be conceptualized in substantialist or relational categories? Dr. Wood arrives at answers to all of these questions which are largely compatible with the traditional answers of the classic American holiness movement. But he does so from fresh perspectives and with a wealth of supporting evidence

from Scripture, church history, and contemporary scholarship such as has rarely been seen. The result of this study should be very helpful to one seeking sound answers. The last two chapters should be familiar to readers of the Journal as they represent revisions of Dr. Wood's articles which appeared in Volume 15, Number 1, and Volume 14, Number 2, respectively.