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EDITORIAL

A LOOK AT CHRISTIAN PERFECTION AFTER TWO CENTURIES

Harold Barnes Kuhn*

When an eighteenth century Christian movement develops through two-plus centuries, it is inevitable that needs for careful re-evaluation and for possible supplementation of original insights should arise. Wesleyanism, with its strong soteriological and experimental emphasis, has not escaped this interpretative process, the more so since it was really, in its context, ahead of its time.

Had Wesley's work been merely the results of the dynamics of the human spirit, it should have remained stillborn in the 1730's. That it to say, it challenged the mood and spirit of the eighteenth century, and was radically disharmonious with the rationalism of the period. This accounts, of course, for the mounting opposition against it by the major religious leadership of the period. As a movement giving emphasis to the inner life of man, it was a scandal to deistic leaders to whom the religious expression of the early Wesleyan societies appeared to be a horrendous manifestation of "enthusiasm."

The student of historical movements finds the survival of Wesleyanism to be little short of a miracle. It actually belonged, in spirit and mood, to the nineteenth century. While it was not in itself typically 'romantic', it would have been in agreement with much of Romanticism, in its powerful reaction in the 1800's against the Century of Reason. Only a movement of gigantic internal resources could have survived, let alone have grown to spectacular dimensions, in the eighteenth century, with its robust advocacy of the ability of reason to speak for the whole man.

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The development of Wesleyanism in the nineteenth century have offended some of those claiming the Wesleyan label in our century. These have objected that Wesley's theological emphasis was basically christological, while the later developments are said to have brought the work of the Holy Spirit, particularly in relation to the doctrine of entire sanctification, into a prominence which Wesley never intended. Now, it is true that Wesley had relatively little time to articulate a full **Summa theologica**. The intensity of his preaching labors, and the extent of his organizational work, militated against this. This being the case, we must rely rather heavily upon his *Sermons* and *Notes* for the elaboration of many of his doctrinal positions.

It seems clear that when Wesley's writings as a whole are considered, the role of the Third Person is seen by him to be far more prominent and meaningful than might be suggested by a reading confined exclusively to *The Plain Account*. Dr. William M. Arnett, The Frank Paul Morris Professor of Christian Doctrine in Asbury Theological Seminary, has done an exceedingly careful in-depth study at this point. We are grateful to Dr. Arnett for the written results of this survey and are delighted to present it to our readership.

The careful reading of this monograph should serve to allay any fears that the nineteenth century developments of Wesleyan theology, particularly that which was stimulated by the work of the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness (now the Christian Holiness Association), represented an "outWesleyanizing of Wesley". No doubt some of the fears at this point represent a reaction against the emphasis of the 20th century charismatic movement. One wonders whether such fears are really warranted. At any rate, it is difficult to feel that professed Wesleyans are consistent in accepting with eagerness whatever light contemporary movements, such as the depth psychology, might shed upon their theology, and at the same time rejecting out of hand that which was developed in the nineteenth century, particularly when this latter made explicit that which was more than implicit in the works of John Wesley himself.

ARTICLES

THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION IN THE WRITINGS OF JOHN WESLEY

William M. Arnett*

The person and work of the Holy Spirit have a significant role in the theological thought of John Wesley. That role is primarily redemptive, and it is therefore interwoven in Wesley's doctrine of salvation, which was the chief burden of his more than fifty years of evangelism.¹ The two great poles of his doctrine of salvation were justification and sanctification, and the experiential basis of his thought is the soil out of which grew his deep concern with the work of the Holy Spirit.² For Wesley, every doctrine of the Christian faith is centered in the context of vital Christian experience in which the Holy Spirit is a key factor. The Trinitarian basis is apparent, for it was the office of Jesus Christ to reveal the Heavenly Father and thus make possible our salvation by His life and death, and in turn it is the office of the Holy Spirit to reveal the Son to sinful man and administer His atoning work in his soul. Hence, Wesley's theology is Christocentric and the person of Christ is essential to every other doctrine. The administrative role of the Holy Spirit in relation to the work of Christ makes it imperative to have a proper understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in Wesley's thought.

The focus of this investigation is the role of the Holy Spirit in entire sanctification in Wesley's writings. Four related aspects are emphasized: first, the preparatory work of the Holy Spirit antecedent to entire

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sanctification; second, the preliminary work of the Holy Spirit in entire sanctification; third, the purifying work of the Holy Spirit in entire sanctification, with Wesley's variation in nomenclature; and finally, the witness of the Holy Spirit in entire sanctification.

I. The Preparatory Work of the Holy Spirit Antecedent to Entire Sanctification

There is a vital activity of the Holy Spirit in the life of the unbeliever without which Christian experience would be impossible. In his open letter "To A Roman Catholic" in 1749, Wesley affirmed his belief in the infinite and eternal Spirit of God, equal with the Father and the Son, Who is not only perfectly holy in Himself, but

the immediate cause of all holiness in us; enlightening our understandings, rectifying our wills and affections, renewing our natures, uniting our persons to Christ, assuring us of the adoption of sons, leading us in our actions, purifying and sanctifying our souls and bodies, to a full and eternal enjoyment of God.³

Wesley took his stand with Augustine, Luther, and Calvin in his insistence that man is totally corrupt by nature, and as a consequence is subject to the judgment and wrath of God. But to these somber facts he adds another principle, namely, the free gift of God's grace which he called preventing or prevenient grace, imparted to all men as a first, unconditional benefit of the atonement, not in the sense of regeneration, but as the spirit of awakening and conviction. For Wesley, God's prevenient grace, which goes before salvation, is related to the activity of the Holy Spirit.

For allowing that all the souls of men are dead in sin by **nature**, this excuses none, seeing there is no man that is in a state of mere nature; there is no man, **UNLESS HE HAS QUENCHED THE SPIRIT** [Caps mine], that is wholly void of the grace of God. No man living is entirely destitute of what is vulgarly called **natural conscience**. But this is not natural; It is more properly termed, **preventing grace**. Every man has a greater or less measure of this, which waiteth not for the call of man.⁴

Man must cooperate with God, however, if he is to come to salvation in Jesus Christ. Wesley agrees with Augustine's remark: "He that made us without ourselves, will not save us without ourselves."⁵

A primary task of the Holy Spirit is to reveal, testify, and defend the truth as it is in Jesus.⁶ In connection with His primary task, the Spirit performs a two-fold office, first toward the world (John 16:8ff.), and secondly toward believers (John 16:12ff.).⁷ It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convince the world, through the agency of preaching and miracles, of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. The Spirit will convict men particularly of the sin of unbelief, which is "the confluence

of all sins.”⁸ The law of God is applied by the Holy Spirit to the heart of man and deeply convicts him of his utter sinfulness and helplessness.⁹ The law becomes to us an occasion of wrath, and exposes us to punishment as transgressors.¹⁰ But God gives us the light of the Gospel that we might repent,¹¹ and the first step towards entering into the kingdom of grace is “to become as little children—lowly in heart, knowing yourselves utterly ignorant and helpless, and hanging wholly on your Father who is in heaven for a supply of all your wants.”¹² Wesley insists that “true repentance is a change from spiritual death to spiritual life, and leads to life everlasting.”¹³ There are two kinds, or stages of repentance prior to initial salvation, according to Wesley’s interpretation. The first he calls “legal” repentance, which is “a thorough conviction of sin,” and the second is “evangelical” repentance, or “a change of heart (and consequently of life) from all sin to all holiness.”¹⁴ Discussing the universality of sin and its consequences in his sermon on “The New Birth,” Wesley concludes by stating “hence it is, that, being born in sin, we must be ‘born again.’ Hence every one that is born of a woman must be born of the Spirit of God.”¹⁵

From this brief analysis of the preparatory work of the Holy Spirit prior to entire sanctification, it is quite apparent that Wesley’s presentation of the gospel was characterized by New Testament realism. In his sermon “On Grieving the Holy Spirit” he stresses that

there can be no point of greater importance to him who knows that it is the Holy Spirit which leads us into all truth and into all holiness, than to consider with what temper of soul we are to entertain his divine presence; so as not either to drive him from us, or to disappoint him of the gracious ends for which his abode with us is designed; which is not the amusement of our understanding, but the conversion and entire sanctification of our hearts and lives The title “holy,” applied to the Spirit of God, does not only denote that he is holy in his own nature; but that he makes us so; that he is the great fountain of holiness to his Church; the Spirit from whence flows all the grace and virtue, by which the stains of guilt are cleansed, and we are renewed in all holy dispositions, and again bear the image of our Creator.¹⁶

It is interesting to note that this sermon was written in 1733, five years prior to Wesley’s heart-warming experience at Aldersgate.

Concerning born-again believers, Wesley expressed the conviction that it is universally allowed that the Holy Spirit, together with the Father and Son, indwells those who believe. The Holy Spirit first inspired, “and still preserves, the life of God in our souls.”¹⁷ The internal agency of the Holy Ghost is generally admitted as well, for He leads the believer into all truth and glorifies Christ in his life. The bodies

and souls of believers are the temples of the Holy Spirit dwelling in them.¹⁸ In regard to the biblical phrase, "receiving the Holy Ghost," Wesley insisted that this occurs at justification. Writing to Joseph Benson on December 28, 1770, respecting entire sanctification, he exhorted him to confirm the brethren "with all zeal and diligence" in a two-fold manner, first, "in holding fast that whereto they have attained—namely, the remission of all their sins by faith in a bleeding Lord," and secondly, "in expecting a second change, whereby they shall be saved from all sin and perfected in love." Immediately following the second point, Wesley adds this important comment,

If they like to call this "receiving the Holy Ghost," they may: only the phrase in that sense is not scriptural and not quite proper; for they all "received the Holy Ghost" when they were justified. God then "sent forth the Spirit of His Son into their hearts, crying Abba, Father."¹⁹

II. The Preliminary Work of the Holy Spirit in Entire Sanctification

Prior to the actual experience of entire sanctification there is an important ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer to indicate clearly and forcefully the need of sanctifying grace as a second crisis experience following the new birth. Since sanctification is "entire holiness of heart and life,"²⁰ the Holy Spirit is given to convince the followers of Christ of this truth and to enable them to be holy.²¹ Therefore, to despise the Apostle's commandments to holiness of heart and life is to despise God Himself. The significance of entire sanctification as a definite second work of grace for Wesley is evident in his strong insistence that "a deep conviction of our **demerit**, after we are accepted . . . is absolutely necessary in order to our seeing the true value of the atoning blood; in order to our feeling that we need this as much, after we are justified, as ever we did before."²² The Holy Spirit seeks to engender "a deep conviction that we are not yet whole; that our hearts are not fully purified; that there is yet in us a 'carnal mind,' which is still in its nature 'enmity against God'; that the whole body of sin remains in our heart, weakened indeed, but not destroyed."²³ In such strong language, Wesley sought to safeguard against a shallow notion of remaining depravity, and further, to produce an earnest expectation of deliverance through the sanctifying grace of God. It is important to note that his conception of sin was more inclusive than "voluntary transgression." Sin was not a material substance or "thing," however, for Wesley expected deliverance from all sin in this life.²⁴ He spoke of the "mischievousness of that opinion" that "we are **wholly** sanctified when we are justified; that our hearts are then cleansed from all sin."

It is true, we are then delivered, as was observed before, from the dominion of outward sin; and, at the same time, the power of inward sin is so broken, that we need no longer follow, or be led by it: but it is by no means true, that inward sin is then totally destroyed; that the root of pride, self-will, anger, love of the world, is then taken out of the heart; or that the carnal mind, and the heart bent to backsliding, are entirely extirpated.²⁵

A timely warning along these lines for those in the present day who share the Wesleyan-Arminian heritage is sounded in a perceptive, scholarly discussion by Merne A. Harris and Richard S. Taylor on "The Dual Nature of Sin," particularly in regard to those "who know secular psychology better than they know the Bible and Christian theology."²⁶

III. The Purifying Work of the Holy Spirit in Entire Sanctification

Wesley uses the word "purify" as well as other terms or phrases to signify the sanctifying ministry of the Holy Spirit in a definite second work of grace. It is the office of the Holy Spirit to sanctify.²⁷ Wesley used the term "inspiration" or "perceptible inspiration" for the general ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian. He defines "inspiration" as the "inward assistance of the Holy Ghost which helps our infirmities, enlightens our understanding, rectifies our will, comforts, purifies, and sanctifies us."²⁸

Just as Wesley had received help from the Moravians in regard to the true nature of justifying faith, there is evidence that he also received illumination concerning the experiential reality of a pure heart. While he was with the Moravians at Herrnhut, Wesley records in his *Journal* for August 8, 1738, that he had the blessing of hearing Christian David preach four times.

Thrice he described the state of those who are "weak in faith," who are justified, but have not yet a new, clean heart; who have received forgiveness through the blood of Christ, but have not received the constant indwelling of the Holy Ghost. This state he explained once from, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;" when he showed at large, from various Scriptures, that many are children of God and heirs of the promises, long before their hearts are softened by holy "mourning;" . . . before they are "pure in heart," from all self-will and sin"²⁹

Approximately two years after his visit to Herrnhut, there is an interesting entry in his *Journal* regarding a sermon he preached at the Foundery on June 24, 1740, in which he used the text, "Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward" (Heb. 10:35). His message was directed to those "who have known and felt your sins forgiven."

Your finding sin remaining in you still is no proof that you are not a believer. Sin does remain in one that is justified, though it has not dominion over him. For he has not a clean heart at first, neither are 'all things' as yet 'become new.' But fear not, though you have an evil heart. Yet a little while, and you shall be endued with power from on high, whereby you may 'purify yourselves, even as He is pure'; and be 'holy, as He which hath called you is holy.'³⁰

"You shall be endued with power from on high" in the quotation, which Wesley addressed to believers, is obviously a reference to the promise of Jesus recorded in Luke 24:49, thus clearly indicating that Wesley connects the coming of the Holy Spirit as He came at Pentecost with the purifying of the hearts of believers.

Commenting on John 7:38 in his sermon on "Christian Perfection," Wesley observes that at that time in Jesus' earthly ministry "the Holy Ghost was not yet given in his sanctifying graces, as he was after Jesus was glorified." Later, however, "when the day of Pentecost was fully come, then first it was, that they who 'waited for the promise of the Father' were made more than conquerors over sin by the Holy Ghost given unto them."³¹ Also commenting on Matthew 3:11, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire," Wesley states that "He shall fill you with the Holy Ghost, inflaming your hearts with that fire of love which many waters cannot quench. And this was done, even with a visible appearance as of fire, on the day of Pentecost."³²

For Wesley the word "sprinkle" in Ezekiel 36:25 ("Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you")

signifies both the blood of Christ sprinkled upon their conscience, to take away their guilt, as the water of purification was sprinkled, to take away their ceremonial uncleanness and the grace of the spirit sprinkle en [sic.] the whole soul, to purify it from all corrupt inclinations and dispositions.³³

"From all your uncleanness" in verse 29 of the same chapter means for Wesley "salvation from all uncleanness, including justification, entire sanctification, and meetness for glory."^{33a}

Wesley used a variety of terms in his discussions concerning entire sanctification, including pneumatological phrases or terms.³⁴ Writing to Walter Churchey in 1771, he stated that "entire sanctification, or Christian perfection, is neither more nor less than pure love; love expelling sin, and governing both the heart and life of a child of God. The Refiner's fire purges out all that is contrary to love"³⁵ Obviously, he used the two terms, entire sanctification and Christian perfection synonymously, and it is incorrect to interpret the latter term merely as a process in Wesley's thinking.³⁶ Crisis and process are never

divorced in Wesley's conception of entire sanctification or Christian perfection, but he did expect a crisis with the process, whether one or the other term was used.³⁷ As the word "crisis" implies, Wesley stressed the instantaneousness of entire sanctification. He made a significant observation in a letter to Sarah Rutter on December 5, 1789, approximately fifteen months before his death: "Gradual sanctification may increase from the time you were justified [sic.]; but full deliverance from sin, I believe, is always instantaneous—at least, I never yet knew an exception."³⁸

Another set of terms was used by Wesley when he considered "St. John's three-fold distinction of Christian believers: little children, young men, and fathers. All of these had received the Holy Ghost; but only the fathers were perfected in love."³⁹ Writing to Joseph Benson in 1771, he observed that "a **babe** in Christ (of whom I know thousands) has the witness **sometimes**. A young man (in St. John's sense) has it continually. I believe one that is **perfected in love**, or **filled with the Holy Ghost**, may be properly termed a **father**. This we must press both babes and young men to aspire after-yea, to expect. And why not now?"⁴⁰ Here the expressions "perfected in love" and "filled with the Holy Ghost" are used synonymously, while "a babe in Christ" or "little children," "a young man," and "father," suggest experiential or maturation stages or levels in the Christian life.

In distinguishing justification and sanctification, Wesley wrote "the one implies, what God does for us through His Son; the other, what He works in us by His Spirit."⁴¹ It is apparent, however, that Wesley did not conceive the work of the Son and that of the Holy Spirit as mutually exclusive, as this quotation might suggest, but intimately related. What Christ made possible through His atoning work, the Holy Spirit makes actual in the lives of believers. As Wesley suggests in his commentary on Hebrews 2:10, "it is His (Christ's) atonement, and His Spirit carrying on 'the work of faith with power' in our hearts, that alone can sanctify us."⁴²

The petition of our Lord for his disciples in John 17:17 ("Sanctify them") is a prayer to "consecrate them, by the anointing of Thy Spirit, to their office, and perfect them in holiness by means of Thy Word."⁴³ For those who are heavy-laden with the guilt and power of sin, it is Christ alone who can freely give "rest from the guilt of sin by justification, and from the power of sin by sanctification."⁴⁴ And it is the Holy Spirit Who takes the things of Christ and reveals them to believers (John 16:14). The blood of Christ "cleanseth us from all sin," according to the Apostle John, and Wesley says this means "both

original and actual, taking away all the guilt and all the power.”⁴⁵ Wesley insisted that “faith is the condition, and the only condition, of sanctification, exactly as it is of justification.”⁴⁶

In Wesley’s commentary on Acts 8:15 and Acts 19:2 in his *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, a clear distinction is made between the miraculous or supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit and “His sanctifying graces.” The term “receive the Holy Ghost” is used in both passages of Scripture, and Wesley’s comments show that he interpreted this phrase as referring to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁷

There is an interesting observation to be made in regard to Wesley’s understanding of “receiving the Holy Spirit.” He employs the term or idea in various aspects of Christian experience, including the time or conditions prior to justification, as well as in regeneration and entire sanctification. For example, in his treatise, “A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion,” Wesley states that “the author of faith and salvation is God alone.” Furthermore

there is no more of power of merit in man; but as all merit is in the Son of God, in what he has done and suffered for us, so all power is in the Spirit of God. And therefore every man, in order to believe unto salvation, must receive the Holy Ghost.⁴⁸

Obviously Wesley is speaking of man’s need prior to actual justification. The reception of the Holy Spirit is necessary for a soul to be brought into a justified relationship. Also, we have already noted in his letter to Joseph Benson in 1770 he expresses the view that all believers “received the Holy Ghost” when they were justified. Similarly, in his comment on Romans 8:9 where the Apostle says that “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,” Wesley’s frank note is “He is not a member of Christ; not a Christian; not in a state of salvation. A plain, express declaration, which admits of no exception.”⁴⁹ We have also observed that the expression “receive the Holy Ghost” in Acts 8:15 and Acts 19:2 is interpreted by Wesley as a reference to the Spirit’s sanctifying work. Perhaps there is a clue to his varied usages of this term in his comment on Romans 8:15 in which Paul speaks of “the spirit of bondage” and “the spirit of adoption.”

The spirit of bondage here seems directly to mean, those operations of the Holy Spirit by which the soul, on its first conviction, feels itself in bondage to sin, to the world, to Satan, and obnoxious to the wrath of God. This, therefore, and the **Spirit of adoption**, are one and the same Spirit, only manifesting itself in various operations, according to the various circumstances of the person.⁵⁰

Thus, for Wesley, the various operations of the Holy Spirit, while including conviction, faith, and regeneration, must also lead to and culminate in entire sanctification.⁵¹

There is also evidence in Wesley's writings that there is a dual usage of the phrase, "baptized with the Holy Spirit." His note on Acts 1:5, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost," is: "And so are all true believers, to the end of the world."⁵² There is a strong intimation in his sermon, "Of the Church," however, that the term, "baptism of the Holy Ghost," is used to indicate the meeting of spiritual needs on different levels. "One baptism" in Ephesians 4:6 should not be interpreted in a figurative sense, according to Wesley, "as if it referred to that baptism of the Holy Ghost which the Apostles received at the day of Pentecost, and which, in a lower degree, is given to all believers."⁵³ Wesley does not elaborate on this distinction. Obviously, the case is not air-tight that he always used the expression, "baptized with the Holy Ghost," solely in reference to conversion and justifying grace.

There are four expressions in regard to the Holy Spirit in Wesley's discussion of Cornelius and his household: "baptism of the Spirit," "received the Holy Ghost," "gift of the Holy Ghost," and "baptized with the Holy Ghost." These expressions are found in his commentary on Acts 10:47, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost?" (Caps that follow are mine)

He does not say, They have **THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT**; therefore they do not need baptism with water; but just the contrary; If they have received the Spirit, then baptize them with water. How easily is this question decided, if we take the World of God for our judge! Either men have **RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST**, or not. If they have not, 'Repent,' saith God, 'and be baptized, and ye shall receive the **GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST**.' If they have, if they are already **BAPTIZED WITH THE HOLY GHOST**, then, **who can forbid water?**⁵⁴

Concerning Cornelius and his household, Herbert McGonigle states that "Wesley held that they were already justified" prior to the encounter with Peter and his message at Caesarea (Acts 10).⁵⁵ Presumably McGonigle bases this on the expression regarding God's gracious favor in Acts 10:35, "Is accepted of him," and Wesley's commentary thereon.

Is accepted of him—Through Christ, though he knows Him not. The assertion is express, and admits of no exception. He is in favour of God, whether enjoying His written words and ordinances or not. Nevertheless, the addition of these is an unspeakable blessing to those who were before, in some measure, accepted: otherwise, God would never have sent an angel from heaven to direct Cornelius to St. Peter.⁵⁶

Perhaps the statement, "He is in the favour of God," is tantamount to justification, though Wesley does not use the word "justified" in his comments. An interesting observation relates to Wesley's earlier comment on Acts 10:4 concerning the prayers and alms of Cornelius. Wesley declares that "it is certain, in the Christian sense, Cornelius was then an unbeliever. He had not then faith in Christ."⁵⁷ It is apparent that there is some tension in Wesley's comments concerning Cornelius. Further, if McGonigle is correct in stating that for Wesley, Cornelius and his household were "already justified," it poses the question, does God justify a man while he is still an unbeliever?—(in view of Wesley's note on Acts 10:4). Or could it be that Wesley held that Cornelius was saved under Old Testament light, even though he was not yet a believer in Jesus prior to Peter's ministry? In his comment on Acts 10:1 concerning "a certain man in Caesarea named Cornelius," Wesley calls attention to the fact that Philip has been in Caesarea previously (Acts 8:40), "so that the doctrine of salvation by faith in Jesus was not unknown there."⁵⁸ Presumably, that message had not yet reached Cornelius, according to Wesley, as his comment on Acts 10:4 implies.

In a sermon preached at Oxford University in 1744 entitled "Scriptural Christianity," Wesley expressed the view that every Christian should be Spirit-filled, and the intimation is that anyone who is not Spirit-filled is not a Christian. The text for the sermon is Acts 4:31, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."⁵⁹

There is a similar emphasis in his sermon on "The First Fruits of the Spirit." Those who "are in Christ Jesus" are "filled with faith and with the Holy Ghost."⁶⁰ Later in the sermon Wesley points out that these "children of God" still have "the corruption of nature," or "inward sin," remaining in them.⁶¹ The problem is, of course, how a Christian can be filled with the Holy Spirit and yet have "inward sin" remaining. Presumably, for Wesley, they were not entirely sanctified.

We have already observed his threefold distinction of Christian believers: a babe in Christ, young men, and fathers, but in that context Wesley says only fathers are perfected in love, or filled with the Holy Spirit. In the two sermons just cited, all Christians should be Spirit-filled without distinction. Obviously, there is a lack of clarity at these points. In another context Wesley insists that it is impossible to be filled with love, or perfected in love, and still have inward sin. His very brief definition of entire sanctification or Christian perfection is that it is "love excluding sin."⁶² Ostensibly, the Holy Spirit is the Divine Agent Who fills the Christian's heart with love. Again, in the two sermons already mentioned, a Christian can be "filled with the Holy Spirit," yet

inward sin remains. Sin cannot remain, however, if the believer is filled with love. It is apparent there is tension in these views.

The sanctifying ministry of the Holy Spirit is likewise an emphasis in the hymns of the Wesleys. The following verses are representative of this element in Wesleyan hymnology.

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

* * *

Within me Thy good Spirit place,
Spirit of health, and love, and power;
Plant in me Thy victorious grace,
And sin shall never enter more.⁶³

* * *

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
Alpha and Omega be,
End of faith as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.⁶⁴

* * *

Come then, and dwell in me
Spirit of power within,
And bring the glorious liberty
From sorrow, fear, and sin:
The seed of sin's disease,
Spirit of health, remove,
Spirit of finish'd holiness,
Spirit of perfect love.⁶⁵

* * *

Spirit of Faith, come down,
Reveal the things of God,
And make to us the God head known,
And witness with the blood:
'Tis Thine the blood to' apply,
And give us eyes to see
Who did for every sinner die
Hath surely died for me.

Inspire the living faith,
 (Which whosoe'er receives
 The witness in himself he hath,
 And consciously believes;)
 The faith that conquers all,
 And doth the mountain move,
 And saves who'er on Jesus call,
 And perfects them in love.⁶⁶

These many references from the writings of John Wesley give ample testimony to the fact that the purifying work of the Holy Spirit's ministry is conspicuously involved in the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification as a definite second work of grace.

IV. The Witness of the Holy Spirit in Entire Sanctification

Wesley regarded "the witness of the Spirit," or Divine assurance, to be "the main doctrine of the Methodists" and "the very foundation of Christianity."⁶⁷ The witness of the Spirit is twofold in nature regarding salvation: first, there is an inner impression of assurance called a direct witness, and secondly, there is the testimony of a changed life which constitutes the indirect witness.⁶⁸

In a similar manner, Wesley insisted that there is a Divine assurance to the reality of entire sanctification. In "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection" (1777) he quotes from an earlier treatise, "Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection" (1761).

Q. 16. But how do you know, that you are sanctified, saved from your inbred corruption?

A. I can know it no otherwise than I know that I am justified. "Hereby know we that we are of God," in either sense, "by the Spirit that he hath given us."

We know it by the witness and by the fruit of the Spirit Indeed, the witness of sanctification is not always clear at first; (as neither is that of justification;) neither is it afterward always the same, but, like that of justification, sometimes stronger and sometimes fainter. Yea, and sometimes it is withdrawn. Yet, in general, the latter testimony of the Spirit is both as clear and as steady as the former.⁶⁹

Wesley urged those who had experienced entire sanctification to testify discreetly to it. Writing concerning this gracious experience, he advised:

Now, certainly, if God has given you this light, He did not intend that you should hide it under a bushel Everyone ought to declare what God has done for his soul, and that with all simplicity One reason why those who are saved from sin should freely declare it to believers is because nothing is a stronger

incitement to them to seek after the same blessing. And we ought by every possible means to press every serious believer to forget the things which are behind and with all earnestness to go on to perfection.⁷⁰

There is a biblical precedent, of course, for Wesley's encouragement to Christian testimony concerning the experience of a pure heart, or entire sanctification. Peter does so in Acts 15:8, 9, testifying that on a certain day, God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, purified his heart, with an accompanying Divine assurance that it was so. Wesley bore his own discreet and indirect testimony to a personal "Pentecost" in an entry in his *Journal* for October 28, 1762.

Many years ago my brother frequently said, "Your day of Pentecost is not fully come; but I doubt it will: And you will then hear of persons sanctified, as frequently as you do now of persons justified." ANY UNPREJUDICED READER MAY OBSERVE, THAT IT HAS NOW FULLY COME. [Caps mine] And accordingly we did hear of persons sanctified, in London, and most other parts of England, and in Dublin, and many other parts of Ireland, as frequently as of persons justified, although instances of the latter were far more frequent than they had been for twenty years before.⁷¹

In another entry on October 29, 1762, regarding his belief in instantaneous sanctification, he declared "I have known and taught it (and so has my brother, as our writings show) above these twenty years."⁷² In his significant sermon, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," he recorded a strong, indirect witness: "I have continually testified in private and in public, that we are sanctified as well as justified by faith."⁷³

Conclusion

A result of the extensive research for this paper is, first of all, the conclusion that there is a plenitude of references in the writings of John Wesley in which the ministry of the Holy Spirit is associated with his discussion of entire sanctification and Christian perfection. Of necessity, the evidence presented has had to be selective, not exhaustive. The weight of evidence calls into question W. E. Sangster's criticism that Wesley did not "link the doctrine (i.e. Christian perfection or entire sanctification) enough (as Paul does) with . . . the Holy Spirit."⁷⁴ Sangster's helpful analysis of Wesley's teaching concerning perfection is centered primarily in the famous treatise, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection." His criticism is not made in a guarded fashion, however, as being confined only to the "Plain Account" which covers eighty pages in Wesley's *Works*.⁷⁵ There are other significant writings of Wesley that bear upon this subject, and especially his sermons, "On Sin in

Believers,” “The Repentance of Believers,” and “The Scripture Way of Salvation.”⁷⁶ Important insights can be gleaned from Wesley’s other writings as well.⁷⁷

Another conclusion relates to Wesley’s use of pneumatological nomenclature in regard to entire sanctification. Although he maintained that he had been consistent in his belief about the doctrine,⁷⁸ there are some areas of tension, perhaps ambiguity, in regard to his application of pneumatological phrases, such as “receiving the Holy Spirit,” “the baptism of the Holy Spirit,” and “filled with the Holy Spirit.” Various references from his scattered writings indicate that Wesley had not worked out fully every facet of his teaching on the Holy Spirit. In spite of some “loose ends” theologically, the judgment of Bishop William R. Cannon, a foremost Wesleyan scholar is noteworthy.

So far as I have been able to determine, in the entire range of historical theology, there has never been a more orderly, well-arranged, and consistent theologian than John Wesley. Others have been more profound than he. He has lacked the encyclopaedic breadth of Aquinas and Calvin. The range of his explorations was limited. But given what he tried to accomplish theologically, no one, so far as I can tell, essayed his task more clear-headedly or brought off his work more consistently than did the Founder of Methodism.⁷⁹

It is only fair to remember that Wesley was primarily an evangelist, and that his theological doctrines were in the service of his evangelism. His itinerant ministry across many years was exceedingly demanding. Once his evangelistic ministry began in the late 1730’s, the opportunities for leisured scholarship were virtually gone. A writer in an American horseman magazine has conjectured that John Wesley may have spent more time on horseback than any man in history—an estimated 175,000 miles, equivalent to seven times around the world.⁸⁰ When we view the abundance of his travels to spread the Gospel, the wonder is that Wesley found time to write anything at all, and when a survey is made of his extensive writings (roughly, 18,000 pages, plus!), an equal wonder is that he found time to itinerate.

It has been left to Wesley’s posterity to work out in greater detail some areas of the Wesleyan theological structure. Where there has been fidelity to Holy Scripture, these efforts have complimented and supplemented Wesley’s valuable insights, without altering in any way the doctrinal standards that he specified for Methodism.⁸¹

A final conclusion relates to Wesley’s vision for a universal penetration of the message of scriptural holiness through evangelistic zeal and the gracious ministry of the Holy Spirit. He regarded this biblical truth to be a special heritage entrusted by God to the people

called Methodist.⁸² The thrust of the doctrine was not sectarian or provincial, however, but truly Christian and universal, as expressed in one of Wesley's prayers.

May all the inhabitants of the earth do Thy will as willingly as the holy angels! May these do it continually even as they, without any interruption of their willing service; yea, and perfectly as they! Mayest Thou, Spirit of grace, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make them perfect in every good work to do Thy will, and work in them all that is well-pleasing in Thy sight!⁸³

In concluding this study of the role of the Holy Spirit in entire sanctification as understood by John Wesley, it is appropriate to call attention to "The Findings" of the first Institute of Methodist Theological Studies which was held at Lincoln College, Oxford in July 1959. A segment of "The Findings" expressed both gratitude for Methodism's founder and challenge to those who would "serve the present age, their calling to fulfill."

Is not the task of Methodists to perform with the Scriptures in the twentieth century a task like that which John Wesley performed in the eighteenth century? Our sense of indebtedness for the biblical insights of Wesley is profound, and we believe these insights will long continue to be relevant. Does not loyalty to this great contribution of the Wesleys require us now to go further and perform in the twentieth century a like task of bringing the world under the judgement of the Word of God? Is it not the proper work of the Holy Spirit in every generation to make Christ and His commands contemporary?⁸⁴

If we are to fulfill our Christian responsibility in this generation, working with God for the transformation of men and society, we need desperately both the purity and power of the Holy Spirit in sanctifying grace, as demonstrated so forcefully and successfully in the life and ministry of John Wesley.

DOCUMENTATION

1. Cf. William R. Cannon, "Salvation in the Theology of John Wesley," *Methodist History*, IX (October, 1970), 3. Cf. Lycurgus M. Starkey, Jr. *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 33f, 45f.
2. John Wesley, "The Scripture Way of Salvation." Sermon L. in *Wesley's Standard Sermons*, Edward H. Sugden, ed. (Nashville: Lamer

- & Barton, Agents, Publishing House M.E. Church, South, n.d.), II, 445f. Hereafter referred to as *Sermons*. Cf. Starkey, *op. cit.*, 15.
3. *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley*, A.M., John Telford, ed. (London: The Epworth Press, 1931), III, 9. Hereafter referred to as *Letters*.
 4. *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley*, A.M., Thomas Jackson, ed. (London: John Mason, 1829), VI, 512. Sermon LXXXV, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation." Hereafter referred to as *Works*.
 5. *Ibid.*, 513.
 6. *John Wesley, Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*. (London: The Epworth Press, 1952), 366. Note on John 14:17. Hereafter referred to as *N.T. Notes*.
 7. *Ibid.*, 371. Note on John 16:8.
 8. *Ibid.* Note on John 16:9.
 9. *Ibid.*, 685. Note on Galatians 2:19.
 10. *Ibid.*, 534. Note on Romans 4:15.
 11. *Ibid.*, 245. Note on Luke 11:33.
 12. *Ibid.*, 87-8. Note on Matthew 18:3.
 13. *Ibid.*, 438. Note on Acts 11:28.
 14. *Ibid.*, 23. Note on Matthew 3:8.
 15. *Sermons*, II, 231. Sermon XXXIX.
 16. *Works*, VII, 485-86. Sermon CXXXVIII.
 17. *N.T. Notes*, 623. Note on I Cor. 12:13.
 18. *Ibid.*, 366. Note on John 14:17.
 19. *Letters*, V, 215.
 20. *N.T. Notes*, 759. Note on I Thess. 4:3.
 21. *Ibid.* Note on I Thess. 4:8.
 22. *Sermons*, II, 396. Sermon XLVII, "The Repentance of Believers."
 23. *Ibid.*, 395.
 24. Cf. George Allen Turner, *The More Excellent Way*. (Winona Lake: Light and Life Press, 1952), 249, 236, 247, and the important footnote (74) on 266.
 25. *Sermons*, II, 394-95. Sermon XLVII, "The Repentance of Believers."

26. *The Word and the Doctrine*, Kenneth S. Geiger, compiler. (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1965), 89ff., especially 115-17.
27. *Letters*, IV, 380.
28. *Ibid.*, 39.
29. *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley*, A.M. Nehemiah Curnock, ed. (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1909), II, 25. Hereafter referred to as *Journal*.
30. *Ibid.*, 359.
31. *Sermons*, II, 162. Sermon XXXV.
32. *N.T. Notes*, 24.
33. John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament*. (London: William Pine, 1765), III, 2385.
- 33a. *Ibid.*, 2386.
34. E.G., Roy S. Nicholson lists twenty-three terms used by Wesley. See Nicholson's article, "John Wesley's Personal Experience of Christian Perfection," *The Asbury Seminary*, VI (January, 1952) 74-5.
35. *Letters*, V, 223.
36. *A Compend of Wesley's Theology*, Robert W. Burtner and Robert E. Chiles, eds. (New York, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1954), 139, 195.
37. Cf. A. Skevington Wood, *The Burning Heart—John Wesley, Evangelist*. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), 267, 269.
38. *Letters*, VIII, 190.
39. *Ibid.*, VI, 146.
40. *Ibid.*, V, 229.
41. *Sermons*, I, 119. Sermon V, "Justification by Faith."
42. *N.T. Notes*, 815.
43. *Ibid.*, 376.
44. *Ibid.*, 61. Note on Matthew 11:28.
45. *Ibid.*, 904. Note on I John 1:7. Cf. 801, note on Titus 2:14, "*That he might redeem us—Miserable bondslaves, as well from the power and the very being, as from the guilt, of all our sins.*"
46. *Sermons*, II, 453. Sermon L, "The Scripture Way of Salvation."

47. *N.T. Notes*, 425, 471.
48. *Works*, VIII, 49.
49. *N.T. Notes*, 547.
50. *Ibid.*, 548.
51. See the helpful discussion by Leslie D. Wilcox, *Be Ye Holy* (Cincinnati: The Revivalist Press, 1965), 281f.
52. *N.T. Notes*, 393.
53. *Works*, VI, 395. Sermon LXXIV.
54. *N.T. Notes*, 436.
55. See McGonigle's helpful discussion, "Pneumatological Nomenclature in Early Methodism," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, VIII (Spring, 1973), 61ff.
56. *N.T. Notes*, 435.
57. *Ibid.*, 432.
58. *Ibid.*, 431.
59. *Sermons*, I, 92ff., especially 104-6, 110. Sermon IV.
60. *Works*, V, 88-9. Sermon VIII.
61. *Ibid.*, 91.
62. *Letters*, V, 223; *Works*, XII, 416.
63. *Sermons*, II, 175-76. Sermon XXXV, "Christian Perfection."
64. *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, G. Osborn, ed. (London: Wesleyan Methodist Conference Office, 1869), IV, 219.
65. *Ibid.*, XIII, 45.
66. Burtner and Chiles, *op. cit.*, 104-5.
67. *Letters*, II, 64.
68. See *Sermons*, Discourse I "The Witness of the Spirit," in I, 199ff., Discourse II "The Witness of the Spirit," II, 341ff.; and "The Witness of Our Own Spirit," I, 219ff.
69. *Works*, XI, 420.
70. *Letters*, V, 6.
71. *Journal*, IV, 532.
72. *Ibid.*, 536.
73. *Sermons*, II, 453. Sermon L.

74. W. E. Sangster, *The Path to Perfection*. (New York, Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1943), 44.
75. *Works*, XI, 366-446.
76. *Sermons*, II, 360ff.; 379ff.; 442ff.
77. Research areas are: *Works*, 14 vols.; *Journal*, 8 vols.; *Letters*, 8 vols.; *Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament*, 3 vols.; and *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*. Grand total: 18,173 pages, though there is some duplication. The total does not include the Osborn edition of *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, 13 vols., his *Christian Library*, 50 vols. nor his *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation: or a Compendium of Natural Philosophy*, 5 vols.
78. *Works*, XI, 373.
79. Cannon, *op. cit.*, 3.
80. Victor D. Sutch, "A Man Who Valued a Good Horse," *The Western Horseman*, September, 1966, 72, 88.
81. The specified doctrinal standards are: (1) *The Standard Sermons*, (2) *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, and in addition for American Methodism, (3) *The Twenty-five Articles of Religion*.
82. *Letters*, VIII, 238.
83. *N.T. Notes*, 38. Prayer comment on Matthew 6:10.
84. *The London Quarterly & Holborn Review*, XXVIII (July, 1959), 163.

CONFESSION OF SIN IN THE LIFE OF
CHRISTIAN EXCELLENCE AND THE ORDER OF
SALVATION IN THE THEOLOGY OF JOHN WESLEY

Irwin W. Reist *

The figure of John Wesley continues to attract and repel the twentieth century theological and ecclesiastical mind-set. Past interpretations have looked upon Wesley as a rigid ascetic who never recovered from an early tragedy in romantic love and, because of this, much later married eventually for pragmatic and unwise reasons; as a crypto-Roman Catholic—either because of his rigid sacramental views and practices or his misunderstanding of the evangelical doctrine of justification by grace through faith alone; as a rigid ecclesiastic who refused to see the implications of his essential position and hence would not leave the Church of England; as a crypto-Calvinist for his emphasis upon free grace as over against free-will;¹ as a devout mystic and saintly Christian leader; as a Barthian before his time who combined intensity of Christian commitment with an emphasis upon the awful holiness of the God revealed in Jesus Christ;² as a Pelagian who robbed God of His sovereign grace because he argued that man was a free creature;³ as a religious fanatic who actively promoted emotional excesses for the sake of religion;⁴ or as a forerunner of modern religious liberalism because he held that orthodoxy constitutes but a very minor part of true Christianity, rather emphasizing the love of God to man and the religious possibilities of man as a religious creature.⁵ The list could be multiplied, for a man of Wesley's Catholic interests, efforts, and accomplishments cannot of course be understood by being funneled through one perspective alone.

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It is not unfair to argue that Methodism arose as, and should be understood as, a redemptive movement in essence whose inner nature released energies for the transformation of the individual and society. When this approach is taken, Wesley's views of the possibilities of redemption and the effects of such redemption in the lives of the men and groups claiming soteriological powers is a necessary field of investigation. Wesley, himself, argued that God had raised up the Methodists to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land. The claims of Wesley's soteriology and the character and state and activity of those professing its power can be looked upon then as phenomena needing continuous clarification and development. This is especially true when it is seen that the universal Christian Church has always perceived herself as a redeemed body whose unity rested in her redemption.

The truths on which we should be able to agree concern the fact and guilt of sin, the possibility of forgiveness and the need for confession . . . So much is agreed among us. We are guilty sinners. Our merciful God offers us forgiveness through Jesus Christ. We must confess our sins.⁶

The idea of confession, however, raises problems, such as its nature, to whom it should be made, and its relations to other aspects of the order of salvation. Confession is intimately related to repentance as a sign of genuine repentance and is necessary before forgiveness is bestowed (I John 1:9). Confession also recognizes sin and guilt in the confessor. "We admit that we are sinners and disclose specific sins in confession."⁷ Four kinds of confession have arisen in the historical church: secret confession to God, private confession to the offended individual, public confession to the church, and auricular confession to the priest.⁸ Wesley believed in the first three of these, but came to see that the fourth was unscriptural.⁹ These four kinds together deal with acknowledgement of sin; a fifth meaning of confession simply is the content of an individual's or group's theological stance which they make known publicly. In this study we shall confine ourselves to the first of these, i.e. confession by the individual of his sin to God.

Wesley's distinctive view of the order of salvation as over against other perspectives (Lutheran, Reformed, Roman Catholic, etc.) raises a particular problem for those who freely attempt to be his religious and doctrinal descendants, for the original Wesleyan theology claims a perfection possible in this life which, at least formally, excludes sin. Would the confession of sin or sins be irrelevant to such a person? If not, why not; if so, why? The tensions and perplexities are many, once the essential problem surfaces. In the following statement of Wesley, delineating the order of salvation, it is important to note the freedom of God to

work as He pleases, yet at the same time to note that there does seem to be a normative pattern for Him.

Indeed, how God may work we cannot tell; but the general manner wherein he does work is this: Those who once trusted in themselves . . . are convinced they are poor and naked . . . In their trouble they cry unto the Lord, and he shows them that he hath taken away their sins, and opens the kingdom of heaven in their hearts . . . In this peace they remain . . . and commonly suppose they shall not know war anymore; till . . . their bosom sins assault them again . . . Then arises fear that they shall not endure to the end . . . But it is seldom long before their Lord answers for himself, sending the Holy Ghost . . . to bear witness continually with their spirits that they are the children of God . . . the witness . . . heightens . . . the inexpressible hunger they feel after a full renewal in his image . . . Then God is mindful of the desire of them that fear him, and gives them a single eye, and a pure heart . . .¹⁰

In this classical statement may be found the essential elements of the Wesleyan understanding of the order of salvation: unbelief, conviction of sin, confession, faith, pardon, the new birth, struggle with sin, the witness of the Spirit, desire for holiness, and purity of heart. This paper focuses on this point: Is repentance and confession of sin always a necessary, constituent element in the Wesleyan idea of salvation in terms of the specific content Wesley gives to the last element of the order, i.e. purity of heart. If a person is pure in heart, why would he need to confess sin?

The problem is focused for us in that Wesley used the term "perfection" to describe the attainable state of the forgiven, indwelt, growing believer. "Wesley also acknowledged sinfulness in believers; nevertheless, he propounded a doctrine of perfection."¹¹ This perfection described the level of Christian experience after initial justification and beginning sanctification. Wesley more precisely described the justifying and sanctifying operations of God.

By justification we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favor of God, by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God. All experience, as well as Scripture, shows this salvation to be both instantaneous and gradual. It begins the moment we are justified . . . it gradually increases from that moment . . . till, in another instant, the heart is cleansed from all sin, and filled with pure love to God and man . . . But even that love increases more and more.¹²

Perfection was the term which Wesley used to describe in some sense any stage of the Christian life. The justified, born-again believer could be called perfect. "But even babes in Christ are in such a sense perfect, or born of God . . . as, First, not to commit sin."¹³ They do not commit outward sin, or at least, they need not. "Wesley did not

claim that a Christian was not able to sin, but that by the indwelling Spirit he was able not to sin”¹⁴ He took the term “perfection” and used it also in two additional different ways. The first concerned the time element as to when this perfection took place. Here, again, there is a recognition of the freedom of God to work as He sees fit, but also a normative process and structure which God manifests.

Perhaps it may be gradually wrought in some . . . But it is infinitely desirable, were it the will of God, that it should be done instantaneously . . . and so he generally does.¹⁵

The perfection that God works, then, in the life entails both a gradual and an instantaneous element.

From the moment we are justified, there may be a gradual sanctification, a growing in grace . . . and if sin cease before death, there must, in the nature of the thing, be an instantaneous change Certainly we must insist on the gradual change, and that earnestly and continually. And are there not reasons why we should insist on the instantaneous also?¹⁶

The Christian, then, is being made perfect in some sense, and is already perfect, in another.

The second way Wesley used the term “perfection” concerns its content or its meaning. What does the word “perfect” mean in the life of the Christian? His interpretation is not hard to find.

Here, then, is the sum of the perfect; this is the true circumcision of the heart . . . Let it be continuously offered up to God through Christ, in flames of holy love . . . Let your soul be filled with so entire a love of him, that you may love nothing but for his sake. Have a pure intention of heart.¹⁷

And again, “This is the sum of Christian perfection: It is all comprised in that one word, Love . . . the love of God . . . Love thy neighbor as thyself.”¹⁸

This love Wesley defined as self-impartment and self-communication, the highest form of which was self-sacrifice.

How what is it to love God, but to delight in him, to rejoice in his will, to desire continually to please him, to seek and find our happiness in him¹⁹ If you have truly presented yourselves to God, you offer up to him continually all your thoughts, and words, and actions, through the Son of his love, as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.²⁰

This was love expelling sin, delivering from sin. This Christian perfection was a purification of motive, the love of God freed from all selfish interests and corrupt natural desire.

The word “perfect” and the phrase “salvation from all sin” raised a variety of questions and problems. Only God is “perfect” and even the most devout Christian is a human, limited, and finite individual. But

here, in his doctrine of perfection, Wesley re-defined sin so as to mean known and purposeful acts against a known law of God. Wesley argued that the perfection he taught "will perfectly well consist with salvation from sin according to that definition of sin (which I apprehend to be the scriptural definition of it) a **voluntary transgression of a known law.**"²¹ In this sense not all transgressions of the law are necessarily sinful, since not purposed. By refusing to call sins those deeds which are non-purposed and those present because of man's depraved nature, he could and did maintain that "perfection" was attainable in this life.²² Even Wesley's modern day, evangelical Anglican counterpart, J. R. W. Stott, when speaking of confession defines sin as "an infringement of God's known will, a revolt against His authority."²³ Elsewhere Wesley does seem to argue, however, that although known sin is the most intense form of sin, others may be present and should be called by that name.

Presumptuous sins (are those in which) . . . the willful sinner is not ignorant or surprised, but knowingly fights against God's express commandment . . . and all other kinds of sins are more or less heinous, as they are nearer or farther off from sins of this dreadful nature; inasmuch as these imply the greatest opposition to God's will, contempt of his mercy, and defiance of his justice.²⁴

In using such concepts as perfection, Wesley was charged with teaching sinless perfection or so re-defining the term "perfection," or re-using it that it became meaningless, for it came to mean something akin to "imperfect perfection." Wesley argues differently at different times and in different places concerning the term and his acceptance or rejection of it. He says, "And I do not contend for the term 'sinless', though I do not object against it."²⁵ Again, he writes, "Secondly, you make sinless perfection necessary after justification in order to make us meet for glory. And who does not?"²⁶ Here, however, he re-defines the term "perfect" because it was a biblical word.²⁷ What he might have said was that it was an English and King James Version word with different meanings. On the other hand, he referred to "the scarecrow of sinless perfection"²⁸ and declared, "To the charge of holding 'sinless perfection' . . . I might likewise plead, Not guilty . . ."²⁹

A tension arises between his word "perfection" and the word "repentance" which includes or leads to confession, for if a man is perfect why need he repent of any sin? Repentance for Wesley involves self-knowledge or conviction of sin,³⁰ utter helplessness,³¹ "producing real desires and sincere resolutions of amendment."³² In one or more of these senses Wesley declared, "There is also a repentance and a faith . . . which are requisite after we have 'believed the gospel'; yea, and in every subsequent stage of our Christian course, or we cannot 'run the

race which is set before us.' ”³³ At the point of Christian perfection, even, repentance is necessary. “Circumcision of heart implies humility . . . a right judgement of ourselves, cleanses our minds from those high conceits of our own perfections It convinces us, that in our best estate we are, of ourselves, all sin and vanity.”³⁴

Yea, suppose God has now thoroughly cleansed our heart . . . yet how can we be sensible enough of our own helplessness, our own utter inability to all good, unless we are every hour, yea, every moment endued with power from on high We have need, even in this state of grace, to be thoroughly and continually penetrated with a sense of this. Otherwise we shall be in perpetual danger of robbing God of his honour, by glorying in something we have received, as though we had not received it.³⁵

Here repentance is looked upon not only as acknowledgement and confession of one's sins, but as recognition that one has not attained all that is possible for him and that, whatever one attains, he does not have from his own sinful, selfish person, but he receives it from God. As such, repentance and confession are a permanent necessary attitude of mind and life.³⁶

These terms—repentance, confession, and perfection—and the relationships among them point us toward the question as to whether the “perfect” Christian still needs forgiveness of sin, Christ as His priest, atonement for his sin, and the unmerited grace of God revealed in Christ. Wesley objected that any form of perfection which ruled out the merits of Christ's atonement, i.e. the need for forgiveness, was not his position.

A perfection such as enables a person to fulfill the whole law and so needs not the merits of Christ—I acknowledge no such perfection; I do now and always did protest against it.³⁷

Wesley always felt the need for the atonement in the lives even of those Christians who are perfect in the love of God. The reasons he felt this were three.

The first was simply that the sanctified Christian's continual supply of power and ability not only to maintain his current relationship with Christ but to increase its dominion in his life was predicated upon the mediation of Christ. The best of men “need Christ as their Priest, their Atonement, their Advocate with the Father . . . as the continuance of their every blessing depends on his death and intercession”³⁸ The perfect are never so perfect as to be independent of the source of their perfection.³⁹ “And whatever expression any sinner who loves God uses to denote God's love to him, you will always upon examination find they directly or indirectly imply forgiveness,”⁴⁰ i.e. atonement. Wesley insists that sanctification, no matter how high,

is always dependent upon trust—not to say so is to re-establish salvation by merit not grace.

None feel their need of Christ like these [the perfect in love] ;none so entirely depend upon him. For Christ does not give life to the soul separate from, but in and with, himself. Hence, his words are equally true of all men, in whatsoever state they are . . . ‘without’ (or separate from) ‘me ye can do nothing.’ ” 41

The second reason why the best of men need the cross of atonement and Christ as their mediator is due to the results of the fall. Perfection in love does not mean present complete deliverance from the effects of the fall of Adam. When Adam fell, all men were rendered powerless to keep the Adamic law (the use of the natural faculties as originally created and intended) and the Mosaic law in its threefold form as political, ceremonial, and moral. Depth of love in the life does not completely overcome the weakness of natural faculty which in turn keeps one from ever loving in an absolutely perfect sense. Although not under the Adamic law of using correctly the natural faculties, “even against this, through the present weakness of our understanding, we are continually liable to transgress. Therefore every man needs the blood of the atonement, or he could not stand before God.” 42

Every such mistake, were it not for the blood of the atonement, would expose to eternal damnation If follows, that the most perfect have continued need of the merits of Christ, even for their actual transgressions, and may say for themselves [confess] , as well as for their brethren, ‘Forgive us our trespasses.’ ” 43

The place of the Mosaic law in its moral form has a special function in Wesley’s order of salvation. The moral law brings guilt and shows helplessness, but it has been fulfilled through Christ in His life, death, and resurrection. He has fulfilled it through the love which He brought and demonstrated in these events. Hence the Christian is under the law of love or the law of faith. The third reason then why the perfect Christian needs the atonement and needs to confess his sins is that he never fully keeps the law of love in act although he may in motive. One can always love more or apply love in a more perceptive way.

For want of better bodily organs, they must at times think, speak, or act wrong; not indeed through a defect of love, but through a defect of knowledge. And while this is the case, notwithstanding that defect, and its consequences, they fulfill the law of love. Yet as, even in this case, there is not a full conformity to the perfect law, so the most perfect do, on this very account, need the blood of the atonement, and may properly for themselves, as well as for their brethren, say, ‘Forgive us our trespasses.’ ” 44

Again,

A man may be filled with pure love and still be liable to mistake . . . a mistake in judgement may possibly occasion a mistake in practise And a thousand such instances there may be, even in those who are in the highest state of grace. Yet, when every word and action springs from love, such a mistake is not properly a sin. However it cannot bear the rigour of God's justice, but needs the atoning blood.⁴⁵

Thus, while the Christian may in motive be delivered from purposely transgressing a known law, in a second and deeper sense in which sin is judged by the perfect will of God, even the perfect Christian is a sinner and under the need for continual repentance, confession and forgiveness. Here, as in Luther, Wesley declares that the Christian is *simul justus et peccator*. He envisages no holiness apart from the cross and is careful to exclude any reliance on human merit just as he does in justification. Here also stands Calvin. Yet justification is transformed, not superseded. There is no existential despair of guilt which cannot be countered by divine love and forgiveness. There is no despair over weakness which cannot be embraced by the divine power and grace. Hence, the Christian need not cry in defeat "My sins, my sins!" but can exult in Christ. Wesley was asked

Q. 10. May not, then, the very best of men adopt the dying Martyr's confession: 'I am in myself nothing but sin, darkness, hell; but thou art my light, my holiness, my heaven'?

A. Not exactly. But the best of men may say, 'Thou art my light, my holiness, my heaven. Through my union with thee, I am full of light, of holiness, and happiness. But if I were left to myself, I should be nothing but sin, darkness, hell.'⁴⁶

Wesley saw no contradiction or inconsistency between heights of "perfect" love and continuous need of the atonement. Although the absolute will and character of God judge the Christian necessitating pardon, the revealed will of God in Jesus Christ brings forgiveness and power to grow in the grace and knowledge of God our Saviour, to desire nothing but His glory, and to confess the perpetual need of Christ's mediation. "The Christian who is perfect is free from sin, not according to the objective standards of justice, but according to the measure of personal relationship with Christ."⁴⁷

In conclusion, let us note the following:

1) It might be better to dispense with the term "perfection" and use the one, "Christian excellence." This removes misunderstandings about "imperfect perfection" and absolute perfection residing in God alone. It permits growth beyond crisis which Wesley himself asserted but never quite satisfactorily developed.

2) It might be better to cease talking of the sanctified state or

perfected state and speak of unbroken relationship with Christ in the power and motive of love.

3) It might be better to cease speaking of holiness as a possession and bear witness to it as a gift. “. . . Holiness never becomes our possession, but is a gift that we must receive daily from Christ.”⁴⁸ We should never trust in possessed righteousness, but in the Mediator of it, Jesus Christ.

4) We might better cease speaking of levels of experience and speak of meeting-places or encounters. It is in the personal, daily crises that Christ meets us and in the two crises encounters that He focuses His work.

5) We ought to freely confess our sins corporately with the Christian body. Not to do so, is to avoid the corporate nature of sin in Christ's people at the expense of personal righteousness.

6) We need to emphasize in a dialectical fashion the two-fold nature of sin and see that although a man need not purposely transgress a known law of God, he always falls short of the absolute law of God's justice and righteousness and hence always needs to confess his sins and receive forgiveness.

7) In the light of the above study, it may be clearer why the man, who proclaimed that Christians could be perfect in that “they are saved in this world from all sin, from all unrighteousness; that they are now in such a sense perfect, as not to commit sin, and to be freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers,”⁴⁹ could also write

But to proceed, the best of men need Christ as their Priest, their Atonement, their Advocate with the Father, not only as the continuance of their every blessing depends on his death and intercession, but on account of their coming short of the laws of love. For every man living does so. You who feel all love, compare yourself with the preceding description. Weigh yourselves in this balance, and see if you are not wanting in many particulars.⁵⁰ and could himself confess through his weakened body as he faced death in three days, “I the chief of sinners am, but Jesus died for me.” When queried about his meaning in these words, he confessed, “Christ is all. He is all.” These words show his continuous and final sense of reliance upon the atonement, forgiveness, and purity of Christ,⁵¹ and his need for confession of sins.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Cp. I. W. Reist, "John Wesley's View of Man—A Study In Free Grace vs. Free-Will." *Wesleyan Theological Journal*. VII, No. 1 (Spring, 1972), 25-35, and "John Wesley and George Whitefield—A Study in the Integrity of Two Theologies of Grace," Paper read at a meeting of the Wesleyan Theological Society, 5 April, 1972, Indianapolis, Indiana, and to be published in *The Evangelical Quarterly*, F. F. Bruce, editor.

² Cp. G. C. Cell, *The Rediscovery of John Wesley*. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1935).

³ This was a repeated argument of older hyper-orthodox Calvinism.

⁴ Wesley faced this charge during his own lifetime, and the emotional excesses of his 19th and 20th century descendants have contributed towards its popular reception.

⁵ Cp. U. Lee, *John Wesley and Modern Religion*. (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1936).

⁶ J. R. W. Scott, "Confess Your Sins. The Way of Reconciliation." *Christian Foundations*. I. P. E. Hughes, editor. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), 9, 12.

⁷ O. Michel, "ὁμολογεῖν" *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. G. Friedrich, editor. (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, Co., 1968), V. 207.

⁸ Stott, op. cit.

⁹ F. Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England*. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1970). 34, 152.

¹⁰ J. Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection." *The Works of John Wesley*. XI (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, n. d.), 380. Hereafter referred to as PACP, p. no.

¹¹ R. C. Monk, *John Wesley, His Puritan Heritage*. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1966), 56.

¹² Sermon LXXXV, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," *Works*, VI, 509. From now on Wesley's collected works will be referred to as *Works*; his sermons as Roman numerals; the initial entry will give the sermon title and an abbreviation which will be used afterwards, followed by volume and page numbers.

¹³ Sermon XL, "Christian Perfection," *Works*, VI, 6. Hereafter, CP.

¹⁴ A. S. Wood, *The Burning Heart*. (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1967), 268.

¹⁵ Sermon XLIII, "The Scriptural Way of Salvation," *Works*, VI, 53.

¹⁶ "Minutes of Several Conversations Between Mr. Wesley and Others from the Year 1744 to the Year 1789." *Works*, VIII, 329.

¹⁷ Sermon XVII, "The Circumcision of the Heart," *Works*, V, 211-12. Hereafter COH.

¹⁸ Sermon LXXVI, "On Perfection," *Works*, VI, 413. Hereafter, OP.

¹⁹ Sermon CXXXIX, "On Love," *Works*, VII, 495.

²⁰ OP, VI, 414.

²¹ OP, VI, 417.

²² Monk, *op. cit.*, 116.

²³ *Op. cit.*, 11.

²⁴ Sermon CXXXVIII, "On Grieving the Holy Spirit," *Works*, VII, 492.

²⁵ PACP, XI, 446.

²⁶ "The Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained." *Works*, VIII, 492. Hereafter "Principles."

²⁷*CP*, VI, 1

²⁸ "Principles," VIII., 432.

²⁹ "A Letter to the Right Rev. The Lord Bishop of London." *Works*, VIII, 484.

³⁰ Sermon VII, "The Way to the Kingdom," *Works*, V. 81.

³¹ Sermon XIV, "The Repentance of Believers," *Works*, V. 164; hereafter, *ROB*.

³² "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," *Works*, VII, 47.

³³ *ROB*, V. 157.

³⁴*COH* V, 203.

³⁵ Sermon LXXXIV, "On the Church," *Works*, VI, 398.

³⁶ U. Lee, *John Wesley and Modern Religion*. (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1936), 192.

³⁷ "Letter CCXVII," *Works*, XII, 257.

³⁸ *PACP*, XI, 417.

³⁹ C. Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today*. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960), 177.

⁴⁰ "An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Opinion," *Works*, VIII, 24.

⁴¹ *PACP*, XI, 395.

⁴² *OP*, 413.

⁴³ *PACP*, XI, 395.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 419.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 394-5.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 417.

⁴⁷ Williams, *op. cit.*, 178.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *CP*. VI, 19.

⁵⁰ *PACP*, XI, 417.

⁵¹ "The Life of the Rev. John Wesley," *Works*, V, 547.

BOOK REVIEWS

Colossians: the Church's Lord and the Christian's Liberty. An Expository Commentary with a Present-Day Application, by Ralph P. Martin. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972. 180 pages. \$5.95.

Professor Martin has given us a commentary which "tries to express in popular form the insights and helps which abound in larger works and in some significant articles in recent journals" (p. ix). The RSV text is taken as the base for the commentary, but it is clear throughout that the author has the Greek text before him.

Martin has taken an interesting but significant step on matters one usually considers "introductory". In the Introduction proper he discusses only issues which relate to an understanding of the epistle itself. The other matters of provenance and authorship which usually are treated in an introduction are here relegated to an appendix after the commentary. Though useful in drawing attention to the relative importance of these difference questions, the format still appears somewhat awkward.

The introductory discussion of the Colossian problem and why Paul responded the way he did is first-rate. The Colossian heresy, whether gnostic, proto-gnostic or whatever, clearly gave to Jesus Christ a role less than what Paul sensed to be fundamental to Christian faith and life. If Christ does not have total primacy in the Church's theological expression, something is critically wrong. The remarkable delineations of thought are Paul's attempt to ensure that the grandeur of Christ is not shared with others. Ethics, and not theology alone, is seen to be involved; for the liberty of the believer is threatened by speculations which force a man into subservience to calendrical calculations and similar contrivances which guarantee cultic conformity. The type of heresy at hand is seen to be the result of free-thinking Judaism of the dispersion having conversation with speculative Greek thought.

The commentary proper presents very little that is novel—nor should it necessarily—but gives us lucid and mature insights into the purpose of this small epistle. The author's own definitive study of pre-Pauline material in the Pauline epistles (Carmen Christi, 1967) has enabled him to speak and write from the vantage point of much reflection on Paul's thought and ministry in the earth Church.

Occasionally one is disappointed: (e.g.,) on the text of Col.

1:15-20, we have less than a full page of theological commentary; whereas considerable space is given to critical matters such as origin and strophic arrangement of this pre-Pauline hymn. Surely the proportion of space ought to be reversed, for it is the present text that comes to us as Word of God. Martin's material here is useful, but our concern is for a more adequate commentary on the text.

Taken as a whole, the book is a welcome addition to those recent publications which seek to relate the apparently esoteric thought of this epistle to the issues of modern man. Many pastors will certainly be grateful for the availability of this volume.

Robert W. Lyon

The Universe: Plan or Accident? by Robert E. D. Clark, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972. 240 pages. \$2.95.

The editors at Zondervan have done a favor to all interested in the relationship between science and religion by issuing this book in the Contemporary Evangelical Perspectives series. It is a reprint of the 1961 third revised edition of a book first published in 1949 by the well-known lecturer in Chemistry at Cambridgeshire College of Arts and Technology.

The book is a near-classic statement of the impact of data from the sciences which are indicative of design in the universe. A primary tenet held by the author is the necessity of focusing on the "unexplained" in order to gain further understanding, an approach basic to the sciences themselves. A second principle emphasized is that evidences of design exist in all the sciences, but researchers in each attempt to explain them away as if such evidences were unique to that science. The result has been to prevent the realization of the cumulative effect.

Problems discussed include (1) whether the universe was created or whether it has always existed, and the subsidiary problem of entropy; (2) whether our planet is unique or one among many; (3) whether life exists elsewhere; (4) conditions necessary for life; (5) the origin of the earth; (6) evidence for design in history; (7) evidence for a Designer; and (8) evil in the universe.

Through all the discussion the author shows a mature grasp of the basic and sometimes hidden presuppositions underlying different perspectives on the relation of science, the universe and man. A truly fine grasp of the history of science is in evidence, as well as a significant acquaintance with the evidence from more than just chemistry among the sciences. This publication remains one of the best works in this field, well worth the moderate price.

Ivan L. Zabilka

The Old Testament Books of Poetry From 26 Translations, Curtis T. Vaughn (ed), Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973. 710 pages. \$9.95.

This volume is the first in a projected series which will, when completed, cover the entire Old Testament. As such, it forms a companion to Zondervan's New Testament from 26 Translations.

Although it is doubtful if a work of this nature will be read straight through, the book will be of value for reference purposes. The basic format has the KJV rendering of each verse first, followed by as many as a half-dozen other translations chosen from the basic stock of twenty-five. Although no principles of choice are stated, it appears that editors chose those translations which they felt would shed most light on a given verse.

Perhaps the greatest danger of a work of this nature is that it tends to perpetuate a "verse-by isolated-verse" approach to Scripture instead of the sounder paragraphical approach. However, if one has first analyzed the entire passage and then turns to a work such as this, the danger will be minimized.

Both those who know and those who do not know Hebrew will profit from this book. Those not conversant with the language will be helped to see some of the nuances in the original by the differing translations; the student of Hebrew will be able to trace directly the ways in which differing scholars handle the original.

J. Oswalt

Knowing God, J. I. Packer. Downers Grove (IL.). InterVarsity Press, 1973. 256 pages. \$5.95.

The author, Associate Principal of Trinity College, Bristol (Eng.), seeks to give an exposition of what happens when God, before whom the nations are as a drop in a bucket, comes to a man and begins to talk to him through the words and truths of the Scriptures. Man, as he listens, realizes that God is actually opening His heart to him, enlisting him—in Barth's phrase, as a "covenant partner". Although in the divine confrontation man is brought very low, he nevertheless comes to realize that it is all to one end—God in love seeks everlasting dialogue with man. The conviction behind the book is that of ignorance of God—of His ways and of the practice of communion with Him. The author cites two trends in today's church that seem to have produced this state of affairs: (1) The Christian mind has conformed to the modern spirit. It has spawned great thoughts of man, leaving room for only small thoughts of God. (2) The Christian mind has been confused by modern scepticism. For more than three centuries the naturalistic leaven in the Renaissance outlook has worked like a cancer in Western thought. As a result, the Bible and the foundation facts of faith are called in question. The remedy is a divine-human confrontation, in our acknowledgement that God speaks to us through His word. Thereby we shall return to the "old paths."

James D. Robertson

The New Oxford Annotated Bible, with the Apocrypha. An Ecumenical Bible, New York: Oxford University Press. 1563 pages plus. \$11.95.

This volume, first published in 1965, and widely acclaimed as a Common Bible, was the first edition of The English Bible to receive both Protestant and Catholic approval. This new, updated edition contains the *Second Edition of the Revised Standard Version New Testament Text*. Numerous aids for Bible study are furnished, including introductions and page-for-page annotations. In each book of the Old

and New Testaments, these have been carefully reviewed and, where necessary, revised. Three new supplementary articles have been added: "Modern Approaches to Biblical Study" by Father R. E. Murphy, "Characteristics of Hebrew Poetry" by G. W. Anderson, and "Literary Forms in the Gospels" by Bruce M. Metzger. The forty page map section has been carefully revised in the light of recent archaeological developments, and the grid reference system has been made uniform throughout. This ecumenical study Bible will be most helpful to students, clergy, and lay people of all faiths.

James D. Robertson

Hand to the Plough, by H. Cecil Pawson, Nutfield, Sy., England. Denholm House Press, 1973. 176 pages. (paperback).

H. Cecil Pawson, one-time Vice-President of the Methodist Conference in the British Isles, was a professor of agriculture in the University of Newcastle. A friend of Sangster and that circle of great hearts in British Methodism, Pawson has something to say worth hearing.

The reviewer especially likes the way the author relates God to both land and people. Get close to God's good earth and one gets close to God, he believes. Get the Gospel in your heart and you get God. Combine Gospel experience with scientific knowledge, and help God make a better world.

This is the kind of biography that is enjoyable. Pawson begins with his heritage, demonstrating the influences of his early upbringing. He takes us through his professional career, showing the role of research (one cannot be a good teacher without eventually doing research), the essentiality of loving one's work, and the necessity of working out a credo for one's profession.

His beautiful tributes to men and women who have influenced him demonstrate again that the course of one's life is determined in no small part by one's friends and associates. What he says about John Henry Jowett provides fresh insight into the life of a great preacher; his treatment of Chadwick is worth reading; the beautiful and moving

account of Sister Winifred Laver, the mission worker, will linger in one's memory.

One is delighted to see the place of home and family in this good man's life. Contrary to what is often supposed, frequently the men who have been used of God are family men. A good reminder in a day of unsettled homes!

Now an old man, Dr. Pawson nonetheless is no "stick in the mud." He can change with the times. Preaching the age-old Gospel in the context of contemporary need, he has been God's instrument in changing many lives.

Donald E. Demaray

Jeremiah and Lamentations, by R. K. Harrison. Downers Grove (IL): InterVarsity Press, 1973. 240 pages. \$5.95.

This volume belongs in *The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries* series. The aim of the whole is to provide an up-to-date commentary, with the primary emphasis on exegesis. The general editor is D. J. Wiseman, Professor of Assyriology, University of London. The author is Professor of Old Testament, Wycliffe College, University of Toronto. The two books comprising this commentary deal with one of the most tragic events in the life of the Chosen People. The first shows the shameless idolatry of Judah in the pre-exilic period, totally ignoring the warnings of the prophet. The second reveals something of the agony endured as a result of divine judgement. Relevant archaeological discoveries shed light on the material under consideration. Significant textual problems are discussed in the commentary sections. Major critical questions are treated, mainly in the introductions. This is an illuminating passage-by-passage commentary on Jeremiah and Lamentations.

James D. Robertson

Peter in the New Testament. A Collaborative Study by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars, by Raymond E. Brown, Karl P. Donfried, and John Reumann. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House; Toronto: Paulist Press, 1973. 181 pages. \$1.95.

The volume under consideration originated in discussion between Lutheran and Roman Catholic scholars in preparation for a forthcoming study of Papal primacy. The depth of background and careful examination of evidence marshalled by the panel makes this volume an important contribution to Petrine studies as well as an obvious landmark in ecumenical discussion of a perennial problem.

Participants in this dialogue included Paul J. Achtemeier, Myles M. Bourke, P. Schuyler Brown, Raymond E. Brown, Joseph Burgess, Karl P. Donfried, Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, Karlfried Froehlich, Reginald H. Fuller, Gerhard Krodel, and John Reumann.

The presuppositions and methodology of the two-year study, tracing "how the historical facts about this companion of Jesus have been developed into the New Testament portrait of the bestknown of the Twelve apostles" (p. 8), are detailed in chapter two. The New Testament is examined "in a roughly chronological fashion" (p. 9) using "methods common in contemporary biblical criticism." (p. 7).

Throughout the volume tough critical and historical concerns are treated on the basis of the New Testament evidence alone. The historian is pacified by the promise of a separate volume on the evidence pertaining to the first five centuries.

Generally to be commended are the rigorous adherence to the text and the responsible critical and historical method. Unfortunately the scope of the subject mitigated against close attention being given to many key issues. The extensive footnotes provide supplemental helpful information and valuable bibliographic clues, but one wishes the discussion had been more full, especially as regards the glimpses of Peter in the Pauline corpus and Luke's account of Peter's role in the early Christian community as recorded in the *Acts of the Apostles*.

The strongest portion of the volume is the discussion of the Matthean representation of Peter. Peter's priority is seen especially in his ecclesiastical responsibilities, these being his lot not because of natural gifts but because of Jesus' giving the keys of the kingdom to this very human instrument. The relationship to the other disciples is unclear. He who is often the spokesman is, in the crucial confession passage, speaking for himself and alone receives the commendation. Here as often is the case in this volume, the implications of the observation are not pursued in detail.

The conclusions of the study are presented in two categories: (1) the historical career of Simon Peter and (2) images of Peter in the New Testament thought. However, "it has become clear to us that an investigation of the historical career does not necessarily settle the question of Peter's importance for the subsequent church." (p. 168). The problem remains, to what extent one's influence and continuing significance is dependent upon one's historical character and career.

David D. Bundy

God Is Up To Something, by David A. Redding. Waco: Word Books, 1972. 161 pages, plus index. \$4.95.

No minister of the Gospel ought to be without this book. And once he himself has read it, he will want to use it with his people in groups and in counseling those depressed about the age in which we live.

Genuinely Gospel oriented, David Redding's book documents vividly that no sinner is clever enough to outwit God. (See, e. g., the incident recorded on pp. 157-8.) To put it otherwise, his view of history is thoroughly Christian and Biblical.

The preacher will profit by this book in other ways too: (1) He will, for example, learn something about communication. Few writers of our day are so creative and fresh. (2) Again, the alert minister will increase the size of his illustration file by working through this book. David Redding knows how to tell a story. (3) Redding will throw light on Biblical truth for the preacher of the Gospel. Always Bible oriented, the author takes old truth and seasons it generously with new insight. (4) Finally, the minister will add considerably to his store of quotations, for Pastor Redding knows how to create proverbs, couching truth in unforgettable language.

Aware of both traditional and contemporary theology, Dr. Redding captures a theology of hope in forms available to the common man. And just there—at the point of understandability—he identifies with our hurts and hopes. Somehow he brings God's truth right down to us, and assists us in doing the same for the people to whom God has called us to minister.

Do not read David Redding's book on hope if you are unwilling to be stirred from apathy. He disturbs the reader, but it is the pain of surgery before healing.

Donald E. Demaray

BOOK BRIEFS

The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament and Apocrypha with an English Translation. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973. 1382 pages. \$11.95.

This book is another in that flood of reprints, first published by S. Bagster in England in the last century. Although the publishers do not indicate why they have chosen to reprint this work, they no doubt have in mind those who do not have either the time or the ability to work from the original alone. Since the format has the Greek and the English in parallel columns, it is more useful than a simple English translation of the Septuagint. The book offers little new to the seasoned scholar, but busy pastors who are intent on studying the Old Testament will want to avail themselves of this handy edition of the earliest of the Old Testament versions.

The Chickadees, A Contemporary Fable, by Conrad Hyers. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974. 63 pages. \$3.95.

In all his reachings for the stars, in his concern for new frontiers and ecstatic visions, man in moments of pause is blinded by the profundity of simple things. "Beyond the dazzling lights and the blaring call of trumpets is a world where even fireflies illumine the night and twittering birds sing overtures of praise" (9). This myth for the time speaks to many of the crucial issues of our day and challenges to heroic vision. A well-told, richly imaginative tale full of spiritual insights.

Guide To Ecclesiastical Birdwatching, by LeRoy Koopman. California: G/L Publications, 1973. 58 pages. \$1.00 (paperback).

The author gives us a delightful satire on the kinds of people who go to church and participate in the worship services. For all who have ears to hear, lessons can be learned and changes in lifestyle can be

implemented. The Wail Quail is as funny as any. He preaches on such subjects as "cross-bearing, being bond slaves, the great tribulation, the suffering of the righteous, the persecution of the saints, the wrath to come, the backside of the desert and the pagan origins of Christmas and Easter observances" (p. 40). Ushers, singers, other members of the congregation take their share of "ribbing". All in good, wholesome humor!

Hope for the Flowers, by Trina Paulus. New York: Paulist Press, 1972. 151 pages. \$4.95 (paperback).

Trina Paulus and the Paulist Press have given us a work of spiritual art. Both in language and drawings the New Testament message of personal surrender as the way to personal fulfillment is made clear. Here is the Stanley Jones message in new format. Pastors and personal evangelists will want to share this book with those they are trying to win and enlighten. Its readability is, in part, its genius. Yellows, greens, blacks, and grays supply tone. Sketches—communicable line drawings—make vivid the truth at hand.

The Challenge of Religious Studies, by K. G. Howkins. Downers Grove (Ill.): InterVarsity Press, 1972. 150 pages. \$2.50 (paperback).

The author seeks to help orient students anticipating enrolling in one of the many courses in religion now being offered in all kinds of universities, public as well as private. He is concerned that the student shall learn for himself what the Bible itself says rather than what the various scholars say the Bible says. The reader will find real value in the author's treatment of such topics as miracles and the supernatural, the resurrection of Christ, Biblical criticism, and Christology.

Letters From Paul, by Boyce W. Blackwelder. Anderson (Ind.): Warner Press, 1971. 160 pages. \$4.95.

In this exegetical translation of Paul's Epistles, the author seeks to bring out of the original Greek language the love, the compassion,

the eternal hope of the great missionary evangelist. Today's messenger of the Gospel, catching the spirit of the apostle, cannot but be challenged to pursue his task with the same zeal.

Preaching on John, by R. C. H. Lenski. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973. 194 pages. \$2.95 (paperback).

In this series of exegetical-homiletical text studies, treating both the person of John the Evangelist and some of his choice teachings, the author provides much helpful material for a series of sermons on the disciple whom Jesus loved.

The Communication of Ideas. Quebec: The Royal Bank of Canada. Obtainable free of charge by writing P. O. Box 6001, Montreal 101, Quebec, Canada. 141 pages. (paperback).

This is a worthwhile book on communication for the professional or business man. Writing skills take up the greater part of the work, but toward the end there is a useful chapter on public speaking and another on dialogue in conversation. Remarkable for its perfection of form, the book covers a wide spectrum of needs: writing letter, doing reports, style of communication, mastering language, etc. Data are richly underscored with illustration and quotation. No minister, teacher or journalist should overlook this little treasure.

They Chose to Live, The racial agony of an American Church, by J. Herbert Eilmore, Jr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972. 206 pages. \$2.95 (paperback).

This is the story of racial crisis in a Southern church, the majority of whose members chose to live for a principle that is going to die, racial segregation. The racial agony of this particular church mirrors the racism present in many churches North and South. This account will inspire

Christians everywhere to help correct racist patterns and attitudes in the American Church.

Job, Our Contemporary, by H. Harold Kent. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973. 92 pages. \$1.50 (paperback).

“Job surely is the Saul of Tarsus of the Old Testament, so completely sure of his own righteousness that even God cannot stand before him” (39). The author comes to grips with the paradoxes recorded in the book of Job, and highlights the fact that only a dynamic encounter with the living God satisfies the soul tormented with problems.

Monkey Off My Back, by Jack Brown, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971. 150 pages. \$1.95 (paperback).

The author, an ex-convict, gives a thrilling, thought-provoking account of his ordeals during seventeen years in various prisons. Without being melodramatic he reveals the squalid state of the prisons and the frequent injustices suffered by prisoners. His associates included the Birdman of Alcatraz, Bonnie and Clyde, Machine Gun Kelly, and Al Capone. After thirty years of drug addiction and numerous attempts to “kick” the habit, he tells how through the prayers of a faithful wife and a concerned church he experienced a personal encounter with Christ and was made “a new man”. This book would be especially relevant to teenagers.

