

CHAPTER 3 JOHN WESLEY AND SANCTIFICATION

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 General Evaluation of Wesley

Some evaluations state that Wesley's theology is based on experience and the Bible rather than theoretical theology. William Hordern considered Wesley as one of the great theologians, though Wesley's theology is based on his experience rather than any theoretical system.¹ According to Ralph Del Colle, for Wesley, sanctification as Christian experience is a subjective aspect of our salvation while justification is its objective aspect.² Particular stress is laid on entire sanctification. Dr. G. Croft Cell viewed Wesley as "a principal founder and first conspicuous exemplar of a theology of experience."³ He noted that Wesley brought Christianity back to the "religion as experience" of the early church. In this religion, "experience and reality come to the same thing."⁴ Howard A. Snyder viewed Wesley's theology as dynamic in the sense that it focused on human transformation.⁵ Reinhold Niebuhr also held that Wesley's conception of perfection contained the largest number of biblical elements as compared to other perfectionist teachings, in the sense that he viewed perfection as deliverance from sin, not from finiteness, and understood its process as existential, not contemplative.⁶ Kenneth J. Collins claims that Wesley's theology is essentially biblical rather than theological.⁷

Some theologians understood Wesley as a balanced theologian of the doctrine of sanctification. For example, Albert Outler described John Wesley as "the most important Anglican theologian of the 18th century because of his distinctive composite answer to the

¹ William Hordern, "Recent Trends in Systematic Theology," *Canadian Journal of Theology* 7 (1961): 87.

² Ralph Del Colle, "John Wesley's Doctrine of Grace in Light of the Christian Tradition," *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, Vol. 4, no. 2 (2002): 177.

³ George Croft Cell, *The Rediscovery of John Wesley* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1935), p.347. Also, noteworthy is Piette's mention that Wesley's "theology of experience has exerted an uncontested influence upon the theories of liberal Protestant theology from Friedrich Schleiermacher to William James," in the sense that it shows the relationship between Wesley's theology and liberal theology. Piette, *La Réaction de John Wesley dans l'Évolution du Protestantisme*, Preface (1925, Second ed., 1927). Quoted by Cell, *ibid.*, p.75.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁵ Howard A. Snyder, *The Radical Wesley: Patterns for Church Renewal* (Illinois Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), p.4.

⁶ Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. II (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), pp. 173-174.

⁷ Kenneth J. Collins, "A Hermeneutical Model for the Wesleyan *Ordo Salutis*," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 19 (1984): 23.

age-old question of ‘the nature of the Christian life.’”⁸ He viewed Wesley’s message as “faith working by love leading to holiness.”⁹ He deemed it Wesley’s distinct position in history “to grasp the vital unity of both Pardon and Participation.”¹⁰ Colin W. Williams held that Wesley stressed sanctification by faith, not sanctification by faith and merit like the Roman Catholics.¹¹ Kenneth J. Collins notes that Wesley maintained a balance between inward religion and outward religion, i.e., the practice of piety as good works, “law and gospel, faith and holy life, grace and works, grace as both favour and empowerment, justification and sanctification, instantaneousness and process, the universality of grace and its limited actualization, divine initiative and human response, initial and final justification.”¹² Donald G. Bloesch is of the opinion that Wesley renewed and complemented Evangelical theology which had been biased towards justification by his emphasis on sanctification.¹³

On the other hand, Wesley’s emphasis on Christian holy life gave him the reputation of a theologian who was close to Roman Catholicism,¹⁴ or Arminianism or Pelagianism, or enthusiasm, though such assessments have their distinctive nuances. George C. Cell deemed Wesley’s perfection the “synthesis of the Protestant’s ethics of grace and the Catholic ethics of holiness.”¹⁵ Kenneth J Collins also regards “the dual emphasis of forgiveness and renewal, the appreciation of the insights of both Protestantism and

⁸ Albert Outler, “The Place of Wesley in the Christian Tradition,” in *The Place of Wesley in the Christian Tradition*, ed. by Kenneth E. Rowe (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1976), p. 14.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 29.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 30.

¹¹ Colin W. Williams, *John Wesley’s Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1959), pp. 176-178.

¹² Kenneth J. Collins, *Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley’s Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p.207; cf. A. Outler mentioned that Wesley “proceeded to develop a theological fusion of faith and good works, scripture and tradition, revelation and reason, God’s sovereignty and human freedom, universal redemption and conditional election, Christian liberty and an ordered polity, the assurance of pardon and the risks of falling from grace, original sin and Christian perfection.” A. Outler, ed., *John Wesley* (London: Oxford, 1964), preface, iv; cf. Francis Young holds that in Wesley’s theology, “the individual and the community, the personal and the corporate, like Law and Gospel, Old Testament and New Testament, rationalism and emotionalism, were welded inseparably together.” Francis Young, “The Significance of John Wesley’s Conversion Experience,” in *John Wesley: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. by John Stacey with an introduction by Frank Baker (London: Epworth Press, 1988), p.43.

¹³ Donald G. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, Vol.1 (Sanfrancisco: Harper & Row Co., 1978), p.2.

¹⁴ Woodrow W. Whidden mentions that “Wesley’s troubling qualifiers in regard to “imputed righteousness” certainly make it appear that he was headed back to Rome,” in his article, “Wesley on Imputation: A Truly Reckoned Reality or Antinomian Polemical Wreckage,” *The Asbury Theological Journal* Vol. 52, no. 2 (1997): 65; Collins notes that Wesley’s emphasis on the necessity of repentance and its fruits antecedent to justification “made him look like a Roman Catholic in the eyes of the Calvinists.” K. J. Collins, *John Wesley: A Theological Journey* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), p.222, 217.

¹⁵ George C. Cell, *The Rediscovery of John Wesley* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1935), p.361.

Catholicism” as “one of Wesley’s most distinctive Soteriological fingerprints.”¹⁶ Luke L. Keefer, Jr. has noted that Wesley “walked a narrow ledge between Calvinism and Pelagianism in regard to sin, free will, and the nature of saving faith.”¹⁷ He has claimed that Wesley’s Arminianism is Anglicized and personalized, and is integrative rather than systematized, and is pastorally motivated.¹⁸ Robert A. Mattke mentioned that Wesley “charted a course between Pietism on the one hand and Anglicanism on the other.”¹⁹ Woodrow W. Whidden points out Wesley suffered from suspicions that he was a Pelagian, synergist, Roman moralist, or legalist.²⁰ To advocate himself, Wesley claimed that his theology was “within a hair’s breadth” “both from Calvinism and Antinomianism.”²¹

Maddox points out that such phenomena as “outcries, convulsions, and trances,” as the side-effects of Wesley’s early form of awakening sermons between 1739- 1744, opened him to “accusations of enthusiasm.”²² Kenneth J. Collins also mentions that Wesley was often designated as an “enthusiast” or fanatic by his eighteenth-century detractors.²³ B.B. Warfield claimed that it was John Wesley who “infected the modern Protestant world with this notion of ‘entire instantaneous sanctification.’”²⁴ Collin W. Williams noted that Wesley’s doctrine of perfection based on conscious sin “led easily to a failure to take seriously the depth of unexamined prejudices and inward sins.”²⁵

As observed above, we can see that Wesley was an influential theologian who emphasised sanctification. At the same time, such observations insinuate that it is worthwhile to study whether Wesley’s teaching of sanctification is really biblical or not, in which aspect his doctrine is different from Calvin’s, what characteristics his doctrine of sanctification has, and whether other theologians’ critiques of Wesley’s doctrine of sanctification are pertinent or not.

¹⁶ Kenneth J. Collins, *Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley’s Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p.101.

¹⁷ Luke L. Keefer, “Characteristics of Wesley’s Arminianism,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 22 (1987): 90.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-97.

¹⁹ Robert A. Mattke, “The Baptism of the Holy Spirit as Related to the Work of Entire Sanctification,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 5-1 (1970): 24.

²⁰ Woodrow W. Whidden, “Wesley on Imputation: A Truly Reckoned Reality or Antinomian Polemical Wreckage,” *The Asbury Theological Journal* Vol. 52, no. 2 (1997): 63.

²¹ Works 8, 284 - 285. “A. Indeed it does; as it were, within a hair’s breadth: So that it is altogether foolish and sinful, because we do not quite agree either with one or the other, to run from them as far as ever we can.”

²² Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Nashville, Kingwood Books, 1994), p. 161.

²³ Kenneth J. Collins, *Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley’s Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p.131.

²⁴ Benjamin B. Warfield, *Perfectionism* 2:562.

²⁵ C. W. Williams, *John Wesley’s Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), p.180.

3.1.2 Wesley's Response to the Theological Trends of His Times

J. Ernest Rattenbury noted that “Catholic and Lutheran, Anglican and Moravian influences were all blended in Wesley.”²⁶ His notion is similar to Cell’s evaluation that Wesley maintained a balance between Catholic and Lutheran theology, Legalism and Moravian mystic quietism.²⁷ We may add to it that Wesley avoided the extremities of both formalism and enthusiasm. His doctrine of sanctification is said to be formed under the influence of German Pietism, but he rejected passive, quietistic antinomianism and accentuated participation in Christ rather than union with Christ, or Christ as our pattern. Wesley certainly was a man of the Anglican Church, and generally acceded to her doctrine, but rejected her formal law and institutions. Wesley’s relationship with the Anglican Church is dealt with mainly at ‘3.2.10.1 The Church: Unity and Schism.’

3.1.2.1 Formalism

Wesley suggested the depiction of a good Christian held by most Anglican leaders in the eighteenth century as typical of a formal Christian. They understood a religious man as

one that is honest, just and fair in his dealings; that is constantly at church and sacrament; and that gives much alms, or (as it is usually termed) does much good.²⁸

For Wesley, such a man is not a real Christian but an altogether Christian. He exclaimed to nominal Christians, “Away with names! Away with opinions!”²⁹ He deemed such a formal Christian to be produced by a lifeless formal religion having “the form of godliness, but not the power.”³⁰

In regard to the difference between formal religion and authentic religion, Wesley explicated it as follows. *First*, in contrast to formal religion, which laid stress on “any ritual observances,” indeed, in any outward thing whatever” or “orthodoxy or right opinions” belonging to the understanding,³¹ true religion laid emphasis on the fruit of the Spirit springing from God and inward change.³² *Secondly*, while love in formal religion is obligatory, love in true religion is relational, which generates from the experience of God’s

²⁶ J. Ernest Rattenbury, *The Conversion of the Wesleys* (London: The Epworth Press, 1938), p.173.

²⁷ Cf. Wesley observed that “a good Methodist would be a happy mixture of the Mystic and the Pharisee.” George Croft Cell, *The Rediscovery of John Wesley* (New York: Hendry Holt and Company, Inc., 1935), pp. 347-348.

²⁸ Journal Nov. 25, 1739: *Works* 1, 250; 7, 263.

²⁹ The Almost Christian 1, 10-11: *Works* 1, 136. For the characteristics of an altogether Christian, see Letters to the Rev. Dr. Middleton, 4, 1, 3-14: *Works* 10, 67-71.

³⁰ The Character of a Methodist: *Works* 8, 346.

³¹ *NT Note* on Eph. 6:18.

³² *Works* 10, 67-71; A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion I, 1, 3: *Works* 8, 47.

love.³³ *Thirdly*, while faith in formal religion is defined as only “a speculative, rational,” “cold, lifeless assent,” faith in true religion is defined as “a divine evidence or conviction” accompanying the experience of God’s love and forgiveness,³⁴ and offering a spiritual sense of God like “the eye of the soul” to see what is invisible in God, “the ear of the soul” to hear the voice of God, “the palate of the soul” to taste the powers of the world to come.³⁵ *Fourthly*, formalism presupposes that grace is automatically, mechanically given to us through an institution, in other words, it is inherent in the means of grace, but Wesley understood that the Spirit works in a relational and personal way.³⁶

Briefly, Wesley rejected formalism because it could not offer the presence of God nor emphasise the experience of God’s presence and the fruit of the Spirit. This was connected with the transformation of Christian life and became the characteristics of his doctrine of entire sanctification.

3.1.2.2 Arminianism

David Bennett holds that “Wesley certainly thought of himself as an Arminian from the time of his controversial sermon on free grace in 1740 to his publication of the Arminian Magazine in January 1778.”³⁷ Rather different from Bennet, Luke L. Keefer Jr. notes, “The Methodists would call themselves Arminians, but they were more the cousins of Arminius than they were his direct descendants” because Wesleyan Arminianism “was Anglicized and personalized.”³⁸ Keefer’s approach seems more probable than Bennett’s, but both of them agree with each other on the point that Wesley followed Arminius’ fundamental thoughts.³⁹

In his sermon on Free Grace in 1740, Wesley rejected limited grace and atonement for the elect,⁴⁰ double predestination, especially reprobation from eternity.⁴¹ Instead of these positions, he supported the view of free grace in all and for all,⁴² and conditional election

³³ See ‘3.2.4.5.1.3 Love.’

³⁴ *Works* 7, 326.

³⁵ *Works* 7, 349-54.

³⁶ See ‘3.2.7 The Means of Sanctification.’

³⁷ David Bennett, “How Arminian was John Wesley?,” *The Evangelical Quarterly*, Vol.72, no.3 (2000): 237.

³⁸ Luke L. Keefer, “Characteristics of Wesley’s Arminianism,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 22 (1987): 90, 91.

³⁹ Bennett, *op. cit.*, p. 248; Keefer, *ibid.*, p. 91.

⁴⁰ Sermon CXXVIII Free Grace: *Works* 7, 380-381; Cameron “Arminius-Hero, or Heretic,” *Evangelical Quarterly*, Vol. 64, no.3 (July, 1992): 221-223; see ‘3.2.1.3.1 Atonement.’

⁴¹ Sermon CXXVIII Free Grace: *Works* 7, 374-379. He suggested the four reasons of his objection; first, it makes all preaching vain, secondly, it “tends to destroy the comfort of religion, the happiness of Christianity,” thirdly, it “tends to destroy our zeal for good works,” fourthly, it has a “tendency to overthrow the whole Christian Revelation.”

⁴² Sermon CXXVIII Free Grace 2: *Works* 7, 373.

“according to the foreknowledge of God.”⁴³

In The Question “What is an Arminian? Answered by A Lover or Free Grace,” he sided with Jacobus Arminius in regard to original sin and justification by faith.

No man that ever lived, not John Calvin himself ever asserted either original sin or justification by faith, in more strong, more clear and express terms, than Arminius has done.⁴⁴

Still, almost similar to Calvinism, he admitted the total depravity of natural humanity,⁴⁵ but it does not mean that people cannot do good deeds at all, because prevenient grace recovers human conscience to some extent.⁴⁶ For Wesley, justification by faith is different from Calvinism in the sense that he regarded good works as a necessary condition for final justification.⁴⁷

Wesley compared Arminianism with Calvinism on three points. Calvinists hold to absolute double predestination from eternity and limited atonement for the elect, while Arminians hold to conditional predestination based on one’s faith in Christ, and Christ’s unlimited atonement for all that died in Adam.⁴⁸ Secondly, the former holds the saving grace of God to be absolutely irresistible, while the latter holds that although it is sometimes irresistible, “in general any man may resist” it.⁴⁹ Thirdly, for the former, predestination is absolutely unconditional, but for the latter, it is conditional.⁵⁰ Carl Bangs notes that on perseverance, Wesley was more negative than Arminius, in the sense that the former claimed all the saints may fall away, while the latter held the elect could not fall away because “election to salvation comprehends within its limits not only faith but likewise perseverance in faith,”⁵¹ though believers may fall away.⁵²

⁴³ Sermon CXXVIII Free Grace 29: *Works* 7, 385.

⁴⁴ *Works* 10, 359.

⁴⁵ Man is “by nature...earthly, sensual, and devilish.” Sermon VI. The Righteousness of Faith, 2, 5: *Works* 5, 72; cf. James Arminius, *The Writings of James Arminius*, Nichols, tr. from *the Latin*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956), 2: 192. “...the Free Will of man towards the True Good is not only wounded, maimed, infirm, bent, and [attenuatum] weakened; but it is also [captivatum] imprisoned, destroyed, and lost...it has no powers whatever except such as are excited by Divine grace.”

⁴⁶ Predestination Calmly Considered: *Works* 10, 229 f.; also see ‘3.2.1.4.1 Prevenient Grace.’

⁴⁷ See ‘3.2.4.2 Positional Sanctification: Justification.’

⁴⁸ *Works* 10, 359-360; *Works* 1, 426-427. See 3.2.8.1 Predestination and Sanctification in this thesis.

⁴⁹ *Works* 10, 360; cf. J. Arminius, *The Writings of James Arminius*, Nichols, tr. from *the Latin*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956), 2: 721. “All unregenerate persons have freedom of will, and a capability of resisting the Holy Spirit, of rejecting the proffered grace of God.”

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ J. Arminius, *Nine Questions in Writings*, 1: 385.

⁵² *Ibid.* “Believers are sometimes so circumstanced as not to produce...(any) confidence or trust in God and Christ”; Carl Bangs, *Arminius: A Study in the Dutch Reformation* (Grand Rapids: F. Asbury Press, 1985), p. 349.

To summarise, Wesley was considerably influenced by Jacobus Arminius' thoughts.⁵³ He adapted Arminianism adequately to his situation in his pastoral perspective. Particular issues will be separately dealt with in relevant aspects.

3.1.2.3 Rationalism and Deism

From the late 17th century, the Anglican Church began to experience the effect of rationalism in religion. A leader of this movement, John Locke understood morality as the primary content of religion and considered reasonableness as the test of truth.⁵⁴ Rationalism had developed in reaction to the sufferings and "the brutalities of the crusades." In England, rationalism conversed with Deism and strengthened its power still more.

Edward Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648) alleged that natural religion is universal to all mankind.⁵⁵ In his book *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1696), John Toland overtly removed the prophecies and the miracles from the Bible. By the mid-18th century, whatever is outside reason was regarded as superstition. At the beginning of the 17th century, the English people already refused to consider "mystic inner light" as "a correct method of imparting knowledge."⁵⁶ Deism extolled reason to the skies and supernaturalism was considered utterly doubtful. Deists did "not receive Scripture as the oracles of God."⁵⁷ Tindal's *Christianity As Old As Creation* "encapsulated the prevailing spirit of believing in God but not His word."⁵⁸ The pulpit of the church was filled with indifference, irreligion, secular philosophy, and a pessimistic spirit.⁵⁹ The weakening of the Gospel resulted in the moral corruption of all the classes of England, especially, drunkenness, adultery, and debauchery.⁶⁰

Accordingly, it is not surprising that in such a situation, Wesley' theology was oriented to the emphasis on experience of the religion and the renovation of Christian life in the society of England.

3.1.2.4 Moravian Mystic Quietism

According to A. Outler, Wesley was influenced by three mystical traditions: the voluntaristic mysticism represented by à Kempis, Law, and Catniza; the quietistic

⁵³ For the relationship between the Anglican Church and Arminius, see Keefer, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

⁵⁴ Mbennah & Vorster, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

⁵⁷ Sermon LXX. The Case of Reason Impartially Considered 3-4; *Works* 6, 351.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 174-175.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

⁶⁰ R. G. Tuttle Jr. *John Wesley: His life and theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), p. 31-32.

mysticism by Molinos, Guyon, de Sales; the mysticism of early and eastern spirituality,⁶¹ by Clement, Origen, Ephrem, and Macarius.⁶²

Among these mysticisms, Wesley objected to Moravian quietistic mysticism. Though he agreed with the Moravians when they “combined their evangelical doctrine of faith with a strong mystical ethic,” he criticized them and broke the relationship with them when they inclined to quietistic antinomianism and drifted towards moral laxity.⁶³ As Collins puts it,⁶⁴ some of the quietists in Wesley’s age were influenced by the Lutheran tradition,⁶⁵ which held that those justified by faith in Christ were free from the law, and certainly from keeping commandments, since they were not under the law but under grace. The quietists claimed that because faith by and large is given only through hearing the preached word, not through using such means of grace as the Lord’s Supper, prayer, fasting and reading Scripture,⁶⁶ “one must do nothing but quietly attend the Voice of the Lord.”⁶⁷ Wesley considered such a view as overt antinomianism.⁶⁸ In contradiction to their claim that without assurance, nobody may use the ordinances of God, especially the Lord’s Supper, he contended that such men may use the means of grace whenever they meet any chance.⁶⁹

After 1738, Wesley objected to all kinds of teachings that encouraged the contemplative, solitary, or passive life.⁷⁰ Instead of the hermitic ideal, he enthusiastically pursued social holiness. He also rejected their claim that darkness in the way to perfection

⁶¹ A. Outler, *John Wesley*, pp. 251-252 and 275.

⁶² Michael J. Christensen, “Theosis and Sanctification: John Wesley’s Reformulation of A Patristic Doctrine,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 31-2 (1996): 91.

⁶³ Robert G. Tuttle. *John Wesley: His Life and Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), pp.332-333.

⁶⁴ Kenneth J. Collins, *Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley’s Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p.161.

⁶⁵ Wesley saw Luther as “the real spring of the grand error of the Moravians”: Nehemiah Curnock, ed., *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley* (London: Epworth, 1909-1916), II: 467. Hereafter, it is written Journal II: 467; cf. According to Gordon Rupp, Luther “disposed of antinomians and mystical quietists in phrases more violent than had any place in John Wesley’s genteel vocabulary.” *The Righteousness of God* (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1953), p. 46. Also see Leo George, *John Wesley’s Concept of Perfection*, (Ph. D diss., University of Iowa. An Arbor, UMI, 1959), p. 110. We may say late Luther opposed antinomianism, while early Luther was antinomistic.

⁶⁶ Journal Dec. 22, 1747, section 9: *Works* 2, 79. “...as for fasting, abstinence, and self-denial, you with the Moravians, trampled it under foot”; for more, see *Works* 2, 27-28.

⁶⁷ Nicholas von Zinzendorf, *Sixteen Discourses on The Redemption of Man by the Death of Christ, Preached at Berlin* (London: Printed for James Hutton, 1742), pp. 20-21; Rogers Charles Allen, *The Concept of Prevenient Grace in the Theology of John Wesley* (Ph. D. diss., Duke University. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1967), p. 267.

⁶⁸ Also See ‘3.2.9.3 An Antinomian or A Legalist?’

⁶⁹ Answer to the Rev. Mr. Church: *Works* 8, 377 and 404. “I could not agree, either that none has any faith, so long as he is liable to any doubt or fear; or that, till we have it, we ought to abstain from the ordinances of God.”

⁷⁰ *Works* 7, 515.

was necessary because he thought darkness resulted only from sin.⁷¹ For Wesley, the term of communion with Christ was preferred to that of mystical union with Him because the latter can imply that human nature is swallowed into divinity.⁷²

To sum up, as Michael Christensen aptly notes,⁷³ while Wesley accepted some elements of the Patristic tradition and voluntaristic mysticism in his thought of sanctification, he criticized quietistic mysticism for passivity, solitude and an antinomistic tendency.

3.1.2.5 German Pietism

As Kenneth J Collins aptly puts it, German Pietism grew out of the reaction against the tendency towards formality and impersonality due to the scholasticism of the sixteenth and seventeenth century orthodoxy, and against the moral anomy due to religious wars such as the Thirty Years War.⁷⁴ Wesley was primarily influenced by the writings of Johann Arndt (*Wahres Christenthum*),⁷⁵ Philip Jacob Spener (*Pia Desideria*),⁷⁶ and August Hermann Francke (*Pietas Hallensis, Nicodemus*).⁷⁷ From the *True Christianity* of Arndt, Wesley learned three themes⁷⁸: one is that there are the different developmental stages of Christian life; the second is that true religion lies in inward renewal rather than external change⁷⁹; the last one is that purity of doctrine is maintained by holy life, not by exhaustive dispute.⁸⁰ He also seems to have taken a hint from Francke's writings in writing his sermons on *The Almost Christian*, and *Scriptural Christianity*, especially in distinguishing almost

⁷¹ *Works* 2, 249; Susanna Winkworth, tr., *Theologia Germanica* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1907), p. 38. "Christ's soul must need descend into hell, before it ascended into heaven, so must also the soul of man." Kenneth J. Collins, "John Wesley's Critical Appropriation of Early German Pietism," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 22 (1992): 76.

⁷² Kenneth J. Collins, "John Wesley's Critical Appropriation of Early German Pietism," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 22 (1992): 77.

⁷³ Michael J. Christensen, "Theosis and Sanctification: John Wesley's Reformulation of A Patristic Doctrine," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, Vol. 31, no.2 (1996): 71.

⁷⁴ Kenneth J. Collins, *op. cit.* pp. 58-60.

⁷⁵ See Journal August 8, 1738. "But at twenty-two, meeting with Arndt's 'True Christianity,' I found I myself was not a Christian": *Works* 1, 139.

⁷⁶ Though Wesley probably never read Spener himself, he is said to be indirectly influenced by Spener, because Francke owed Spener who owed Arndt, Wesley read Arndt and Francke. Wesley's society and the principles to run it are very similar to Spener's *collegia pietatis* and the principles to run it. Collins, *op. cit.*, 66-67.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-72.

⁷⁸ Cf. K. J. Collins, "The Motif of Real Christianity in the Writings of John Wesley," *The Asbury Theological Journal* 49 (Spr., 1994): 49-62.

⁷⁹ Wesley stressed a similar theme in his sermon on "The Way to the Kingdom": *Works* 1, 77-78 and "The Circumcision of the Heart": *Works* 1, 202-212.

⁸⁰ Journal From November 19, 1751: *Works* 1, 247.

Christians from altogether Christians, and nominal Christianity from real Christianity.⁸¹

On the other hand, J. Steven O'Malley focuses on the influence of Rhineland spirituality on Wesley. This spirituality "began with the Dominican mysticism of Johan Tauler (1300-1361) and proceeded to the distinctive Reformed spirituality of Gerhard Tersteegen (1697-1769)."⁸² It contributed to Wesley's spiritual formation, as a corrective to the increasingly legalistic piety of Halle, which emphasised "penitential struggle" as the precondition of one's climactic "*Durchbruch*" into the assurance of pardon and adoption in Christ,⁸³ and to "immediate and complete" sanctification of Zinzendorf.⁸⁴ Tersteegen's piety influenced Wesley's mature thought of perfection, though Moravian piety offered him assurance of immediate transformation at the beginning of his theological journey.⁸⁵

Admitting such similarities, Collins does not regard Wesley as one of the Pietists for the reason that Wesley did not emphasise mortification so much, nor view perfection as union with God.⁸⁶ Rather, Wesley is considered as an English evangelist in that he was closely connected with Anglicanism and the Apostolic Fathers. Though Wesley stressed Christian piety, he may be viewed as an evangelist rather than a Pietist because he worked for the expansion of the Gospel and focused on Christ. He emphasised Christ our Redeemer, while criticizing the bias of Pietism to Christ our Pattern.

3.1.2.6 Enthusiasm

Wesley was accused of religious enthusiasm by the Anglicans when he preached instant conversion and emphasised the experience of the work of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁷ In reply to this critique, he newly defined enthusiasm according to his own perspective distinctive from theirs.

In 1750 Wesley understood enthusiasm as "a disorder of the mind", "a species of

⁸¹ Francke noted, "Nothing is a more fatal hindrance of man's salvation, than the false conceit that he is already a Christian." August Herman Francke, *Nicodemus in A Christian Library: Consisting of Extracts from and Abridgments of the Choicest Pieces of Practical Divinity Which Have Been Published in the English Tongue*, John Wesley, ed. and comp. 30 Vols. (London: J. Kershaw, 1826; reprint of 1st ed. 50 Vols. London, 1749-1755), 29: 482; he also noted, "There is not true faith without holiness of heart and life...the true boldness of faith is known by its continually working by love." *Ibid.*, 29: 492; see Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 71. Given that Francke's warning of almost Christian and his definition of true truth are very similar to Wesley's, Wesley seems to have been affected by Francke's writings.

⁸² J. Steven O'Malley, "Pietistic Influence on John Wesley: Wesley and Gerhard Tersteegen," *Wesleyan Theological Society* 31 (1996): 49.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 78; Cf. A. Outler was also of the opinion that Wesley "was never the typical Pietist." A. Outler, ed., *John Wesley* (London: Oxford, 1964), preface, iii.

⁸⁷ W. Stephen Gunter, *The Limits of "Love Divine": John Wesley's Response to Antinomianism and Enthusiasm* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood, 1989), pp.271.

madness.”⁸⁸ They drew right conclusions from a wrong hypothesis. For example, they imputed “something to God which ought not to be imputed to him.”⁸⁹ Wesley suggested three types of enthusiasm. The first type is “those who imagine they have the grace which they have not.” They imagine they were saved without deep repentance.⁹⁰ Despite their pride, ungodliness, and passion, they think themselves to be Christians.⁹¹ The second type is “those who imagine they have such gifts from God as they have not” e.g., healing power or prophecy.⁹² A little later, their gifts are usually proved false. They think their prayer and preaching are influenced by the Spirit, or they are particularly directed by the Spirit without any rational or scriptural ground.⁹³ Wesley strongly criticized them in particular for considering the dreams of their own imagination to be revelations from God,⁹⁴ because most of them are “absurd, self-inconsistent dreams of a heated imagination,”⁹⁵ though they may be from God, or nature, or the devil. For Wesley, God’s direction in an individual is discerned commonly by law and testimony.⁹⁶ A general rule to discern whether a vision or dream comes from God is to observe whether it corresponds to the will of God for our sanctification. More details are judged by our rationality and experience.⁹⁷ The third type of enthusiasm is “those who think to attain the end without using the means by the immediate power of God.” They think they can understand the Bible without reading and meditating on it, or they can speak to the congregation without preparation.⁹⁸ This attitude caused Anglican clergy to criticize the Methodists for “deprecation of learning.”⁹⁹ The fourth type is those who imagine “those things to be owing to the providence of God which are not owing thereto.”¹⁰⁰ They ascribed the governing of God to his providence. Wesley deemed it “a plain breach of the third commandment.” He concluded that enthusiasm produced pride, which “dries up the springs of faith and love, of righteousness and true holiness” and accompanied “unadvisableness” and “stubbornness.”¹⁰¹

⁸⁸ Sermon XXXVII. The Nature of Enthusiasm 11: *Works* 5, 469.

⁸⁹ *Works* 5, 470.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Works* 5, 471.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 472.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 472-473.

⁹⁴ *Works* 7, 211; also see “Plain Account of Christian Perfection, Q 33 and its Answer”: *Works* 11,428 “Do not easily suppose dreams, voices, impressions, visions, or revelations to be from God”; *Works* 5, 478. Do not trust “in visions or dreams; in sudden impressions, or strong impulses of any kind.”

⁹⁵ *Works* 7, 211.

⁹⁶ Sermon XXXVII. The Nature of Enthusiasm, 22: *Works* 5, 474.

⁹⁷ Sermon XXXVII. The Nature of Enthusiasm, 23, 24: *Works* 5, 474.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 475.

⁹⁹ W. Stephen Gunter, *The Limits of “Love Divine”: John Wesley’s Response to Antinomianism and Enthusiasm* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood, 1989), p. 30.

¹⁰⁰ Sermon XXXVII. The Nature of Enthusiasm, 23, 24: *Works* 5, 474.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* p. 476.

In his Journal of Oct. 29, 1762, Wesley manifested his opinions of enthusiasm in a similar tone. He also showed his abhorrence of Maxfield's contentions that "a justified person is not in Christ, or born of God, or sanctified, or a temple of the Holy Spirit"; a man saved from sins needs "no self-examination, no times of private prayer."¹⁰² In his "Farther Thoughts Upon Christian Perfection," Wesley complained that enthusiasts claimed the instantaneous attainment of perfection, but renounced any responsible growth before perfection.¹⁰³ Rejecting their view that perfect sanctification is a requisite for final salvation, Wesley designated it a privilege of all Christians as a gift of God's grace.¹⁰⁴

In conclusion, though admitting as pertinent some elements of enthusiasm like "instantaneous conversion," "the direct witness of the Spirit," and "the experiential proof of conversion,"¹⁰⁵ Wesley objected to other elements because of their irrationality and faulty presuppositions.¹⁰⁶ Briefly, enthusiasm was considered as a dreadful enemy of sanctification. This will be reflected in '5.3.1.2 Harmony between Spirituality and Rationality' and '5.3.1.3 Maintaining a Balance between Antinomianism and Legalism.'

3.1.3 Wesley's Conversion: Experience at Aldersgate

It is worthwhile to observe Wesley's experience at Aldersgate because it became an important turning point in his theological journey, determining his understanding of justification by faith and the instantaneousness of sanctification. There have been claims and diverse opinions about its meaning by many theologians.

Albert C Outler claimed, "Aldersgate was not the time when John Wesley became a 'real Christian.'"¹⁰⁷ Theodore W. Jennings Jr. held that Aldersgate was not a decisive turning point in Wesley's life because "there is no change in his doctrine or practice that is in any way associated with May, 1738."¹⁰⁸ He contended, "In his later years Wesley never spoke of Aldersgate."¹⁰⁹ He indicated the time of Wesley's conversion as 1725.¹¹⁰ But his contention was strongly refuted by Kenneth J. Collins. According to Collins, Wesley referred to Aldersgate at least five times in his later years.¹¹¹ Randy Maddox also criticized

¹⁰² *Works* 3, 119-121.

¹⁰³ "Farther Thoughts Upon Christian Perfection, Q.9": *Works* 11,417.

¹⁰⁴ Sermon LXXXIX. The More Excellence Way, 8: *Works* 7, 29. "I do not affirm that all who do not walk in this way are in the high road to hell."

¹⁰⁵ Letters XXIV "To the Rev. Samuel Wesley, May 10, 1739: *Works* 12, 36-37. Wesley referred to some ecstatic phenomenon; Cf. W. Stephen Gunter, *The Limits of "Love Divine": John Wesley's Response to Antinomianism and Enthusiasm* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood, 1989), p.136; see also foot note no.75 and 76.

¹⁰⁶ Sermon CXXXII. Preached on Monday, April 21st 1777: *Works* 8, 426.

¹⁰⁷ Albert C. Outler, "Beyond Pietism: Aldersgate in Context," *Motive* (May 1963): 12.

¹⁰⁸ Theodore W. Jennings. Jr., "John Wesley Against Aldersgate," *Quarterly Review* 8 (Fall 1988), p. 5.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹¹¹ Kenneth J. Collins, "The Continuing Significance of Aldersgate: A Response to 'John Wesley Against

the predominant interpretation of Aldersgate that Wesley was converted in 1738 “from a pre-Christian moralist into a true Christian believer.”¹¹² John Cobb mentions that Wesley was a Christian prior to Aldersgate.¹¹³ Ralph Del Colle views Wesley’s experience on Aldersgate Street on 24 May 1738 as his second conversion, one which “consolidated his understanding of the doctrine of justification by faith.”¹¹⁴ Wesley was firstly converted to a life of devoting himself to God in 1725.¹¹⁵ The time when he became a Christian is considered as long before 1725, given that he was born and raised in a Christian family.¹¹⁶ Colle contends that the experimental foundation for his later doctrine of Christian perfection was his first conversion rather than the experience in 1738. However, his claim seems rather implausible because the conversion without the proper understanding of the gospel cannot be called real Christian conversion. Furthermore, Wesley’s view of Christian perfection also underwent a significant change after justification by faith in Christ.

Strange as it sounds, Wesley called himself an honest heathen even in 1766. “[I do not love God. I never did]. Therefore [I am only an] honest heathen, a proselyte of the Temple, one of the ‘fearers of God.’”¹¹⁷ Wesley’s statement confuses us because it means that he is not a Christian even after his experience at Aldersgate (1938).

For a more reasonable conclusion, Wesley’s own testimony of his experience at Aldersgate must be considered. In January 1738, he suffered from unbelief, which stemmed from not fixing his faith on its right object, Christ. Until then, Wesley had had “only faith in God, not faith in or through Christ,”¹¹⁸ It seems to mean that he was lacking in assurance of justification by faith in Christ rather than totally ignorant of Christ. On 24th of May in 1738 he experienced in living faith accompanied by assurance.¹¹⁹

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-
Street, where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the

Aldersgate,” *Quarterly Review* 8 (1988): 95. Connecting Wesley’s experience at Aldersgate with justification by faith, he presents Wesley’s statements -letter to John Newton in 1765, the letter to Dr. Erskine in 1765, his Sermon “The Lord Our Righteousness” in 1765, and his notions of justification by faith in 1772 and in 1778 - as the evidence according to which Wesley several times referred to Aldersgate, even in his later years.

¹¹² Randy Maddox, ed., *Aldersgate Reconsidered* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1990), p.13.

¹¹³ John B. Cobb, Jr., *Grace and Responsibility: A Wesleyan Theology for Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), p. 64.

¹¹⁴ Ralph Del Colle, “John Wesley’s Doctrine of Grace in Light of the Christian Tradition,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, Vol. 4, no. 2 (2002): 173.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 173: also see Frank Whaling, ed., *John and Charles Wesley* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), p. 103.

¹¹⁶ Ralph Del Colle, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-174.

¹¹⁷ Telford, *Letters*, 5:16 (Charles Wesley, June 27, 1776); Kenneth J. Collins, *Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley’s Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p.144.

¹¹⁸ *Works* 1, 100-101.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.102.

Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation: And an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.¹²⁰

Wesley understood “peace and victory over sin” to be “essential to faith in the Captain of our salvation.”¹²¹ He depicted the difference between his state before this experience and his state after it. “I was striving, yea, fighting with all my might under the law, as well as under grace. But then I was sometimes, if not often, conquered; now, I was always conqueror.”¹²² Of course, it was not the level of perfect sanctification but that of assurance of justification.

In a letter to his brother Samuel on October 30, 1738, he confessed that he was not a Christian until May 24th in 1738 in the sense that sin had dominance over him.

By a Christian, I mean one who so believes in Christ, as that sin hath no more dominion over him: And in this obvious sense of the word, I was not a Christian till May the 24th last past. For till then sin had the dominion over me, although I fought with it continually; but surely, then, from that time to this it hath not¹²³

Since his experience at Aldersgate, by the grace of God, he attained freedom and victory over sin.¹²⁴ This implies that Wesley thought himself as an almost Christian of the eighteenth-century England Church before May 24, 1738.

For some time Wesley set the standpoint of a real Christian too high. A real Christian was ascribed to those having the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which implies that a real Christian was equal to an entirely sanctified Christian. On October 30, 1738, he called “those who have not yet received joy in the Holy Ghost, the love of God, and the plerophory of faith (πληροφορία πίστεως)” Christians in an imperfect sense, including himself (parenthesis is my addition).¹²⁵ In his Journal on January 4, 1739, he confessed, “I affirm, I am not a Christian now...But that I am not a Christian at this day, I as surely know, as that Jesus is the Christ. For a Christian is one who has the fruit of the Spirit of Christ, which are love, peace, joy. But these I have not.”¹²⁶ At the latter, he once again confessed, “Though I have

¹²⁰ *Works* 1, 103.

¹²¹ *Works* 1, 103.

¹²² *Works* 1, 103-104.

¹²³ *Works* 12, 33.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Works* 12, 34.

¹²⁶ *Works* 1, 170-171. Robert G. Tuttle regarded this as “indicative of a rather irresponsible Arminian

constantly used all the means of grace for twenty years, I am not a Christian,” for “I have not the fruit of the Spirit of Christ.”¹²⁷ This means that he was justified by his faith in Christ, but he was not entirely sanctified. To put it in another way, he equated a real Christian with an entirely sanctified Christian.

Those statements of Wesley’s caused Theodore W. Jennings, Jr. to underestimate the meaning of Aldersgate because there was no particular change in Wesley’s spiritual condition, as though he was not yet a Christian before Aldersgate.¹²⁸ In his journal on January 4, 1739, “a Christian” means a real Christian, i.e., a perfect Christian or a mature Christian. However, because at that time Wesley knew Jesus as his Christ who forgave his sins, he was already a Christian, though he was not entirely sanctified. Therefore, the claim of Theodore W. Jennings, Jr. that Wesley’s experience at Aldersgate does not have any particular significance in his conversion seems impertinent. Jennings seems to miss the change in Wesley’s conception of a Christian. Later, Wesley admitted those who lack assurance are a Christian who could be saved.¹²⁹ In a letter to Thomas Church on June 17, 1746, Wesley stated, “From 1738 to this time...the word of God ran as fire among the stubble,” in contrast to the former periods when he did not see so much fruits of his labour. This fact shows us that we cannot undervalue the experience at Aldersgate in Wesley’s life or Methodist history. Since that day, the fire of assurance totally enveloped him and his societies.

Before his experience at Aldersgate, Wesley had the faith of a son, not the faith of a son.¹³⁰ Since then he came to have the faith of a son, that is, assurance of justification by faith, and liberation from the dominion of sin. Of course, even before Aldersgate, he was not a nominal Christian nor a son, but only a devoted servant. Tuttle points out that for Wesley, “Aldersgate was indeed a watershed between law and grace.”¹³¹ His assessment of Aldersgate seems reasonable, given that after the experience Wesley became assured of justification by faith. Theodore W. Jennings contends that Wesley was justified before Aldersgate but lacked perfection.¹³² However, Wesley seems to have had the faith of a

doctrine held during the first few years following Aldersgate which convinced Wesley that if he did not at that moment feel love for and acceptance by God as the all-consuming fire, he was not a Christian.” *John Wesley: His Life and Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), p.196. Note no.9.

¹²⁷ *Works* 1, 172.

¹²⁸ Wesley had suffered from lack of the fruit of the Spirit even since the experience at Aldersgate. Theodore W. Jennings, Jr, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-17. Jennings referred to Journals or letters in May 24, 1738: Oct. 14, 1738: Nov. 23-24, 1738: Jan. 4, 1739: July 31, 1739.

¹²⁹ *Works* 7, 199.

¹³⁰ Sermon on Faith: *Works* 7, 195ff.

¹³¹ Robert G. Tuttle. *John Wesley: His Life and Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), p.200.

¹³² Theodore W. Jennings, Jr., “John Wesley Against Aldersgate,” *Quarterly Review* (1988): 10. “[W]hat Wesley lacked was not faith, but what he (lacked) was later to call ‘perfection.’”

servant without assurance of justification by faith in Christ, seeing that he confessed, “I still fixed not this faith on its right object: I meant only faith in God, not faith in or through Christ.”¹³³ Those having the faith of a servant who accepted God will receive the adoption of sons by their continual progress in faith.¹³⁴ Perhaps this state can be explained with the centurion, Cornelius in Acts 10-11. Though he did not know Jesus Christ, he had the faith of a servant and was accepted by God. Though such a statement was misunderstood as justification by works in the sense that Cornelius was accepted by God due to his pious works, it does not support that good works justify us, for Cornelius was saved by faith in Christ, and received the Spirit. Likewise, before Aldersgate, Wesley did not realize justification by faith in Christ and forgiveness attained through Christ’s blood. His spiritual condition, which lacked assurance of justification, was due to the teaching of William Law, who taught that justification follows after sanctified life.¹³⁵ In a word, Wesley came to understand justification by faith at Aldersgate.

To sum up, prior to the experience at Aldersgate, Wesley understood justification and sanctification in a Pelagian fashion, which means salvation by human efforts. Until then he had the faith of a servant,¹³⁶ but through the experience at Aldersgate, he came to realize justification by faith in Christ and had the faith of a son and found sanctification on justification by faith.¹³⁷ Secondly, he came to be assured that conversion can be accomplished “in an instant.”¹³⁸ Before that day, he was not convinced of it, though he often preached on “instantaneous conversion” and “inward assurance of salvation.”¹³⁹ Thirdly, the statements where Wesley confessed, “I am not a Christian” even after Aldersgate do not indicate that he lacked assurance of justification, but that he lacked assurance of his entire sanctification. He had assurance of justification and the faith of a son since Aldersgate, but not assurance of perfection in relation to a real Christian. The confusion of W. Jennings can be cleared by parallelism and trans-parallelism of K. J.

¹³³ *Works* 1, 101.

¹³⁴ “I now see clearly that even prior to Aldersgate I had the faith of a servant,” ... a divine conviction which enables one “to fear God and work righteousness.” Robert G. Tuttle. *John Wesley: His Life and Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), p.196: *Works* 7, 199.

¹³⁵ “Only if he does everything he possibly can for his own salvation, can he expect to be accepted by God.” William Law, *A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection of The Works of the Rev. William Law*. Vol. 3 (London, 1726, reprinted in 1893), p. 240. Cited by Lindstörn, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

¹³⁶ Cf. W. Stephen Gunter, *The Limits of “Love Divine”: John Wesley’s Response to Antinomianism and Enthusiasm* (Nashville, Tennessee: Kingswood Books, 1989), p.270. “The years prior to Aldersgate had been characterized by *legalism*” (my emphasis).

¹³⁷ Cf. Gordon Stanley Dicker, *The Concept Simul Iustus Et Peccator in Relation to the Thought of Luther, Wesley and Bonhoeffer, and Its Significance for A Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Th. D. diss., Union Theological Seminary, An Arbor: UMI, 1971): 79-80.

¹³⁸ W. Stephen Gunter, *op. cit.*, p.269.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

Collins.¹⁴⁰ Christians can be divided into two groups, namely the justified and the entirely sanctified, or Christians who are assured of the fruit of the Spirit and Christians without its assurance.. Faith can also be distinguished between justifying faith and sanctifying faith, or the faith of a servant and the faith of a son.

3.1.4 The Structure of Wesley's Theology and Sanctification

3.1.4.1 The Theological Methods and Characteristics of Wesley

Some theologians including Randy L. Maddox claim that for Wesley, the sources of doctrine were Scripture, reason, tradition, and experience.¹⁴¹ They often appeal to two or three of them jointly. Scripture is the primary source, and the others are secondary sources.¹⁴² Maddox sees tradition as the initial source of Wesley's theology. Where traditional doctrine differed from his experience, he sought to revise it according to the Bible and reason.¹⁴³ Maddox called Wesley's method a "hermeneutic spiral" in the sense that the characteristics of Wesley's theology can be said to be salvation, experience, and a creative synthesis of the two. This configuration is similar to Wesley's structure of salvation, which is composed of initial justification by faith, sanctification as our experience of salvation from the power of sin, and final justification by faith and works. Donald W. Dayton notes that Wesley's emphasis on reason was influenced by the Enlightenment and his stress on tradition was influenced by the Catholic Church.¹⁴⁴ Dayton's notion seems relevant, seeing that Wesley was raised in the background of German Pietism and his time related to the Enlightenment. Albert Outler described Wesley's theology as "an integral and dynamic theology in which Eastern notions of synthesis (i.e., dynamic interactions between God's will and man's) were fused with the classical Protestant *sola fide* and *sola scriptura* and with the Moravian stress upon inner feeling" (italics are my emphasis).¹⁴⁵

Granted the importance of experience in Wesleyan theology, it may be worthwhile to observe Wesley's view on experience in more detail. Theodore Runyon mentions that for

¹⁴⁰ See '3.1.4.2 The Structure of Wesley's Soteriology' on this thesis (p. 17). For the applied example of his theory in this thesis, see '3.2.1.3.1 Atonement.'

¹⁴¹ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville, Kingwood Books, 1994), p.36; William James Abraham, "The Wesleyan Quadrilateral," *Wesleyan Theology Today* (Nashville, Kingwood Books, 1985), pp. 119-126; Colin W. Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today* (London: The Epworth Press, first published in 1960), pp.26-38. Williams presented Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience as the sources of Wesley's theology.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p.46.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.47.

¹⁴⁴ Donald W. Dayton, "Law and Gospel in the Wesleyan Tradition," *Grace Theological Journal* 12 (1991): 235.

¹⁴⁵ Albert C. Outler, ed., *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 14:

Wesley, “experience is the presence and activity of the Other which transforms the self in relation.”¹⁴⁶ It has a sacramental function that communicates a transcendent reality. Ralph Del Colle notes that for Wesley, experience was always a necessary medium for the application of revealed truth. Though experience itself is not a source of authority, it is “sufficient to confirm a doctrine” grounded in the Bible.¹⁴⁷ His view seems pertinent in the light of Wesley’s statement that “we cannot know his love to us, till his Spirit witnesses it to our spirit. Till then we cannot believe it.”¹⁴⁸ In this respect, Wesley criticized the Quakers for regarding Scripture as a “secondary rule, subordinated to the Spirit.”¹⁴⁹ In contradiction of their view, spiritual experience is subordinate to the authority of the Bible.¹⁵⁰ Wesley’s view of experience is different from nineteenth-century subjectivism in the sense that for the former, experience is based on the Bible, but for the latter it is found on human thought rather than on the Bible.¹⁵¹

As has been observed above, Wesley’s methodology was based on tradition, experience, reason and the Bible. His emphasis on experience distinguishes him from other theologians, which has something to do with sanctification having to be attainable in this world.

3.1.4.2 The Structure of Wesley’s Soteriology

Wesley’s soteriology sheds light on his doctrine of sanctification. The core of Wesley’s theology is said to be soteriology, seeing that he deemed human salvation “the greatest of all blessings” which God grants to us.¹⁵²

W. E. Sweetland considered Wesley’s view of salvation under the three terms: “justification by faith, the new birth, and Christian perfection.”¹⁵³ His analysis, however, is insufficient because he did include repentance, which is very important in Wesley’s soteriology. Ralph Del Colle admitted that Wesley distinguished the stages in the salvific process more explicitly than Luther and Calvin.¹⁵⁴ For Wesley, there are three processive

¹⁴⁶ Theodore, Runyon, “The Role of Experience in Religion,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 31(1992):187.

¹⁴⁷ Ralph Del Colle, “John Wesley’s Doctrine of Grace in Light of the Christian Tradition,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, Vol. 4, no. 2 (2002), p. 177.

¹⁴⁸ Sermon XI. The Witness of the Spirit. Discourse II, 3, 5: *Works* 5, 127.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*: also see Robert W. Burton and Robert E. Chiles, eds., *John Wesley’s Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982), p. 35.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. G. C. Cell, *The Rediscovery of John Wesley* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1935), p.135-136.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Theodore, Runyon, “The Role of Experience in Religion,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 31(1992):193.

¹⁵² Sermon I, Salvation by Faith, 3: *Works* 5, 8.

¹⁵³ William Ernest Sweetland, *A Critical Study of John Wesley as Practical Thinker and Reformer* (Ph D. diss., Michigan State University, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1955), pp. 58-63.

¹⁵⁴ Ralph Del Colle, “John Wesley’s Doctrine of Grace in Light of the Christian Tradition,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, Vol. 4, no. 2 (2002): 176.

stages of salvation: repentance, faith, and holiness.¹⁵⁵ Repentance is compared to the “porch of religion”, faith “the door” and holiness “religion itself.”¹⁵⁶ They correspond respectively to prevenient grace, justifying grace and sanctifying grace.¹⁵⁷ Colle’s analysis seems more germane than that of Sweetland in virtue of his comprehensive analysis of Wesley’s soteriology. He embraced repentance and various graces in his configuration. In view of faith, Robert G. Tuttle classified dialectically the developmental stages of Wesley’s theology. The stage of thesis is ‘pre-1738’: “faith initiated solely by (human) inward and outward works” (parenthesis my addition). The stage of antithesis is ‘1738-1764’: “faith initiated solely by God’s Grace.” The stage of synthesis is ‘post-1764’: “faith initiated by grace and confirmed by works.”¹⁵⁸ In the synthesis stage, Wesley stressed faith working by love. His analysis is clearer than Colle’s, though it seems rather simple because it centred on faith only. As Clarence Bence puts it, the structure of Wesley’s soteriology is teleological.¹⁵⁹ Perfection as the final stage of salvation functions as the main impetus for its realization, as well as being the goal of the Christian life. God’s grace promotes our sanctification from repentance before justification, via justification, the new birth, repentance after justification, to entire sanctification.

Peculiarly and remarkably, Kenneth J. Collins suggests “parallelism and trans-parallelism” as a hermeneutical structure for the Wesleyan *Ordo Salutis*. According to Collins, parallelism means that in Wesley’s soteriology, there is “parallel structure with an emphasis on similarity” and trans-parallelism means that there are “parallel structures with an added emphasis on contrast due to Soteriological change.” For example, for Wesley, the atonement, the law, repentance, faith, and the witness of the Spirit have both similar and different meaning with respect to both justification and sanctification.¹⁶⁰ Collins’ hermeneutical methodology is significant because it offers us an important key to understanding Wesley’s diverse statements on a particular topic.¹⁶¹

3.1.4.3 The Position of Sanctification in His Theology

For Wesley, the aim of religion was to find “the way to heaven.” This signifies that his theology centres on soteriology. Salvation is accomplished by the attainment of

¹⁵⁵ Barth presented justification-faith, sanctification-love, and calling-hope, and Calvin stressed justification-faith and sanctification-repentance.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Collin W. Williams, *John Wesley’s Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), pp. 39-40.

¹⁵⁷ Colle, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

¹⁵⁸ Robert G. Tuttle. *John Wesley: His Life and Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), p.334. Note no.10.

¹⁵⁹ Clarence L Bence, *John Wesley’s Teleological Hermeneutics*, (Ph. D. diss., Michigan State University, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1982), pp.18-19.

¹⁶⁰ Kenneth J Collins, “A Hermeneutical Model For the Wesleyan *Ordo Salutis*,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 19 (1984): 23-37, especially 30-31.

¹⁶¹ See 3.1.3 Wesley’s Conversion: Experience at Aldersgate on this thesis.

holiness.¹⁶² As this holiness is attained by way of repentance, justification and regeneration, it is fair to delineate the whole process of salvation as a search for sanctification. As W. Stephen Gunter aptly puts it, holiness is the central theme comprising his entire theology.¹⁶³ In this regard, he is said to move the centre of theology from justification to sanctification.

3.2 Wesley's Doctrine of Sanctification

3.2.1 The Concept of Sanctification

3.2.1.1 Anthropological Presupposition

3.2.1.1.1 Human Nature as the Image of God

Wesley depicted the image of God in three ways. First, the natural image of God is “a picture of his own immortality; a spiritual being, endued with understanding, freedom of will, and various affections.”¹⁶⁴ Secondly, the political image of God implies “the governor of this lower world having “dominion over the fishes of the sea, and over all the earth.” Thirdly, the moral image of God is “righteousness and true holiness” (Eph 4:24). Wesley added love to the moral image of God. Since God is love, “man at his creation was full of love; which was the sole principle of all his tempers, thoughts, words, and actions.” The moral image was related to purity. As God is spotless purity, man was “pure from every sinful blot.”¹⁶⁵

In his sermon on the New Birth, Wesley did not refer to the knowledge of God and his works as the moral image of God. In “The Doctrine of Original Sin,” Wesley comprised the knowledge of God and his works in the right state of his intellectual powers as the image of God.

[T]his image consisted, not only in his rational and immortal nature, and his dominion over the creatures, but also in knowledge, actual knowledge, both of God and of his works; in the right state of his

¹⁶² Sermon XLV. The New Birth 1, 1: *Works* 6, 66.

¹⁶³ W. Stephen Gunter holds that for Wesley “heart holiness is the comprehensive frame of reference within which his entire theology developed.” W. Stephen Gunter, *The Limits of “Love Divine”: John Wesley's Response to Antinomianism and Enthusiasm* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood, 1989), p. 202.

¹⁶⁴ Sermon XLV: *Works* 6, 66. Barry E. Bryant concludes that Wesley was influenced by Molina, Arminius, Plaifere, and Goad on human free will. “Molina, Arminius, Plaifere, Goad, and Wesley on Human Free-Will, Divine Omniscience, and Middle Knowledge,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 27 (1992): 101.

¹⁶⁵ Sermon XLV. The New Birth 1, 1: *Works* 6, 66.

intellectual powers, and in love, which is true holiness.¹⁶⁶

For Wesley, it is not clear whether the knowledge of God belongs to the moral image of God or the natural image of God. In his sermon on the Fall of Man, Wesley depicted the natural image of God in man before the fall as follows:

[Man is] a spirit like his Creator, a being endued not only with sense and understanding, but also with a will exerting itself in various affections. To crown all the rest, he was endued with liberty; a power of directing his own affections and actions; a capacity of determining himself, or of choosing good or evil.¹⁶⁷

He understood original righteousness as keeping the moral image of God in which Adam was created.

His reason was clear; and sense, appetite, and passion were subject to it. His judgment was uncorrupted, and his will had a constant propensity to holiness. He had a supreme love to his Creator, a fear of offending him, and a readiness to do his will.¹⁶⁸

For Wesley, the image of God is not mutable because God was pleased to put him under the state of trial.¹⁶⁹ “He was free to stand or fall.”¹⁷⁰ The human ability to cooperate with God’s grace belongs to God’s grace. Accordingly, Wesleyan Arminianism does not totally abolish grace.

3.2.1.2 Hamartiological Presupposition

There have been many critiques of Wesley’s doctrine of sin. Newton Flew held that “undeniable defects in Wesley’s doctrine (of perfection) spring from an inadequate analysis of the nature of sin.”¹⁷¹ Umphrey Lee ascribed Wesley’s conclusion of Christian attainability of perfection in this life to a mistaken conception of sin.¹⁷² Along a similar line, Frederic Greeves noted that Wesley’s definition of sin as conscious sin led him to “identify perfection with the absence of conscious sin,” which involved the danger to “encourage a pharisaic type of self appraisal.”¹⁷³ Then, with those views in mind, Wesley’s doctrine of sin as presupposition of sanctification will be analysed in detail from

¹⁶⁶ ‘The Doctrine of Original Sin,’ *Works* 9, 293.

¹⁶⁷ Sermon LVII. On The Fall of Man: *Works* 6, 215.

¹⁶⁸ ‘Of Original Righteousness’: *Works* 6, 339.

¹⁶⁹ Sermon XLV. The New Birth: *Works* 6, 67.

¹⁷⁰ The Doctrine of Original Sin, Part VI, 2: 416

¹⁷¹ R. Flew, *The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 332.

¹⁷² Umphrey Lee, *John Wesley and Modern Religion* (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1936), pp. 185-187.

¹⁷³ F. Greeves, *The Meaning of Sin* (London: Epworth, 1956), p. 168.

his own work.

3.2.1.2.1 Original Sin and Its Result

3.2.1.2.1.1 Original Sin

Wesley regarded Adam's sin as original sin. In spite of God's warning that "Thou shalt not eat thereof," Adam ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As a result, he fell from his high status. His disobedience implies rebellion against his Creator. Since that time Adam "would be governed by his own will, and not the will of Him that created him." He would seek his happiness in the world and in the works of his hands rather than in God.¹⁷⁴ Wesley viewed Adam's sin as intentional sin by his own will. Adam "chose to do his own will, rather than the will of his Creator." "He 'was not deceived,' but knowingly and deliberately rebelled against his Father and his King."¹⁷⁵

Wesley understood original sin as the corruption of human nature due to Adam's fall.

The sinfulness of that state into which man fell consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin; the want of that righteousness wherein he was created; and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to evil, and that continually; which is commonly called original sin, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions.¹⁷⁶

He delineated original sin as corruption of human nature far from original righteousness:

Original Sin — is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man,—whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit.¹⁷⁷

He viewed human irregular desire, i.e., lust as a part of original sin.¹⁷⁸ We never can

¹⁷⁴ Sermon LVI: *Works* 6, 67.

¹⁷⁵ Sermon LVII. On The Fall of Man, 2, 6: *Works* 6, 223.

¹⁷⁶ 'The Original Sin': *Works* 9, 264.

¹⁷⁷ A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion: *Works* 8, 52. While Wesley regarded the absence of original righteousness as the result of original sin, James Arminius viewed absence of original righteousness as "original sin itself," in the sense that it "alone is sufficient to commit and produce any actual sins whatsoever." James Arminius, *The Writings of James Arminius*, 3 Vols., tr. by J. Nichols (London: James Nichols, 1828), 2: 375; also see Vern A. Hannah, "Original Sin and Sanctification: A Problem for Wesleyans," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, Vol. 2, No.2 (1983): 48-49.

¹⁷⁸ 'The Original Sin': *Works* 9, 274.

recover the moral image of God until we are “created anew in Christ Jesus.”¹⁷⁹

3.2.1.2.1.2 The Result of Original Sin

As the first result of original sin, Adam was separated from God and lost the life of God, in other words, at that moment he died in a spiritual sense, though his body did not immediately die. “The love of God was extinguished in his soul.” He was so under the power of servile fear that he fled from the presence of God.¹⁸⁰ He lost the knowledge as well as the love of God. He became impious and miserable. He lost “the moral image of God, and, in part, the natural.”¹⁸¹ In place of the image of God, he was immersed in “pride and self-will,” which are “the very image of the devil”; and in “sensual and desire,” which are “the image of the beasts that perish.”¹⁸² In spite of the fall, Adam retained “the spiritual nature and immortality of the soul” and “a degree of dominion over the creatures.”¹⁸³ To put it another way, he has the natural image and the political image of God.

As the second result, original sin brought death to Adam’s posterity.

Not only after, but before, and ‘until the law,’ given by Moses, ‘sin was in the world;’ and men were deemed sinners, and accordingly punished with death, through many generations... from Adam to Moses...death could not then be inflicted on mankind for any actual sin, because it was inflicted on so many infants, who had neither eaten of the forbidden fruit nor committed any actual sin whatever, and therefore had not sinned in any sense, ‘after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.’¹⁸⁴

As the third consequence, all of Adam’s posterity comes into the world deprived of the moral image of God.¹⁸⁵ In regard to the relationship between Adam’s sin and the guilt of his posterity, on the one hand, Wesley explicated it by the principle of representatives of his offspring. Since Adam was “a public person,” “a federal head” and “a legal representative” of all his posterity,¹⁸⁶ humankind descending from him through ordinary reproduction “sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression.”¹⁸⁷ Wesley drew

¹⁷⁹ Sermon LXXVI. On Perfection 1, 7: *Works* 6, 458.

¹⁸⁰ Sermon XLV. The New Birth: *Works* 6, 67.

¹⁸¹ Sermon LVII. On The Fall of Man 2, 6.: *Works* 6, 222.

¹⁸² Sermon XLV. The New Birth: *Works* 6, 67-68.

¹⁸³ The Original Sin: *Works* 9, 381.

¹⁸⁴ Original Sin: *Works* 9, 256.

¹⁸⁵ ‘Of Original Righteousness’: *Works* 9, 339.

¹⁸⁶ The Original Sin’: *Works* 9, 404.

¹⁸⁷ ‘The Original Sin’: *Works* 9, 262.

its support out of Romans 5:12-20, and 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22, which read: “all men die in Adam” and “by his offense, judgment is come upon all men to condemnation.”¹⁸⁸ On the other hand, he stated it in terms of hereditary nature. “[I]n Adam all died, all human kind, all the children of men who were then in Adam’s loins.” Consequently, “everyone descended from him comes into the world spiritually dead, dead to God.”¹⁸⁹ Psalm 51:5 reads: we are shaped in iniquity and are conceived in sin in our mother’s wombs.

Fourthly, original sin has led us to eternal death because it is the root of our personal sins.¹⁹⁰ From Rom. 5:18 and Eph. 2:3 say that “we are children of wrath, liable to death eternal.”¹⁹¹ Such a statement of Wesley must be treated with caution because for him, man is not sentenced to eternal death by original sin itself.¹⁹² His statement means that only when we submit to the instigation of original sin, we are punished with eternal death.¹⁹³ Without the grace of God, man cannot overcome the temptation of Satan goading his corrupt nature. Natural man voluntarily participates in actual sin stemming from original sin; he became filled with the guilt of original sin. This guilt drives him to Christ.

3.2.1.2.2 Actual Sin: Voluntary Sin

Wesley viewed actual sin as a voluntary transgression of the known law of God.¹⁹⁴ Sin is “every voluntary breach of the law of love and nothing else, if we speak properly. Accordingly, for Wesley, in order for sin to be committed, “the will must be engaged and it must give its assent.”¹⁹⁵ All unconscious mistakes and errors are not sins because they lack wilful intention.¹⁹⁶ Man is ultimately punished only through his own fault. Though his sin “springs from the infection of his nature,” he is not condemned because of Adam’s

¹⁸⁸ ‘The Original Sin’: *Works* 9, 262.

¹⁸⁹ Sermon XLV. The New Birth: *Works* 6, 68.

¹⁹⁰ 4.2.1.4.1 Prevenient Grace on this thesis.

¹⁹¹ Minutes of Some Late Conversations: *Works* 8, 277.

¹⁹² *Works* 9, 332. cf. “I believe none ever did, or ever will, die eternally, merely for the sin of our first father.” *Works* 9, 315.

¹⁹³ Predestination Calmly Considered: *Works* 10, 236.

¹⁹⁴ Sermon XIX. Privilege of Those that are Born of God, II, 2: *Works* 5, 227. Wesley seemed to adopt Arminius’ concept of sin as “a voluntary transgression of the law.” J. Arminius, *Writings* 2: 258. “[S]in is a voluntary transgression of the law, which the sinner, since he could avoid, commits of his own fault”; cf. Carl Bangs, *Arminius: A Study in the Dutch Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985): 197, foot note no.17.

¹⁹⁵ Wesley’s view of actual sin is similar to Arminius’, who concluded “that man did not sin on account of any necessity through a preceding decree of predestination.” J. Arminius, *Writings* 1: 220. Mbennah and Vorster hold that Arminius seems to have drawn it from Article 14 of the Belgic Confession. Man “wilfully subjected himself to sin..., giving heed to the words of the devil.” Emmanuel D. Mbennah and J. M. Vorster (Potchefstroom Univ. for Christian Higher Education), “The Influence of Arminian conception of Predestination on the 18th-century Wesleyan revival,” *Studia historiae ecclesiasticae*, Vol.24, no.1 (1998): 170.

¹⁹⁶ Kenneth J. Collins, *Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley’s Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p.118.

sin.¹⁹⁷ This is Wesley's distinction from Calvin and Barth with respect to Hamartiology. This definition of sin led Wesley to fail to take seriously the depth of unexamined prejudices and inward sins. In contrast to Wesley, Reformed theology regards human corruption from Adam's sin as sin.

Wesley viewed actual sin as the fruit springing from original sin. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies" (Matt 15: 19).¹⁹⁸ As our actual sins are like the hairs on our head, it will be of little significance to count all of them, though some remarkable sins will be dealt with in '4.2.1.2.2.1 Sin in Believers'. The important thing is that for Wesley, actual sins are not unavoidable, for "whoever is born of God does not commit sin" and "cannot sin" (1 John 5:18).¹⁹⁹

In his sermon on "the Wilderness State," Wesley classified sin into three categories; sin of commission, sin of omission, and inward sin. First, sin of commission often darkens the soul in a moment especially in case it is "a known, wilful or presumptuous sin like drunkenness, or uncleanness."²⁰⁰ This case does not frequently happen. Secondly, sin of omission consists in failing to rebuke a brother in fault and sin,²⁰¹ sidestepping the ordinances of God, i.e., any means of grace, and habitually neglecting public, family, and private prayer. This is the want of striving and spiritual sloth.²⁰² This kind of sin does not instantly quench the fire of the Spirit but gradually and slowly, whereas sin of commission immediately does so. The former may be compared to 'withdrawing the fuel from it' while the latter may be likened to 'pouring water upon a fire.' Thirdly, inward sin as 'a root of bitterness' consists of pride, anger, and foolish desire as any inordinate affection.²⁰³ They deprive believers of peace, joy, and the influence of the Spirit, and darken the heart.²⁰⁴ Though Christians may mortify inward sin "by the Spirit" day by day, they cannot drive it out by justifying grace.²⁰⁵ Wesley claimed that the body of sin as the old man including "all evil tempers, words, and actions" might be destroyed when believers are entirely sanctified.²⁰⁶ When Jesus said, "Be clean," the leper was cleansed and "then only the evil root, the carnal mind, is destroyed; and inbred sin subsists no more."²⁰⁷ His claim will be

¹⁹⁷ The Doctrine of Original Sin: *Works* 9, 286. "...They were not led captive (to Satan) through Adam's sin, but their own wickedness" (my addition).

¹⁹⁸ Original Sin: *Works* 9, 274.

¹⁹⁹ Sermon XL. Christian Perfection 2, 5: *Works* 5, 7.

²⁰⁰ Sermon XLVI. The Wilderness State: *Works* 6, 80-81.

²⁰¹ Sermon XLVI. The Wilderness State: *Works* 6, 81-82..

²⁰² *Ibid.*, pp.86-87.

²⁰³ Sermon XLVI. The Wilderness State: *Works* 6, 82, 85.

²⁰⁴ Sermon XLVI. The Wilderness State: *Works* 6, 82-83.

²⁰⁵ Sermon XIV. The Repentance of Believers 1, 20: *Works* 5, 165.

²⁰⁶ NT Note on Rom. 6:6.

²⁰⁷ Sermon XIV. The Repentance of Believers 1, 20: *Works* 5, 165.

criticized later.

Wesley explicated the relation between inward sins and outward sins as follows.

Of pride cometh contention, vain boasting, seeking and receiving praise of men, and so robbing God of that glory which he cannot give unto another. Of the lust of the flesh, come gluttony or drunkenness, luxury or sensuality fornication, uncleanness; variously defiling that body which was designed for a temple of the Holy Ghost: Of unbelief, every evil word and work.²⁰⁸

Pride, the lust of the flesh, and unbelief are inward sins, while consequential sins are outward sins. Similarly, in ‘The Doctrine of Original Sin’, Wesley stated that the root of sin is pride, self-will, unbelief, and heart-idolatry.²⁰⁹ In his sermon on ‘the Deceitfulness of Man’s heart,’ he viewed it as self-will, pride, love of the world, independence of God, atheism and idolatry.²¹⁰ These sins can be included in inward sins.

For Wesley, sanctification means deliverance from actual sin, including sin of commission, sin of omission, and inward sin. For Wesley, sin of commission and outward sin is removed at justification, and sin of omission and inward sin is overcome by entire sanctification. The latter is equal to sin in believers.

3.2.1.2.2.1 Sin in Believers as Pride, Self-Will, and the Desire of the World

According to Wesley, sin remains in a believer’s heart, because the flesh still lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.²¹¹ Even a believer is fleshly as long as he remains immature in Christ according to 1 Cor. 3:1-4. The angel of the church of Ephesus was exhorted to repent his sin, though he was praised by the Lord for his efforts.²¹² Believers are equally assured that sin is in them, although Christ is in them and they are the children of God. Christ is and dwells “in the heart of every believer, who is fighting against all sin,” even though his heart is not yet fully purified as the temple of God.²¹³

Some people including Count Zinzendorf claimed that there is no sin in a believer. They stated their opinion as follows.

Scripture says, Every believer is born of God, is clean, is holy, is sanctified, is pure in heart, has a new heart, is a temple of the Holy

²⁰⁸ Sermon VII. The Way to the Kingdom. II, 3: *Works* 5, 83.

²⁰⁹ *Works* 9, 433.

²¹⁰ *Works* 7, 337.

²¹¹ Sermon XII. Sin in Believers: *Works* 5, 147.

²¹² Sermon XII. Sin in Believers: *Works* 5, 148.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

Ghost. Now, as ‘that which is born of the flesh is flesh,’ is altogether evil, so ‘that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,’ is altogether good. Again: A man cannot be clean, sanctified, holy, and at the same time unclean, unsanctified, unholy. He cannot be pure and impure, or have a new and an old heart together. Neither can his soul be unholy, while it is a temple of the Holy Ghost.²¹⁴

In opposition to this view, Wesley refuted their views by these four statements. First, the opinion ‘that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, is altogether good’ means that every man who is “born of the Spirit,” is a spiritual man, but he is not altogether good and spiritual. For example, the saints at Corinth were spiritual but not altogether spiritual. They were still partially fleshly and were babes in Christ. Secondly, it is not true that “a man cannot be clean, sanctified, holy, and at the same time unclean, unsanctified, unholy.” On the contrary, he may be so as the Corinthians were so. Though they were washed and sanctified, and cleansed from “fornication, idolatry, drunkenness” (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10, 11), they were yet not inwardly cleansed “from envy, evil surmising, and partiality.”²¹⁵ Thirdly, that “they had not a new heart and an old heart together” is true, but their new hearts were “not entirely, renewed” yet. Though their carnal mind was nailed to the cross, it was “not wholly destroyed.” Fourthly, it is true that they were holy because they were the ‘temples of the Holy Ghost,’ but it is equally certain that they were partially carnal and unholy.²¹⁶

In view of justification, the Corinthians were already new creatures but in view of sanctification, they were not yet wholly new.²¹⁷ The tempers and affections of the old man, i.e., Φρόνημα σάρκος remains manifest, though it cannot rule over the justified.²¹⁸ They are delivered from guilt by means of the blood of Christ and from the power of sin by the Holy Spirit who dwells in them, but they still feel “the flesh lusting against the Spirit.”²¹⁹

Wesley stated that sin in believers cannot rule over them, whereas sin in unbelievers can. Unbelief as the absence of faith is in the latter, whereas unbelief as little faith is in the former. Little faith signifies faith often mixed with doubt or fear. It can exist in believers like the case of Jesus’ disciples: “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”²²⁰ Though a believer feels the urge to sin, if he does not engage in it, but follow the Spirit, he will not lose God’s favor as the child of God.

In his sermon on “the Repentance of Believers,” Wesley stated inward sin in believers

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 150-151

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 152.ó

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

as “pride,” “self-will contrary to the will of God,” “the desire of the flesh,” “the desire of the eye,” and “the pride of life.”²²¹

3.2.1.2.2.1.1 Pride and Self-Will

Pride is to think oneself higher than ought to be himself. It is difficult to conquer pride. Pride delights in the honour coming from men. It is a desire for and a love of praise. It stems from *fear of dispraise* linked to *evil shame* and *fear of man*, “which brings a thousand snares upon the soul.” Even those that seem strong in faith are subjected to “a degree of all these evil tempers.”²²²

A believer may be self-willed even against the will of God, in contrast to Jesus who always subjected himself to the will of his Father.²²³ A self-willed person wants what is pleasing to his nature, though he knows it does not please God, whereas he avoids something that is painful, even though it is the will of God for him. Self-will is “a species of idolatry” which is directly opposed to the love of God. To stay in faith is to strive against self-will with all might.

3.2.1.2.2.1.2 Inordinate Affection

A person who is born again can say, “Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee!” But it is not possible always to remain in the same mood. Without continually watching and praying, lust will return to him. The assault of *inordinate affection*, i.e., a strong proclivity to anything but God will return. Without awareness, the *desire of the eye*, which is the desire of “gratifying his imagination with something great, or beautiful, or uncommon” may overwhelm him.²²⁴ It is very difficult for a believer to conquer curiosity, one of the desires of inordinate affection.

Wesley suggested that the inordinate affection in believers show itself as envy, revenge, and covetousness. Envy often befalls a person who was faced with people more excellent than him. Resentment generates in persons when are injured or affronted; especially by “those whom we peculiarly loved,” and “whom we had most laboured to help.” Injustice or ingratitude often excites a desire of revenge instead of “overcoming evil with good.”²²⁵ Covetousness is a feeling contrary to the love of God. It can be explicated with the terms, *filaoguria* (the love of money) or *pleonexia* (the desire to have more). It may bind the freedom of God’s children. Such inordinate affections as envy, covetousness, a root of bitterness, and revenge still remain in the hearts of the justified.²²⁶ Wesley understood the

²²¹ Sermon XIV. Repentance of Believers, 1.3-6: *Works* 5, 158-159.

²²² Sermon XIV. Repentance of Believers, 1.7: *Works* 5, 159.

²²³ Sermon XIV. Repentance of Believers, 1.4: *Works* 5, 158.

²²⁴ Sermon XIV. Repentance of Believers, 1.5: *Works* 5, 159.

²²⁵ Sermon XIV. Repentance of Believers, 1.8: *Works* 5, 160.

²²⁶ Sermon XIV. Repentance of Believers, 1.9: *Works* 5, 160.

latter part of the seventh chapter to the Romans as the state of the justified, but not the entirely sanctified. All these sins remaining in believers are the objects of repentance to acquire entire sanctification.²²⁷

3.2.1.2.2.1.3 Inward Sin Clinging to Words and Actions

Wesley mentioned that inward sins cling to all our words and actions.

In regard to our words, he explicated it as follows. All uncharitable conversation which does not spring from brotherly love, for instance, “all backbiting, all tale-bearing, all whispering, all evil-speaking,” and repeating the faults of persons not present are unquestionably the sin to grieve the Spirit. Believers “shall give an account in the day of judgment” of every idle word.²²⁸ Wesley also described as sin all actions which are not to the glory of God.²²⁹ If believers feel wrong tempers of various kinds when they do good things for our neighbours, it is a sign that our good works are contaminated with sin. The omission of good works of piety and mercy are regarded as sin in believers, as the Bible says: “To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4:17). While the works of piety are communion, hearing God’s word, prayer and the like,²³⁰ the works of mercy are believers’ good works for their neighbours. Wesley noted that there are so many inward defects in their love towards neighbours and in holy temper towards God. This fact shows them the need to confess with Job, “I am vile: I abhor myself, and repent as in dust and ashes.”²³¹

3.2.1.2.2.1.4 Schism

For Wesley, schism means “a separation *in* a Church” (his emphasis), or “a *causeless* separation from *the Church of Christ*” (my emphasis),²³² not just a separation from a particular national Church like the Church of England.²³³ On the basis of 1 Cor 12: 24-25, Wesley defined schism in a Church as

an alienation of affection in any of them towards their brethren; a division of heart, and parties springing therefrom, though they were still outwardly united together; though they still continued

²²⁷ Sermon XIV. Repentance of Believers, 1.10: *Works* 5, 161.

²²⁸ Sermon XIV. Repentance of Believers, 1.11: *Works* 5, 161.

²²⁹ Sermon XIV. Repentance of Believers, 1.13: *Works* 5, 162.

²³⁰ Sermon XIV. Repentance of Believers, 1.14: *Works* 5, 163.

²³¹ Sermon XIV. Repentance of Believers, 1.15: *Works* 5, 163.

²³² The former is based on Cor 1:10, the latter Cor 12: 25.

²³³ A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, 3, 20: *Works* 8, 236; Sermon LXXV. On Schism 1,1: *Works* 6, 402. “[I]t is not a separation from *any Church*, (whether general or particular, whether the Catholic or any national Church), but a separation *in a Church* (my emphasis).

members of the same external society.²³⁴

Wesley's definition of schism is similar to that of Calvin, who thought the essence of unity is engrafting into the body of Christ in sound doctrines rather than in visibly united instruments.²³⁵

He regarded schism as "evil in itself." "To separate ourselves from a body of living Christians...is a grievous breach of the law of love."²³⁶ The cause of schism is want of love. When love grows cold, schism befalls us. Schism is "naturally productive of the most mischievous consequences" and "opens a door to all unkind tempers." It leads us to "evil surmising," "severe and uncharitable judging," "offence," "anger and resentment," "bitterness, malice, and settled hatred." Briefly, it is "a prelude to hell eternal." Accordingly, schism is the main object to be overcome by sanctification.

3.2.1.2.2.2 Sin against the Holy Spirit and Sin unto Death

Wesley viewed sin against the Holy Spirit as apostasy.²³⁷ Believers generally do not commit this sin. At the time of persecution, the Jews asked apostatized Christians to express in the public assembly that "Jesus was a deceiver of the people" and that he had suffered the penalties which he justly deserved. Such confession was "crucifying the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame," and "counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, treading under foot the Son of God, and doing despite to the Spirit of grace." In spite of the seriousness of their sin, some apostates recovered their faith and God's mercy on them, whereas others miserably died in their sin. From Wesley's viewpoint, those who have fallen from sanctifying grace can recover their state again.²³⁸ However, to continue in sin on the pretext of God's mercy "leads to utter, irrecoverable destruction." To make the grace of God an excuse to sin is "the sure way to the nethermost hell."²³⁹

Sin unto death was viewed as "a sin which God determined to punish by the death of the sinner."²⁴⁰ In this case, because God decided the penalty of the sinner, the prayer for him is useless. But it does not signify eternal death. Rather, though his body is destroyed, his soul may be saved from hell. They were cut off due to the seriousness of their sin. Nonetheless, they are convinced by the mercy and justice of God on them.

²³⁴ On Schism 1,7: *Works* 6, 404.

²³⁵ Cf. Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England* (London: Epworth Press, 1970, second edition 2000), p. 162. "They do not divide themselves at all from the living body of Christ."

²³⁶ Sermon LXXV. On Schism 1,11: *Works* 6, 406.

²³⁷ Sermon LXXXVI. A Call to Backsliders: *Works* 6, 523.

²³⁸ Sermon LXXXVI. A Call to Backsliders: *Works* 6, 525.

²³⁹ Sermon LXXXVI. A Call to Backsliders: *Works* 6, 527.

²⁴⁰ Sermon LXXXVI. A Call to Backsliders: *Works* 6, 520.

Accordingly, for Wesley, these two sins calls for repentance and sanctification.

3.2.1.2.3 The Seat of Sin

For Wesley, the seat of sin is the soul, not the body, which is corrupt but is not sinful because it is not personal but material.

A sinful body? ...But there is no authority for it in Scripture: The word sinful body is never found there. And as it is totally unscriptural, so it is palpably absurd. For no body, or matter of any kind, can be sinful: Spirits alone are capable of sin. ...It cannot lodge in the skin, nor in the muscles, or nerves, or veins, or arteries; it cannot be in the bones, any more than in the hair or nails. Only the soul can be the seat of sin.²⁴¹

As our body is corruptible, it is “the most dangerous enemy” tempting us to sin, while our soul lives in our body. In glorification, our body will be changed to “fit instruments for the soul.”²⁴² The body is “purified and refined” from corruption at the resurrection. Because our body is morally neutral, it cannot be the seat of sin, but the soul is the seat of sin.

3.2.1.3 Christological Presupposition: Objective Aspect of Sanctification

3.2.1.3.1 Atonement

Wesley viewed the doctrine of atonement as a proper distinction between Deism and Christianity.²⁴³ The atonement of Christ is “the meritorious cause” of entire sanctification, as well as of justification.²⁴⁴ His view of atonement can be described “as a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction.”²⁴⁵ The terms ‘full’ signifies that Christ’s sacrifice is not partial but complete. ‘Perfect’ implies that his sacrifice needs no addition or repetition. Because the suffering of Christ purchased human redemption, there is nothing further to pay for it. ‘Sufficient sacrifice and oblation’ also involves that Christ’s

²⁴¹ Sermon LXXVI. On Perfection 2, 9: *Works* 5, 418.

²⁴² Sermon CXXXVII. On The Resurrection of The Dead (1732), 7, 2, 4: *Works* 7, 483.

²⁴³ *Works* 10, 205. For the relationship between them, see William Ernest Sweetland, *A Critical Study of John Wesley as Practical Thinker and Reformer* (Ph. D. diss., Michigan State University, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1955), pp. 58-63.

²⁴⁴ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* 3 Vols. (Bristol: published by William Pine, 1765), 1 Chron 21: 26; Lev 25: 25; Num 15:2; John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* (London: Epworth Press, 1954), Rom 9: 25; 1 Thess. 1:10; Heb 2:10; 13:10. Cited by Ole E. Borgen, “John Wesley: Sacramental Theology No Ends without the Means,” in *John Wesley: Contemporary Perspective* (London: Epworth, 1988), p. 67, footnote no. 5; also see Kenneth J. Collins, “A Hermeneutical Model for the Wesleyan *Ordo Salutis*,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 19 (1984): 23.

²⁴⁵ Sermon LIX. God’s Love to Fallen Man: *Works* 6, 234.

sacrifice is so great and inestimably valuable as to bring reconciliation of God and humanity. 'For the sins of the whole world' implies that propitiation was asked because God was offended by human sin and got 'angry with all mankind.'²⁴⁶ Christ became "our substitute as to penal sufferings."²⁴⁷ He paid the ransom for humankind by his death.²⁴⁸

In his comment on Col. 1:14 in *NT Notes*, Wesley stated that "The voluntary passion of our Lord appeased the Father's wrath, obtained pardon and acceptance for us, and, consequently, dissolved the dominion and power which Satan had over us through our sins." This implies that he understood atonement as our forgiveness and our liberation from the dominion of Satan and sin. He synthesized the Western tradition that the atonement of Christ results in absolving our guilt with the Eastern tradition that it liberated us from the dominion of Satan and sin. The atonement of Christ brought us not only a liberty from the law but also from the law.²⁴⁹ Christ enabled us to accomplish the law by giving his Spirit. Maddox is of the opinion that for Wesley, the cross of Christ causes us to obey God as our response to his love towards us.²⁵⁰ In this sense, Christ's atonement becomes the basis of sanctification.²⁵¹

Wesley explicated the continual sanctification of Christ in relation to the daily service in the Old Testament.

This daily service, a lamb offered upon the altar every morning, and every evening, typified the continual intercession which Christ ever lives to make in the virtue of his satisfaction for the continual sanctification of his church: though he offered himself once for all, yet that one offering thus becomes a continual offering.²⁵²

Christ continually sanctifies us by means of his intercession at the right hand of God the Father. For Wesley, believers continuously need Christ's atonement even in the best deed of the entirely sanctified, on account of their omissions, short-comings, mistakes in judgment and practice, and defects of various kinds.²⁵³ This statement is worth noting because it denotes that Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification does not imply an

²⁴⁶ Letters DCCXI to Miss Bishop: *Works* 13, 35.

²⁴⁷ Preface To A Treatise On Justification: *Works* 10, 319.

²⁴⁸ Sermon CXXVIII, Free Grace, 21: *Works* 7, 381.

²⁴⁹ *Works* 10, 202-203.

²⁵⁰ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville, Kingwood Books, 1994), p. 109.

²⁵¹ Cf. Leo George Cox, *John Wesley's Concept of Perfection* (Ph. D diss. University of Iowa, 1959. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1980), p. 55.

²⁵² *John Wesley's Notes on the Whole Bible the Old Testament* by John Wesley (SAGE Software Albany, OR USA Version 1.0 © 1996), p. 325.

²⁵³ Plain Account of Christian Perfection: *Works* 9, 496; cf. A Letter to the Author of "The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared."41: *Works* 9, 52.

absolute perfection, which renders Christ's intercession unnecessary.

On the other hand, Wesley proclaimed unlimited atonement because if Christ died for all, then all may be saved. "The grace or love of God, whence cometh our salvation, is FREE IN ALL and FREE FOR ALL" (his emphasis).²⁵⁴ The benefit of atonement is not limited by predestination.²⁵⁵ Though "Christ's death was an objective satisfaction to God's justice," God's forgiveness is subjectively accomplished when man believes in Christ's atonement.²⁵⁶

3.2.1.3.2 The Threefold Offices of Christ

As High Priest, Christ accomplished atonement for his people and has been making intercessions to God for them in order to restore them to God's favour, pardon and peace by destroying the root of pride, self-will, and the love of the world.²⁵⁷ The Christian is restored to the image of God in virtue of Christ's continual mediation.²⁵⁸ Wesley rejected the substitutionary imputation of Christ's obedience and viewed his exemplary life of service as a means of effective edification of fallen humanity in order to emphasise human responsibility.²⁵⁹ As Prophet, Christ reveals the law of God to his people. He came to "establish, illustrate, and explain," not to destroy the law.²⁶⁰ In virtue of Christ's administration of Prophethood, we know our sin and the need of its pardon and repent our sin in the light of his law, which leads us to a holy life. As King, Christ breaks the power of sin and Satan, gives laws to those he has redeemed and restores them to the image of God, and reigns in them.²⁶¹ Wesley sometimes described Christ as Physician, who cuts off our rotten part in order to heal our wounds and makes us participate in his holiness.²⁶²

As we observed above, for Wesley, the threefold offices of Christ is necessary for our sanctification.

3.2.1.3.3 The Imputation of Christ's Righteousness

²⁵⁴ Robert W. Burton & Robert E. Chiles, eds., *John Wesley's Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982), p. 146.

²⁵⁵ Cf. Arther Skevington Wood, *The Contribution of John Wesley to the Theology of Grace* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc, 1975), p. 216.

²⁵⁶ Leo George Cox, *op. cit.* p. 52.

²⁵⁷ Sermon LXII. "The End of Christ's Coming" 3.1-2: *Works* 5, 275.

²⁵⁸ Father Thoughts on Christian Perfection, Q.9: *Works* 11:417.

²⁵⁹ *NT Notes*, John 9:5. "I am the light of the world — I teach men inwardly by my Spirit, and outwardly by my preaching, what is the will of God: and I show them, by my example, how they must do it."

²⁶⁰ *NT Notes*, Mt 5:17.

²⁶¹ *NT Notes*, Rev 12:10-11.

²⁶² Sermon XLVIII, "Self-Denial," 1, 13: *Works* 5, 109.

In his “Thoughts on the Imputed Righteousness of Christ,” Wesley regarded the righteousness of Christ as an expression that does not exist in the Bible.²⁶³ Instead of the righteousness of Christ, he stressed the righteousness of God, which means “his ways of justifying sinners” by faith in Christ.²⁶⁴ For Wesley, that Jesus Christ is made of God unto our righteousness and sanctification (1 Cor 1:30) means no more than that he is “the sole Author” of justification and sanctification.²⁶⁵

It is not Christ’s obedience to God but their faith in Christ’s atonement to be counted to believers for righteousness (Gen 15:6; Rom.4:5; Heb 11:7; Rom 9:30).²⁶⁶ Paul’s statement that “the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men” and “through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous”(Rom. 5:18-19) does not mean that the righteousness of Christ as his obedience to God became the righteousness of believers.²⁶⁷ It means that believers are forgiven and accepted before God by their faith in Christ’s perfect atonement, which was prepared through his whole obedience. The righteousness of believers is their faith in Christ²⁶⁸ and their obedience to God in the Spirit, not Christ’s obedience. A Christian is called holy not because he is simply united with the holy Christ, but because he is made really holy in Christ through his cooperation with God’s grace. For Wesley, the righteousness of believers means that God is reigning over them in the Spirit and as its result, the fruit of the Spirit, which are described in terms of the affection of the heart, i.e., “humbleness, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering, patience, deadness to the world; and every right disposition of heart towards God and towards man.”²⁶⁹ It can be depicted with one word, love.

The more serious reason why Wesley abhorred the imputation of Christ’s righteousness is that the antinomians made Christ “the minister of sins” by using the expression as a means to justify and cover their sins.²⁷⁰ His anxiety can be explicated by the following syllogism. Since the moment when one believes that Christ’s obedience is his righteousness, he cannot add anything to Christ’s obedience. This causes his moral

²⁶³ Thoughts on the Imputed Righteousness of Christ 1: *Works* 10, 312.

²⁶⁴ Thoughts on the Imputed Righteousness of Christ 3: *Works* 10, 313.

²⁶⁵ Thoughts on the Imputed Righteousness of Christ 8: *Works* 10, 314.

²⁶⁶ Thoughts on the Imputed Righteousness of Christ 9: *Works* 10, 314; Remarks on Mr. Hill’s Farrago Double-Distilled III, 24: *Works* 10, 427.

²⁶⁷ Thoughts on the Imputed Righteousness of Christ 11: *Works* 10, 314-315.

²⁶⁸ “I continually affirm, to them that believe, faith is imputed for righteousness.” Remarks on Mr. Hill’s Farrago Double-Distilled III, ‘Of Imputed Righteousness’ 24: *Works* 10, 426-427; “[H]is faith is counted to him for righteousness” A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion: *Works* 8, 57. This thought of Wesley is similar to Arminius’. “For the word, ‘to impute,’ signifies that faith is not righteousness itself, but is graciously accounted for righteousness...on account of Christ, whom God hath appointed as the propitiation through faith in his blood. I affirm, therefore, that faith is imputed to us for righteousness, on account of Christ and his righteousness.” J. Arminius, *Writings* 2: 474.

²⁶⁹ *Works* 1, 642-643.

²⁷⁰ Thoughts on the Imputed Righteousness of Christ 13: *Works* 10, 315.

dissolution. By corollary, it makes Christ “a minister of sins.”²⁷¹

To sum up, Wesley’s objection to the imputation of Christ’s righteousness is orientated towards faith in Christ and obedience to God as the believers’ responsible role in sanctification.

3.2.1.3.4 The Imitation of Christ

According to Ralph Del Colle, Wesley envisioned “Christ as ‘our grand Exemplar.’” Wesley’s view is congruent with the conventional Catholic view of following Christ.²⁷² Colle’s view seems relevant given Wesley’s notion that humility is the mark of those who “tread in his steps” to imitate Christ’s exemplar.²⁷³ Justification should issue in sanctification, i.e., discipleship as following Christ in the Holy Spirit. Christ’s example was delineated in the Gospels in detail. Regretfully, Colle does not refer to the difference between Christ and us. Christ’s life as a person can be our example, but his life as the Son of God cannot be our example, for it is his unique life as Redeemer.

Wesley linked repentance, which is regarded as an important stage of sanctification, with the imitation of Christ. Repentance is “not only to be sorry for our sins, and to cease to do evil, but also to learn to do well; to be more and more Christians; daily endeavouring to be more religious than we were before; continually pressing forward to perfect ourselves in holiness, to tread more and more in the steps of Christ” (emphasis is mine).²⁷⁴ Before his experience at Aldersgate, Wesley understood sanctification as following Christ’s example rather than regeneration, which generates at the same time with justification. Since then, he came to understand sanctification as God’s gift after sincere repentance, which involves justification as positional sanctification, the new birth, and entire sanctification.

3.2.1.4 Soteriological Presupposition: Grace

3.2.1.4.1 Preventive Grace and Human Recovery

Wesley could neither agree with the limited atonement and unconditional election of Calvinism, nor with Roman Catholicism’s view that human depravity was not so total that some freedom was preserved in natural man.²⁷⁵ He rejected the latter because it underestimated the result of original sin and weakened the gratuity of God’s restoring

²⁷¹ Thoughts on the Imputed Righteousness of Christ 14: *Works* 10, 315.

²⁷² Ralph Del Colle, “John Wesley’s Doctrine of Grace in Light of the Christian Tradition,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, Vol. 4, no. 2 (2002): 188-189.

²⁷³ Sermon XVII. The Circumcision of the Heart, 1, 5: *Works* 5, 204.

²⁷⁴ Telford, ed. *Letters* I, 152f, 159.

²⁷⁵ Letter to Dr. John Robertson, 24 Sept. 1753: *Works*, 26:517-518.

grace.²⁷⁶ The former was also refused because it abolished human responsibility to God's grace by rendering participation in it to be automatical, regardless of the human will. Leo G. Cox points out the difference between Wesleyans and Calvinists regarding the doctrine of grace as follows. For Wesleyans, common grace and special grace are the same in kind but different in degree, namely, preventing grace comprises all kinds of graces of God, whereas for Calvinists, they are completely different.²⁷⁷ For Wesley, prevenient grace given to man is not limited only to the time of regeneration, but can be ascribed to all stages of man regardless of regeneration. Rogers Charles Allen seems to have been missing this point when he contended that prevenient grace is "bestowed upon man in his new birth."²⁷⁸ This misunderstanding seems to have resulted from his missing that the baptism described in Philippians 2:12-13²⁷⁹ signified infant baptism.²⁸⁰ Later, Allen admitted that human reason to understand the truths of the gospel belongs also to "unregenerate man assisted by the grace of the Spirit."²⁸¹ Anyway, the point is that the grace of the Spirit as preventing grace is given to everybody, not to particular people only.

For Wesley, God's grace always prevents (comes before) the total corruption of man, which makes human response possible. Its ground is John 1: 9, which reads, "the true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world" and the Anglican Thirty-Nine Articles, which reads, "Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us...." Prevenient grace based on the salvific grace of Christ is applied to all people regardless of being Christians or non-Christians,²⁸² when they "cometh into the world."²⁸³ Roger C. Allen was missing this point when he claimed that prevenient grace "is not a grace which precedes regeneration, or which somehow enables man to fulfill the conditions of regeneration." It is freely given, not merited. As Kenneth J Collins aptly puts it, prevenient grace restoring human facilities to some extent is irresistible to all men, whereas sanctifying grace is

²⁷⁶ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), p. 83.

²⁷⁷ Leo G. Cox, "Prevenient Grace-A Wesleyan View," *Journal of Evangelical Society* 12 (summer, 1969): 144.

²⁷⁸ Rogers Charles Allen, *The Concept of Prevenient Grace in the Theology of John Wesley* (Ph. D. diss. Duke University, Ann Harbor: University Microfilms, 1967), p. 129.

²⁷⁹ Wesley's *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* (Bristol: W. Pine, 1765), pp. 85-86; Allen, *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ This becomes clear when we consider Wesley's expression "in baptism before we can remember, and so know no time when we had it not...the grace of God preventing us, growing up with us, and accompanying us all along, through all the stages of our life." *NT* "Philippians 2:12-13," pp. 84-85; Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 128. Also see 3.2.7.3.1 Baptism on this thesis.

²⁸¹ Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

²⁸² Kenneth J. Collins, *Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p.39.

²⁸³ Predestination Calmly Considered, 45: *Works*, 10, 230.

resistible.²⁸⁴

In terms of pardon and power, Wesley explicated the prevenient grace of God in the following way. Pardon is prevenient grace in a narrow sense, which is “God’s saving work in fallen humanity prior to justification.”²⁸⁵ It provided forgiveness of inherited guilt from original sin. Accordingly, “no infant ever was, or ever will be, ‘sent to hell for the guilt of Adam’s sin;’ seeing it is cancelled by the righteousness of Christ, as soon as they are sent into the world.”²⁸⁶ In virtue of the merit of Christ, “all men are cleared from the guilt of Adam’s actual sin.”²⁸⁷ Accordingly, infants are saved in the case of death in infancy. As a result, present human culpability results from the rejection of “God’s restoring work in our lives” rather than any guilt from original sin.²⁸⁸ This is the reason why men suffer eternal death on account of actual sin rather than original sin.

Power is prevenient grace in a broad sense, which signifies the prior empowering of God’s grace to make it possible for man to act virtually from the beginning of faith to the high level of sanctification.²⁸⁹ Prevenient grace as power confers on people a measure of free will and some power of discernment. The human will and intelligence are supernaturally recovered to fallen man.²⁹⁰ Grace empowers man to discern what is good and what is evil, and with the will to do what is good. Accordingly, even to men before justification, actual sins are not unavoidable in virtue of prevenient grace.²⁹¹ Furthermore, it enables us to recognize the need of God’s offer of salvation and to respond to such an offer.²⁹² The primary end of prevenient grace is to lead men to repentance and salvation in Christ.²⁹³ Accordingly, the final dimension of prevenient grace is God’s specific approach to individuals to invite them to closer relationship. If men receive this overture of grace, they begin to experience cooperative and progressive transformation.²⁹⁴

²⁸⁴ Kenneth J. Collins, *op. cit.*, p.44.

²⁸⁵ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), p. 84.

²⁸⁶ Letter DXXXIV, to John Mason: *Works* 11, 453.

²⁸⁷ *Works* 8, 277.

²⁸⁸ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), p. 87.

²⁸⁹ “The end and design of grace being purchased and bestowed on us, is to destroy the image of the earthly, and restore us to that of the heavenly. And so far as it does this, it truly profits us: and also makes way for more of the heavenly gift, that we may at last be filled with all the fullness of God.” *Wesley’s notes on NT*, 2 Pet 3: 18.

²⁹⁰ Predestination Calmly Considered: *Works* 10, 229 f.

²⁹¹ *Works* 9, 338.

²⁹² Sermon LXXXV. On Working out our own Salvation, 2.1: *Works* 6, 509. In contrast to Wesley, Arminius held that “man hath a will to turn to God before grace prevents him.” Outler, *Sermons* 2:157. no. 3.

²⁹³ Leo G. Cox, “Prevenient Grace-A Wesleyan View,” *Journal of Evangelical Society* Vol. 12, p. 145.

²⁹⁴ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), p. 90.

Wesley understood conscience in its connection to the prevenient grace of God. He depicted the loss of the image of God and the re-inscribed law in the human heart as follows.

But it was not long before man rebelled against God, and, by breaking this glorious law, well nigh effaced it out of his heart; the eyes of his understanding being darkened in the same measure as his soul was “alienated from the life of God.” And yet God did not despise the work of his own hands; but, being reconciled to man through the Son of his love, he, in some measure, re-inscribed the law on the heart of his dark, sinful creature.²⁹⁵

The re-inscribed law engraved in the heart refers to human conscience.²⁹⁶ Wesley claimed that God has showed natural law, i.e., conscience, to the heathens by his prevenient grace as he gave his written law to the Jew. Thus people know that there is one God in the world.²⁹⁷ Their conscience implies “some discernment of the difference between moral and evil with an approbation of the one, and disapprobation of the other by an inward monitor excusing or accusing” which lies in “every human heart.” They sometimes have “some desire to please God, as well as some light concerning what does really please him, and some convictions when they are sensible of displeasing him.”²⁹⁸ Still, this grace is not natural, but is infused by God. It is neither a premise for natural theology nor a saving knowledge because natural men do not have any knowledge of faith in Christ, the Son of God, his atonement, and our sanctification by his Spirit in the image of God yet.²⁹⁹ If they

²⁹⁵ Sermon XXXIV. The Original, Nature, Property, and Use Of The Law: *Works* 5, 436.

²⁹⁶ In his sermon on ‘the Mount,’ Wesley delineated it as the remaining part of the letter written in the human heart by God’s finger (*Works* 5, 311-312). In his sermon on ‘The Heavenly Treasure in Earthen Vessels,’ he saw conscience as the remainder of the image of God (Sermon CXXIV. 1.1-2: *Work* 7, 345: *John Wesley’s Notes* on Rom. 1: 19-21) but in his Note on Rom. 2:14 he regarded it as God’s prevenient grace superadded to man in a strict sense. In his Sermon CV ‘on Conscience’ (1.5), he claimed, “properly speaking, it is not natural, but a supernatural gift of God (*Works* 7, 187). Accordingly, it is difficult for us to judge whether Wesley considered conscience as the residue of the image of God or the prevenient grace superadded by God, though Lindström claimed that for Wesley, conscience is prevenient grace rather than a certain residue of the image of God (Lindström, *op. cit.*, p.46, 48). In my opinion, both of them seem germane, given that he stated, “[W]hether this is natural or superadded by the grace of God” (Jackson, ed., *Works* 7, 345). If we consider his whole theological tone against Roman Catholicism on original sin, we can conclude that Wesley preferred the latter. The point lies in that conscience as a moral image of God was totally obliterated after the fall, but God recovered it in measure by re-inscribing his law in the human heart.

²⁹⁷ *John Wesley’s Notes* on Rom. 1: 19-21.

²⁹⁸ Sermon CXXIV. The Heavenly Treasure in Earthen Vessels 1.1-2: *Work* 7, 345. Prevenient grace as human conscience is similar to common grace in Calvin, which has a braking effect on human evil ascribed to the first use of the Law in Calvin. The difference between them is that for Wesley, prevenient grace enables man to accept the Gospel, while for Calvin, special grace does it.

²⁹⁹ Sermon LXXXV. On Working Out Our Own Salvation, 2: *Works* 6, 506.

refuse the prevenient grace, they do not glorify him as God, nor are they thankful. They worship him like the idols.³⁰⁰ If they accept it, they feel the need of the Gospel and by means of grace they will be able to respond to it when the Gospel is offered to them. They can refuse the Gospel because God's grace is resistible. "No man sins because he has not grace, but because he does not use the grace which he hath."³⁰¹

In this manner, the doctrine of prevenient grace enables Wesley to counteract the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation without human agreement. He thought unconditional election and reprobation unbiblical because it abolishes human responsibility for eternal destruction. Prevenient grace recovers the human will and discernment to be able to choose the Gospel when they hear the Gospel. This grace is resistible.³⁰² God does not compel grace upon those who reject God's activity in their life.³⁰³ Consequently, he chooses his own destiny and bears responsibility for it. This absolves God from the blame for sin and destruction by his predestination, but weakens the sovereignty of God over human destiny. Which is more biblical: Calvin's doctrine of double predestination or Wesley's doctrine of prevenient grace? In my view, Wesley's opinion is supported by Ezekiel 18:1-31, Matthew 25:1-46, James chap. 1-2,³⁰⁴ and Revelation chap. 2-3, and 20: 4, 11-15, which stress the human responsibility for salvation, i.e., that human destiny depends mainly upon human deeds. Calvin's viewpoint is upheld by Isaiah 10:23, 24-27; 41:4, 42:9, 13; 45:7; 46:10; 48:5; 49:1, Romans 8:30; 9:1-16; 19-23; 11:1-12, Acts 4:28; 9:15; 13:18, 27:24; 28:23-28, Galatians 4:21-25, and Ephesians 1:4-5, which lay emphasis mainly on the sovereignty of God in human destiny. Though both of them have their own biblical ground, Wesley's view of prevenient grace shows synergistic tendencies of salvation.³⁰⁵

3.2.1.4.2 Various Graces in the *Ordo Salutis*

Dr. L. M. Starkey mentions that for Wesley, the grace of God is identical with "the power of the Holy Spirit in human life."³⁰⁶ His view seems probable given that in his sermon on

³⁰⁰ John Wesley's Notes on Rom. 1: 19-21.

³⁰¹ Sermon LXXXV. On Working Out Our Own Salvation, 3.4: *Works* 6, 512..

³⁰² Wesley was persuaded that "there are no men living that have not many times 'resisted the Holy Ghost,' and made void 'the counsel of God against themselves' ... 'that every child of God has, at some time, life and death set before him.'" The General Spread of the Gospel, 12: *Works* 8, 281.

³⁰³ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), p. 88.

³⁰⁴ Cf. Donald W. Dayton, "Law and Gospel in the Wesleyan Tradition," *Grace Theological Journal* 12 (1991): 236. "Wesley is able to move from Galatians to James in the New Testament without feeling the tension that caused Luther to appropriate the former as the hermeneutical centre of this theology while marginalizing the latter as "a right strawy epistle."

³⁰⁵ Cf. Lindström, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

³⁰⁶ Lycurgus M. Starkey, Jr., *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, (New York: Abingdon Press, 1963), p. 63; also see Leo G. Cox, "Prevenient Grace - A Wesleyan View," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol.12

“The Good Steward,” Wesley defined God’s grace as “the power of his Holy Spirit, which alone worketh in us all that is acceptable in his sight”³⁰⁷ and in “Instructions for Children,” he regarded grace as “the power of the Holy Ghost enabling us to believe and love and serve God.”³⁰⁸

For Wesley, salvation begins with prevenient grace and proceeds with convincing grace, which leads us to repentance and “which brings a larger measure of self-knowledge, and a farther deliverance from the heart of stone.” Convincing grace as a term connected with repentance is a sincerity, i.e., willingness, which is “a constant disposition to use all the grace given.”³⁰⁹ Thereafter, repentance leads us to justification and sanctification.³¹⁰ In this process, the constellation of grace correlates with the *ordo salutis*. Justifying grace guides us to justification, and regenerating grace leads us to the new birth, entirely sanctifying grace conducts us to entire sanctification. Put another way, justifying grace correlates with “Christ for us,” prevenient grace with “Christ enlightening us,” and sanctifying grace with “Christ in us.” The final “goal of all prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace” is Christian perfection, namely, entire sanctification.³¹¹

3.2.1.5 The Definition of Sanctification³¹²

Michael J. Christensen understands that for Wesley, entire sanctification is “an experience of grace, subsequent to salvation, with the effect that the Holy Spirit takes full possession of the soul, sanctifies the heart, and empowers the will so that one can love God and others.”³¹³ His understanding of Wesley’s concept of sanctification is probable, but it skips over the conception of sanctification as the recovery of the image of God.

According to Wesley, sanctification is a gift freely given by God.³¹⁴ It is not an outward thing like doing no harm and doing good, but an inward thing that is depicted as “the life of God in the soul of Man”, “a participation of the divine nature”, “the mind that was in Christ” and “the renewal of our heart, after the image of Him that created us.”³¹⁵

(summer, 1969): 145.

³⁰⁷ Sermon LI, “The Good Steward” 1, 8: *Works* 5,139.

³⁰⁸ John Wesley, *Instruction for Children*, 8th edition (Bristol: William Pine, 1767), p.10: Maddox, *op. cit.*, p.120.

³⁰⁹ *Works* 8, 288-289.

³¹⁰ *Works* 1, 509.

³¹¹ Ralph Del Colle, “John Wesley’s Doctrine of Grace in Light of the Christian Tradition,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, Vol. 4, no. 2 (2002), p. 187.

³¹² Also see ‘4.2.4.5 Entire Sanctification’ and ‘4.2.5.2.1 Perfection.’

³¹³ Michael J. Christensen, “Theosis and Sanctification: John Wesley’s Reformulation of A Patristic Doctrine,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, Vol. 31, no.2 (1996): 71.

³¹⁴ “Now surely sanctification is one of ‘the things which are freely given us’”: *Works* 10, 493.

³¹⁵ Journal Sept. 13, 1739: *Works* 1, 225.

The new birth is almost equated with sanctification, except that the former is the beginning of the latter.³¹⁶

In view of a process of transformation, Wesley described sanctification as follows.

We are enabled “by the Spirit” to “mortify the deeds of the body” of our evil nature; and as we are more and more dead to sin, we are more and more alive to God. We go on from grace to grace, while we are careful to abstain from all appearance of evil,” and are “zealous of good works,” as we have opportunity, doing good to all men; while we walk in all His ordinances blameless, therein worshipping him in spirit and in truth; while we take up our cross, and deny ourselves every pleasure that does not lead us to God.³¹⁷

In the light of salvation, Wesley viewed entire sanctification as “a full salvation from all our sins, — from pride, self-will, anger, unbelief.”³¹⁸ Salvation is completed in entire sanctification beyond initial justification. In terms of the circumcision of the heart, he defined it as “salvation from *all sin* and loving God with an *undivided heart*”³¹⁹ (italics are his emphasis).

In connection with love, Wesley posited entire sanctification as “neither more nor less than pure love; love expelling sin, and governing both the heart and life of a child of God.”³²⁰ In “Thoughts on Christian Perfection,” he similarly stated, “Pure love reigning alone in our hearts and life - this is the whole of scriptural perfection.”³²¹ It is love “excluding sin” and “filling the heart.”³²² To describe sanctification as pure love is a salient characteristic of Wesley.

Sanctification was also defined as the renewal in the image of God in his conversation with others.

Q. 1. What is it to be sanctified?

A. To be renewed in the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness.³²³

Linking the image of God with real religion, Wesley described sanctification as “recovery not only to the favor but likewise to the image of God, implying not barely deliverance

³¹⁶ Journal Sept. 13, 1739: *Works* 1, 225.

³¹⁷ Sermon XLIII, Scripture Way of Salvation 1, 8: *Works* 6, 46.

³¹⁸ Sermon XLIII. Scripture Way of Salvation 1, 9: *Works* 6, 46.

³¹⁹ Telford, ed., *Letters* IV, “To John Newton,” May 14, 1765.

³²⁰ Letter CCCLXXXVII to Mr. Walter Churchery, of Brecon, London, Feb. 21, 1771: *Works* 12, 432.

³²¹ Plain Account of Christian Perfection: *Works* 11, 401.

³²² Sermon XLIII. Scripture Way of Salvation 1.9: *Works* 6, 46.

³²³ Minutes of Some Late Conversations between the Rev. Mr. Wesleys and Others, Conversation I, “On Tuesday Morning June 26th, was Considered the Doctrine of Sanctification”: *Works* 8, 279.

from sin, but the being filled with the fullness of God.”³²⁴ Religion was also depicted as “a uniform following of Christ, an entire inward and outward conformity to our master...our grand Exemplar.”³²⁵ Here religion can be understood as equal to entire sanctification.

In a letter to Joseph Benson, Wesley combined deliverance from sin, a recovery of God’s image, and pure love in the conception of sanctification. Sanctification is “an entire deliverance from sin, a recovery of the whole image of God, the loving God with all our heart, soul, and strength.”³²⁶ This may yet be the clearest definition of sanctification.

3.2.2 The Motive and the Goal of Sanctification

Wesley understood the will of God as the motive of our sanctification. “It is his will that we should be inwardly and outwardly holy; that we should be good, and do good, in every kind and in the highest degree whereof we are capable.”³²⁷ Our sanctification is based on God’s unchangeable will.³²⁸

Sanctification is the goal of the Christian life, which is described as “the recovery to humanity of the perfection that was a part of man’s nature in creation,” but was distorted and obscured by the Fall.”³²⁹ According to Theodore Runyon, Wesley was influenced by Gregory of Nyssa with respect to sanctification as recovery of the image of God.³³⁰ In other words, for Wesley the goal of sanctification is the recovery of the image of God.

For Wesley, we can say that the aim of the Christian sanctified life is to give glory to God. “You do everything in the spirit of sacrifice, giving up your will to the will of God, and continually aiming...merely at the glory of God.”³³¹ The labour of love is done “to the glory of God.”³³² The sanctified Christian “in his whole life and conversation, whether he eats or drinks, or whatsoever he does,” does all to the glory of God.”³³³ The actions and words of sanctified man spring from “the abundance of a loving heart” and “aim at the glory of God.”³³⁴

³²⁴ Sermon LXII. The End of Christ’s Coming, 3, 5: *Works* 6, 276.

³²⁵ Frank Whiling, ed., *John and Charles Wesley* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), p. 300.

³²⁶ Letter CCCCLVII to Mr. Joseph Benson, London, Dec. 28, 1770: *Works* 12, 415.

³²⁷ Sermon XXXVII. ‘The Nature of Enthusiasm,’ 3, 23: *Works* 5, 474.

³²⁸ Sermon XLVI, 2.1: *Works* 6, 80.

³²⁹ Theodore, Runyon, “The Role of Experience in Religion,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 31(1992):192.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.192-193.

³³¹ Sermon LXXXIX. The More Excellent Way,3.3: *Works* 7, 31.

³³² Sermon XCVIII. On Visiting the Sick, 2.1: *Works* 7, 120.

³³³ Sermon CVII. On God’s Vineyard, 1.9: *Works* 7, 206; Sermon CXXXIII. Preached of Occasion of the Death of the Rev. MR. John Fletcher, 1.4: *Works* 7, 432.

³³⁴ Sermon CXIV. The Unity of the Divine Being, 23: *Works* 7, 272.

3.2.3 God's Role and Human Role in Sanctification

Generally, Wesley emphasised the priority of God's grace, but did not neglect the cooperating role of the believers.

3.2.3.1 The Role of God in Sanctification

In a letter to the Bishop of Gloucester, Wesley explicated the role of the Spirit of sanctification as illustration, rectification, and direction. By enlightening our understanding and illuminating the Bible,³³⁵ the Spirit reveals the deep will of God to us.³³⁶ The Holy Spirit also renews a person in all the parts and faculties of his soul. He changes "an aversion of our wills and a depravation of our affections" into "an affinity of our wills and affections to the will of God."³³⁷ He leads, directs, and governs us "in our actions and conversations" in order that we might walk in the Spirit. He "establishes our faith, and perfects our obedience, by enlightening the understanding and rectifying the will,"³³⁸ and comforts believers and helps our infirmities.

As far as love and purification of affection are concerned, Wesley depicted the role of the Spirit as follows. The Spirit "sheds the love of God abroad in their hearts, and the love of all mankind, thereby purifying their hearts from the love of the world from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." He saves men "from anger and pride, from all vile and inordinate affections, from evil words and works, from all unholiness of conversation." He makes men be "zealous of all good works."³³⁹

In a letter to a Roman Catholic, he comprehensively delineated the role of the Spirit in sanctification as "the immediate cause of all holiness in us." The Spirit enlightens our understandings, rectifies our wills and affections, renews our natures, unites our persons to Christ, assures us of the adoption of sons, leads us in our actions, purifies and sanctifies our souls and bodies.³⁴⁰ The Spirit offers us a new inner acceptance and peace through his witness to our soul.³⁴¹ In prayer, the Spirit makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God when we do not know what we should pray for as we ought.³⁴²

To sum up, the Holy Spirit works in us for our sanctification through illuminating our

³³⁵ Letter to The Right Reverend The Lord Bishop of Gloucester: 'The Operation of the Holy Ghost': *Works* 9, 149.

³³⁶ *Ibid.* p.165.

³³⁷ *Ibid.* p.165.

³³⁸ Letter to The Right Reverend The Lord Bishop of Gloucester: 'The Operation of the Holy Ghost': *Works* 9, 149.

³³⁹ Sermon IX. The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption: *Works* 5, 108.

³⁴⁰ Letter to a Roman Catholic, 8: *Works* 10, 82.

³⁴¹ Cf. Melvin E. Dieter, "Wesleyan Theology," in *John Wesley: Contemporary Perspective* (London: Epworth, 1988), p. 170.

³⁴² *Ibid.* pp.165-166.

intelligence, rectifying our willing, purifying our affection and renewing our soul. Through his work, we recover and participate in his image.³⁴³

3.2.3.2 The Human Role in Sanctification

With regard to God's grace and human responsibility in our salvation, Randy L. Maddox is of the opinion that for Wesley "God will not effect holiness apart from our responsive participation, while we can not attain holiness apart from God's grace." It seems germane, given Wesley's following two statements. "It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure." Therefore "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."³⁴⁴

In the first sentence, the role of God in sanctification is indicated. Wesley claimed, "It is God that works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure."³⁴⁵ In his sermon "Salvation by Faith," he declared, "Whatever righteousness may be found in man, this also is the gift of God."³⁴⁶ These statements testify that Wesley's emphasis on human works did not intend salvation by human merits without God's grace. This expression removes all thoughts of merit. This makes it clear that "it is God that works both inward and outward holiness" and who breathes into us "every good desire," and brings "every good desire to good effect."³⁴⁷

Wesley analyzed the second sentence in more detail. The original word which is rendered into *work out* implies "doing a thing thoroughly."³⁴⁸ 'Your own' means that "you yourselves must do this, or it will be left undone for ever." For Wesley, 'salvation' begins with preventing grace and proceeds by convincing grace.³⁴⁹ Human working out salvation is accomplished by cooperating with God's grace. The phrase, 'with fear and trembling' means to serve the master with a single heart. It is not to serve God "with eye service, as men-pleasers," but to do "the will of God from the heart" as his servants. 'With fear' (μετὰ φόβου) means that "everything be done with the utmost earnestness of spirit, and with all care and caution." 'With trembling' (μετὰ τρόμου) signifies that everything "be done with the utmost diligence, speed, punctuality, and exactness."³⁵⁰ His analysis shows us that we should work out our salvation with all our earnestness and diligence in God's grace.

Wesley also explicated the human role in terms of good works and evil works. The human role in sanctification is "to cease to do evil" and "to learn to do well." The former is

³⁴³ Sermon XII. 'The Witness of Our Own Spirit' 15: *Works* 5, 141.

³⁴⁴ Sermon LXXXV. Working out our own Salvation": *Works* 6, 598

³⁴⁵ Sermon LXXXV. Working out our own Salvation," 1.1: *Works* 6, 598.

³⁴⁶ Sermon I. Salvation by Faith, 1: *Works* 5, 7.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁸ Sermon LXXXV. Working out our own Salvation," 2.1.: *Works* 6, 509.

³⁴⁹ Sermon LXXXV. Working out our own Salvation," 2.1: *Works* 6, 509.

³⁵⁰ Sermon LXXXV. Working out our own Salvation," 2.2: *Works* 6, 510.

to avoid “every evil word and work” and to abstain from “all appearance of evil.” The latter is to be “zealous of good works, of works of piety, works of mercy.”³⁵¹ The human role includes self-denial and bearing the cross daily, and watching out the remains of sin believers.³⁵² It is related to obeying the moral law, not as “the condition of obtaining, but of continuing in the favour of God.”³⁵³

Wesley understood the relation between the above two sentences as “the closest connection.” “First God works; therefore you can work. Secondly, God works, therefore you must work.”³⁵⁴ First, original sin cannot be an excuse for their actual sins because prevenient grace empowered them to avoid them. As far as they cooperate with the work of God in them, they can evade actual sin. For Wesley, the following two sentences are absolutely true. “Without me ye can do nothing.” “I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.”³⁵⁵ Secondly, we must work because God works in us. Wesley found its ground in the statement of Augustine, which reads “*Qui fecit nos sine nobis, non salvabit nos sine nobis*”: “He that made us without ourselves, will not save us without ourselves.”³⁵⁶ Wesley warned that “God will not save us unless we labour by every possible means to ‘make our own calling and election sure.’”³⁵⁷ The more grace we received, the more are our obligations to sanctification.³⁵⁸

As we have observed above, Wesley connected the indicative with the imperative in a logical way. The difference between Calvin and Wesley lies in the fact that for Wesley, our role in sanctification absolutely affects God’s salvation, while for Calvin, the role of the elect in sanctification is almost automatically done by God’s sovereign grace. Thus for Calvin, the human role in sanctification inclines to be weak, while for Wesley, assurance of our salvation is prone to be weak. Nonetheless, in practice, Calvin strengthened the human role in sanctification by the third use of the Law and the emphasis of discipline and prayer.

For Wesley, grace is resistible because God wants to redeem man as a free acting being. Man works with God for his salvation. But human cooperating power stems from God.³⁵⁹ Therefore, it is all to the glory of God. Wesley considered human cooperation with the initiative of God’s grace in sanctification as harmonious to God’s wisdom, justice, and

³⁵¹ For the list of the works of piety and mercy, see 1.2.10.5.1 (p. 107).

³⁵² Sermon LXXXV. Working out our own Salvation,” 2.4: *Works* 6, 511.

³⁵³ Letter CCCLXX. To Miss Jane Hilton, June 19, 1771: *Works* 12, 368.

³⁵⁴ Sermon LXXXV. Working out our own Salvation,” 3.3: *Works* 6, 511.

³⁵⁵ Sermon LXXXV. Working out our own Salvation,” 3.5: *Works* 6, 512.

³⁵⁶ Sermon LXXXV. Working out our own Salvation,” 3.7: *Works* 6, 513.

³⁵⁷ Sermon LXXXV. Working out our own Salvation,” 3.7: *Works* 6, 513.

³⁵⁸ Kenneth J. Collins, *Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley’s Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p.155.

³⁵⁹ Predestination Calmly Considered: *Works* 10, 230.

mercy in that human responsibility justifies God's judgment.³⁶⁰ Wesley realized that the balance between God's grace and the human response is important, for its loss causes either quietism or enthusiastic pride.³⁶¹

3.2.3.3 Monergist or Synergist?

As John Allan Knight aptly pointed out, after the controversy with the Calvinistic Methodists in 1770, Wesley generally emphasised "freedom and man's works more than faith and God's grace."³⁶² As a result, he was criticized for his legalism by the Calvinistic Methodists. However, the critique that Wesley was a legalist seems unreasonable because he consistently recognized the absolute initiative of God's grace in sanctification. Of course, Wesley was not a monergist who holds that God alone accomplishes all things in relation to human salvation. He can be said to be a synergist in the sense that he expected final salvation through human good works as the result of the cooperation with God's grace.³⁶³

3.2.4 The Stages of Sanctification

It is not easy to say that Wesley strictly divided the whole process of sanctification into the following stages, because he admitted that a Christian could slide back to a previous stage. Accordingly, these stages are not fixed, but changeable. Nonetheless, the structure of his doctrine of sanctification can be classified into these stages.

3.2.4.1 The State before Justification

3.2.4.1.1 The Sleeping State

In his sermon on "the Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption," Wesley compared the state of a natural man to "a state of sleep."³⁶⁴ A natural man cannot see spiritual things since his eyes are covered with spiritual darkness. He is totally ignorant of God and his law, holiness and happiness in Christ. His indolent state is "a kind of peace consisting with an earthly,

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 232 f.

³⁶¹ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), p. 92.

³⁶² John Allan Knight, "John Fletcher's Influence on the Development of Wesleyan Theology in America," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 13 (1978): 21; cf. Kenneth J Collins, "A Hermeneutical Model For the Wesleyan *Ordo Salutis*," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 19 (1984): 23. Here, Collins mentions Wesley's sermon "On Working Out Our Own Salvation" as one exception contrary to Knight's claim.

³⁶³ Leo G. Cox called Wesley's synergism a synergism born of monergism in the sense that "God works, therefore man is enabled to work." *John Wesley's Concept of Perfection* (Ph. D. diss., University of Iowa, An Arbor: UMI, 1959), p. 341.

³⁶⁴ Sermon IX. The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption: *Works* 5, 99.

devilish mind.”³⁶⁵ Though he stands on the edge of the pit, he does not fear it. Though he might hear of God, he does not know God as He is. He thinks God to be merciful to him in spite of his sins. He is ignorant of God’s wrath against those who do not obey his law. He imagines that Christ came to destroy the Law and the Prophets in order to deliver men “in, not from their sins.”³⁶⁶ He is also utterly ignorant of himself. Though he may have some knowledge of the Bible, he feels a kind of joy from the desires of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life.³⁶⁷ Free from holiness and the mind of Christ, he commits sin day by day. He remains a willing servant of sin, content with the bondage of corruption; inwardly and outwardly unholy. He neither conquers sin nor strives to conquer the sin in him.³⁶⁸

In this state he is “unable to do anything acceptable to God,”³⁶⁹ for he does not have any power to do such good. He can just wait to receive the power.³⁷⁰ Nonetheless, the prevenient grace of God in all can sufficiently lead us to Christ, unless we refuse it.

3.2.4.1.2 Awakening: Repentance before Justification

Wesley distinguished between repentance antecedent to justification and the repentance consequent upon it. In the former, he viewed repentance antecedent to justification as legal repentance. It is “the very first motion of the soul towards God.”³⁷¹ It occurs when an awakened by the Holy Spirit starts with a new spiritual journey in his life with sincere resolution. This repentance means “conviction of sin, producing real desires and sincere resolutions of amendment.” It relates to actual sin rather than inward sin. The fruits meeting for repentance are “forgiving our brother (Matt 6:14, 15), ceasing from evil, doing good...in general obeying him according to the measure of grace which we have received (Matt 7:7; 25:29).”

With respect to the relationship between faith and repentance, while Calvin considered faith in God’s mercy as the presupposition for evangelical repentance and deemed legal repentance useless for our salvation, Wesley thought legal repentance to come before justification by faith. For Wesley, legal repentance and its fruits, if opportunity permits, are “necessarily previous to faith”³⁷² because “no man ever yet truly believed the gospel who

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p.100.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p.100.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p.101.

³⁶⁹ The Principles of a Methodist Written in 1740. ‘Of the Effect of Justification,’ 29: *Works*, 8, 373.

³⁷⁰ A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion: *Works* 8, 53.

³⁷¹ Wesley, *NT Notes*, Matt. 3:8.

³⁷² A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion. Part I. 2. 4: *Works* 8, 52. “[O]ur Church inculcates justification by faith alone, she nevertheless supposes repentance to be *previous to faith*, and fruits meet for repentance” (my emphasis); Part I. 2. 10: *Works* 8, 56, 57.

did not first repent” and “none was ever yet truly ‘convinced of righteousness,’ who was not first ‘convinced of sin.’”³⁷³ In this sense, repentance is remotely necessary for initial justification because “it is necessary to the increase or continuance of faith,” while faith is proximately necessary to justification.³⁷⁴

To maintain the efficiency of legal repentance for justification, he linked legal repentance to the faith of a servant,³⁷⁵ and evangelical repentance to the faith of a son. Those with faith of a servant are “not anywise to be despised,” for they are accepted by God. Nevertheless, they should continually press on “from faith of a servant to faith of a son” until they attain “the adoption of sons.”³⁷⁶

In regard to the process of repentance before justification, Wesley vividly explicated it as follows. Generally, after perceiving the curse of the law, an awakened man struggles against sin with all his understanding and all his will power, but he realises his inability to overcome his sin. The more he endeavours to be delivered, the more he realizes the chains of sin, for Satan grabs him. Generally, he is particularly disposed to some outward sin and is always prone to some inward sin. “The more he frets against it, the more it prevails.”³⁷⁷ Again and again, he repents and sins. At last, he groans, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” as in the expression of St. Paul.³⁷⁸ In the light of Wesley’s delineation above, Collins’ analysis that for Wesley, repentance before justification consists of conviction of sin or self-knowledge, poverty of spirit, and the rejection of self-righteousness seems quite relevant.³⁷⁹ Poverty of spirit is a consequence of self-knowledge through the law in the illumination of the Spirit. The poor in spirit confess, “In me dwelleth no good thing; but whatsoever is evil and abominable.”³⁸⁰ Such a confession is connected with the rejection of self-righteousness, which leads him to the stage of justification by faith in Christ.

By corollary, repentance antecedent to justification is of some significance because it is remotely necessary for justification by the faith of a son. Wesley did not consider the fruits of repentance before justification as good works because they stem from his fear of God’s punishment rather than “from faith and the love of God,”³⁸¹ and are contaminated with unholy elements by the power of the Satan and sin. Since justification by faith, the fruits of

³⁷³ A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion. Part I. 2.10: *Works* 8, 56.

³⁷⁴ A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion. Part I. 2.11: *Works* 8, 57,58.

³⁷⁵ Sermon CX. The Discoveries of Faith, 12: *Works* 7, 232.

³⁷⁶ Sermon CX. The Discoveries of Faith, 12: *Works* 7, 236.

³⁷⁷ Sermon IX. The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption: *Works* 5, 104.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.* p.105. I do not agree to the statement of Wesley’s. It will be debated at the assessment of his doctrine of sanctification.

³⁷⁹ Kenneth J. Collins, *Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley’s Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p.56.

³⁸⁰ Sermon XXI Sermon on the Mount, 1.4: *Works* 5, 253.

³⁸¹ A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Part I, 1, 3: *Works* 8, 47.

repentance are regarded as good works.

3.2.4.2 Positional Sanctification: Justification

Wesley defined justification as the act of God the Father in which the believers in Christ are declared to be righteous by “the remission of the sins which are past.”³⁸² This definition can be expressed in three ways. *Firstly*, justification is based on the atoning work of Christ. In order to be justified, one must believe in the person and work of Christ. *Secondly*, justification entails the remission of sins and restores the sinner to a right relationship with God. This relationship is marked, not by alienation and fear but by faith, hope, and love as a child of God.³⁸³ Man can be justified while he remains under the dominion of sin, in other words, justification can be apart from the fruits of the new birth. Good works and virtues are the results of justification, but not its cause. *Thirdly*, justification is the forgiveness of past sins. This was intended by Wesley against a libertine interpretation, which makes justification an “insurance for sin rather than freedom from its guilt.”³⁸⁴

For Wesley, the doctrine of imputation is another way to explicate the efficaciousness of the atonement. Imputation is related to justification as forgiveness and acceptance, but not to sanctification. He thought that the imputation of Christ’s righteousness should not be abused as a veil for unrighteousness.³⁸⁵ “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” Imputed righteousness, i.e., justification is the ground of acceptance by God, whereas inherent righteousness, i.e., sanctification is its fruit.³⁸⁶ As justification means only forgiveness and acceptance, it is not based on the imputation of Christ’s active righteousness, but on faith in Christ’s atonement. Our own righteousness is founded on our faith in Christ. Though Wesley held that faith is the only necessary condition for justification,³⁸⁷ it does not mean that repentance and good works are unnecessary for final justification. It means that we cannot be justified without faith in Christ because he is the meritorious cause of justification.³⁸⁸ Our inherent righteousness as our obedience to God’s

³⁸² Sermon I. Salvation by Faith, 2.3: *Works* 5, 10.

³⁸³ *NT Note* on 1 John 2:13-14: Rom. 5:1.

³⁸⁴ Kenneth J. Collins, *op. cit.*, p.90.

³⁸⁵ Randy L. Maddox also stated, “Wesley was convinced that the imputation of Christ’s active righteousness to the believer encouraged antinomianism.” *Responsible Grace*, p.166.

³⁸⁶ Cf. W. Stephen Gunter, *The Limits of “Love Divine”: John Wesley’s Response to Antinomianism and Enthusiasm* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood, 1989), pp.116-117. “There is a proper place for inherent righteousness...as the *fruit* of it; not in the place of imputed righteousness, but as consequent upon it” (his emphasis).

³⁸⁷ Sermon V. Justification by Faith, 4.5: *Works* 5, 62. It is “the only thing that is immediately, indispensably, absolutely requisite in order to pardon.”

³⁸⁸ Answer to the Rev. Mr. Church 2, 9: *Works* 8, 393; cf. Earl P Crow Jr., “Wesley and Antinomianism,” *The Duke Divinity School Review* 31 (Winter 1966): 17.

commandments is necessary for our final justification.

Wesley emphasised that justification is generally instantaneous.³⁸⁹ The instantaneous element of justification implies the sovereignty of God's grace in human salvation. He admitted that the grace is "irresistible at that moment" when God brings men to faith and convinces them of their sin and reveals Himself to them as in the case of Paul.³⁹⁰ Yet he believed that "both before and after those moments," the grace may be resistible. In the process, "it does not act irresistibly."³⁹¹ He did not deny that "in some souls, the grace of God is so far irresistible that they cannot but believe and be finally saved." But he denied that all those "in whom it does not thus irresistibly works" "must be damned."³⁹² From his view, God's grace does not always work "irresistibly in every believer."³⁹³ Wesley's depiction that a sinner is justified when he "casts himself wholly on the mercy of God in Christ"³⁹⁴ implies that he did not deny the human active role in justification, though he emphasised God's initiative.

By justifying grace, man who has attained favour "in the sight of God" has the power of the Holy Spirit ruling in his heart, and has received the "Spirit of adoption" and cries "Abba, Father!"³⁹⁵ Accordingly, justification can be said to be positional sanctification. In this state, he sees "the light of the glorious love of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Since he sees all his sins laid on His body on the cross, he cries "My Lord and my God." Now, he clearly realizes God in Christ. This state ends both the guilt and power of sin. He confesses, "I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: And the life which I now live in the flesh," (even in this mortal body,) "I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."³⁹⁶ His remorse, sorrow, and anguish turn into joy. The bondage of sin and Satan is broken and the fear of God's wrath and hell vanishes. Now he does not devote himself "as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin but as instruments of righteousness unto God."³⁹⁷

Still, even after being justified, he was born again "in the imperfect sense," i.e., he has power over all sins, but "not a total freedom from them." Subsequently, he does not yet

³⁸⁹ Letter to John Smith, Sep. 28, 1745, III, 11, 12: *Works* 12, 60. "I believe it is generally given *in an instant*." "This first sowing of the first seed of faith, you cannot conceive to be other than *instantaneous*" (my emphasis).

³⁹⁰ Rev. J. Wesley's Journal, Aug. 22, 1743: *Works* 1, 427; *Works* 10, 204. "...when the power of the Highest wrought upon them in an eminent manner...And at that time it is certain they had no power to resist the grace of God."

³⁹¹ *Works* 1, 407.

³⁹² *Works* 1, 427.

³⁹³ Predestination Calmly Considered 4: *Works* 10, 205.

³⁹⁴ Sermon V, Justification by Faith 4, 6: *Works* 5, 62.

³⁹⁵ Sermon IX. The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption: *Works* 5, 106.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.* p.107.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

have “in the full and proper sense” a perfectly pure heart. If he is exposed to diverse temptations without a firmer gift, he may and will fall again from the state of justification, i.e., the state to control the motion of sin. Collins contends that for Wesley, “If believers continue in the practice of sin,” they cannot remain justified because justification is the remission of past sins.³⁹⁸ This statement makes justification unstable like the Roman Catholic view of justification, which warns saints of the possibility to lose infused righteousness. As Ralph Del Colle aptly points out, Wesley’s view of justification is closer to the Tridentine rather than to Calvin in the sense that Wesley understood justification as the actualisation of inherent righteousness, not as the imputation of Christ’s righteousness.³⁹⁹ The only distinction between the Tridentine and Wesley lies in that the former regarded repentance and good works as the merit of final justification, whereas the latter regarded it as a condition and God’s gift. Though we can say that the former viewed the beginning of sanctification as infused righteousness, whereas the latter saw it as regeneration,⁴⁰⁰ it is only a difference in conception, not in an actuality. For Reformed Scholasticism, the formal cause of justification is declared to be the death of Christ, whereas for Wesley, it is ascribed to “the universally offered grace of God.” The former results in universal atonement in the case of Barth or particular election in the case of Calvin, the latter enables man to cooperate with God’s grace to be justified.⁴⁰¹

To sum up, for Wesley, initial justification depends upon faith in Christ but final justification depends upon faith, repentance and good works. In contrast to the Reformers, he did not consider Christ as the formal cause of justification, but its meritorious cause, similarly to the Tridentine.⁴⁰² Initial justification can be lost to those who continue to remain in sin. It is an instantaneous gift of God and sometimes irresistible, but not always.

³⁹⁸ Kenneth J. Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

³⁹⁹ Ralph Del Colle, “John Wesley’s Doctrine of Grace in Light of the Christian Tradition,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, Vol. 4, no. 2 (2002), p. 184-185.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰¹ Woodrow W. Whidden, “Wesley on Imputation: A Truly Reckoned Reality or Antinomian Polemical Wreckage,” *The Asbury Theological Journal*, Vol. 52. No. 2 (1997): 67.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*; cf. According to Peter Toon, The Council of Trent said that of justification, the *final* cause is the glory of God, the *efficient* cause is a merciful God, the *meritorious* cause is Christ, the *instrumental* cause is the sacrament of baptism, and the *formal* cause is the justice of God. Peter Toon, *Foundations for Faith: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine Justification and Sanctification* (Westchester: Crossway Books and London: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1983), pp. 68-69. In applying this scheme to Wesley, we can make the following suggestions. The *meritorious* cause is Christ’s atonement, the *formal* cause is God’s grace, the *material* cause is sacraments, the *indirectly conditional* cause is good works, and the *directly conditional* or *instrumental* cause is faith. Given that Reformed theology ascribed the formal cause to Christ’s works, Wesley can be said to maintain a balance between Catholicism and Reformed Theology. Cf. Whidden, *op. cit.* p. 67; Mbennah & Vorster, *op. cit.*, p. 181. Justification “was attained *meritoriously* through the sacrificial work of Christ. Justification was appropriated *instrumentally* by faith alone; and that justification is *declaratively* demonstrated by good works.”

It is generally consequent on repentance and its fruits and concurrent with the new birth.

3.2.4.3 Initial Sanctification: The New Birth

For Wesley, the time of the new birth was identified with the moment of justification. The new birth and justification are given to every believer “in one and the same moment.” At the same time “his sins are blotted out, and he is born again of God.”⁴⁰³

In regard to the necessity of the new birth, Wesley referred to John 3:3, which reads “Truly, truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” Wesley underlined that as long as pride, self-will, and idolatry reign in the heart, there can be no room for happiness.⁴⁰⁴

With respect to the relationship between regeneration and sanctification, he understood regeneration as the entrance of sanctification.

This [regeneration] is a part of sanctification, not the whole; it is the gate to it, the entrance into it. When we are born again, then our sanctification, our inward and outward holiness, begins; and thenceforward we are gradually to “grow up in Him who is our Head.”⁴⁰⁵ ([] is my addition).

In his sermon on God’s Vineyard (1787), Wesley stated, “The new birth is the first point of sanctification, which may increase more and more unto the perfect day.”⁴⁰⁶ It is “planting all good dispositions,” while entire sanctification is “deliverance from all evil disposition.” Regeneration is not “the whole gradual process of sanctification” but the porch of sanctification.⁴⁰⁷ After the new birth, Christian sanctification becomes mature in Christ.

In terms of the direction of change, he delineated regeneration as follows. Regeneration is inward change “from darkness into marvellous light,” “from the image of the brute and the devil into the image of God,” from the earthly, sensual and devilish mind to “the mind which was in Christ Jesus.”⁴⁰⁸ In a letter to Richard Morgan,⁴⁰⁹ Wesley described regeneration as “a renewal of our minds in the image of God; a recovery of the divine likeness; a still-increasing conformity of heart and life to the pattern of our most holy Redeemer.” This definition is almost identical with that of sanctification except for the fact that new birth in a narrow sense is the commencement of sanctification, not entire

⁴⁰³ Sermon XIX. 1: *Works* 5, 223.

⁴⁰⁴ Sermon VII. The Way to The Kingdom 1, 5: *Works* 7, 78.

⁴⁰⁵ Sermon XLV. 4. 3: *Works* 6, 74.

⁴⁰⁶ Sermon CVII. On God’s Vineyard, 1,7: *Works* 7, 205.

⁴⁰⁷ Sermon CVII. 1. 7: *Works* 7, 205.

⁴⁰⁸ Sermon XIV, The Repentance of Believers. 3. 2: *Works* 5, 169.

⁴⁰⁹ Baker, ed., *Letters*, 25:369 (to Richard Morgan, Sr. Jan. 15, 1734).

sanctification.⁴¹⁰

In his sermon “The New Birth” (1760), Wesley described the nature of the new birth as “the change wrought in the whole soul by the almighty Spirit of God when it is ‘created anew in Christ Jesus.’”⁴¹¹ It refers not to the entirety of the process of sanctification but to the total change of its beginning.⁴¹²

From the viewpoint of the recovery of God’s image, he defined the new birth as “to recover from his fall, to regain that image of God wherein he was created.” It is inward universal change and “birth from above” figured out by baptism and the beginning of the total renovation, i.e., the “sanctification of spirit, soul, and body.”⁴¹³ Initial sanctification involves freedom from the guilt and power of sin, but not freedom from its being, i.e., inward sin. Inward sin cannot reign over him, but is not yet abolished. Accordingly, the regenerated needs continual repentance of inward sin remaining in him. Kenneth J. Collins understands Wesley’s new birth as inward sanctification.⁴¹⁴ His view seems reasonable given that Wesley described new birth as inward change.

On the perfection of the new birth, Wesley noted that the regenerated are already so perfect as not to commit sin though they were depicted as babes in Christ.⁴¹⁵ “This is the glorious privilege of every Christian, yea though he be but a baby in Christ.”⁴¹⁶ While he abides in faith, love, the spirit of prayer, and thanksgiving, the regenerated not only do not, but also cannot commit outward sin as a voluntary transgression of the written law of God.⁴¹⁷ In “Minutes of Some Late Conversations,” he answered that a new born Christian who has justifying faith has “power over all outward sin and power to keep down inward sin.”⁴¹⁸ However, as Maddox points out,⁴¹⁹ it is rather doubtful how he can avoid outward sin while he has inward sin.

With regard to the relationship between the new birth and baptism by water, Wesley stated that the new birth is not equated with baptism. “It does not always accompany baptism and they do not constantly go together.”⁴²⁰ Baptism may be an outward sign where there is no new birth as inward grace.

⁴¹⁰ Cf. Similarly to my opinion, in his *Responsible Grace*, Maddox describes, “if taken in its strongest sense, it could equate the New Birth and entire sanctification!” Maddox, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

⁴¹¹ Sermon XLV. The New Birth, 2.5: *Works* 6, 71:

⁴¹² The Doctrine of Original Sin: *Works* 9, 459.

⁴¹³ Sermon III. Awake, Thou That Sleepest, 1. 2: *Works* 5, 26.

⁴¹⁴ Kenneth J. Collins, *Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley’s Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p.104.

⁴¹⁵ Plain Account of Christian Perfection 12: *Works* 11,375.

⁴¹⁶ Plain Account of Christian Perfection 12: *Works* 11,376.

⁴¹⁷ Sermon XIX. Privilege of Those that are Born of God, II, 2: *Works* 5: 226.

⁴¹⁸ Minutes of Some Late Conversations, Answer to Q.7: *Works* 8, 276.

⁴¹⁹ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Nashville, Kingwood Books, 1994), p. 182.

⁴²⁰ Sermon XLV. The New Birth 4, 2: *Works* 6, 74.

3.2.4.4 Repentance after Justification by Faith in Christ

Contrary to repentance before justification by faith in Christ, repentance consequent to justification has “no guilt, no sense of condemnation, no consciousness of the wrath of God” because they are in Christ.⁴²¹ It is a confidence of the carnal mind, i.e., “proneness to evil, a heart bent to backsliding” and “the still continuing tendency of the flesh to lust against the spirit.”⁴²² The former is called legal repentance, whereas the latter is called evangelical repentance, which is described as a change of heart from “all sin to all holiness.”⁴²³ While legal repentance is related to outward sin, evangelical repentance is concerned with inward sin, i.e., the carnal nature, and it aims at the more spiritually mature.⁴²⁴ Inward sin has an effect on Christians’ words and actions. Even their most noble works may be motivated by their carnal nature. Hence, they still need evangelical repentance.

The conviction of “utter helplessness” is an important distinctive aspect of this repentance.⁴²⁵ It means that before justification, believers are totally helpless in doing good as they are even after justification. Not by their own strength but only by the gift of God can they do good works. Even by justifying grace, they are unable to remove such inward sins as “pride, self-will, love of the world, anger, and general proneness to depart from God.”⁴²⁶ At this stage, although they may, by the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the flesh, struggle with both outward and inward sin, and they may weaken their enemies day by day, they cannot drive them out. Even by all the grace which is given at justification believers cannot exterminate them.⁴²⁷ “Though we watch and pray ever so much, we cannot wholly cleanse either our hearts or hands.” Only another blessing of the Lord can clean their hearts, and abolish the evil root of the carnal mind. “If there be no such second change, if there be no instantaneous deliverance after justification,” believers must remain guilty till death.⁴²⁸ Accordingly, they are continually to repent after having been justified. God can save them from all sin remaining in their our hearts, the sin clinging to all their words and actions, from sins of omission, and can supply whatever is required for salvation. God promised this to them both in the Old and the New Testament.⁴²⁹ This mean there remains another stage before them, namely, entire sanctification.

Considering the relationship between repentance and faith, Wesley compared both in

⁴²¹ Sermon XIV. Repentance of Believers, 1.16: *Works* 5, 163.

⁴²² Sermon XLIII. 3. 6: *Works* 6,50.

⁴²³ Wesley, NT Note, Mt. 3:8.

⁴²⁴ Sermon XIII On Sins in Believers, 3.2: *Works* 5, 147.

⁴²⁵ Sermon XIV. Repentance of Believers, 1.16: *Works* 5, 163.

⁴²⁶ Sermon XIV. Repentance of Believers, 1.17: *Works* 5, 164.

⁴²⁷ Sermon XIV. Repentance of Believers, 1.19-20: *Works* 5, 164-165.

⁴²⁸ Sermon XIV. Repentance of Believers, 1.20: *Works* 5, 165.

⁴²⁹ Sermon XIV. Repentance of Believers, 2.2: *Works* 5, 166.

three facets. First, while by repentance we feel sin remaining in our hearts and cleaving to our words and actions, by faith we receive the power of God in Christ purifying our hearts and cleansing our hands. Secondly, while by repentance we have an abiding conviction that there is no help in us, by faith we receive not only mercy but “grace to help” us in every time of need. Thirdly, while repentance says, “Without him I can do nothing,” faith says, “I can do all things through Christ strengthening me.”

In conclusion, for Wesley, repentance after justification by faith in Christ is necessary for “our continuance and growth in grace” i.e., gradual sanctification.⁴³⁰

3.2.4.5 Entire Sanctification

Entire sanctification will be examined from the viewpoint of the final stage of salvation according to Wesley’s teleological soteriology.⁴³¹

For Wesley, the state of entire sanctification is the last and highest state of perfection attainable in this life. In the full and perfect sense, this is the state that is given unto those with a new and clean heart, where “the struggle between the old and the new man is over.”⁴³² In view of the broad or perfect sense of regeneration, entire sanctification can be defined as “total freedom from all the stirring and motions of sin.”⁴³³ As Collins puts it, it entire sanctification is the state in which “the heart is not only delivered from the power of sin but also from its being.”⁴³⁴

From the viewpoint of affection, Wesley defined perfection as “the humble, gentle, patient love of God, and our neighbour, ruling our tempers, words, and actions.”⁴³⁵ Perfection is the state that Jesus alone reigns in our heart as “the Lord of every motion.”⁴³⁶ In this manner, entire sanctification is defined as purification of affection in our right relation towards God and people. It is almost identified with the fruit of the Spirit.

With respect to inward sin, Wesley defined entire sanctification as freedom from evil thoughts and evil tempers which compose inward sin.⁴³⁷ Because in this stage, our evil nature is destroyed and only Christ lives in us, we are purified from pride, desire, anger and come to be humble, meek and gentle. We live not according to our self-will but the will of God.⁴³⁸ Our heart has been cleaned of inward sin by the sanctifying grace of the

⁴³⁰ Sermon XIV. Repentance of Believers, 3: *Works* 5, 157: cf. Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Nashville, Kingwood Books, 1994), p. 182.

⁴³¹ Other views of entire sanctification will be discussed in 1.2.7 The Nature of Sanctification.

⁴³² The Principles of a Methodist Written in 1740, ‘Of the Effect of Justification,’ 29: *Works*, 8, 373.

⁴³³ The Principles of a Methodist Written in 1740, ‘Of the Effect of Justification,’ 29. 2: *Works*, 8, 373.

⁴³⁴ Kenneth J. Collins, *Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley’s Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p.108.

⁴³⁵ *Works* 11, 446.

⁴³⁶ Sermon LXXXIII. On Patience: *Works* 6, 490.

⁴³⁷ Plain Account of Christian Perfection 12: *Works* 11,377.

⁴³⁸ Plain Account of Christian Perfection 12: *Works* 11,377.

Holy Spirit. After gradual mortification, we experience “a total death to sin and an entire renewal in the love and image of God, so as to rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in everything to give thanks.”⁴³⁹

Considering whether it is real moral transformation in us or our right relationship with Christ, Colin W. Williams claims that for Wesley, “the perfect Christian is holy, not because he has risen to a required moral standard, but because he lives in this state of unbroken fellowship with Christ.”⁴⁴⁰ His view seems germane in the light of justification,⁴⁴¹ but in the light of sanctification his opinion seems imperfect given that Wesley emphasised total, real change in our tempers, thoughts, words, and action.⁴⁴² Though such changes result from our right relationship with Christ, entire sanctification does not exclude the change of our action and life as our congruity to the perfect will of God.⁴⁴³ Wesley did not identify entire sanctification with “a full conformity to the perfect law,” nor exclude fulfilling “the law of love” as our real change in terms of moral standard.⁴⁴⁴

In relation to purity of intention, entire devotion, the circumcision of the heart, the recovery of God’s image, and love of God and man, Wesley described entire sanctification inclusively:

In one view, it is purity of intention, dedicating all the life to God. It is the giving God all our heart; it is one desire and design ruling all our tempers. It is the devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body, and substance to God. In another view, it is all the mind which was in Christ, enabling us to walk as Christ walked. It is the circumcision of the heart from all filthiness, all inward as well as outward pollution. It is a renewal of the heart in the whole image of

⁴³⁹ Plain Account of Christian Perfection 12: *Works* 11,401.

⁴⁴⁰ Collin W. Williams, *John Wesley’s Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), pp. 170 and 175: Later, he again emphasised it, “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” (p. 178).

⁴⁴¹ Preface to a Treatise on Justification: *Works* 10, 322. “The terms of acceptance for fallen man (justification) were a full satisfaction to the divine justice and a *complete conformity to the divine law*” (my addition and emphasis).

⁴⁴² As the mark of sanctification, our love of God is shown through our “conformity to his will; obedience to all the commands of God, internal and external; obedience of the heart and of the life; in every temper, and in all manner of conversation.” Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth 3, 5: *Works* 5, 220.

⁴⁴³ A Plain Account of Christian Perfection 25: *Works* 11, 436. “If we suffer persecution and affliction in a right manner, we attain a larger measure of conformity to Christ”...“True resignation consists in a thorough conformity to the whole will of God.”

⁴⁴⁴ Plain Account of Christian Perfection 25 Q 13 and its Answer: *Works* 11, 419. “...notwithstanding that defect (of perfection) and its consequences, *they* (the entirely sanctified) *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 atonement” (my emphasis and addition).

God, the full likeness of Him that created it. In yet another, it is the loving God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves.⁴⁴⁵

On the other hand, Wesley stressed the instantaneousness of the second blessing, which is a work of grace distinct from the new birth.⁴⁴⁶ This second blessing comes at a certain instant after gradual mortification after justification.⁴⁴⁷ However, he never called it the baptism of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁴⁸ This second blessing causes the inner assurance of entire sanctification.⁴⁴⁹ It will be dealt with in more detail at ‘instantaneousness and gradualness’ in this thesis.

In regard to the possibility of loss of entire sanctification, he admitted its possibility.

“Q. 30. Can they fall from it?”

“A. I am well assured they can.”⁴⁵⁰

Wesley stated that even those who have “both the fruit of the Spirit, and the witness” can lose both and “there is no such height or strength of holiness as it is impossible to fall from.”⁴⁵¹ In a letter to Charles Wesley, he wrote that even the perfectly sanctified “can fall, once more, such that not only may inbred sin infect the heart, but the power of actual sin may dominate the soul as well.”⁴⁵² By his experience, he confessed, “To retain the grace of God is much more difficult than to gain it. Hardly one in three does this.”⁴⁵³ This possibility made him urge upon those who were totally sanctified to be always on the watch for sin. Nonetheless, Wesley affirmed that the grace of God is powerful enough to uphold the entirely sanctified, lest they should fall from perfection.

In God’s grace, those who lost perfection can recover it again.

“Q. 31. Can those who fall from this state recover it?”

“A. Why not? We have many instances of this also. Nay, it is an

⁴⁴⁵ Plain Account of Christian Perfection 27: *Works* 11, 444.

⁴⁴⁶ Letter to Thomas Olivers, 1757: letter to Samuel Bardsley, 1772: letter to Jane Salkeld, 1772: letter to Mrs. Barton, 1774: letter to Ann Bolton, 1775.

⁴⁴⁷ Plain Account of Christian Perfection 12: *Works* 11,401.

⁴⁴⁸ Robert A. Mattke, “The Baptism of the Holy Spirit as Related to the Work of Entire Sanctification,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 5-1 (1970): 24; Mildred B. Wynkoop, *Foundations of Wesleyan-Arminian Theology* (Kansas City, Missouri.: Beacon Hill Press, 1967), p.114.

⁴⁴⁹ Cox, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

⁴⁵⁰ *Works* 11, 426.

⁴⁵¹ *Works* 11, 426. cf. “There is no state under heaven from which it is not possible to fall” Telford, *Letters*, 4:266 (to Ann Foard, September 29, 1764): also see Ward & Heitzenrater, *Journal and Diaries*, 22:422 (July 25, 1774): and Telford, *Letters*, 5:190 (to Mrs. Bennis, June 13, 1770).

⁴⁵² Telford, *Letters*, 5:41 (to Charles Wesley, February 12, 1767).

⁴⁵³ Letters DCCCXXII. To Adam Clarke, Nov. 26, 1790: *Works* 13, 104.

exceeding common thing for persons to lose it more than once.⁴⁵⁴

In regard to the way to keep perfection, Wesley noted several ways in connection with conscience. First, “watch the first risings of sin, and beware of the borders of sin. Venture not upon temptations or occasion of sin.”⁴⁵⁵ Secondly, live before God, in the sensible presence of God. Thirdly, diligently examine your heart and life; morning and evening “examine whether you have done what you ought.” Fourthly, “let your whole life be a preparation for heaven.” Fifthly, “do not venture on sin” with the expectation that Christ will pardon your sin. This would be a most hideous maltreatment of Christ. Sixthly, do not be proud of anything in this world. Seventhly, mind your duty, not events. Eighthly, take for yourself “what advice you would give another.”⁴⁵⁶ Ninthly, do nothing that you cannot pray for. Tenthly, think, speak, and do what Christ would do in your place.⁴⁵⁷ For Wesley, to keep our conscience pure is the best way to maintain our holiness. Viewed negatively, the saints should be watchful against pride, enthusiasm, antinomianism, omission, and schism.⁴⁵⁸ Viewed affirmatively, they should not desire “anything but God” and “be exemplary in all things” in order to keep perfection.⁴⁵⁹

For Wesley, entire sanctification is the final stage of the saints in this world. It is the end of justification and its result. It is God’s unchangeable will towards his people.

3.2.4.5.1 The Marks of the New Birth

In his sermon on “The Circumcision of the Heart” (1733), Wesley viewed the circumcision of the heart as “the distinguishing mark of a true follower of Christ.”⁴⁶⁰ Its mark was depicted as “humility, faith, hope, and charity.”⁴⁶¹ Later, in his sermon the Marks of the New Birth (1748), humility and charity are replaced by “love.” They seem to be amalgamated in the term, love. Faith, hope, and love were regarded as the marks of regeneration and sanctification.⁴⁶² This scheme is similar to that of the individual sanctification of Karl Barth, who dealt with faith, hope, and love as three characteristics of Christian life.⁴⁶³ Unity, purity, and stewardship are treated to in addition to them because they were seriously referred to by Wesley as crucial elements in Christian holy life.

⁴⁵⁴ Plain Account of Christian Perfection: *Works* 11: 426-427.

⁴⁵⁵ Sermon CV. On Conscience: *Works* 7, 193.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁸ Plain Account of Christian Perfection: *Works* 11: 427-435..

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁰ Sermon XVII: *Works* 5, 202.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

⁴⁶² Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth 1,1: *Works* 5, 213.

⁴⁶³ See, Barth, *CD* IV/2, 731-836.

3.2.4.5.1.1 Faith⁴⁶⁴

Faith is “the foundation” of Christian life⁴⁶⁵ because we become children of God through faith. Wesley defined Christian faith as follows:

The true, living, Christian faith, which whosoever hath, is born of God, is not only assent, an act of the understanding; but a disposition which God hath wrought in his heart; “a sure trust and confidence in God, that, through the merits of Christ, his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favor of God.”⁴⁶⁶

It implies that faith is to renounce ourselves, i.e., to reject all confidence in the flesh to be “found in Christ.” This faith is accepted by him.⁴⁶⁷

A fruit of faith is freedom from the power of all kinds of sins including outward sins and inwards sin.⁴⁶⁸ Faith in the blood of Christ purges the conscience from dead works and purifies “the heart from every unholy desire and temper.” Its fruit is to be free from sin and to become a servant of righteousness. The person justified by faith does “not commit sin” (1 John 3:1). To interpret it as “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin *habitually*” is to add a human word, “habitually” to Scripture text.⁴⁶⁹ If a Christian does not look after himself nor abide in the faith, he “may commit sin even as another man.” Conversely, as long as he looks after himself, the evil one cannot touch him.⁴⁷⁰ In human transformation, not the pessimism of human nature, but the optimism of grace is the characteristics of Wesley’s theology.⁴⁷¹

Another fruit of a living faith is peace. Since our sins were cleaned by faith in Jesus Christ, “we have peace with God” (Rom. 5:1.) This is the accomplishment of the promise which our Lord said: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27, KJV).⁴⁷² This is God’s peace to pass “all understanding.” It is a peace which this world cannot deprive them of. Being based upon a rock, that is Christ, even waves and storms cannot shake it. It keeps “the hearts and minds of the children of God” in any situation, i.e., in ease or in pain, in sickness or health, in abundance or want. As a result, in every state

⁴⁶⁴ See also 3.2.8.2 Faith and Sanctification.

⁴⁶⁵ Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth 1, 1: *Works* 5, 213.

⁴⁶⁶ Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth 1, 3: *Works* 5, 213.

⁴⁶⁷ Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth 1, 3: *Works* 5, 213.

⁴⁶⁸ Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth 1, 4: *Works* 5, 214.

⁴⁶⁹ Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth 1, 5: *Works* 5, 215.

⁴⁷⁰ Sermon XIX. The Great Privilege of Those That Are Born of God, 2, 7: *Works* 5, 229.

⁴⁷¹ Kenneth J. Collins, *Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley’s Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p.119.

⁴⁷² Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth 1,7: *Works* 5, 216.

they are content, and believe that “in all things God works for the good of those who love him.” Peace in them enables them to stand fast, believing in the Lord in all the vicissitudes of life.⁴⁷³

To sum up, faith as a mark of the new birth is the foundation of Christian life and its characteristics are freedom and peace. This faith can be lost and in that case, he will slide back to an unholy life.

3.2.4.5.1.2 Hope

Wesley viewed hope as the second scriptural mark of the regenerated. A *lively* or *living* hope is contrary to a dead hope which is “the offspring of pride” and “the parent of every evil word and work.”⁴⁷⁴ Every man with living hope is holy “as He that calleth him is holy.” Those who hope to see the Lord purify themselves according to His purity. This hope implies two testimonies. Firstly, the testimony of our own spirit that we walk “in simplicity and godly sincerity.” Secondly, the testimony of the Spirit of God that being led by the Spirit of God, “we cry, Abba, Father!”⁴⁷⁵ As “joint-heirs with Christ” of God’s kingdom we participate in sufferings with Christ and deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, cheerfully endure persecution or reproach for his sake, “that we may also be glorified together.”⁴⁷⁶ Expecting God’s reward for our patience empowers us with the power to endure our suffering.

While faith accompanies freedom and peace, hope accompanies joy. Though we are sad, the Spirit in us changes it into joy according to the Lord’s promise that when the Comforter is come, “your heart shall rejoice”, “your joy shall be full,” and “that joy no man taketh from you” (John 16:22). Because we stand in reconciliation with God, we rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:2). In hoping to meet Christ, we rejoice with unspeakable joy and full of glory (1 Pet. 1:5, etc). It is like “the hidden manna, which no man knows, save he that receives it.” This joy overflows, even in severe suffering, because of the superfluous consolations of his Spirit.⁴⁷⁷ The children of God are not afraid of any “want, pain, hell, and the grave,” for they know Him who has “the keys of death and hell.” In hope, they rejoice in the depth of affliction because they know God’s true comfort to be given to them on the judging day of God (Rev. 21:3, 4).

3.2.4.5.1.3 Love

Love is “a third scriptural mark” of the regenerated, and the greatest of all. A mark of a

⁴⁷³ Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth 1,7: *Works* 5, 216.

⁴⁷⁴ Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth 2.1: *Works* 5, 216.

⁴⁷⁵ Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth 2.1-3: *Works* 5, 216-217.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁷ Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth 2.4: *Works* 5, 218.

faithful Christian is to love “the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.” In this love, he knows the meaning of “My Beloved is mine, and I am his” (Cant. 2:16).⁴⁷⁸

Love expels all kinds of sins in the regenerate.⁴⁷⁹ It is the origin of every grace and holy and happy temper. From love flows “uniform holiness of conversation.”⁴⁸⁰ Perfect love results in “rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, in everything giving thanks.”⁴⁸¹ Love is described as “the medicine of life, the never-failing remedy for all the evils of a disordered world, for all the miseries and vices of men.”⁴⁸²

As the marks of the new birth, Wesley classified the fruits of love into three categories. The first fruit of our love of God is the love of our neighbour as our body, which means every man around us regardless of our friends or enemies.⁴⁸³ As Christ showed us his example, true love is to love to the extent to give our life for neighbours. Then “we know that “we have passed from death unto life because we thus “love the brethren” (1 John 3:14).⁴⁸⁴ Our love towards people is “the sign or proof of the love of God”⁴⁸⁵ The second fruit of the love of God is entire obedience to him, i.e., “conformity to his will; obedience to all the commands of God, internal and external; obedience of the heart and of the life; in every temper, and in all manner of conversation.”⁴⁸⁶ The third fruit of love is change of temper. The regenerated man became “zealous of good works,” “hungering and thirsting to do good” for all people. With joy, they do good works for their neighbours with all their belongings and abilities, looking for recompense in heaven not in this world.⁴⁸⁷

In a letter to the Rev. Dr. Conyers Middleton, Wesley added a more concrete explanation of love towards neighbours, the change of Christian disposition, conversation and action. *First*, Christian love is not confined to “one sect or party” including his supporters. This love embraces “neighbours and strangers,” “friends and enemies,” not only “the good and gentle,” but also “the froward, the evil and unthankful.”⁴⁸⁸ *Secondly*, this universal, unselfish love is productive of all right affections, i.e., “gentleness, tenderness, sweetness; of humanity, courtesy, and affability.”⁴⁸⁹ It enables a Christian to rejoice in the virtues and happiness of all neighbours, to sympathize with their pains, and

⁴⁷⁸ Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth 3, 2: *Works* 5, 219.

⁴⁷⁹ Minutes of Some Late Conversations between the Rev. Mr. Wesleys and Others, Conversation V, “Wednesday, June 17th,” Answer to Q. 8: *Works* 8, 296. “But if the love of God fill all the heart, there can be no sin there.”

⁴⁸⁰ A Letter to the Reverend Mr. Baily of Cork, 2.23.1: *Works* 9, 85.

⁴⁸¹ Sermon XLIII. Scripture Way of Salvation, 1, 9: *Works* 6, 46.

⁴⁸² *Works* 8, 3.

⁴⁸³ Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth 3, 3: *Works* 5, 219.

⁴⁸⁴ Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth 3, 3: *Works* 5, 220.

⁴⁸⁵ Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth 3, 4: *Works* 5, 220.

⁴⁸⁶ Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth 3, 5: *Works* 5, 220.

⁴⁸⁷ Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth 3, 5: *Works* 5, 220.

⁴⁸⁸ Letter to the Rev. Dr. Middleton, VI, I, 5: *Works* 10, 68.

⁴⁸⁹ Letter to the Rev. Dr. Middleton, VI, I, 7: *Works* 10, 69.

to feel pity for their frailties. Love is the mother of all virtues.⁴⁹⁰ Believers' dispositional change in love is formed by the actual and lasting work of the Holy Spirit, not by instantaneous emotion. *Thirdly*, in words, love urges believers to abstain from all expressions that are contrary to justice or truth, to refrain from every unloving word. Love makes those with whom they converse "wiser, or better, or happier than they were before." *Fourthly*, in action, it leads them into an earnest performance of all social offices which they belong to. Love not only prevents them from hurting or grieving any man, but also leads them into a uniform practice of justice and mercy.

To sum up, for Wesley, the third characteristic of sanctified life is to let love "be the constant temper of our soul," in other words, to let love rule our heart, words, action and relationship with both neighbours and with God.⁴⁹¹

3.2.4.5.1.4 Unity

For Wesley, to 'keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace' is the crucial duty of all Christians. Accordingly, the true members of the Church should do their best to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." This unity needs such spirit as humbleness and meekness, patience, mutual tolerance, and love. Wesley especially considered love as "fundamental to the oneness of the body of Christ."⁴⁹² "The greater the love, the stricter the union."⁴⁹³ Deficiency of love is always the real cause of separation. Unity also needs the peace of God to fill the heart.⁴⁹⁴

As solutions for disunity, he gave four directions. Firstly, behave in a kindly and friendly manner, rather than hurt one another; secondly, speak nothing harsh or unkind of each other; thirdly, determine on cherishing "no unkind thoughts, no unfriendly temper towards each other"; finally, provide each other with reciprocal help.⁴⁹⁵ As the instrument of unity, he stressed love. For unity, a Christian should lead a life witnessing to the religion of love, have warmth and benevolence to all mankind, and desire all men to be virtuous and happy. Unity needs a single wish and prayer longing for a full revival of a pure religion of love. To avoid schism, our urging all men to sanctification needs to be done in love and good works, remembering God is love.⁴⁹⁶

In the Directions to the Stewards of The Methodist's Society in London (no. 9), he noted "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" as an important mark of the

⁴⁹⁰ Letter to the Rev. Dr. Middleton, VI, I, 6: *Works* 10, 69.

⁴⁹¹ Cf. Sermon C. On Pleasing All Men, 2.1: *Works* 9, 144.

⁴⁹² Aelred Burrows O S B, "Wesley the Catholic," in *John Wesley: Contemporary Perspectives with an introduction by Frank Baker*, ed., by John Stacey (London: Epworth Press, 1988), p. 56.

⁴⁹³ Sermon LXXV. On Schism 1, 11: *Works* 6, 406.

⁴⁹⁴ Sermon LXXIV. Of the Church, 27: *Works* 6, 399.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁴⁹⁶ Sermon CXXXII. Preached on Monday, April 21st 1777, 2, 10: *Works* 7, 430.

Methodists.⁴⁹⁷ For unity's sake, he remained in the Church of England all his life.⁴⁹⁸

3.2.4.5.1.5 Purity and Simplicity

Wesley viewed simplicity and purity as “the two wings which lift the soul up to heaven.” Though not strictly distinguishing between them, he emphasised simplicity “in the intention,” and purity “in the affection.”⁴⁹⁹ The purity of intention was deemed to be very important in all kinds of religious actions⁵⁰⁰ in the sense that it makes our alms and devotions acceptable as “a proper offering to God.” For Wesley, simplicity was ascribed to always seeing God. It is to aim only at and to pursue God and to find out “happiness in knowing, loving, and serving God.” As a result, the souls of the simple become full of light of God's glorious love.⁵⁰¹ Purity was depicted as “desiring nothing more but God,” which means “crucifying the flesh with its afflictions and lusts” and “setting my affections on things above, not on things of the earth.”⁵⁰² He especially understood that only the purity of heart can offer us the deliverance from “covetousness” and “the love of money.”⁵⁰³

The way to attain purity is through “faith in the blood of Jesus,” the power of God's grace and love,⁵⁰⁴ and the deepest humble spirit. The object of which we should purify ourselves is “every unholy affection” i.e., “filthiness of flesh and spirit,” “pride,” “anger,” and “every unkind or turbulent passion.”⁵⁰⁵ In this sense, it is almost equated with sanctification. Purity involves humility that cleans us from “pride and vanity.”⁵⁰⁶ Adultery is the main sin which defiles purity. As God requires inward purity and searches our heart, we should not imagine even committing adultery. In ordinary life, we should treat “the younger as sisters, with all purity.”⁵⁰⁷ He was opposed to divorce without the cause of adultery, and regarded polygamy as clearly unbiblical.⁵⁰⁸

The blessing of the pure is the closest “fellowship with the Father and with the Son.” They see all things full of God by faith because God wants his presence to go continually

⁴⁹⁷ *Works* 13, 516.

⁴⁹⁸ Telford, *Letters* VIII, 58.

⁴⁹⁹ Sermon LXXIX. On Dissipation, 17: *Works* 6, 449.

⁵⁰⁰ Sermon XXIII. Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Discourse IV, 2: *Works* 5, 295.

⁵⁰¹ Sermon LXXIX. On Dissipation, 18: *Works* 6, 450.

⁵⁰² Sermon XII. The Witness of Our Own Spirit, 16: *Works* 5, 141.

⁵⁰³ “Seeing, if poverty of spirit were only freedom from covetousness, from the love of money, or the desire of riches, it would coincide with what he afterwards mentions; it would be only a branch of purity of heart.” Sermon XXI. Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Discourse I, 1, 3: *Works* 5, 253.

⁵⁰⁴ “The love of God has purified his heart from all revengeful passions, from envy, malice, and wrath, from every unkind temper or malign affection.” *The Character of A Methodist*, 10: *Works* 8, 343.

⁵⁰⁵ Sermon XXIII. Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Discourse III: *Works* 5, 272-279.

⁵⁰⁶ *Works* 5, 203-204.

⁵⁰⁷ Sermon LIII. On the Death of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield (1770), 2, 5: *Works* 6, 176.

⁵⁰⁸ Sermon XXIII. Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Discourse III: *Works* 5, 277.

before them, and to shine the light of his face upon them. They see the Ruler looking after all, and “upholding all things by the word of his power.”⁵⁰⁹ They see God protect and take care of them with his mercy and wisdom. In their private prayer, in participating in the Lord’s Supper, in worshipping him, they see him as it were, face to face.⁵¹⁰

In terms of religion, purity is to keep us from heresy and superstition, enthusiasm, and bigotry.⁵¹¹ The way to keep religion pure is to cling to the essential message of the Bible, i.e., the love towards God and man, and to observe the relationship between each part of Scripture from the perspective of the central message. For him, enthusiasm is overcome by rationality, and bigotry by love and good works.⁵¹²

Briefly, purity is an important mark of the regenerate. It is an essential aspect of entire sanctification because it shows the distinction from the worldly spirit. It is almost synonymous with pure love as Christian perfection.

3.2.4.5.1.6 Stewardship

In a Sermon in 1768, Wesley considered a steward as the most congruent state of man.⁵¹³ Granted that sanctification implies the recovery of the image of God, we ought to regard stewardship as a mark of the sanctified, for Christ, the image of God called himself a steward.⁵¹⁴ Wesley suggested the following spiritual principles of stewardship.

First, viewing the sovereignty of God, a steward cannot use what he has at his will, but at his Lord’s will because all his things belong to the Lord, not to him. His soul, body, goods, and talents are entrusted to him on condition that he uses those according to the Lord. Accordingly, all his thoughts, behaviours and affections should be regulated according to His direction.⁵¹⁵ All worldly belongings are to be controlled by His will. Furthermore, all that God has given him, e.g., bodily strength, agreeable address, degrees, influence, esteem, and power are to be used for His glory.⁵¹⁶

Secondly, viewing the time given to believers, as their life is short, they have to use all God has given them well. After death, they must give accounts of their stewardship before God. With death, all their belongings will vanish. Nonetheless, their souls will remain with all their faculties, e.g., memory, understanding and emotion.⁵¹⁷ Their spiritual faculties

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹¹ Sermon CXXXII. Preached on Monday, April 21st 1777, 2,10: *Works* 7, 427.

⁵¹² Sermon CXXXII. Preached on Monday, April 21st 1777, 2,13: *Works* 7, 430.

⁵¹³ Sermon LI. The Good Steward, 2: *Works* 6, 136.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁵ Sermon LI. The Good Steward, 1, 3: *Works* 6, 138.

⁵¹⁶ Sermon LI. The Good Steward, 1, 4-7: *Works* 6, 138-139.

⁵¹⁷ Sermon LI. The Good Steward, 2, 8: *Works* 6, 142.

will be stronger and clearer than before death. But they will no longer be stewards of their faculties after death.⁵¹⁸ After death, God's judgment of their stewardship waits them. According to the book of Revelation, it is the time of the general resurrection.⁵¹⁹ As they do not know the time of their death, they should fulfil their duty as stewards.

Stewardship is the lifestyle of the sanctified who realised the grace of God and his ruling over the hearts of the believers.

3.2.5 The Nature of Sanctification

3.2.5.1 Instantaneousness and Gradualness

Wesley admitted both the immediacy and gradualness of sanctification. "I endeavoured to show at large, in what sense sanctification is gradual, and in what sense it is instantaneous."⁵²⁰ The instantaneousness of sanctification can be explicated as the new birth. As if "a child is born of a woman in a moment, or at least in a very short time," "a child is born of God in a short time, if not in a moment." He explicated instantaneous sanctification as follows.

Sanctification (in the proper sense) is "an instantaneous deliverance from all sin" and includes "instantaneous power then given, always to cleave to God."⁵²¹

After instantaneous sanctification of the new birth as, the believer by slow degrees "grows up to the measure of the full stature of Christ."⁵²² Wesley delineated the gradualness and immediacy of sanctification in his sermon on 'Working on our own Salvation':

It begins the moment we are justified, in the holy, humble, gentle, patient love of God and man. It gradually increases from that moment, as "a grain of mustard seed, which, at first, is the least of all seeds," but afterwards puts forth large branches, and becomes a great tree; 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, till we "grow up in all things into Him that is our head" till we attain "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."⁵²³

⁵¹⁸ Sermon LI. The Good Steward, 2, 11: *Works* 6, 143.

⁵¹⁹ Sermon LI. The Good Steward, 3,2: *Works* 6, 144.

⁵²⁰ Journal, 5 December, 1762: *Works* 3,123.

⁵²¹ Letter CLXXVI.- To Miss Furly, afterwards Mrs. Downes, ST. IVES, *September* 15, 1762: *Works* 12, 96.

⁵²² Sermon XLV 'The New Birth' 4.3: *Works* 6, 75.

⁵²³ Sermon LXXXV. On Working Out Our Own Salvation.2, 1: *Works* 6, 509.

Peculiarly, Wesley contended that sanctification is fulfilled *in another instant* (italics are my emphasis) after justification. That is to say, for Wesley, sanctification begins instantaneously at birth and continues gradually to the level of whole sanctification and *in any instant*, sanctification is fulfilled. Even after that, our sanctification grows to the measure of the fullness of Christ. Also in a letter to Miss Cooke, he admitted instantaneousness of sanctification. “And not only by a slow and insensible growth in grace, but by the power of the Highest overshadowing you, *in a moment*, in the twinkling of an eye so as utterly to abolish sin, and to renew you in his whole image!” (Italics are my emphasis).⁵²⁴

Wesley noted that the expectation of instantaneous sanctification promotes gradual sanctification. The more earnestly we expect the instantaneous change before death, “the more swiftly and steadily does the gradual work of God go on in their soul.” Such expectation makes us be more watchful against all sin and be more careful “to grow in grace and be more zealous of good works,” and be “more punctual in their attendance on all the ordinances of God.”⁵²⁵

In a chronological order, repentance before justification is gradual; justification and the new birth are instantaneous; repentance after justification is gradual; entire sanctification is instantaneous; growth to Christ’s level is gradual. Although for Wesley, these gradual stages in sanctification are ordinary and normal, entire sanctification can sometimes occur by faith in a moment.⁵²⁶ Hence, Maddox’s statement that “the conception of sanctification as the progressive journey in responsive cooperation with God’s empowering was the most characteristic of Wesley”⁵²⁷ seems insufficient because he neglects Wesley’s emphasis on the instantaneousness of sanctification. Rather, Cox’s expression seems more pertinent. Sanctification is “gradual with instantaneous stages, like the rocket that puts the satellite moon into orbit.”⁵²⁸

3.2.5.2 Perfection or Imperfection

3.2.5.2.1 Perfection

⁵²⁴ Letter DCCCV to Miss Cooke, BRISTOL, *September 24, 1785: Works 13, 94.*

⁵²⁵ Minutes of Several Conversations between the Rev. Mr. Wesley and Others: From the Year 1744, to the Year 1789, Answer 7 to Q. 56: *Works 8, 329.*

⁵²⁶ Letter DCCLXXXII. To Miss Hester Anne Roe Jan. 7, 1782: *Works 13, 83.* “If it be by works, then certainly these will need time, in order to the doing of these works. But if it is by faith, it is plain, a moment is as a thousand years. Then God says: (in the spiritual, as in the outward world,) Let there be light, and there is light.”

⁵²⁷ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Nashville, Kingwood Books, 1994), p. 190.

⁵²⁸ Leo George Cox, *John Wesley’s Concept of Perfection* (University of Iowa: Ph. D dissertation, 1959), p. 155.

Wesley understood perfection in terms of love.

Q 3. What is implied in being a perfect Christian?

A. The loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our mind, and soul, and strength (Deut 6:5, 30:6; Ezek 36:25-29).

In the state of perfection, God's love expels "the love of the world, together with pride, anger, self-will, and every other evil temper, and fills the heart." It takes up the whole capacity of the soul.⁵²⁹ In its character, perfection is essentially a gift to be given by faith, though it requires our efforts in the sense that we should wait, utilizing the means of grace until the Spirit confers it to us.⁵³⁰

Wesley explicated the meaning of perfection with the following nine points. Firstly, it is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind, and is to love our neighbours as ourselves. These comprise the whole of Christian perfection. Secondly, it is to possess the whole disposition of Christ's mind, all his affections, and all his tempers. Thirdly, it can appear as the one undivided fruit of the Spirit like "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance."⁵³¹ Fourthly, it is renewed after the image of God, i.e., in righteousness and true holiness. Fifthly, perfection is another name for universal holiness, inward and outward righteousness, and holiness of life arising from holiness of heart. Sixthly, perfection is the sanctification of our spirit, soul, and body. Seventhly, it is to present our souls and bodies as a living sacrifice unto God.⁵³² Eighthly, it implies that we offer up to God constantly "all our thoughts, and words, and actions" through Christ as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving."⁵³³ Ninthly, perfection is the salvation from all sins.

Wesley deemed perfection particularly to be "consistent with a thousand nervous disorders."⁵³⁴ It signifies that perfection is purity in the motivation of our intention, in other words, doing in love. He did not consider unintentional mistakes as sin in its proper meaning.

Wesley presented many biblical passages to support the promise of perfection:

"He shall redeem Israel from all his sins." (Psalm 130:8)... "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses." (Ezek 36:25,

⁵²⁹ Sermon XLIII 1.4: *Works* 5, 45.

⁵³⁰ *Works* 11, 402; cf. '4.2.3 The Role of God and Human Role on this thesis.'

⁵³¹ Sermon LXXVI 'On Perfection' 1.6: *Works* 6, 413.

⁵³² Sermon LXXVI 'On Perfection' 1.8-10 *Works* 6, 413

⁵³³ Sermon LXXVI 'On Perfection' 1.11; Wesley states shortly that in what sense Christians are not perfect in "Plain Account of Christian Perfection," 12, 1: *Works* 11:374.

⁵³⁴ Letter CLXXVII to Miss Furly, St. Ives, September 15, 1762: *Works* 12, 207.

29)...“Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Cor 7:1). ... “The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.” (Deut 30:6).⁵³⁵

Perfection is described as the abolition of the works of the devil to which all sins are ascribed and as the establishment of the righteousness of the law. The Son of God was manifested to save us from all sins caused by the devil. Christ wants to make his church entirely holy without any spot or wrinkle, and blemish (Eph 5:25, 27). God sent Christ that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us “walking not after the flesh but after the Spirit” (Rom 8:3, 4).

Wesley presented Matthew 5:8, 48 as the ground of perfection. “Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt. 5:48). Mcneile pointed out that Luke used οἰκτίρμων (merciful, Luke 6:36) in place of Matthew’s τέλειοι(perfect).⁵³⁶ Dr. Torrey claimed that ‘Be therefore *perfect*’ should be corrected to ‘show kindness to all men’ in the light of the context.⁵³⁷ In contrast, Vincent Taylor held that Luke 6:36 and Matt. 5:48 might be different sayings.⁵³⁸ Torrey’s claim seems quite probable in Luke’s context, but Matthew might have intentionally used τέλειός differently from Luke’s οἰκτίρμων, given that he stressed the sound obedience to the law through his entire gospel.⁵³⁹

On the other hand, Galatians 2:20 reads: “I am crucified with Christ; yet I live: and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me.” Wesley interpreted “I live not” to signify that the evil nature is destroyed, and “Christ liveth in me” to mean “all that is holy, just and good” live.⁵⁴⁰ W. E. Sangster contends that it is unnatural to interpret Paul’s statement as that “all sin had been destroyed in him and nothing left but what is ‘holy, just and good.’”⁵⁴¹ It is a “metaphor” and an “aspiration” rather than “an achievement.” Sangster’s contention seems

⁵³⁵ Minutes of Some Late Conversations between the Rev. Mr. Wesleys and Others, Conversation V, “Wednesday, June 17 th,” Answer to Q.4: *Works* 8, 294.

⁵³⁶ Alan H. McNeile, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (London: Macmillan & New York: St Martin’s Press, 1st edition, 1915, reprinted in 1965), p. 73. “Lk. has the simpler εἰς ἑσέα οἰκτιρμων, which is perhaps nearer to the original.”

⁵³⁷ Charles C. Torrey, *The Four Gospels. Our Translated Gospels* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, New York: D. Mckay Co., 193-), p. 291.

⁵³⁸ Vincent Taylor, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: A Study in New Testament Theology* (London: Macmillan and Co. limited & New York: St Martins’ Press, 1960), p. 155. “If these are different forms of the same saying, there is good reason to prefer the Lukan form, but it is also possible that the two are different sayings.”

⁵³⁹ See Mt.19: 21; 5:8; 12:29-31; 22: 40. Cf. V. Taylor, *ibid.*, pp. 155-156.

⁵⁴⁰ Plain Account of Christian Perfection 12: *Works* 11, 377.

⁵⁴¹ W. E. Sangster, *The Path to Perfection: An Examination & Restatement of John Wesley’s Doctrine of Christian Perfection* (first published 1943: London: Epworth Press, reissued 1984), p. 41.

germane to me given that his statement that “Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” is not already accomplished but still in progress (2 Cor 7:1). At any event, Wesley presented these passages as the biblical grounds that perfection could be accomplished in this life. By contrast, his brother Charles was convinced that perfection could be attained only at death.

Considering whether people are perfect or not, Wesley evaluated the perfected from three standpoints. Firstly, he examined whether “they feel no inward sin and to the best of their knowledge commit no outward sin.” Secondly, whether “they see and love God every moment, and pray, rejoice, give thanks ever more.” Thirdly, whether “they have constantly as clear a witness from God of sanctification as they have of justification.”⁵⁴² He regarded “a WILL steadily and uniformly devoted to God” as “essential to a state of sanctification rather than “a uniformity of joy, or peace, or happy communion with God,” for the latter may be influenced by the condition of the body (his emphasis).⁵⁴³ All tempers, and words, and actions should have been kept holy for at least two or three years.⁵⁴⁴ Given Wesley’s standpoints of perfection, Brunner’s notion that “the believer is always the unbeliever, the sinner”- “*Simul justus, simul peccator*”⁵⁴⁵ is not applied to Wesley. For him, an entirely sanctified Christian is no longer a sinner in both the forensic state and the real one.

Wesley believed that perfection is possible before death⁵⁴⁶ on the ground that God’s commands to be perfect are given to living people not the dead. As an answer to the question who had attained to perfect sanctification in this world, Wesley presented “St. John, and all those of whom he says this in his First Epistle.”⁵⁴⁷ As Maddox puts it, “to the end of his ministry,” Wesley maintained the view that the Christian could attain perfection in this world.⁵⁴⁸

3.2.5.2.2 Imperfection

Wesley admitted the imperfection of sanctification in its absolute meaning on the grounds of his statement that “sin exists in the best of Christians till they obtain deliverance by the hand of death.”⁵⁴⁹ In an absolute sense, man cannot reach perfect sanctification but he can

⁵⁴² Journal 12 March, 1760: *Works* 2, 530.

⁵⁴³ Letter CCCCXXVII to Mrs. Elizabeth Bennis, London January 18, 1774: *Works* 12, 398.

⁵⁴⁴ Minutes of Some Late Conversations, Answer to Q. 5, June 26th: *Works* 8, 279; Maddox, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

⁵⁴⁵ Emil Brunner, *The Divine Imperative* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942), p. 80.

⁵⁴⁶ Minutes of Some Late Conversations, II, “Q. 4. But ought we to expect it sooner? A. Why not?”: *Works* 8, 285.

⁵⁴⁷ Minutes of Some Late Conversations V, “Wednesday, June 17th,” Answer to Q.10: *Works* 8, 296.

⁵⁴⁸ “The poor people appeared to be quite ripe for the highest doctrine of the Gospel: so I exhorted them, leaving the first principles, to ‘go on unto perfection.’” Journal, 30 May 1787: *Works* 4, 379; Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), p. 186.

⁵⁴⁹ Footnote no. 16 of *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. VII in *The SAGE Digital Library Collected Works*

do it in the biblical meaning, which implies relative perfection for fallen men.

Yet this sanctification (at least, in the lower degrees) does not include a power never to think a useless thought, nor ever speak a useless word. I myself believe that such a perfection is inconsistent with living in a corruptible body: For this makes it impossible “always to think right.” While we breathe, we shall, more or less, mistake.⁵⁵⁰

Wesley explicated the imperfection of entire sanctification as follows. Firstly, it is not the perfection of angels. They do not make mistakes. Human mistakes are natural because their understanding, will, and affections are variously disordered due to original sin.⁵⁵¹ Secondly, man cannot reach an Adamic pure perfect condition because he “is no longer able to avoid falling into innumerable mistakes” since the Fall. Thirdly, even the highest perfection which man can attain in this world “does not exclude ignorance and error, and a thousand other infirmities.”⁵⁵² Fourthly, such mistakes need the blood of Christ’s atonement lest we fall to eternal damnation. In this respect, even the most perfect Christian continually needs the merits of Christ.⁵⁵³

Wesley mentioned that there may be many degrees of sanctification in some tempers such as meekness.⁵⁵⁴

3.2.6 The Mode of Sanctification: Self-Denial

For Wesley, self-denial is not to physically abuse oneself, but to submit oneself to the will of God in place of one’s own will. It was deemed to be necessary for entire sanctification. It functions as our waiting for perfect sanctification “in universal obedience; in keeping all the commandments; in *denying ourselves*, and taking up our cross daily” (italics are mine).⁵⁵⁵ Of course, they can be dealt with as the means of sanctification, but for the sake of convenience they will be dealt with as the mode of sanctification when comparing Wesley’s view with those of other theologians.

In 1733, Wesley emphasised the necessity of self-denial for sanctification. Any child of Adam cannot enter the kingdom of Christ without being sanctified in his whole being by “a constant and continued course of general self-denial,” because God’s will resists our

(SAGE Software Albany, OR USA Version 1.1 © 1996), p. 576.

⁵⁵⁰ Letter CLXXVI.- To Miss Furly, afterwards Mrs. Downes, ST. IVES, *September* 15, 1762: *Works* 12, 96.

⁵⁵¹ Sermon LXXVI. On Perfection, 1.1: *Works* 6,412.

⁵⁵² Sermon LXXVI. On Perfection, 1.3: *Works* 6,412.

⁵⁵³ Plain Account of Christian Perfection: *Works* 11, 395.

⁵⁵⁴ Minutes of Some Late Conversations III, Answer to Q. 6. “Many degrees of outward holiness may: yea, and some degree of meekness, and several other tempers which would be branches of Christian holiness.”: *Works* 8, 290.

⁵⁵⁵ Minutes of Some Late Conversations II, Answer to Q.9: *Works* 8, 286.

corruption “at all times and in all things.”⁵⁵⁶ Accordingly, every minister must inculcate self-denial “in the clearest and strongest way,” “at all times and in all places.” It would be the way to “be pure from the blood of all men.”⁵⁵⁷

In the preface to “A Collection of Forms of Prayers for every Day in the Week” (1775), Wesley referred to self-denial in more detail.⁵⁵⁸ Self-denial is founded on the command of Christ, “If any man will come after me, let him renounce himself, and follow me.” From this sentence, Wesley induced two implications: one is “a thorough conviction that we are not our own,” the other is “a solemn resolution to act suitably to this conviction.”⁵⁵⁹ The former signifies that we are not the proprietors of ourselves, and therefore we have no right to dispose of our goods, bodies, souls, and everything. The latter means that we should not live for ourselves. This principle was also expressed in his sermon on “The Good Steward.” “A steward has no right to dispose of anything which is in his hands, but according to the will of his Lord.”⁵⁶⁰ We are not to follow our own desires to please ourselves, nor let our own will be the principle guiding our action.

On the other hand, self-denial naturally leads the believer to his devotion to God. It is “to render unto God the things which are God’s” in order to glorify Him in his body, spirit, with all his power. This devotion results from an absolute conviction that he is God’s belongings.⁵⁶¹ God is the owner of all he has, not only by right of creation, but of purchase by his blood. Hence, he should devote himself to God. Whoever decides to live a life to devote himself to God should perceive the necessity of denying himself and taking up his cross daily.⁵⁶² Whenever he feels the will of God prevents him from indulging in his desire, he must choose between denying himself or the will of God.

Unlike Karl Barth, Wesley did not deal with “taking up the cross” as a section apart from self-denial, but incorporated the former in the latter. Whenever a Christian meets with the means of grace, he must choose to take up his cross or reject his Lord. Wesley distinguished “to take up our cross” from “to bear it.” The former is to voluntarily suffer it according to the will of the Lord even though we can avoid it, whereas the latter is to endure it with meekness and acquiescence when we cannot avoid it.⁵⁶³ Both of them are ascribed to every Christian. The cross is given to him by God for his good as a token of God’s love. It is not only for God’s pleasure but also for his profit, namely, his

⁵⁵⁶ Sermon XVII. The Circumcision of the Heart, 1, 7: *Works* 5, 210-211.

⁵⁵⁷ *Works* 6, 113.

⁵⁵⁸ *Works* 14, 270-272.

⁵⁵⁹ *Works* 14, 271; Sermon XLVIII, Self-Denial, 2 and 3: *Works* 6, 104. “If we do not continually deny ourselves,” it is the same like the confession that Christ is not our Master.”

⁵⁶⁰ *Works* 6, 137.

⁵⁶¹ Cf. Sermon XLVIII, Self-Denial, 2: *Works* 6, 107.

⁵⁶² *Works* 14, 271.

⁵⁶³ Sermon XLVIII. Self-Denial 1, 11: *Works* 6, 109.

participation in God's holiness.⁵⁶⁴ Because to take up the cross is for Christian spiritual health, the believer must endure it even though it means tearing his body apart.⁵⁶⁵ The want of self-denial is partly due to the want of the means of grace. To avoid the cross is dangerous because it brings him to the senseless and sleeping state in sin, which becomes an abomination to the Lord. Subsequently, love becomes cold; the peace of God goes faint.⁵⁶⁶ Grieving the Holy Spirit by evasion, he turns to "pride, anger, desire, self-will, and stubbornness." It leads him to spiritual sloth. The way to avoid spiritual withdrawal is to diligently use the means of grace, including the works of charity.⁵⁶⁷

For Wesley, a steady exercise of self-denial enables the faithful follower of Christ to advance in mortification, which means dying to the world and the things of the world. A continual self-denial enables him to confess, "I desire nothing but God" or "I am crucified unto the world; I am dead with Christ; I live not, but Christ liveth in me."⁵⁶⁸ That Christ lives in me implies "the fulfilling of the law," which is the ultimate stage of Christian sanctification. In this respect, he is not so far from Calvin.

Christian perfection in terms of self-denial can be described as the state in which the believer is dead to the world and alive to God. His entire desire is unto God's name, and he has given God his whole heart, and delights in Him only. Burning with love towards all mankind, he speaks and acts only in order to fulfil God's will. It is God's grace to lead his soul to reach this state.⁵⁶⁹ This state is compared to "the last round of the ladder to heaven." Not only do the entirely sanctified forget those things which are behind and "press towards the mark for the prize" of our calling but also "rejoice to suffer the loss of all things, and count them but dung" to win Christ.⁵⁷⁰

3.2.7 The Means or Ways of Sanctification

As Maddox appropriately points out, Wesley considered that the means of grace primarily contributed to sanctification.⁵⁷¹ Wesley's means of grace was noted in the following texts. First, he noted the means of grace like the communion of the saints, learning the Bible, and the Lord's Supper in Acts 2:42, 44.

Their constant practice set this beyond all dispute; for so long as

⁵⁶⁴ Sermon XLVIII. Self-Denial 1, 13: *Works* 6, 109.

⁵⁶⁵ *Works* 6, 110.

⁵⁶⁶ *Works* 6, 111.

⁵⁶⁷ *Works* 6, 112.

⁵⁶⁸ *Works* 14, 272.

⁵⁶⁹ *Works* 14, 272.

⁵⁷⁰ *Works* 14, 272.

⁵⁷¹ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), p. 202.

“all that believed were together, and had all things common,” (Acts 2:44), “they continued steadfastly in the teaching of the Apostles and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Verse 42).⁵⁷²

Secondly, in his sermon on ‘The Means of Grace’, Wesley depicted “the works of piety” as the *ordinary channel* of conveying God’s grace, or the *chief means*, or the *instituted means*, or the *particular means* of grace (italics are my emphasis).⁵⁷³

The chief of these means are prayer, whether in secret or with the great congregation; searching Scriptures; (which implies reading, hearing, and meditating thereon;) and receiving the Lord’s supper, eating bread and drinking wine in remembrance of Him: And these we believe to be ordained of God, as the ordinary channels of conveying his grace to the souls of men.⁵⁷⁴

Thirdly, in his *Minutes of Some Late Conversation II*, Wesley noted the *general means* of sanctification as follows.

Q. 9. How should we wait for the fulfilling of this promise?

A. In universal obedience; in keeping all the commandments; in denying ourselves, and taking up our cross daily. These are the *general means* which God hath ordained for our receiving his sanctifying grace (my emphasis).⁵⁷⁵

In the *Minutes of Several Conversations*, he added to the general means of grace “watching against the world, the devil,” self and inherent sin, “denying ourselves,” “taking up our cross,” and “exercise of the presence of God”.⁵⁷⁶

Fourthly, in his *Minutes of Several Conversations*, he referred to the *prudential means* of grace as “particular rules” or “arts of holy living,” the small group like a class, band, “every society” and “the Leaders and Bands,” making “a conscience of executing every part” of ones’ own office.⁵⁷⁷

Fifthly, in his “Preface, A Collection of Hymns,” he recommended the hymnal to the

⁵⁷² Sermon XVI ‘The Means of Grace’ 1.1: *Works* 5, 185.

⁵⁷³ On the works of piety, see *Works* 8, 286, 322-323.

⁵⁷⁴ Sermon XVI ‘The Means of Grace’ 2.1: *Works* 5, 188; Cf. Henry Hawthorn Knight, *The Presence of God in the Christian life: A Contemporary Understanding of John Wesley’s Means of Grace* (Ph. D. diss. Emory University. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1987), p. 7.

⁵⁷⁵ *Minutes of Some Late Conversations II*, Q.9 and Answer: *Works* 8, 286.

⁵⁷⁶ *Works* 8, 323.

⁵⁷⁷ *Works* 8, 323. cf. Henry Hawthorn Knight, *op. cit.*, p. 7. He involved “prayer meeting, covenant services, watch night services, love feasts,” “visiting the sick,” “doing all the good one can, doing no harm,” “reading devotional classics and all edifying literature,” in this group. These things will be included in the ‘Communion of the Saints’ and dealt with in ‘Good Works’ separately.

saints

as a means of raising or quickening the spirit of devotion, of confirming his faith, of enlivening his hope, and of kindling of increasing his love to God and man.⁵⁷⁸

We can analyze the characteristics of Wesley's classification of the means of grace as follows. Firstly, it is rather peculiar for him to regard "obedience, self-denial, and taking up our cross daily" as the *general means* of sanctification, though they may be ascribed to the human role in sanctification, or the modes of sanctification. Secondly, since fasting and prayer were noted by Christ, it is called the *ordinary channel*, or the *chief means*, or the *particular means* of grace. Thirdly, prayer is mentioned before any other means like Scripture, the Lord's Supper, communion, and fasting. But all days dedicated to saints were abolished and the church year was reconstructed around events connected with Christ, e.g., Advent, Easter, and Ascension/Pentecost. This implies that the prayer to saints as a means of grace was rejected by Wesley. The saints were honoured as exemplars, not intercessors.⁵⁷⁹ Fourthly, hymns were regarded as the means that "both empower and shape Christian discipleship."⁵⁸⁰ Fifthly, with the communion of saints, the works of mercy were viewed as the *real means* or *prudential means* of grace.⁵⁸¹ This can be particular to Wesley, viewing in the perspective of Reformed theology. Lastly, faith was considered as a means of sanctification. While other means are visible, faith is the invisible means. It is a gift given by the Spirit. In this point, faith is distinguishable from other visible means, thence it will be independently dealt with in 4.2.8. 2. 'Faith and Sanctification.'

Wesley stated some notions of the means of grace. First, the outward ordinances of God should advance inward holiness. Without inward holiness, the means are "unprofitable and void, are lighter than vanity." Without a devoted heart, they are "an utter abomination to the Lord."⁵⁸² Accordingly, they should be used "not for their own sake," but for our renewal "in righteousness and true holiness."⁵⁸³ Secondly, unless the Spirit works in them and by them, they are "mere weak and beggarly elements." This implies that there is no intrinsic power in any means.⁵⁸⁴ Thirdly, the Holy Spirit can also work in men without any means of grace in a particular situation. Convincing grace may occur either within the church or beyond its walls. The means of God's grace can be "varied,

⁵⁷⁸ Preface, A Collection of Hymns, 8: *Works* 7, 75.

⁵⁷⁹ Popery Calmly Considered, Section III, Of Divine Worship, 3: *Works* 8, 146.

⁵⁸⁰ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), p. 208.

⁵⁸¹ Cf. Henry Hawthorn Knight, *op. cit.*, p. 7; also see 3.2.7.4 The Works of Mercy in this thesis.

⁵⁸² Sermon XVI 'The Means of Grace' 1, 4: *Works* 5, 186.

⁵⁸³ Sermon XVI 'The Means of Grace' 5, 4: *Works* 5, 200.

⁵⁸⁴ Sermon XVI 'The Means of Grace' 2, 3: *Works* 5, 188.

transposed, and combined together, in a thousand different ways” in diverse situations.⁵⁸⁵ Fourthly, the means will never atone for our sins. It is wrong to imagine that there is some kind of power in means, or that by practising them, we “shall certainly be made holy,” or that “there is a sort of *merit* in using them.” Such a thought is to force God to give us holiness.⁵⁸⁶

To attain perfection, the saints are to wait for it in using the means of God’s grace “not in laying them aside.”⁵⁸⁷ The human role in sanctification is to diligently use those means for our sanctification. Quietism says, “Stand still, and see the salvation of God.” Conversely, Wesley declares, “This was the *salvation of God*, which they *stood still* to see by *marching forward* with all their might!”⁵⁸⁸ It is *after* all to Israel’s people who *prayed* to the Lord to help them, that Jahaziel said, “Ye shall not need to fight in this battle. Set yourselves: Stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord.”⁵⁸⁹

To sum up, the sure and general way to reach sanctification is to use “all the means which God has ordained, whenever opportunity serves.”⁵⁹⁰

3.2.7.1 Prayer

For Wesley, prayer is “a channel through which the grace of God is conveyed.”⁵⁹¹ He drew the example of prayer as a means of grace from Matt. 7: 7, 8, which read: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”⁵⁹² Through prayer the Holy Spirit, the origin of all graces is received. Peculiarly, Wesley regarded prayer as God’s command given to both believers and unbelievers on the grounds of the case of Cornelius.⁵⁹³ His view that Cornelius was an unbeliever seems rather doubtful because Cornelius was a believer in the God revealed in the Old Testament. For Wesley, an unbeliever is a non-Christian.

The attitude of prayer is our faith in God’s promise. If we wait for “the blessings of God in private prayer, together with a positive promise,” we shall obtain what we ask.⁵⁹⁴ When we pray in faith, without doubt, God receives our prayer.

Wesley presented prayers implying entire sanctification as follows. In the Lord’s

⁵⁸⁵ Sermon XVI ‘The Means of Grace’ 5, 3: *Works* 5, 200.

⁵⁸⁶ Sermon XVI ‘The Means of Grace’ 2, 5: *Works* 5, 189.

⁵⁸⁷ Sermon XVI ‘The Means of Grace’ 3, 1: *Works* 5, 190.

⁵⁸⁸ Sermon XVI ‘The Means of Grace’ 4, 5: *Works* 5, 197.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁰ Sermon XVI ‘The Means of Grace’ 5, 3: *Works* 5, 200.

⁵⁹¹ Sermon XVI ‘The Means of Grace’ 4, 1: *Works* 5, 195.

⁵⁹² Sermon XVI ‘The Means of Grace’ 3, 1: *Works* 5, 190.

⁵⁹³ Journal June 26, 1740: *Works* 1: 279.

⁵⁹⁴ Sermon XVI ‘The Means of Grace’ 3, 5: *Works* 5, 192.

Prayer, “Deliver us from evil” or “from the evil one” implies that the evil one is the cause of our sin and his removal is our sanctification. Jesus’ prayer, “I in them, and thou in me...that they may be made perfect in one” (John 17: 21, 23) was for sanctification in our unity. Paul prayed for our comprehension of the vastness of “the love of Christ” and for us to “be filled with all the fullness of God.” (Eph 3:14, 16-19). Paul also prayed, “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly” and “our whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess 5:23). These show that prayer is one of the means for our entire sanctification.

Wesley showed us the example of prayer for sanctification:

“Grant us, Lord, we beseech thee, the Spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful” (*Ninth Sunday after Trinity*). “O God, ...grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts” (*Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity*). “Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name” (*Communion Office*).⁵⁹⁵

He suggested that “wherever you can, appoint prayer-meetings, and particularly on Friday,”⁵⁹⁶ for the negligence of those prayers causes the decay and the death of our life.⁵⁹⁷

3.2.7.2 The Word of God

3.2.7.2.1 The Bible

Wesley viewed “searching Scriptures” as a means of grace. “All who desire the grace of God are to wait for it in searching the Scriptures.”⁵⁹⁸ Jesus directed the Jews to read Scripture that they might believe him because Scripture testified to Christ. Searching the Scriptures contains hearing, reading, and meditating.

Wesley explicated the benefit of Scripture according to Paul’s statement. The holy Scriptures have true wisdom to lead us to salvation through faith in Christ (2 Tim. 3:15). They are is “the great means God has ordained for conveying his manifold grace to man.” All Scriptures are “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” They are given “that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished

⁵⁹⁵ Letter to the Right Reverend The Lord Bishop of Gloucester: ‘The Operation of the Holy Ghost’: *Works* 9, 167.

⁵⁹⁶ Minutes of Several Conversations between the Rev. Mr. Wesley and Others: From the Year 1744 to the Year 1789, Answer 4, 5 to Q. 56: *Works* 8, 328.

⁵⁹⁷ Sermon XLVI The Wilderness State: *Works* 6, 81.

⁵⁹⁸ Sermon XVI ‘The Means of Grace’ 3, 7: *Works* 5, 192.

unto all good works” (2 Tim.3: 16, 17).⁵⁹⁹ Wesley showed us the example of David who waited for God’s grace through the Word. “I have waited for thy saving health, O Lord, and have kept thy law. Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end.”⁶⁰⁰ The bible that Paul referred to was the Old Testament. Accordingly, the Old Testament should be read lest we one day “wonder and perish by accounting only the New Testament.”⁶⁰¹ It is profitable not only to those who walk in the light, but also to those who seek him in darkness.⁶⁰²

3.2.7.2.2 The Commandments of God

Molther, an antinomian insisted that the believer’s only duty was to believe, “that there is no commandment in the New Testament but to believe...and that when a man does believe, he is not bound or obliged to do anything which is commanded there.”⁶⁰³ His insistence was condemned for its antinomian tendency by Wesley. It was regarded as “shamelessly contrary to our Lord’s own words, “Whosoever shall break one of the least of these commandments shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.” Wesley emphasised that believers are bound to keep Christ’s commandments on the basis of Christ’s words that “If ye love me, (which cannot be unless ye believe,)’ keep my commandments.”⁶⁰⁴ To obey God’s commandment in our sanctification is the way to be perfect in love. “Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (Matt. 5:48). “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” (Matt.22:37).⁶⁰⁵

3.2.7.2.3 Preaching

Wesley advised preachers to declare the law as well as the gospel, to both believers and unbelievers.⁶⁰⁶ He looked upon the role of the sermon as communicating Christ in three offices. To preach Christ as Priest is to assure us of “God’s pardoning love”. To preach Christ as Prophet is to reveal “our remaining need of Christ”. To preach Christ as King is to guide our continual growth in the image of Christ.⁶⁰⁷ In a Sermon on Mark 9:38, he

⁵⁹⁹ Sermon XVI ‘The Means of Grace’ 3, 8: *Works* 5, 192.

⁶⁰⁰ Sermon XVI ‘The Means of Grace’ 4, 4: *Works* 5, 196.

⁶⁰¹ Sermon XVI ‘The Means of Grace’ 3, 9: *Works* 5, 193.

⁶⁰² Sermon XVI ‘The Means of Grace’ 3, 10: *Works* 5, 194.

⁶⁰³ Journal. June 22, 1740: *Works* 1, 275.

⁶⁰⁴ Journal. June 23, 1740: *Works* 1, 277.

⁶⁰⁵ Minutes of Some Late Conversations V, “Wednesday, June 17th,” Answer to Q. 7: *Works* 8, 295.

⁶⁰⁶ Cf. Kenneth J. Collins, *Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley’s Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p.51.

⁶⁰⁷ Cf. Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), p. 209.

argued that Christ's exorcism brought sinners to repentance, i.e., both an inward and an outward change in man.

3.2.7.2.4 Law and Gospel

3.2.7.2.4.1 Law and Gospel as the Means of Repentance

Wesley emphasised the precedence of the law to the gospel in repenting sinners. He utterly rejected that preaching of the gospel, i.e., "the speaking of nothing but the sufferings and merits of Christ" answers all the ends of the law.⁶⁰⁸ His experience taught him that "one in a thousand may have been awakened by the gospel." The way that God ordinarily uses to convict sinners is not the gospel, but the law. The gospel is not the means which God has ordained for repentance of the sinner or which our Lord himself used.⁶⁰⁹

He understood that Paul convicted sinners by the law. Paul "first reminds them that they could not be justified by the Law of Moses, but only by faith in Christ; and then severely threatens them with the judgments of God, which is, in the strongest sense, preaching the law."⁶¹⁰ Paul declared not only the love of Christ to sinners, but also Christ's coming from heaven in flaming fire. Preaching Christ is exclaiming both his forgiveness and his judgment.⁶¹¹ Wesley considered to preach both the law and the gospel to be effective to lead the sinner to repentance. In this respect, he stands with Luther.

3.2.7.2.4.2 The Three Uses of the Law

To Wesley, the law is the heart of God disclosed to humanity. "It is the streaming forth or out-beaming of his glory, the express image of his person."⁶¹² The law of God is supreme, unchangeable reason.⁶¹³ It is "a copy of the eternal mind, a transcript of the divine nature."⁶¹⁴ With his view of the law, Wesley rebuked Luther for being "blasphemous in his treatment of the law."⁶¹⁵

According to Wesley, the first use of the law is to convince man of his sins. Though doing it without the law, the Spirit ordinarily convicts sinners by the law. The word of God is "quick and powerful," "full of life and energy," "and sharper than any two-edged

⁶⁰⁸ Sermon XXXV. "The Law Established Through Faith," 1.3: *Works* 5, 449.

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁰ Sermon XXXV. "The Law Established Through Faith," 1.6: *Works* 5, 450.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁶¹² Sermon XXXIV "The Original, Nature, Properties and Use of the Law," 2.3: *Works* 5, 438.

⁶¹³ Sermon XXXIV "The Original, Nature, Properties and Use of the Law," 2.5: *Works* 5, 438.

⁶¹⁴ Sermon XXXIV "The Original, Nature, Properties and Use of the Law," 2.6: *Works* 5, 439.

⁶¹⁵ Donald W. Dayton, "Law and Gospel in the Wesleyan Tradition," *Grace Theological Journal* 12 (1991): 240.

sword.”⁶¹⁶ Thus it can pierce “through all the folds of a deceitful heart,” and make man perceive how wretched and poor he is before God. It kills the sinner and demolishes “the life and strength wherein he trusts,” and awakes him to the fact that he is spiritually dead unto God due to his sins and trespasses.⁶¹⁷ The second use of the law is to lead the sinner unto Christ “that he may live.” Like a strict schoolmaster, the law “drives us by force, rather than draws us by love”. Nevertheless, it is “the spirit of love which, by this painful means, tears away our confidence in the flesh.”⁶¹⁸ The third use of the law is “to keep us alive.”⁶¹⁹ It is the excellent means whereby the Spirit leads us to eternal life. As Maddox aptly points out, Wesley put more emphasis on the third use in Christian life because of his “conflict with antinomian understanding of the Christian life.”⁶²⁰

For Wesley, since human perfect obedience to the law became impossible owing to the fall, God desires that people avoid “voluntary transgressions of known laws.”⁶²¹ God re-inscribed the basic moral law through prevenient grace in order to preserve universal moral accountability.⁶²²

3.2.7.2.4.3 Christ’s Law and the Decalogue as the Moral Law

Concerning the relationship between the law of Christ and the moral law, Wesley viewed the law of Christ as stated in the Sermon on the Mount and understood the moral law as demonstrated in the Decalogue.⁶²³ For him, the moral law was reinforced by the prophets and was not abolished by Christ.⁶²⁴ There is no contradiction between the Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount. The difference does not lie in separation but in developmental degree. The moral law is most clearly expressed in the Sermon on the Mount.⁶²⁵

In view of function, the moral law accuses man of his sins and leads him to both legal and evangelical repentance. Before justification, it condemns us totally, leads us to

⁶¹⁶ Sermon XXXIV. “The Original, Nature, Property, and the Uses of the Law” 4, 1: *Works* 5, 443.

⁶¹⁷ Sermon XXXIV. “The Original, Nature, Property, and the Uses of the Law” 4, 2: *Works* 5, 443.

⁶¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁹ Sermon XXXIV. “The Original, Nature, Property, and the Uses of the Law” 4, 3: *Works* 5, 443.

⁶²⁰ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Nashville, Kingwood Books, 1994), p. 161.

⁶²¹ Letter to John Hosmer (7 June 1761): Telford, *Letters* 4:155.

⁶²² Leon Orville Hynson, *To Reform the Nation: Theological Foundations of Wesley’s Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), pp.77ff.

⁶²³ Letters, XXVI. To an Evangelical Layman, Dec. 20, 1751: Wesley, *OT Notes*, Ex. 20:1-7.

⁶²⁴ Sermon XXV “On the Mount, V,” 1.2: *Works* 5, 311.

⁶²⁵ Sermon XXV “On The Mount V,” 1.4”: *Works* 5, 312. “Yet was it never so fully explained, nor so thoroughly understood, till the great Author of it himself condescended to give mankind this authentic comment on all the essential branches of it.” Collins understood this expression as Jesus’ explication of the law. but Collins’ opinion is not total relevant because ‘it’ indicates a religion rather than the law. Kenneth J. Collins, *Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley’s Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p.52.

repentance, and guides us to Christ. After justification, it accuses our inward sin and urges us to be cleaned of our sin by the blood of Christ. Furthermore, it makes us feel the necessity to go forward to perfection more enthusiastically by receiving grace upon grace.⁶²⁶ In this sense, Wesley's view of the law is much closer to Calvin's than Luther's.

Christians are no longer under the moral law as the condition of acceptance by God, because they are justified by faith in Christ.⁶²⁷ They obey the law of God "not from the motive of slavish fear, but on a nobler principle"; namely, "the grace of God ruling in his heart." God's grace causes all their works to be done in love. The saints are not now under angelic law, that is, the perfect law, but under the law of love, the law from above. The law of love as "the fulfilling of the law" is given to fallen men.⁶²⁸

3.2.7.3 The Sacraments

3.2.7.3.1 Baptism

Wesley criticized the formally baptized at his time. Too many were baptized "gluttons and drunkards, the baptized liars and common swearers, the baptized railers and evil-speakers, the baptized whoremongers, thieves, extortioners." From his viewpoint, they were the children of the devil rather than the regenerated or the children of God.⁶²⁹ They had to be truly born again.⁶³⁰ His experiential observation caused him not to identify outward baptism with regeneration.⁶³¹ Baptism is an outward and perceptible sign, whereas regeneration is an inward and spiritual grace by the Spirit. Baptism as the sign is "distinct from regeneration, the thing signified."⁶³² Likewise, in his *Note* on John 3:5, he described baptism by the Spirit as "great inward change," and baptism by water as "the outward sign and means of it." Baptism is in an ordinary way necessary to salvation but in the absolute sense is not.⁶³³

Nevertheless, he recognized that if we participate in baptism, it may be the instrument of regeneration. Maddox holds that for Wesley, the function of baptism was "to initiate the graciously-empowered transformation of our lives." Maddox's viewpoint seems reasonable given that Wesley understood baptism as the instrument of regeneration. "By water then, as a means, the water of baptism, we are regenerated or born again."⁶³⁴ With this line,

⁶²⁶ Sermon XXXIV. The Original, Nature, Property, and Use of the Law, 4.4: *Works* 5, 444.

⁶²⁷ Sermon XXXV. "The Law Established Through Faith," 3.3: *Works* 5, 455.

⁶²⁸ Sermon LXXVI "on Perfection," 1.3.

⁶²⁹ Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth 4,3: *Works* 5, 220.

⁶³⁰ Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth 4, 5: *Works* 5, 225.

⁶³¹ Sermon XLV The New Birth, 4.1: *Works* 6, 73.

⁶³² Sermon XLV The New Birth, 4.1: *Works* 6, 73.

⁶³³ *Works* X, 198.

⁶³⁴ *Works* X, 192.

Wesley continued to baptize the Quakers who did not observe water baptism and joined the Methodist society.

On the other hand, with respect to infant baptism, Wesley did not deny its association with the new birth. “It is certain, our Church supposes that all who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time born again.”⁶³⁵ “It is certain, by God’s word, that children who are baptized dying before they commit actual sin are saved.”⁶³⁶ The baptized infants are asked for repentance and faith, when they are mature.⁶³⁷ However, Wesley left room for the salvation of infants dying without baptism by noting that “where it (infant baptism) cannot be had, the case is different.”⁶³⁸

3.2.7.3.2 The Lord’s Supper

Wesley understood the Lord’s Supper as an ordinary means of receiving grace from God. It is “the outward, visible means, whereby God conveys into our souls all that spiritual grace,” for example, “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”⁶³⁹ The way that this means conveys God’s grace to man is not automatic, but by the works of the Spirit.⁶⁴⁰

In his Journal (June 27, 1740), Wesley held that the Lord’s Supper played the role of causing the first deep conviction, namely the very beginning of our conversion to God.⁶⁴¹ For such a purpose, it was allowed “in the full sense of the word,” unbelievers.⁶⁴² For believers, it brings “sanctifying grace” for their growth.⁶⁴³ In his Journal (July 28, 1740), he noted that “the Lord’s Supper was ordained by God, to be a means of conveying to men either preventing, or justifying, or sanctifying grace, according to their several necessities.” The only requirement for it is “a sense of our state, of our utter sinfulness and helplessness.”⁶⁴⁴ It is meant for “all those who know and feel that they want the grace of God either to restrain them from sin or to show their sins forgiven or to renew their souls in the image of God.” Accordingly, “all who desire an increase of the grace of God are to wait for it in partaking of the Lord’s Supper.”⁶⁴⁵ In his Journal (Nov. 13, 1763), Wesley

⁶³⁵ Sermon XLV The New Birth, 4.2: *Works* 6, 74.

⁶³⁶ Treatise on Baptism, 2, 1: *Works* 10, 191.

⁶³⁷ Sermon XLV The New Birth, 4.2: *Works* 6, 74.

⁶³⁸ Treatise on Baptism, 4, 2: *Works* 10, 193.

⁶³⁹ Sermon XVI ‘The Means of Grace’ 3, 12: *Works* 5, 195.

⁶⁴⁰ Edward H., Sugden, ed., *Wesley’s Standard Sermon*, 2 Vols. (London: Epworth Press, 1921), I: 259. Hereafter it is written as *StS* I: 259.

⁶⁴¹ *Works* 1, 279.

⁶⁴² Answer to the Rev. Mr. Church 3, 1: *Works* 8, 404. “Our Lord commanded those very men who were then unconverted, who had not yet ‘received the Holy Ghost,’ who, in the full sense of the word, were not believers, to do this in remembrance of him”; Letters VI, 124; *Works* 9, 50. “Because I believe, these (all the means of grace) do ordinarily convey God’s grace even to unbelievers” (my addition).

⁶⁴³ Colin W. Williams, *John Wesley’s Theology Today*, p.164.

⁶⁴⁴ *Works* 1, 280.

⁶⁴⁵ Sermon XVI ‘The Means of Grace’ 3, 11: *Works* 5, 194.

confessed that the power of God was far more present at the Lord's Supper than in preaching.⁶⁴⁶

He viewed the Lord's Supper as "a memorial" that signifies the suffering of Christ and as "a means" that communicates the first-fruits of suffering in present graces, and as "an infallible pledge" that convinces us of glory to come.⁶⁴⁷ In his sermon on 'The Means of Grace', he considered it not simply as a permission but "a command."⁶⁴⁸

On the qualification of the partakers in the sacraments, Wesley had a different opinion from the Moravians. They insisted that "a man cannot have any degree of justifying faith, till he is wholly freed from all doubt and fear; and till he has, in the full, proper sense, a new, a clean heart" and that "a man may not use the ordinances of God, the Lord's Supper in particular before he has such a faith as excludes all doubt and fear, and implies a new, a clean heart." In opposition to this, Wesley asserted that "man can have justifying faith, before he is wholly freed from all doubt and fear; and before he has, in the full, proper sense, a new, a clean heart" and that "a man may use the ordinances of God, the Lord's Supper in particular, before he has such a faith as excludes all doubt and fear, and implies a new, a clean heart."⁶⁴⁹

3.2.7.4 Works of Mercy⁶⁵⁰

Peculiarly, Wesley regarded works of mercy as the *real means* of grace.

Surely there are works of mercy, as well as works of piety, which are *real means* of grace. They are more especially such to those that perform them with a single eye. And those that neglect them, do not receive the grace which otherwise they might (*italics are my emphasis*).⁶⁵¹

Wesley stressed charity again as a means of grace in the sense that "want of charity will make all those works an abomination to the Lord."⁶⁵² In his sermon on Zeal (1781), he again noted that all the works of mercy are the real means of grace.

In an exterior circle are all the works of mercy, whether to the souls or bodies of men. By these we exercise all holy tempers; by these

⁶⁴⁶ *Works* 3, 156; StS I: 440.

⁶⁴⁷ *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley* (ed. by G. Osborn: London: Wesleyan Methodist Conference Office, 1869), p. 186: quoted by Colin W. Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today*, p.159.

⁶⁴⁸ Sermon XVI 'The Means of Grace' 3, 11: *Works* 5, 194.

⁶⁴⁹ An Extract of The Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal from February 1, 1737-8, to his Return from Germany. Number II, Preface 10: *Works* 1, 82.

⁶⁵⁰ For the list of works of mercy, see '3.2.9.2 Good Works and Sanctification.'

⁶⁵¹ Sermon XCVIII. On Visiting The Sick, 1: *Works* 7, 117.

⁶⁵² Sermon XXII. Upon Our Lord's Sermon On The Mount, Discourse II, 1,10: *Works* 5, 265.

we continually improve them, so that all these are *real means of grace*, although this is not commonly adverted to. Next to these are those that are usually termed *works of piety*; — reading and hearing the word, public, family, private prayer, receiving the Lord’s Supper, fasting or abstinence. Lastly, that his followers may the more effectually provoke one another to love, holy tempers, and good works, our blessed Lord has united them together in one body, the Church dispersed all over the earth.

In this context, it is clear that Wesley understood the means of grace as three circles. In the exterior circle, there are works of mercy; in the middle circle, there are works of piety; in the innermost core, the Lord and his church exists. Though works of piety and works of mercy are the means of sanctification, only the Lord sanctifies us. In this manner, Wesley saw the effective cause of sanctification as God’s grace, i.e., Christ’s work. In his reply to his detractors who accused him of moralism, Wesley held that “the lines in question do not refer to the condition of obtaining, but of continuing in the favor of God.”⁶⁵³ As Collins aptly points out, good works are a means that communicates sanctifying grace.⁶⁵⁴ For Wesley, the efficient, direct cause of sanctification is God’s gracious work. Good works are considered as fruits meet for repentance which God asks them as an indirect necessary condition for justification and sanctification.

The fact that Wesley considered works of mercy as a means of grace is connected with his emphasis on obedience to the Word of God in the Christian life. The works of piety such as reading the word of God, prayer, the Lord’s supper, and fasting are related to the love of God, while works of mercy are related to the love of the neighbours. Given the close relationship between the love of God and the love of neighbours, it is not surprising that Wesley regarded works of mercy as a means of grace, as well as works of piety. It is said that his distinctive contribution to Protestantism was to extend the means of grace to good works.

3.2.7.5 Church Discipline

Wesley saw discipline as necessary for continual spiritual growth.⁶⁵⁵ In his Journal (Aug. 25, 1763), he regarded teaching and discipline as more durable than preaching, in the sense that without them preaching is simply begetting children for the murderer.⁶⁵⁶ The general rules of church discipline are three marks: “avoiding all known sin, doing good after his

⁶⁵³ Letter CCCLXX. To Miss Jane Hilton, June 19, 1771: *Works* 12, 368.

⁶⁵⁴ Cf. Kenneth J. Collins, *Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley’s Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p.163.

⁶⁵⁵ Thoughts Upon Methodism 1: *Works* 7, 258.

⁶⁵⁶ *Works* 3, 144.

power, and attending all the ordinances of God.” He regarded the Methodist discipline as the most simple, rational one which is based on “common sense, particularly applying the general rules of Scripture.”⁶⁵⁷ A Methodist preacher was asked to examine a Methodist society once a quarter. The blameable offence of any member could be easily discovered owing to such examination, and the offender was excluded or soon corrected. Generally, the exclusion of a member out of the society is done “in the most quiet and inoffensive manner.” But in case “the offence is great, and there is danger of public scandal,” it was publicly declared that they were no longer members of our society.⁶⁵⁸ For Wesley, this removal was not identified with excommunication because Methodism was a voluntary society. He avoided the critique that Methodism’s excommunication was judgmental by mentioning that the goal of discipline was “not punitive but therapeutic.”⁶⁵⁹ Considering the charge that the General Rules were a kind of works-righteousness, Wesley held that it was not to earn God’s favour but to nurture the reshaping of their character into Christ-likeness.⁶⁶⁰

As means of grace, he organized class meetings, bands, penitent bands, and select societies.⁶⁶¹ A class meeting consisted of a dozen members and contributed to their recognition of spiritual need and desire for God’s help. A spiritually mature leader inquired after their spiritual condition and provided comfort, encouragement, advice, and reproof in accordance with their situation. In contrast, the bands consisted only of people with some assurance of God’s pardoning presence. In order to induce those who committed known, wilful sin to repent, Wesley offered a penitent band.⁶⁶² The select society as the final substructure consisted of the most devoted Methodist Church in order to press them to pursue entire sanctification in serious reciprocal support. He asked them to shape an example of holiness and love for other societies.⁶⁶³

3.2.7.6 The Communion of the Saints

For Wesley, Christian fellowship was regarded as “essential in growing in grace.”⁶⁶⁴ Besides individual communion between each other, Wesley offered several opportunities

⁶⁵⁷ Sermon CVII. On God’s Vineyard 3, 1: *Works* 7, 209.

⁶⁵⁸ Sermon CVII. On God’s Vineyard 3, 3: *Works* 7, 209.

⁶⁵⁹ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), p. 212.

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶¹ A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists, II-VIII: *Works* 253-261. Henry Hawthorn Knight called those thing *prudential means* of grace. See, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁶⁶² Ted Allen Cambel, *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity: Religious Vision and Cultural Change* (Nashville: Kingwood, 1991), p.87.

⁶⁶³ Cf. Albert C. Outler, *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press. 1964), p. 144.

⁶⁶⁴ Ole E. Borgen, “John Wesley: Sacramental Theology No Ends without the Means,” in *John Wesley: Contemporary Perspective* (London: Epworth, 1988), p. 74.

to grow in grace. For example, the “love feast” in which participants shared non-consecrated bread and water with one another was used as a means of sanctification. During this service, the testimonies by believers were intended to model, encourage, and progress Christian sanctification. “Watch-night services” chosen by Wesley contributed to arousing the participants to residual sin and to assure them of “God’s support in renewed obedient response.”⁶⁶⁵ “The Covenantal renewal” provided a setting for recovery of thanks, “a sense of pardon,” “full salvation,” “a fresh manifestation of his grace,” and “healing all their backsliding.”⁶⁶⁶ The community surroundings of the service offered both a motivation for personal truthfulness and a circumstance of communal sustenance.

3.2.8 The Relation to Other Doctrines

3.2.8.1 Predestination, Election and Sanctification

Wesley had a strong abhorrence of absolute double predestination because it was deemed to make “God worse than the devil; more false, more cruel, more unjust.”⁶⁶⁷ If there were no middle area between salvation by works and absolute predestination, his choice was the former rather than the latter.⁶⁶⁸ Not finding out any covenant in Scripture about election and reprobation, he exclaimed, “[I]f this (election and reprobation) were true, we must give up all Scriptures together” (my addition). “It is absolutely, notoriously false.”⁶⁶⁹

Apart from believing in Christ to the end, there is no other predestination for salvation. God’s unchangeable decree is well depicted in Mark 16:16, “He that believeth shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Wesley’s opinion of predestination can be summarised in a sentence. “Whosoever believeth unto the end, so as to show his faith by his works, I the Lord will reward that soul eternally. But whosoever will not believe, and consequently dieth in his sins, I will punish him with everlasting destruction.”⁶⁷⁰ His view reflects that God’s grace is resistible and co-operant in every stage of Christian sanctification. So a Christian has the possibility to establish or to dissolve his relationship with God according to his choice.⁶⁷¹

⁶⁶⁵ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), p. 210.

⁶⁶⁶ Journal Jan.1, 1775: *Works* 8, 38-39.

⁶⁶⁷ *Works* VII, 382-283.

⁶⁶⁸ Remarks on Mr. Hill’s Review 7, 5: *Works* 10, 379.

⁶⁶⁹ Predestination Calmly Considered, 39: *Works* 10: 225.

⁶⁷⁰ Predestination Calmly Considered, 61: *Works* 10: 239. Wesley’s view is similar to Arminius’ one. “believers shall be saved, unbelievers shall be damned.” *The Works of James Arminius*, 3: 566; Charles M. Cameron, “Arminius-Hero, or Heretic,” *Evangelical Quarterly*, Vol. 64, no.3 (July, 1992): 220; cf. Mbennah, Emmanuel D. and Vorster, J. M., “The Influence of Arminian conception of Predestination on the 18th-century Wesleyan revival,” *Studia historiae ecclesiasticae*, Vol. 24, no.1 (1998): 172;

⁶⁷¹ *Works* 11:426.

In regard to the relationship between predestination and sanctification, Wesley affirmed, “Every one that believes is sanctified, whatever else he has or has not.” In other words, God’s predestination depends upon human belief in Christ. Arther Skevington Wood mentioned that Wesley avoided both extremities of “hyper-Calvinism and antinomianism.”⁶⁷² His view seems probable, given that Wesley objected to both double predestination and the antinomian belief neglecting gradual sanctification.

To summarise, for Wesley, predestination is universal, and election is conditional, while man’s sanctification depends upon his faith working by love in Christ.

3.2.8.2 Faith and Sanctification

By Wesley’s definition, faith is “a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that through the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favor of God.”⁶⁷³ It is not simple rational assent but “participation in the divine reality,” i.e., “the very righteousness of Christ.”⁶⁷⁴ To put it in more detail, “faith in general is the most direct and effectual means of promoting all righteousness and true holiness; of establishing the holy and spiritual law in the hearts of them that believe.”⁶⁷⁵

Though not more meritorious than any other of our actions, our faith in Christ is *the means and instrument* whereby we embrace and receive the promises of pardon (my emphasis).⁶⁷⁶ In this respect, Colin W. Williams’ assertion that “Wesley took the doctrine of sanctification out of the order of merit and so removed it from the legal order to the order of faith” is acceptable.⁶⁷⁷ For Wesley, faith is only bestowed on those who earnestly long for it, actively manifesting the longing in repentance and the fruits meet for it.⁶⁷⁸

Wesley admitted faith as the instrument of sanctification as that of justification.

Q. 2. Is faith the condition, or the instrument, of sanctification?

A. It is both the condition and instrument of it.⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷² Arther Skevington Wood, *The Contribution of John Wesley to the Theology of Grace* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc, 1975), p. 218.

⁶⁷³ An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley’s Journal, April 22 in 1738: *Works* 1, 90.

⁶⁷⁴ W. Stephen Gunter, *The Limits of “Love Divine”: John Wesley’s Response to Antinomianism and Enthusiasm* (Nashville TN: Kingswood, 1989), p. 274.

⁶⁷⁵ Sermon XXXVI, 3, 2: *Works* 5, 465; also see Frank Baker, ed., *The Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984ff), 2: 41.

⁶⁷⁶ The Principles of A Methodist Father explained II. 3. (3): *Works* 8, 830.

⁶⁷⁷ Collin W. Williams, *John Wesley’s Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), p.181.

⁶⁷⁸ Cf. William Ragsdale Cannon, *The Theology of John Wesley: With Special Reference to the Doctrine of Justification* (Lanham and London: University Press of America, 1974), p. 248.

⁶⁷⁹ Minutes of Some Late Conversations I: *Works* 8, 279. His statement is similar to James Arminius. “The external instrument is the word of God; *the internal one is faith* yielded to the word preached. For the word does not sanctify, only as it is preached, unless the faith be added by which the hearts of men are purified” (my emphasis). James Arminius, *The Writings of James Arminius* (3 Vols.), tr. from *the Latin* by J. Nichols

He emphasised faith as the only condition for sanctification as follows:

We are sanctified as well as justified by faith...Exactly as we are justified by faith, so are we sanctified by faith. Faith is the condition, and the only condition, of sanctification, exactly as it is of justification. It is the condition: None is sanctified but he that believes; without faith no man is sanctified. And it is the only condition: This alone is sufficient for sanctification. Every one that believes is sanctified, whatever else he has or has not.⁶⁸⁰

Justifying faith and sanctifying faith are different from each other in terms of emphasis. While the former is “a sure trust and confidence that Christ died for my sins,”⁶⁸¹ the latter is the conviction;

First, that God hath promised it (entire sanctification) in the Holy Scripture...secondly, that what God hath promised he is able to perform...thirdly, a divine evidence and conviction that he is able and willing to do it now.⁶⁸²

God can give people “*in a moment* such a faith in the blood of his Son, as translated them out of darkness into light, out of sin and fear into holiness and happiness”⁶⁸³ (italics are my emphasis).

That faith is expanded to the means of sanctification as well as the means of justification can be said to be Wesley’s theological contribution.

3.2.8.3 Justification and Sanctification⁶⁸⁴

In contrast to the Church of England, which views justification as “the same thing with sanctification, or as something consequent upon it,” Wesley regarded justification as

(Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956), 2: 120. Given the similarity between the two statements, Wesley’s view on faith as an instrument of sanctification seems to be influenced by Arminius’. With respect to the relationship between them, Luke L. Keeper, Jr. notes that Wesley “knew of Arminius through Hugo Grotius’ *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum*” (1725) and the works of Simon Episcopius (1741), who was “both the student of Arminius at Leiden University and the chief spokesman for the Remonstrant party at the Synod of Dort.” See his “Characteristics of Wesley’s Arminianism,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 22 (1987): 89.

⁶⁸⁰ Sermon XLIII. Scripture Way of Salvation, 3, 3: *Works* 6, 49.

⁶⁸¹ Sermon V. Justification by Faith 4, 2: *Works* 5: 60.

⁶⁸² Sermon XLIII. Scripture Way of Salvation, 3, 14-16: *Works* 6, 52-53.

⁶⁸³ Journal April 23, 1738: *Works* 1, 91. Wesley realized this from his experience at Aldersgate. See 3.1.3 “His Conversion at Aldersgate” in this thesis.

⁶⁸⁴ Considering the change of Wesley’s viewpoint of the relationship between justification and sanctification according to his career, Randy, L. Maddox notes the following: Wesley confused justification with sanctification before 1739 and since then, he understood justification as a relational change, and sanctification as a real change. From 1771, he distinguished initial justification and final justification. *Responsible Grace*, pp.170.

“wholly distinct from sanctification, and necessarily antecedent to it.”⁶⁸⁵ Harshly criticizing Luther for his ignorance of sanctification,⁶⁸⁶ he also charged the Roman Church for confusing sanctification with justification.⁶⁸⁷ For Wesley, sanctification is “in some degree, the immediate fruit of justification but, nevertheless, is a distinct gift of God,” and has a totally different nature from justification.⁶⁸⁸ While justification implies “what God does for us through his Son,” sanctification “what he works in us by his Spirit.”⁶⁸⁹ While the former is deliverance “from the accusation brought against us by the law”⁶⁹⁰ and “pardon, the forgiveness of sins” on the basis of Christ’s atonement,⁶⁹¹ the latter is “a *real* as well as a *relative* change...inwardly renewed by the power of God.”⁶⁹² By the former we are delivered “from the guilt of sin,” and brought back “to the favor of God,” by the latter “from the power and root of sin,” and renovated “to the image of God.”⁶⁹³

Wesley explicated the new birth, which is a part of sanctification as its beginning, in comparison with justification.⁶⁹⁴ “The being born of God was all one with the being justified; that the new birth and justification were only different expressions, denoting the same thing.” In accordance with his viewpoint, in 1762, Wesley criticized Thomas Maxfield for separating justification from the new birth.⁶⁹⁵ The new birth and justification are given to every believer “in one and the same moment.” At the same time “his sins are blotted out, and he is born again of God.”⁶⁹⁶ He depicted the distinction between them as follows.

Justification implies only a relative, the new birth a real, change. God in justifying us does something *for* us; in begetting us again, he does the work *in* us. The former changes our outward relation to God, so that of enemies we become children; by the latter our inmost souls are changed, so that of sinners we become saints.⁶⁹⁷

⁶⁸⁵ Journal, Sept. 13, 1739: *Works* 1, 224.

⁶⁸⁶ Sermon CVII, ‘On God’s Vineyard’ I, 5. “Who wrote more ably than Martin Luther on justification by faith alone? And who was more ignorant of the doctrine of sanctification, or more confused in his conceptions of it?”

⁶⁸⁷ Sermon CVII, ‘On God’s Vineyard’ 1, 5: *Works* 7, 204.

⁶⁸⁸ Sermon V. 2. 1 : *Works* 5, 56.

⁶⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹⁰ Sermon V. 2. 2: *Works* 5, 56.

⁶⁹¹ Sermon V. 2. 5. *Works* 5, 57.

⁶⁹² Sermon XLIII.1.4: *Works* 8, 45.

⁶⁹³ Sermon LXXXV. On Working out our own Salvation, 2,1: *Works* 6, 509.

⁶⁹⁴ Sermon XIX. 2 : *Works* 5, 224.

⁶⁹⁵ Journal Oct. 29, 1762: *Works* 3, 119. “...a justified man is not in Christ, is *not born of God*, is not a new creature...cannot grow in grace” (my emphasis).

⁶⁹⁶ Sermon XIX. 1: *Works* 5, 223.

⁶⁹⁷ Sermon XIX. 2: *Works* 5, 224.

Wesley placed justification before the new birth in the order of thinking. “We first conceive his wrath to be turned away, and then his Spirit to work in our hearts.”⁶⁹⁸ The new birth is done by the incomprehensible work of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁹⁹ Wesley allowed “that at the very moment of justification, we are *born again*: In that instant we experience inner change from the image of the devil to the image of God.”⁷⁰⁰

In regard to the similarities between justification and sanctification, Wesley stated, God not only justifies but also sanctifies “all them that believe in him.”⁷⁰¹ In justification the saints “were created” after the image of God and in sanctification they are “made righteous and holy” in it.⁷⁰² For Wesley, justification does not supersede sanctification, nor does sanctification supersede justification. “God has joined these together, and it is not for man to put them asunder.”⁷⁰³ He emphasised that we should be careful of depreciating justification by exalting entire sanctification.⁷⁰⁴ The blessings of justification should be mentioned before speaking of entire sanctification.

With respect to the relationship between final justification and sanctification, Wesley claimed that sanctification is prior to final justification, while repentance is antecedent to initial justification.⁷⁰⁵ True holiness cannot precede faith.⁷⁰⁶ Both inward and outward holiness subsequent on faith are “the ordinary, stated condition of final justification.”⁷⁰⁷ He stated, “It is undoubtedly true, that nothing avails for our final salvation without *καὶνὴ κτίσις* “a new creation,” and consequent thereon, a sincere, uniform keeping of the commandments of God.”⁷⁰⁸ This statement seems almost like salvation by regeneration and works.⁷⁰⁹ Wesley’s view that we should make an effort for sanctification seems pertinent in the sense that it awakens our responsibility for our salvation.⁷¹⁰

⁶⁹⁸ Sermon XLV.1: *Works* 6, 66.

⁶⁹⁹ Sermon XLV. 2, 2. “...the precise manner how it is done, how the Holy Spirit works thus in the soul, neither thou nor the wisest of the children of men is able to explain”: *Works* 8, 68.

⁷⁰⁰ Sermon. XIV.3.2: *Works* 5, 169.

⁷⁰¹ Sermon XX.2.12: *Works* 5, 241.

⁷⁰² Sermon XX.2.12: *Works* 5, 241.

⁷⁰³ Sermon CVII. ‘On God’s Vineyard’ 1, 8: *Works* 7, 205.

⁷⁰⁴ Minutes of Some Late Conversations II Q. 20 and, its Answer: *Works* 8, 284.

⁷⁰⁵ A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Part I, 2, 2: *Works* 8, 50-51.

⁷⁰⁶ A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Part I, 2, 2: *Works* 8, 51.

⁷⁰⁷ A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Part I, 2, 8: *Works* 8, 56.

⁷⁰⁸ A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Horne 2, 7: *Works* 9, 115.

⁷⁰⁹ Cf. Gordon Stanley Dicker, *The Concept Simul Iustus Et Peccator in Relation to the Thought of Luther, Wesley and Bonhoeffer, and Its Significance for A Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Th. D. diss., Union Theological Seminary, An Arbor: UMI, 1971), p.68.

⁷¹⁰ Maddox also claims that for Wesley our growth “was not automatic- we must nurture a continuing responsiveness to God’s progressive empowering grace.” *op. cit.*, p.153.

As Tyron Inbody aptly puts it,⁷¹¹ Wesley explicated the relationship between justification and sanctification in “the most subtle and complex” manner, compared with other theologians. According to this clear distinction between them, his view was closer to Calvin’s than Luther’s in which justification was deemed to comprise sanctification.⁷¹²

3.2.8.4 Assurance and Sanctification

Colin W. Williams stated that for Wesley, assurance is not necessary for salvation.⁷¹³ His view was criticized by Kisker in the sense that for Wesley, salvation means both salvation from God’s wrath (justification) and salvation from sin (sanctification).⁷¹⁴ Scott Kisker made Williams’ statement clearer, “assurance is necessary for inward holiness” though it is not utterly necessary for justification.⁷¹⁵ Kisker’s view seems pertinent given that salvation implies justification and sanctification. Granted that salvation means only God’s acceptance of a sinner, Williams’ view will also be relevant, for Wesley noted that those without assurance of justification, who have the faith of a servant, are acceptable to God.⁷¹⁶ If we define salvation as freedom from both outward and inward sin, assurance accompanying the witness of both the Spirit and our spirit will be necessary to our salvation, for it comprises both justification and sanctification. Accordingly, in a broad sense of salvation, Kisker’s view is germane, but in a narrow sense, Williams’ is also relevant. Let us then examine Wesley’s statement on this issue.

Wesley described assurance as “the common privilege of real Christians” like entire sanctification.⁷¹⁷ Assurance can be identified with the evidence of things unseen.⁷¹⁸ In a letter to his brother Charles (1747), explicit assurance was described as “the proper Christian faith, which purifieth the heart and overcometh the world.”⁷¹⁹ In a letter to Mr. Tompson on 18 February 1756, it was stated that a man in a state of justification may not have a clear assurance.⁷²⁰ In a letter to Dr. Rutherford in 1768, “disorder of body or

⁷¹¹ “Wesley offered one of the most subtle and complex understandings of the relationship between justification and sanctification that has been offered in Western theology.” Tyron Inbody, “Where United Methodists and Presbyterians Differs on Sanctification,” *Journal of Theology* 105 (2001): 76.

⁷¹² Gordon Stanley Dicker, *op. cit.*, p. 66. Some charged Wesley that “he had returned to the popish doctrine of salvation by faith and works.”

⁷¹³ Colin W. Williams, *John Wesley’s Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), p. 112.

⁷¹⁴ Scott Kisker, “Justified But Unregenerate? The Relationship of Assurance to Justification and Regeneration in the Thought of John Wesley,” *Wesleyan Theological Society*, Vol. 28, no.1-2 (1993): 55-56.

⁷¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 52.

⁷¹⁶ *Works*, 12, 472. “The Spirit’s witnessing that we are accepted cannot be the faith whereby we are accepted.” “A conviction that we are justified cannot be implied in justifying faith.”

⁷¹⁷ Letter LI. To His Brother Charles: *Works* 12, 112.

⁷¹⁸ “I think a divine conviction of pardon is directly implied in the evidence, or conviction, of things unseen.” Letter DXLIX. To Mr. Richard Tompson, July 25, 1755: *Works* 12, 468.

⁷¹⁹ Letter LI. to His Brother Charles, Sep.22, 1745: *Works* 12, 112-113.

⁷²⁰ Letter DLI: *Works* 12, 472. “YOU ask, 1. ‘Can a man who has not a clear assurance that his sins are

ignorance of the gospel promises” was considered as the cause of lack of assurance. In his sermon “On Faith” in 1788, assurance was depicted as the faith of a son.⁷²¹ For Wesley, in a narrow sense, the faith of a servant excludes justification, regeneration and assurance, but in a broad usage, it includes justification, regeneration but not assurance. Conversely, the faith of a child of God accompanies all of them.⁷²²

Considering the way to assurance of sanctification, Wesley equated it with the way that we gain assurance of justification.

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. And, First, by the witness. As, when we were justified, the Spirit bore witness with our spirit, that our sins were forgiven; so, when we were sanctified, he bore witness, that they were taken away.⁷²³

Assurance consists of two witnesses; one is the witness of our own spirit, the other is that of the Holy Spirit. The former is “the subjective side of this experience of grace” and the latter is “the objective ground of Christian assurance.”⁷²⁴ Wesley declared that no one can be a Christian believer till he has these two witnesses.⁷²⁵

First, the witness of our own spirit is indirect. In his Sermon on ‘The Witness of the Spirit, Discourse One’, Wesley employed a syllogism. First, the Bible stated that “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God”; secondly, “I am thus led by the Spirit of God”; in conclusion, therefore “I am a son of God.”⁷²⁶ In ‘Witness of the Spirit,

forgiven, be in a state of justification?” I believe there are some instances of it”: in a letter to James Morgan in 1768, Wesley stated, “Some may fear and love God, and yet not be clearly conscious of His favour: at least, they may not dare to affirm that their sins are forgiven”:

⁷²¹ Albert Outler, ed., *The Works of John Wesley: Sermons*, Vol. 3 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), p. 497.

⁷²² *Ibid.*, also see Kenneth J. Collins, *Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley’s Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p.142; Scott Kisker, “Justified But Unregenerate? The Relationship of Assurance to Justification and Regeneration in the Thought of John Wesley,” *Wesleyan Theological Society*, Vol.28, no. 1-2 (1993): 54.

⁷²³ Plain Account of Christian Perfection: *Works* 11, 420.

⁷²⁴ Outler, *Sermons*, 1:299.

⁷²⁵ Sermon LV. On The Trinity, 17: *Works* 6, 205. “But I know not how anyone can be a Christian believer till ‘he hath’ (as St. John speaks) ‘the witness in himself’: till ‘the Spirit of God witnesses with his spirit that he is a child of God’-that is, in effect, till God the Father has accepted him through the merits of God the Son.”

⁷²⁶ Sermon X. The Witness of the Spirit, Discourse One 1, 2: *Works* 5, 113.

Discourse Two’, he developed his theory in connection with the fruit of the Spirit by a similar syllogism.

The word of God says, every one who has the fruit of the Spirit is a child of God; experience, or inward consciousness, tells me, that I have the fruit of the Spirit; and hence I rationally conclude, “Therefore I am a child of God.”⁷²⁷

To put it simply, the witness of our own spirit is linked to our inward consciousness to perceive the fruit of the Spirit. Here inward consciousness means our conscience or reason or understanding.⁷²⁸ The inward fruit of the Spirit like “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance” are the immediate results of his testimony. The outward fruit of the Spirit are “the doing good to all men; the doing no evil to any; and the walking in the light, — a zealous, uniform obedience to all the commandments of God.”⁷²⁹ They are equated with the testimony of our own spirit. This statement can be summarized as that the marks of the new birth are faith, hope, love, and obedience to the commandments of God.

Secondly, the witness of the Spirit offers us the assurance of the adoption of sons and an earnest of our everlasting inheritance, and creates a sense of the paternal love of God in us.⁷³⁰ Our crying, “Abba, Father” is the witness of the Spirit of our adoption as the children of God.⁷³¹ His witness is necessary, especially when Satan tempts us into various doubts. Without His witness, the work of sanctification could not be discerned nor could it subsist.⁷³²

On dissimilarity and similarity between the witness of the Spirit of justification and sanctification, Wesley gave the following description. When we were justified, the Spirit bore witness that “our sins were forgiven,” while when we were sanctified, he did “that they were taken away.”⁷³³ Like that of justification, the witness of the Spirit of sanctification is also “not always clear at first” or always the same afterward, rather

⁷²⁷ Sermon XI. The Witness of the Spirit, Discourse Two, 2, 6: *Works* 5, 125.

⁷²⁸ Sermon XII. The Witness of Our Own Spirit, 7: *Works* 5, 137. A good conscience requires four items: first, a correct understanding of his holy will, which is revealed in the Word of God, secondly, knowledge of ourselves, our hearts and lives, our inward tempers and outward conversation, thirdly, an agreement of our hearts and lives, including our tempers and conversation, thoughts, words, and works, with the written Word of God as the rule of our conscience, fourthly, an inward perception of this agreement with our rule. Collins refers to three items except the fourth element, inward perception of the agreement with our rule. Kenneth J. Collins, *op. cit.*, p.133.

⁷²⁹ Sermon X. The Witness of the Spirit, Discourse One 2, 12: *Works* 5, 122.

⁷³⁰ Letter to the Right Reverend The Lord Bishop of Gloucester: ‘The Operation of the Holy Ghost’: *Works* 9, 166.

⁷³¹ *Ibid.*

⁷³² Plain Account of Christian Perfection: *Works* 11, 420.

⁷³³ *Ibid.*

“sometimes stronger and sometimes fainter” and “sometimes is withdrawn.” Yet, generally, the witness of the Spirit of sanctification is “clear and steady” as that of justification.⁷³⁴

In terms of the degree of Christian maturity, Wesley explicated the witness on three levels:

“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.”⁷³⁵

He warned of two extremities. One is to “rest in any supposed testimony of the Spirit which is separate from the fruit of it.”⁷³⁶ The other is to “rest in any supposed fruit of the Spirit without the witness.”⁷³⁷ Though there may be a degree of human virtue before justification and sanctification, they cannot be identified with the fruit of the Spirit after those. Both the testimony of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit are necessary ingredients for assurance. To rest only on the witness of the Spirit results in enthusiasm or fanaticism, while to stress the fruit of the Spirit is inclined to formalism, legalism, or self-justification.

Still, Wesley’s emphasis on assurance by the witnesses of both the Spirit and our spirit seems quite subjective in contrast to “the objective assurance conveyed by the Word and Sacraments,” in the sense that it is difficult for us to discern them though the two witnesses are referred to by the Bible.⁷³⁸

3.2.8.5 Perseverance and Sanctification

In “Serious Thoughts upon the Perseverance of the Saints,” Wesley stoutly claimed the possibility of loss of our salvation in eight terms.⁷³⁹ First, even the saint who has the witness and the fruit of the Spirit and lives by faith in Christ may fall away according to Ezek 18:4-26; 33:13.⁷⁴⁰ Conversely, those who fell away may recover their faith and favour according to Psalm 89:30-35.⁷⁴¹ Secondly, one who has the faith and a good conscience may “so fall from God as to perish everlastingly” according to 1 Timothy 1:18, 19.⁷⁴² The biblical statement, “He that believeth shall be saved” was interpreted as the meaning that if he continues in faith, he shall be saved, but if he continues in unbelief,

⁷³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁵ Telford, *Works*, 5:215 (to Joseph Benson, Dec. 28, 1770).

⁷³⁶ Sermon XI. The Witness of the Spirit, Discourse Two 5, 3: *Works* 5, 133.

⁷³⁷ Sermon XI. The Witness of the Spirit, Discourse Two 5, 4: *Works* 5, 133.

⁷³⁸ Cf. Collin W. Williams, *John Wesley’s Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), p. 203.

⁷³⁹ Serious Thoughts upon the Perseverance of the Saints, 2 and 5: *Works* 10, 285.

⁷⁴⁰ Serious Thoughts upon the Perseverance of the Saints 5 and 6: *Works* 10, 286-287.

⁷⁴¹ Serious Thoughts upon the Perseverance of the Saints 7: *Works* 10, 286.

⁷⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 287.

“shall be damned.”⁷⁴³ John 3:36 and 5:24 were interpreted in the same manner. Belief should be continually kept as Jesus said, “Verily I say unto you, if a man keeps my saying, he shall never see death” (John 8:51). Thirdly, those who are grafted into the good olive tree may so fall from God as to perish everlastingly according to Romans 11:17, 20-22.⁷⁴⁴ That “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance” means the election of the Jewish, not individual Jews. God’s faithfulness implies this. God “will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able to bear.” (1 Cor 10:13), if you put your trust in him and do not quench the fire of the Spirit, be not disobedient unto God (2 Thess 3:2, 3; 1Thess 5:19; 1Cor1:8, 9). “Unless you fulfil the condition, you cannot attain the promise.”⁷⁴⁵ Wesley construed Paul’s exclamation as the description of Paul’s own perseverance only, not of Christians in general. “I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:38, 39).⁷⁴⁶ His interpretation seems implausible given that St. Paul used ‘us’, which surely includes the Roman saints of Rom 8:12. Fourthly, they who are branches of the true vine of Christ may fall from God “as to perish everlastingly,” unless they do bear its fruits, according to John 15:1-6.⁷⁴⁷ Conversely, those who obey Him shall never perish according to (John 10:27-29).⁷⁴⁸ In Jesus’ prayer, “Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are one”(John 17:11), “they” were interpreted as the twelve Apostles, not all believers.⁷⁴⁹ Fifthly, “those who so effectually know Christ, as by that knowledge to have escaped the pollutions of the world, may yet fall back into those pollutions, and perish everlastingly” according to 2 Peter 2:20, 21.⁷⁵⁰ At the same time, we may be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Sixthly, “those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy may so fall as to perish everlastingly. Seventhly, those who live by faith may so fall from God as to perish everlastingly. Believers may draw back and it does not please God (Heb 10:38). The expression that “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee” should be related to “Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as we have,” because the latter is the condition of the former. Eighthly, those who are sanctified by Christ’s blood “may so fall from God as to perish everlastingly” according to Heb 10:26-

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 288.

⁷⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

⁷⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

⁷⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

⁷⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

⁷⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 291-292.

⁷⁴⁹ I do not agree with this view. See Paragraph 3.3.2.2 Negative Assessment no. 9 of this chapter.

⁷⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 292-293.

29, if he wilfully sin, tread under foot the Son of God.⁷⁵¹ He who is a child of God today may be a child of the devil tomorrow, if they do not continue to believe, for “the devil is the father of them that believe not.”⁷⁵²

Seeing what we observed above, Woodrow W. Whidden’s statement seems probable that for Wesley, “a wilful, habitual indulgence in sin of any type will sooner or later cause the loss of salvation,”⁷⁵³ whereas an effort to pursue a holy life in God’s grace will result in conservation until the end. For Wesley, perseverance is totally conditional because it asks our sustained response to God’s promise. It seems a clear synergism that human efforts cooperate with God’s grace to accomplish His promise of salvation.

3.2.9 Good Works and Sanctification

3.2.9.1 Good Works and Justification

In his Journal of 1739, Wesley noted initial justification by faith only, including no good works.

“Neither our own holiness nor good works, are any part of the cause of our justification; but that the death and righteousness of Christ are the whole and sole cause of it...I believe, *no* good work can be *previous* to justification nor consequently a condition of it; but that we are justified (being till that hour ungodly, and therefore incapable of doing any good work) by faith alone, faith without works, faith (though producing all, yet) including no good work (italics are my emphasis).⁷⁵⁴

Of course, without repentance and its fruits, a man cannot be justified. In this sense, they are necessary for justification, but because they are not regarded as good works until they are justified, only faith is viewed as necessary to present justification.⁷⁵⁵

In the relationship with final justification, good works are necessary for final justification. He mentioned, “nothing avail for our final salvation without *καινή κτίσις* a new creation, and consequent thereon, a sincere, uniform keeping of the commandments of God.”⁷⁵⁶ In his Sermon on Scripture Way of Salvation in 1765, Wesley held, “if a man

⁷⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 294-296.

⁷⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 297-298.

⁷⁵³ Cf. Woodrow W. Whidden, “Wesley on Imputation: A Truly Reckoned Reality or Antinomian Polemical Wreckage,” *The Asbury Theological Journal* Vol. 52, no. 2 (1997): 68.

⁷⁵⁴ Journal, Sept. 13, 1739: *Works* 5, 224-225.

⁷⁵⁵ A letter to the Rev. Dr. Horne in 1762: *Works* 9:111.

⁷⁵⁶ A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Horne 2, 7: *Works* 9, 115.

willingly neglect them, he cannot reasonably expect to be justified at all.”⁷⁵⁷ In his interpretation of the twenty fifth chapter of Matthew, Wesley again stated, “I still believe, no good works can be done before justification. Yet I believe, (and that without the least self-contradiction,) that final salvation is “by works as a condition.”⁷⁵⁸ Though his statement is based on the Bible, it seems doubtful whether it may be harmonious with justification by faith in the perspective of Reformed theology.⁷⁵⁹ In my opinion, we are justified by faith working with love, which means that faith produces good works.⁷⁶⁰ Accordingly, the judgment by our good works according to Matthew chapter 25 does not contradict justification by faith, for we were forgiven by faith, and our works are considered as the fruit and evidence of our faith. The main point lies in the fact that Wesley regarded works as an indirectly necessary condition for final justification, beyond the simple evidence of living faith.

Such a view of good works caused the critique that Wesley turned too closely to Roman Catholicism. Especially, the Countess of Huntingdon charged that Wesley’s view was “popery unmasked.”⁷⁶¹ Wesley’s emphasis on good works was construed as “a foundation of justification other than Jesus Christ.”⁷⁶² In the face of this critique, he signed the declaration that it did not mean “to favour justification” by works but “by works as a condition.”⁷⁶³ Anyway, Wesley’s view of good works seems to be more intensified than Calvin’s view. Calvin regarded good works as the fruits of justification⁷⁶⁴ and did not say that “we can be saved without good works.” Dr. C. W. Suh also mentions that, “Only those who do God’s will receive eternal life.”⁷⁶⁵ Calvin did not describe good works as a necessary condition for justification, but an evidence of election and assurance.⁷⁶⁶

Briefly, as Collins aptly puts it, for Wesley, good works do not produce the Christian

⁷⁵⁷ *Works* 6, 48. Though this is true to initial justification and final one, as I explained above, repentance and its fruits before justification are not regarded as good works.

⁷⁵⁸ Remarks on Mr. Hill’s Farrago Double-Distilled 6: *Works* 10, 432.

⁷⁵⁹ For the difference between Wesley and Calvin on this issue, see 3.2.4.2 Positional Sanctification: Justification in this thesis.

⁷⁶⁰ “But what is the faith to which he attributes justification? That ‘which worketh by love:’ which is the same with the ‘new creature,’ and implies in it the keeping the commandments of God. A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Horne 2, 7: *Works* 9, 115.

⁷⁶¹ Luke Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley*, M. A, 3 of 3 Vols. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1871), p. 73. Quoted by Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

⁷⁶² Earl Crow, *John Wesley’s Conflict with Antinomianism in Relation to the Moravians and Calvinists* (Ph. D. diss., The University of Manchester, An Arbor, UMI, 1964), p. 227.

⁷⁶³ Minutes of Several Conversations Q.77 and the Answer: *Works* 8, 337; Tyerman, *Life*, 3:100: cf. *ibid.*

⁷⁶⁴ Calvin, *Comm.* on 1Jn. 3:7.

⁷⁶⁵ Chul-Won Suh, *The Creation-Mediatorship of Jesus Christ. A Study in the Relation of the Incarnation and the Creation* (Ph.D. diss. Amsterdam, 1982), p.93.

⁷⁶⁶ *Institutes* 3.16.1, “We dream not of a faith which is devoid of good works, nor of a justification which can exist without them: the only difference is, that while we acknowledge that faith and works are necessarily connected, we, however, place justification in faith, not in works.”

life, but are the necessary fruits of the living faith that justifies us, and the indirect condition for justification.⁷⁶⁷

3.2.9.2 Good Works and Sanctification

For Wesley, our good works consist of two aspects. One is the works of piety and the other is the works of mercy. The former include all kinds of prayers, participating in the supper of the Lord and reading, meditating, hearing, and studying the Bible and “fasting or abstinence.”⁷⁶⁸ The latter include “feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, entertaining the stranger, visiting those that are in prison, or sick, or variously afflicted,” and “the endeavouring to instruct the ignorant, to awaken the stupid sinner, to quicken the lukewarm, to confirm the wavering, to comfort the feebleminded, to succour the tempted, or contribute in any manner to the saving of souls from death.”⁷⁶⁹

On the relationship between good works and sanctification, Wesley explicated it as follows. First, both of them are not the same in the sense that sanctification is not an outward thing like “the doing no harm and the doing good.” Like the new birth, it is not an outward change “from a vicious to (what is called) a virtuous life either.”⁷⁷⁰ Good works are the fruits flowing out from the new birth and justification.⁷⁷¹ Secondly, good works are necessary for sanctification, given that “if a man willingly neglect them, he cannot reasonably expect that he shall ever be sanctified; he cannot grow in grace, in the image of God,” nor “retain the grace,” nor “continue in faith, or in the favour of God.”⁷⁷²

Good works are “only necessary conditionally, if there be time and opportunity for them, otherwise a man may be sanctified without them.” Conversely, “faith is *immediately* and *directly* necessary to sanctification” (italics are his),⁷⁷³ for the moment a man believes, “with or without those fruits, yea, with more or less of this repentance, he is sanctified.”⁷⁷⁴ Without faith, repentance and its fruits, good works do “not at all avail” for sanctification.⁷⁷⁵ In this sense, good works are “only remotely necessary” for sanctification, whereas faith is a direct, sufficient, and absolute condition for sanctification.

Wesley’s viewpoint of good works for sanctification differs from Calvin’s in two

⁷⁶⁷ Kenneth J. Collins, *Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley’s Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p.162.

⁷⁶⁸ Sermon XLIII, ‘The Scriptural Way to Salvation’ 3.9: *Works* 6, 51.

⁷⁶⁹ Sermon XLIII, ‘The Scriptural Way to Salvation’ 3.10: *Works* 6, 51.

⁷⁷⁰ Journal, Sept. 13, 1739: *Works* 1, 225.

⁷⁷¹ Cf. Kenneth J. Collins, *Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley’s Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p.162.

⁷⁷² Sermon XLIII, ‘The Scriptural Way to Salvation’ 3, 4: *Works* 6, 49.

⁷⁷³ Sermon XLIII, ‘The Scriptural Way to Salvation’ 3.13: *Works* 6, 52: cf. Kenneth J. Collins, *Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley’s Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p.168.

⁷⁷⁴ Sermon XLIII, ‘The Scriptural Way to Salvation’ 3.13: *Works* 6, 52.

⁷⁷⁵ Sermon XLIII, ‘The Scriptural Way to Salvation’ 3.2 and 3: *Works* 6, 48-49.

respects. One is that for Calvin, good works are the secondary “evidence and support,” not the condition. The other is that they are evidence and support of “election and assurance,” not the necessary condition of sanctification.⁷⁷⁶

3.2.9.3 An Antinomian and Legalist (Moralist)?

The Reformed theologians have felt the fear that emphasis on good works could cause nomism and would abolish full trust in Christ. In contrast to them, Wesley seriously felt the threat of antinomianism in his time. Generally, antinomians stressed the abolition of the law and the uselessness of good works in our justification and sanctification because believers are justified and sanctified only by faith.

Peculiarly, antinomians denied the degrees of holiness, i.e., its increase or decrease. According to their opinion, because from the time when one is justified, he is wholly sanctified, his holiness does not increase nor decrease, “from that hour, to the day of his death.” To put it in another way, as entire justification and entire sanctification happen in the same moment, after that time, neither of them can increase or decrease.⁷⁷⁷ “The moment we are justified, we are as pure in heart as ever we shall be. A newborn babe is as pure in heart as a father in Christ.”⁷⁷⁸ Accordingly, we do not need to struggle in order to keep the Law for sanctification to increase our righteousness and holiness. A believer does good works freely, not because he is mandatory to grow in holiness.⁷⁷⁹ Conversely, Wesley understood that he should continually increase in holiness through his constant obedience to the law in grace since justification. Justification is only positional sanctification and regeneration is the beginning of sanctification. Both of them are not enough for Christians.⁷⁸⁰

Christologically and soteriologically, antinomians denied the necessity of good works for salvation. They taught “that Christ had done, as well as suffered all; that his righteousness being imputed to us, we need none of our own; that seeing there was so much righteousness and holiness in him, there needs none more in us.” They also made void the law by Solifidianism and denied the need for private prayer and self-examination.⁷⁸¹ They regarded those who taught different things from theirs as “legal preachers.”⁷⁸² Wesley looked upon this as “a blow at the root” of all holiness and “the masterpiece of Satan.” His awareness of such a menace of antinomianism led him to mordantly refute them with these contentions. First, Christians “can neither be made nor

⁷⁷⁶ Comm. on 1 Jn. 3:7 (p.53); cf. *Institutes* 1.25.21.

⁷⁷⁷ Dialogue between an Antinomian and His Friend, *Works* 10, p. 275.

⁷⁷⁸ Dialogue between an Antinomian and His Friend, *Works* 10, p. 276.

⁷⁷⁹ Zinzendorf, *Sixteen Discourse*, pp. 61-62.

⁷⁸⁰ See 3.2.4 The Stages of Sanctification.

⁷⁸¹ Plain Account of Christian Perfection, Answer to Q. 34: *Works* 11, 430-431.

⁷⁸² Albert C. Outler, ed., *John Wesley* (London: Oxford, 1964), p. 380.

called good or gentle”, “without having goodness or gentleness in him.”⁷⁸³ Secondly, without real change, “neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, . . . nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”⁷⁸⁴ Along the same line, he also criticized Moravians for their antinomistic tendency, when they claimed, “No works; no law; no commandments,” following Luther.⁷⁸⁵ For Wesley, “the gospel continually leads us to a more exact fulfilling of the law” instead of abolishing the law in our life.⁷⁸⁶ Nobody can be a true Christian without refraining from all evil, using all means of grace, and doing good works to other people, when he meets the opportunity to do so.⁷⁸⁷

On the other hand, Wesley spoke against Calvinism for the reason that “it fostered antinomianism” by letting “people rest in their election.”⁷⁸⁸ Of course, Calvinists urged believers to accomplish the commandments of God by the third use of the law. Nonetheless, because they neglected “the necessity of keeping the moral law for salvation,” Wesley regarded Calvinists as “moral antinomians.”⁷⁸⁹ He seemed to miss Calvin’s view of good works. Calvin did not acknowledge salvation by faith without good works, though he did not claim good works as the condition of salvation.⁷⁹⁰ Hence, Wesley’s charge against Calvinism seems rather improbable.

Is Wesley then a legalist? In a strict sense, a legalist may be said to be a person who claims that we must keep the Law in order to be justified or accepted before God.⁷⁹¹ The Calvinist Methodists charged Wesley with being a legalist, when Wesley stated that he that feareth God and worketh righteousness . . . is accepted of him.⁷⁹² K. J. Collins views this as the misunderstanding of Wesley’s doctrine of justification⁷⁹³ because for Wesley, good works are necessary for justification and do not justify man. For Wesley, initial

⁷⁸³ Second Dialogue between an Antinomian and His Friend, *Works* 10, p. 283.

⁷⁸⁴ Albert C. Outler, ed., *John Wesley* (London: Oxford, 1964), p. 382.

⁷⁸⁵ Journal, June 15, 1741: *Works* 1,316. The Moravian claim is harmonious with Zane C. Hodges’ definition of an antinomian, who would be “one who held that there are no laws governing Christian behaviour so that the Christian is entirely free from commandments and binding obligations”⁷⁸⁵ Zane C. Hodges, “Legalism: The Real Thing,” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 9 (1996): 25.

⁷⁸⁶ Sermon XXV, Sermon on the Mount, V, 2, 3: *Works* 5, 313-314.

⁷⁸⁷ Albert C. Outler ed., *John Wesley* (London: Oxford, 1964), p. 379.

⁷⁸⁸ Luke L. Keefer, “Characteristics of Wesley’s Arminianism,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 22 (1987): 96; cf. K. J. Collins, *John Wesley: A Theological Journey* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), p.227.

⁷⁸⁹ W. Stephen Gunter, *The Limits of “Love Divine”: John Wesley’s Response to Antinomianism and Enthusiasm* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood, 1989), p.11.

⁷⁹⁰ *Institutes* 3.16.1.

⁷⁹¹ Cf. Zane C. Hodges defined legalism as the attempt to establish one’s own righteousness through completion of the law.⁷⁹¹ “Legalism: The Real Thing,” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*, Vol. 9, no. 2 (1996): 27.

⁷⁹² *Works* 8, 337.

⁷⁹³ K. J. Collins, *John Wesley: A Theological Journey* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), p.224; cf. W. Stephen Gunter is of the opinion that Wesley “avoided the pitfalls of both moralism and antinomianism” in his theology.

justification is only by faith in Christ. In this sense, Wesley is not a legalist. In a broad sense, a legalist may be described as a person who stresses “Christian responsibility to such an extent that obedience becomes more than the fruit or evidence of faith. Rather obedience comes to be seen as a constituent element of justifying faith.”⁷⁹⁴ In the latter sense, Wesley can be called a legalist, because he claimed that good works are conditionally necessary for final justification, while faith is the only immediate and direct condition for initial justification and entire sanctification.⁷⁹⁵ Still, he is different from a legalist like a Pelagian or a Jew, or a Catholic⁷⁹⁶ in the sense that he accentuated the necessity of grace to do good works and emphasised justification “not by the merit of works but by works as a condition” and God’s gift.⁷⁹⁷ In another sense, a legalist or moralist may signify a person who insists upon an outward conformity to a set rule for sanctification.⁷⁹⁸ In his Oxford days, Wesley stressed such rules as prohibition of smoking, card games, and dancing. It may be used as evidence that Wesley was a legalist. Nonetheless, all his life, his emphasis on sanctification is primarily laid on inward transformation into the image of God rather than outward change like the doing good. Accordingly, it is not easy to regard him as a moralist in this sense. Antinomians faulted him for moralism because Wesley emphasised the constant use of the means of grace and sincerely obeying Christ’s commandments.

3.2.10 The Sphere of Sanctification

3.2.10.1 The Church: Unity and Schism

Viewing the history of the Church of England, Wesley sarcastically criticized separatism

⁷⁹⁴ Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright, ed., *New Dictionary of Theology* (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1988), p.379.

⁷⁹⁵ Wesley’s view of good works was scholasticized to moralism by Fletcher, who emphasised that believers “must bring forth fruits of a lively faith” and only they “will be eternally justified in good works.” W. Stephen Gunter, *The Limits of “Love Divine”: John Wesley’s Response to Antinomianism and Enthusiasm* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood, 1989), p.275.

⁷⁹⁶ Catholics regard good works as a merit for justification and eternal life. “Si quis dixerit, hominis justificati bona opera ita esse dona Dei, ut non sint etiam bona ipsius justificati merita, aut ipsum justificatum bonis operibus...fiunt, non vere mereri augmentum gratiae, vitam aeternam et ipsius vitae aeternae... anathema sit” (p.324). “If any one says that the good works of one that is justified are in such manner the gifts of God, as that they are not also the good merits of him that is justified...do not truly merit increase of grace, eternal life, and the attainment of that eternal life...let him be anathema” (p.46). Sixth Session (13, Jan, 1547), Canon 32 in Rev. H. J. Schroeder, *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent: Original Text with English Translation* (St. Louis and London: B. Herder Book Co., 1941, fourth printing 1961), p. 324, 46.

⁷⁹⁷ *Works* 8, 337.

⁷⁹⁸ Zane C. Hodges mentions that “in ordinary jargon of evangelicalism legalism has come to mean an undue emphasis on rules—particularly rules of a negative kind,” though it is impertinent in St. Paul’s view. “Legalism: The Real Thing,” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* Vol. 9, no. 2 (1996): 21.

which had been prevalent in England. Though there had been several significant revivals of religion in England since the Reformation, generally, the English were little profited thereby because some serious separation consequently happened. They separated themselves from the Church of England. Among them were the Presbyterians, the Independents, the Anabaptists, and the Quakers. Their problem was that they did barely any good, except for their own communities. As a result, the people remained separated from one another and looked at each other with prejudice. This separation totally quenched the fire of national reformation.⁷⁹⁹

Deeming unity to be an indispensable element for the growth of the church in grace,⁸⁰⁰ Wesley endeavoured to keep unity. For example, seeing that Thomas Maxfield and George Bell caused contention and division by enthusiasm in London, he strongly warned them of their divisive spirit.⁸⁰¹ Though he could not withhold Bell's fanatic enthusiasm and Maxfield's separation,⁸⁰² by his efforts for unity, he could see that his other brethren were "all at peace and unity with each other" in his societies.⁸⁰³

However, he could not prevent his societies from being separated from the Church of England in 1784. He explained it by the fact that they did not "renounce her fundamental doctrines" nor "refuse to join in her public worship."⁸⁰⁴ It was not her original doctrines but "her orders and laws" that Wesley refused. He deemed the constitution of the Church of England the "rotten timber" as the main beams of a house, or a building burning with "the fire of love of the world."⁸⁰⁵ In order to live in the household of God, he continued praying extempore, forming societies, and permitting preachers who were not Episcopally ordained to administer the sacraments.⁸⁰⁶ The administration by the preachers ordained by him was necessary "because otherwise numberless souls must have perished."⁸⁰⁷ Subsequently, these led him to separate Methodism from the Church of England in 1784, which means Methodism became an independent denomination.⁸⁰⁸ For his denomination, Wesley revised the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty-Nine Articles. All of these were a transformation rather than a schism.

⁷⁹⁹ Sermon CXXXII. Preached on Monday, April 21, 1777, 2,13: *Works* 7, 428.

⁸⁰⁰ Journal Feb. 28, 1788: *Works* 4, 407.

⁸⁰¹ *Works* 3, 119-121.

⁸⁰² Luke Tyerman, *The life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley*, M.A 3 Vols. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1890), p. 438; also see W. Stephen Gunter, *The Limits of "Love Divine": John Wesley's Response to Antinomianism and Enthusiasm* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood, 1989), pp.218- 224.

⁸⁰³ Journal Apr. 30, 1788: *Works* 4, 415.

⁸⁰⁴ Letter to the Rev. Mr. Walker: *Works* 13, 195.

⁸⁰⁵ Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England* (London: Epworth Press, 1970, second edition 2000), p. 182.

⁸⁰⁶ *Works* 13, 196.

⁸⁰⁷ Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England* (London: Epworth Press, 1970, second edition 2000), p. 166.

⁸⁰⁸ *ibid.*, p. 218.

Wesley did not regard the establishment of his denomination as a schism. For him, denomination just meant independent ordination, not separation.⁸⁰⁹ He regarded separated worship, e.g., not attending the worship of the Church of England as the test of schism.⁸¹⁰ To avoid this type of schism, he asked the Methodists to “go to the church once on Sunday at least.”⁸¹¹ The preachers were asked immediately to “change every plan that would hinder their being at church at least two Sundays in four.”⁸¹² As a more essential problem, heresy was defined as “denying the Lord that bought them,” which results in destructive parties or sects.⁸¹³ Accordingly, Wesley was not to be condemned for schism defined as division from lack of love, to say nothing of heresy. In this manner, he faced the critique that his societies separated from the Church of England.

To justify his independent stance from her, Wesley suggested his view of the unavoidable case to separate from the church.

Suppose you could not remain in the Church of England without doing something which the word of God forbids, or omitting something which the word of God positively commands; if this were the case, (but blessed be God it is not,) you ought to separate from the Church of England.⁸¹⁴

He applied a similar principle to himself.

[I]f I could not continue united to any smaller society, Church, or body of Christians, without committing sin, without lying and hypocrisy, without preaching to others doctrines which I did not myself believe, I should be under an absolute necessity of separating from that society.⁸¹⁵

With such a line, Wesley allowed his members to have an independent service at Church Hours in case the Minister of the Church of England was “a notoriously wicked man” or “preached Socinianism, Arian or any equally pernicious doctrine.”⁸¹⁶ In this respect, avoiding sin, and preaching the pure doctrine of original sin, atonement and the Trinity⁸¹⁷

⁸⁰⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 256-282.

⁸¹⁰ *Works* 8, 236.

⁸¹¹ *Works* 8, 320.

⁸¹² *Ibid*.

⁸¹³ Sermon LXXV. On Schism 1, 8: *Works* 6, 402.

⁸¹⁴ Sermon LXXV. On Schism 1, 17: *Works* 6, p. 408.

⁸¹⁵ Sermon LXXV. On Schism 1, 17: *Works* 6, p. 409.

⁸¹⁶ *Works* 8,322.

⁸¹⁷ “If we give up this (the doctrine of original sin), we cannot defend either justification by the merits of Christ, or the renewal of our natures by his Spirit.” *Works* 9: 429; For Atonement, see *Letters* (Telford ed.) 6:297-99; for the Trinity, see *Works* 6: 199-206, especially 200; cf. Geoffrey Wainwright, “Schisms, Heresies & The Gospel: Wesleyan Reflections on Evangelical Truth & Ecclesial Unity,” in *Ancient & Post-modern*

are essential and fundamental issues of unity and separation. In a letter to John Newton on May 14, 1765, he reclassified “particular election and final perseverance” as an *opinion*, which is “compatible with love to Christ, and a work of grace,” in contrast to thirty years previously when he opposed predestination with all his might.⁸¹⁸ He also entitled “perfection” as only his opinion, “not subversive of the very foundation of Christian experience.” This attitude was for a union of evangelical preachers.⁸¹⁹ He urged a man to keep unity as far as he can. “Do not rashly tear asunder the sacred ties which unite you to any Christian society.”⁸²⁰

In conformity to his view of unity, he never tried to separate himself from the established church during his lifetime.⁸²¹

3.2.10.2 Social Sanctification

Wesley affirmed that Christianity is “essentially a social religion, and...to turn it into a solitary religion indeed is to destroy it.” Christianity “cannot subsist at all without society, -without living and conversing with other men.”⁸²² The gospel of Christ knows “no holiness but social holiness.”⁸²³ Of course, he did not renounce the individual religion that takes root in the deepest nook of the human heart, but emphasised that holy disposition, such as “mildness, gentleness, and long-suffering” cannot exist without communion with other men.⁸²⁴ What he censured is not a personal religion, but a solitary religion as reclusive monasticism. His recognition of the importance of communion among the believers enabled him to organize various societies as the class meeting, the bands, and the select societies for their spiritual growth and maturation. These organizations came to contribute to transform the society of England by checking and promoting their practice.⁸²⁵ Wesley thought that the way to accomplish social sanctification is to transform the individual.⁸²⁶ A changed society comes through “a changed individual.” In this line, he

Christianity: Paleo-Orthodoxy in the 21st Century: Essays in Honour of Thomas C. Oden, ed., by Kenneth Tanner & Christopher A. Hall (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2002), pp. 191-192.

⁸¹⁸ Journal May 14, 1765: *Works* 3, 211.

⁸¹⁹ Journal May 14, 1765: *Works* 3, 212.

⁸²⁰ Sermon LXXV. On Schism 1, 17: *Works* 6, p. 409.

⁸²¹ Cf. Martin Schmidt, “Wesley’s Place in Church History,” in *The Place of Wesley in the Christian Tradition* ed., by Kenneth E. Rowe (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc, 1976), p. 85.

⁸²² Sermon XXIV. Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on The Mount. Discourse IV, 1,1: *Works* 5, 296.

⁸²³ Hymns and Sacred Poems (1939), Preface, 4-5; cf. Black Robert Edwin notes, “For Wesley, holiness translated into social ethics, not private ecstasy.” *The Social Dimension of John Wesley’s Ministry as Related to His Personal Piety* (Ph. D. diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1984, An Arbor: UMI, 1987), p. 133.

⁸²⁴ Sermon XXIV. Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount. Discourse IV, 1, 3: *Works* 5, 297.

⁸²⁵ Cf. *Notes* on Romans 14:19.

⁸²⁶ David Guy, “John Wesley: Apostle of Social Holiness,” in *John Wesley: Contemporary Perspective* (London: Epworth, 1988), p. 116. “Wesley’s significance emerges when, and only when, the importance of moral transformation in the individual- and his immediate and sometimes widening circle- is given due

asserted, “you have nothing to do but save souls.” Then “the converted would press on towards that holiness” which would always result in “social holiness.”⁸²⁷ His assertion is harmonious with Christ’s instruction that Christians should play a role as the light and the salt of the world.⁸²⁸ Christians should season whatever is round about them. He has the duty to distribute whatever grace he has received from God to others. Through his “holy temper and word and work,” he influences them.⁸²⁹ Wesley’s view that the sufficiency of God’s grace enables us to overcome the sinfulness of both individual and society is quite optimistic.

With respect to the nature of social transformation, Wesley emphasised that it is a gift received moment by moment from God. At the same time, it also needs Christians’ complete obedience to God. For example, he believed that even slavery would be abolished by God through Christian obedience. “Go on; in the name of God and in the power of his might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it.”⁸³⁰

Howard A. Snyder comprehensively described Wesley’s actions for social transformation as follows:

Among other things, he agitated for prison, liquor, and labour reform; set up loan funds for the poor; campaigned against the slave trade and smuggling; opened a dispensary and gave medicines to the poor; worked to solve unemployment; and personally gave away considerable sums of money to persons in need.⁸³¹

We may add some items to the above as Ronald H. Stone summarized Wesley’s moral practice for social sanctification: “Evangelical preaching,” “education in class meetings, Methodist schools, Sunday schools,” “publication of books,” “criticism of war,” “arguing and writing for tax reform,” “preventing unnecessary pensions,” “criticism of selling of votes,” and “lobbying political leadership on behalf of abolition of slavery.”⁸³² Wesley made efforts to practise the will of God in almost all fields of his society. In this respect, R.

weight.”

⁸²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁸²⁸ Cf. R. George Eli, *Social Holiness: John Wesley’s Thinking on Christian Community and its Relationship to the Social Order* (New York etc.: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc, 1993), pp. 106-107. He similarly notes, “As light, Christian community witnesses to society as model, exemplar, illuminator, revealer, and identifier” (p.106) and “as salt and leaven, Christian community is to exert a tangible influence in society” (p. 107).

⁸²⁹ Sermon XXIV, Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on The Mount. Discourse IV, 1, 7: *Works* 5, 299.

⁸³⁰ Letter DCCCXCIX. February 26, 1791: *Works* 13, 153.

⁸³¹ Howard A. Snyder, “John Wesley, A Man For Our Times,” *Christian Today* 16 (1972): 9.

⁸³² Ronald H. Stone, *John Wesley’s Life and Ethics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), pp.227-228; “After Lord Mansfield’s ruling in 1772 made slavery illegal in England” (p. 189).

George Eli's mention that Wesley's social holiness as "the outward thrust of the kingdom into society" is not only "evidenced by good works" but also requires "critical responses and prophetic action from the Christian community" seems relevant.⁸³³

As we observed above, the characteristic principles of Wesley's notion of social sanctification can be summarized in three ways: first, Christianity is a social religion, secondly, social reformation comes through individual transformation, thirdly, it is a gift given by God, which concomitantly asks our obedience to God's command, e.g., legal action,⁸³⁴ lobbying, arguing and criticizing for important issues. It is noteworthy that Wesley lobbied whenever it was necessary.

3.3 Abstract and Assessment

3.3.1 Abstract

According to John Wesley, sin means human voluntary transgression against a known law. Nobody descends into hell simply because of original sin, but man does so due to his own sinful deeds. Sin is the main target of sanctification. The justified do not sin wilfully. If he wilfully sins, he may lose his pardon, e.g., justification without previously repenting it.⁸³⁵

Prevenient grace removes our guilt of original sin on the basis of the atonement of Christ. It is resistible, not irresistible. So, man can choose his destiny by his own decision. This justifies the judgment of God, but threatens his sovereignty of human destiny. Prevenient grace accompanies man all his life. If he accepts and obeys to it, he is led to justifying grace, and sanctifying grace step by step.

In a broad sense, sanctification begins with God's awakening of a sinner in his grace. It consists of repentance and its fruits before justification. In its narrow sense, sanctification begins with justification, which is regeneration. Regeneration is the beginning of entire sanctification. Justification and sanctification are connected in the sense that both of them are founded on the atonement of Christ, who is the origin of all grace.

Sanctification is defined as "an entire deliverance from sin, a recovery of the whole image of God, the loving God with all our heart, soul, and strength."⁸³⁶ The image of God consists of righteousness and holiness, i.e., the human right relationship with God.

Perfection does not mean an angelic perfection, or absolute obedience to God's law. It

⁸³³ R. George Eli, *Social Holiness: John Wesley's Thinking on Christian Community and its Relationship to the Social Order* (New York etc.: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc, 1993), p. 43.

⁸³⁴ Cf. Black, Robert Edwin concludes, "He was not opposed on principle to social legislation." *The Social Dimension of John Wesley's Ministry as Related to His Personal Piety* (Ph. D. Diss, Union Theological Seminary, 1984, An Arbor: UMI, 1987), p. 179.

⁸³⁵ *Works* VIII, 276.

⁸³⁶ Letter CCCCLVII to Mr. Joseph Benson, London, Dec. 28, 1770: *Works* 12, 415.

implies the purity of his motive, when the believer does anything. The purity of the motive is to do everything out of love of God and people. It does not exclude human unconscious faults and his limits in intelligence and physical power. It is to love God and people with all his heart and will.

Perfection can be accomplished in this life because it is promised in the Bible. In its absolute meaning, it can be achieved only after death, but in a relative sense, it can be attained in this life. Everybody must aspire to attain this perfection in this life.

Sanctification is instantaneously attained, whereas repentance and its fruit gradually grows. Our repentance and its fruits are both antecedent and consequent to justification. Entire perfection attained in a moment by the Holy Spirit can practically be continuous, but it is “a present experience of sanctification” rather than a fixed condition.⁸³⁷ The second blessing can recur scores of times in our life. The experience of the instantaneous work of the Spirit is helpful to promote our sanctification in the Spirit, but it is neither necessary to all nor completes our holiness in one time.⁸³⁸ It becomes a good stimulus to continually pursue our sanctification in the Spirit.⁸³⁹

Assurance of salvation depends upon the witness of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit. Perseverance does not unconditionally depend upon predestination, but upon our continual faith in Christ. Good works are only a secondary condition of justification and sanctification, not the merit for them. Unconditional double predestination and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness are refused.

The mode of sanctification is described as self-denial. It begins with Christian recognition that he belongs to Christ, and that he is a steward. Through self-denial, Christ lives in the believers. The motive of sanctification is the will of God and its goal is to give glory to God through a holy life.

The means of sanctification are mainly God’s Word, prayer, fastening, bible study, the Lord’s Supper, and baptism. Wesley added the works of mercy to these items. The works of mercy means good works for other people. The decisive and immediate means of sanctification is faith, which makes sanctification God’s gift.

The human role is to do the means of sanctification diligently with sincere desire of sanctification. God’s role is to bestow his entire sanctification on humans as his gift. Peculiarly, Wesley admitted that even unbelievers could use such means as reading the Bible, bible study, prayer, and fasting, especially the Lord’s Supper, but not baptism. He used various societies to promote sanctification. These organizations contributed to the

⁸³⁷ Edward H., Sugden, ed. *Wesley’s Standard Sermon* 2 Vols. (London: Epworth Press, 1921), 2: 172.

⁸³⁸ Cf. Charles David Clarke, “A Still More Excellent Way: A Historical, Theological and Biblical Evaluation of John Wesley’s Doctrine of Christian Perfection” (Ph. D. thesis, the Univ. of Potchefstroom, 1998), p. 235.

⁸³⁹ J. Sidlow Baxter, *Christian Holiness Restudied and Restated Includes the Complete Text of A New Call to Holiness, His Deeper Works in Us, Our High Calling* (Zondervan Publishing House, 1967), p. 128.

discipline of the Methodist members for their sanctification. Infant baptism was recognized as a means of sanctification.

Wesley cannot be called an antinomian, given his stress on the use of the means of sanctification, or a legalist, given his emphasis on justification by faith in Christ. Rather, he seems to be closer to a moralist in the sense that he emphasised using all possible means to accomplish entire sanctification. Granting that Wesley viewed good works as a secondary condition for final salvation, his view can be said to be a synergist, which means that humans cooperate with God's grace for sanctification from beginning to end. Seeing that God's grace has the initiative, his synergism can be said to be a monergistic synergism. He never denied human active participation in justification and sanctification. Human freewill functions very importantly to attain entire sanctification. So does human choice to believe Jesus Christ as his Saviour. Free will was recovered by the prevenient grace of God, and is not from human nature.

3.3.2 Assessment

3.3.2.1 Positive Assessment

1 Wesley's doctrine of sanctification prepared a position for human responsibility in the frame of *sola gratia* and established an ethical subject by forming the ethical ego. He presented the possibility of the Christian social ethics in contrast to the humanistic social ethics of the Enlightenment or social ethics that pursues social revolution.

2 He maintained a balance between gradual and instantaneous sanctification, by harmonizing human effort with God's gift in Christian perfection. His emphasis on gradual growth after attaining perfection corresponds with the biblical statement we should grow to the full extent of Christ.

3 His view on sanctification is optimistic in that humans can overcome the power of sin because grace is more powerful than sin.

4 His teaching of attaining final justification by good works can be helpful to reform the moral corruption of Christian life, though it has the risk to incline to the loss of the stability of justification and to justification by faith and works. The necessity of repentance awakens the saints to watch out for all kinds of sins.

5 His efforts for social sanctification and their fruits are exemplary to contemporary Christians. His view on social transformation seems pertinent in that it is based on individual sanctification, emphasis on God's initiative, and human obedience to God's guidance. His objection to slavery is his pre-eminent merit.

6 Sanctification by faith seems as probable as justification by faith. To regard sanctification as God's gift can be interpreted as his emphasis on God's sovereignty in sanctification. Sanctification is not a human merit as Roman Catholicism.

7 His efforts to maintain the unity with the Church of England are noteworthy, especially at present with the urgent need for unity instead of schism is strongly asked.

8 His opinion of using the diverse means of grace is helpful to avoid quietism and enthusiasm. His allowance for unbelievers to use such means is helpful to their salvation.

9 His emphasis on a changed life is helpful to renovate formalism of religion.

10 His stress on the human free will, coupled with human responsibility to accomplish salvation contributed to world mission, as his slogan, “the whole world is my parish.”⁸⁴⁰

3.3.2.2 Negative Assessment

1 Wesley’s claim that prevenient grace is bestowed on all people due to Christ’s atonement and removes the guilty of original sin from birth seems unreasonable to me. To apply his claim to those born since Jesus’ atonement can be probable, but to apply it to unbelievers born before his atonement scarcely find substantiation in the Bible. Though Christ’s atonement was foreshowed in the Old Testament, it seems implausible to apply to anybody of unbelievers outside Israel before Christ’s atonement

2 According to Wesley, 1 John 3:9 reads, “He doth not commit sin,” not “True: Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin habitually.”⁸⁴¹ The latter is regarded as that “addest to the words of this book?”⁸⁴² The Greek text reads: Πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ, ὅτι σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει, καὶ οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται. Here, ποιεῖ can be translated as a simple present action or as a present continuous action. According to the New International Version Bible, it is translated as a continuous action. “No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.” The New Living Version, English Standard Version (2001) agree with the continuous action after NIV, while the New Revised Standard Version (1989), the King James Version, and the New American Standard Version (1995) take it as a simple present action. Grammatically, both interpretations are possible because the present simple tense can indicate two actions; the simple present action and the present continuous action. Still, to understand ποιεῖ as a present continuous action is in harmonious with 1 John 1:8, which reads, “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us”

⁸⁴⁰ Cf. Mbennah & Vorster, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

⁸⁴¹ Wesley interpreted two other passages as simple present action. “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not, Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.” (1John 3:6). “No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.” “He that committeth sin is of the devil: for the devil sinneth from the beginning.” (1 John 3:8, KJV). In contrast, the New Living Version reads, “So if we continue to live in him, we won’t sin either. But those who keep on sinning have never known him or understood who he is.” (3: 6). “But when people keep on sinning, it shows they belong to the Devil...” (3:8).

⁸⁴² Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth 1,5: *Works* 5, 215.

(NASV). This interpretation is congruent to two other biblical passages. Ecclesiastes 7:20 reads, “there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins” (אִישׁ יָשָׁר is qal imperfect indicating an ongoing action). Wesley held that the justified do not commit outward sin, except inward sin, but it is doubtful whether they can abstain from outward sin if they have inward sin in their heart, for inward sin cannot but produce outward sin.⁸⁴³

3 Wesley’s view that “the evil root, the carnal mind, is destroyed; and inbred sin subsists no more” seems self-contradictory, given his mention that inbred sin can recur even to the entirely sanctified:

...so far as these (love of God and human good tempers) reign in the soul, are not the opposite tempers, worldly-mindedness, malice, cruelty, revengefulness, destroyed? Indeed, the unclean spirit, though driven out, *may return and enter again*; nevertheless he was driven out. I use the word ‘destroyed’ because St. Paul does; ‘suspended’ I cannot find in my Bible” in (my emphasis).⁸⁴⁴

It is wrong that Wesley identified an unclean spirit with inward sin itself, for the unclean spirit was the cause of sin, but not inward sins itself. His expression that the carnal mind is the root of sin led W. E. Sangster to criticize Wesley for regarding sin as a thing to be eradicated “like a cancer or a rotten tooth.”⁸⁴⁵ In the same vein, Leon O. Hynson asserts that we should interpret sin as relational term like “the distortion of relationship” rather than ontological term like “illness or contagion.”⁸⁴⁶ Let us observe St. Paul’s statement of this issue. In Ephesians 4: 22-25, St. Paul delineated sin as an ontological term, i.e. a thing to be “put off.”

4: 20 ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐχ οὕτως ἐμάθετε τὸν Χριστόν But you have not so learned Christ, 21 εἴ γε αὐτὸν ἠκούσατε καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐδιδάχθητε, καθὼς ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 ἀποθέσθαι ὑμᾶς κατὰ τὴν προτέραν ἀναστροφὴν τὸν παλαιὸν

⁸⁴³ Cf. Gordon Stanley Dicker, *The Concept Simul Iustus Et Peccator in Relation to the Thought of Luther, Wesley and Bonhoeffer, and Its Significance for A Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Th. D. diss., Union Theological Seminary, An Arbor: UMI, 1971), p. 93.

⁸⁴⁴ Sermon XIV. The Repentance of Believers 1, 20: *Works* 5, 165; Telford, ed. *Letters*, Vol. 5, 203-204.

⁸⁴⁵ W. E. Sangster, *The Path to Perfection: An Examination & Restatement of John Wesley’s Doctrine of Christian Perfection* (first published 1943: London: Epworth Press, reissued 1984), p. 113; Sermon XIV. The Repentance of Believers: *Works* 5, 165.

⁸⁴⁶ Leon O. Hynson, “Original Sin as Privation: An Inquiry into a Theology of Sin and Sanctification,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 22 (1988): 70; also see Umphrey Lee, *John Wesley and Modern Religion* (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1936), pp. 185; R. Flew, *The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 335.

ἄνθρωπον τὸν φθειρόμενον κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ἀπάτης with reference to the former manner of life, to *put off* the old man which is being corrupt according to the desire of the deceit to you 23 ἀνανεοῦσθαι δὲ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοῦς ὑμῶν instead are being renewed in the spirit of your minds 24 καὶ ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας. and to *put on* the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. 25 Διὸ ἀποθέμενοι τὸ ψεῦδος λαλεῖτε ἀλήθειαν ἕκαστος μετὰ τοῦ πλησίον αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἐσμὲν ἀλλήλων μέλη. therefore, having put away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbours, for we are members of one another (Bible Works NA 27th ed.)

Here, the old man is described like a cloth to be taken off or put on. Likewise, falsehood is depicted as a cloth to be taken off. Accordingly, we can say Wesley's description of inbred sin as "a root of bitterness" is congruent to the Bible. Nonetheless, there is a more profound meaning in Paul's statement. The ground is that ἀποθέσθαι is infinitive aorist with an accusative, ὑμᾶς. The aorist ἀποθέσθαι with ὑμᾶς indicates that their becoming believers involves a radical break with the past.⁸⁴⁷ Fixing his eyes upon the aorist tense, Dr. Sidlow Baxter claimed that to put off the old man, which means that the first man, Adam, including humankind was punished and killed with Jesus on the cross, not that our old nature, namely, our inbred sin died with Christ.⁸⁴⁸ For Baxter, the old man is "the whole human race in Adam," but not our old nature.⁸⁴⁹ The old man was lawfully sentenced to death on the cross. This is the meaning of "I have been crucified with Christ" (NIV. Galatians 2:20). The decisive break with the last order can be well explained in the baptismal rite where believers remove their cloth before entering the water in baptism and put on a new garment after baptism. Such instants lie in Rom 6:4, Gal 3:27 and Col 3:9-

⁸⁴⁷ Cf. John Murray, *Principles of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957, reprinted in 1964), p. 213. In the respect that we are united with Christ, he identified the death of the old man with Christ's death. "Exegetically speaking it is no easier to think of the old man as in process of crucifixion or mortification than it is to think of the resurrected Lord as being still in process of crucifixion."

⁸⁴⁸ J. Sidlow Baxter, *Christian Holiness Restudied and Restated Includes the Complete Text of A New Call to Holiness, His Deeper Works in Us, Our High Calling* (Zondervan Publishing House, 1967), pp. 93, 101, and 109. According to him, the statement that "I have been crucified with Christ" means my "juridical identification with Christ on the Cross" (emphasis is mine).

⁸⁴⁹ Cf. M. Luther viewed the old Adam in us as flesh, which means the man is ruled by our old nature, or concupiscence and pride. *LW* 27, 249. Also see Gordon Stanley Dicker, *The Concept Simul Iustus Et Peccator in Relation to the Thought of Luther, Wesley and Bonhoeffer, and Its Significance for A Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Th. D. diss. Union Theological Seminary. An Arbor, UMI, 1971): 165. "The flesh cannot be sanctified, but only mortified." Luther used the flesh, or the old man.

10.⁸⁵⁰ However, he did not mention that the infinitive was used as imperative. On the basis of Greek usage that the infinitive form was used as imperative, Andrew T. Lincoln claims that Eph 4: 22-25 “do take on some imperatival force.”⁸⁵¹ But, Lincoln did not pay attention to the fact that “put on” and “put off” were used in the aorist tense. Lincoln contends that if Paul wanted to express Eph 4:22-25 as “a definitive putting on an off in the past,” he would have used ὥστε introducing a dependent clause—indicating the actual result *so that* (Mt 8:24; 27:14; Mk 1:45; 2:12; Jn 3:16; Act 1:19; 2 Cor 1:8; Gal 2:13). His contention can be refuted by Murray’s opinion that the infinitive of result also occurs without ὥστε (Acts 5:3, Heb 6:10, Rev 5:5; 16:9).⁸⁵² Though there is the imperative infinitive in New Testament (e.g., Phil. 3:1 and Romans 12:15), Eph. 4:22-25 could hardly be its example.⁸⁵³ Murray interpreted this passage as a result clause. Because they learned the truth as it is in Christ, they have put off the old man and have put on the new man. Practically, they are being renewed in the spirit of their mind. Therefore, like the new man, let us put away falsehood and speak the truth. His view seems persuasive, given his scrupulous observance of Greek grammar and Paul’s use of the term, the old man.⁸⁵⁴

Accordingly, we can say that Eph 4:22-25 is an exhortation to live holy lives, on the grounds of the assurance that believers are already justified.⁸⁵⁵ To put on the new man and to put off the old man means the change of believers’ stature in justification. It is beyond human ability and depends on only God. Their duty is to put away their ways of life like unbelievers. This duty is related to sanctification, not to justification. The old man already died and exists no longer, because they put it off when they believed.⁸⁵⁶ The old man implies their old relation with Adam. It was broken down in their union with Christ’s death. The new man implies their new relation which was established in their union with Christ when they believe in Him. It is related to justification. In terms of sanctification, inbred sin as the carnal mind and the root of sin was not yet entirely destroyed in their nature. It cannot be destroyed like a cancer until they die because it is not a thing but a relation. Even the sanctified are often tempted and sometimes fall down. If inward sin had been entirely rooted as a thing, it would not have recurred in the sanctified. Wesley also knew that sin

⁸⁵⁰ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians: Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 42 (Dallas: Word Books Publisher, 1990), pp.283-286.

⁸⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

⁸⁵² John Murray, *Principles of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957, reprinted in 1964), p. 215; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York, 1914), pp.1089-1091.

⁸⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp.214-215.

⁸⁵⁴ John Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 218; Cf. for Lincoln’s interpretation of Eph 4: 20-25, see Lincoln, *op. cit.*, pp. 283-289. His view seems plausible, but it can be refuted by John Murray’s analysis of Paul’s usage of the old man. Ordinarily, Paul does not call “the sin and the flesh” the old man.

⁸⁵⁵ Cf. Murray, *op. cit.*, pp.219-220.

⁸⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

recurs, even to the sanctified. But his expression that sin can be totally rooted out, so it exists no longer has enough grounds for controversy,⁸⁵⁷ or at least leaves room for misunderstanding. As J. I. Packer points out, “no Christian, however wholehearted at this moment, or at any future moment, in conscious love of God and neighbor,” will ever be impervious to attack of sin.⁸⁵⁸ Hence, Wesley’s opinion that sin in believers can be completely abolished in this life must be rejected as unbiblical.⁸⁵⁹

4 In his classification of the human state, Wesley put the Jew in the circle of man under the law.⁸⁶⁰ His division seems implausible, given that Paul did not feel any guilt of his obedience to God’s law when he was in Judaism, while Wesley held that man under the law feels serious guilt before God. Paul thought of himself as a blameless Jew, but after his conversion to Christianity, he felt the deficiency of his obedience to the Law. Accordingly, the general state of the Jew seems to be closer to the sleeping state rather than the state under the Law. Conversely, the state under the Law is ascribed to those whose sin was disclosed by the law of Christ, i.e., the inward sincerity of the Law by the light of the Spirit, but who still do not know the liberty of faith in Christ and the grace of the Spirit.

5 His standpoint of a real Christian as a person who does not sin, is exceedingly high for the ordinary Christian, and is unbiblical. It seems excessively strict that Christians lose pardon, i.e., justification when they wilfully commit sin.⁸⁶¹ His view means that justification by faith can be demolished by the condition of sanctification. This opinion makes justification dependent upon sanctification. It necessarily results in losing the certainty of present justification. From the reformed perspective, the Christian who willingly committed, do not become an unbeliever but are called to repent of their sin.

6 In Romans 7:7-13, all verbs are in the past tense, but the verbs in 7:14-25 are in the present tense. Therefore 7:14-25 do not describe the pre-Christian state but the present Christian experience. Because Rom. 7:25 “so then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin” describes the present state of believers, Wesley’s view on present perfection cannot be supported.⁸⁶² Galatians 6: 17 concurs with that view. “For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.” Though the desire of flesh can be repressed by the Spirit, it cannot be

⁸⁵⁷ Charles David Clarke, “A Still More Excellent Way: An Historical, Theological and Biblical Evaluation of John Wesley’s Doctrine of Christian Perfection,” Ph. D. thesis, the Univ. of Potchefstroom, 1998, pp. 234-235.

⁸⁵⁸ J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984), p. 142.

⁸⁵⁹ See, Charles David Clarke, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-221; cf. R. N. Flew, *The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology* (Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 336. “[I]t is not so likely that the subtler sins of Pharishaim will be once and for ever uprooted in that same spiritual crisis.”

⁸⁶⁰ Sermon IX. The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption, III, 8: *Works* 5, 108.

⁸⁶¹ *Works* 8, 276.

⁸⁶² *Works* 8, 276.

radically removed until death.⁸⁶³

7 The teaching of perfection in this life is apt to lead people to “subjectivism, moralism,” “self-righteousness, and fanaticism.”⁸⁶⁴

8 Wesley’s excessive stress on repentance and experience may lead people to a hysteric experience or pretended attitude, as Charles Wesley pointed out.⁸⁶⁵

9 The case of George Bell, perfection has a danger to cause the perfected to erroneously believe that they can infallibly discern the will of God, e.g., they can know the last day of the earth, as many people have often asserted. Although Wesley objected to this enthusiasm, it may be undeniable that Wesley’s view of perfection tempted George to think himself infallible.⁸⁶⁶

10 Wesley’s interpretation of some biblical passages on perseverance is incorrect. First, Wesley ascribed Paul’s declaration in Rom 8:38-39 to only his own perseverance: “I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”.⁸⁶⁷ His interpretation seems impertinent given that Paul used ‘us’, which surely includes the Roman saints according to Rom 8:12. Secondly, in Jesus’ prayer, “Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are one”(John 17:11), Wesley interpreted “they” as the twelve Apostles, not all believers. However, John 17:20 reads, “I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of *those who will believe in me through their word*” (New Revised Standard Version). The expression that “they” may be one, as we are one” recurred in 21verse. Accordingly, Wesley’s interpretation is impertinent.

⁸⁶³ For a similar view to mine, see Sinclair B Ferguson, “The Reformed View,” in Donald L. Alexander ed., *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988), pp. 62-63. For an opposite view, see Anthony A. Hoekema, “The Reformed Perspective,” in Melvin Dieter, et. al., *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, The Zondervan Corporation, 1987), p. 232.

⁸⁶⁴ Cf. Tyron Inbody, “Where United Methodists and Presbyterians Differ on Sanctification,” *Journal of Theology* 105 (2001): 97.

⁸⁶⁵ W. Stephen Gunter, *The Limits of “Love Divine”: John Wesley’s Response to Antinomianism and Enthusiasm* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood, 1989), p.153. He concluded that “hysteria was diabolical.”

⁸⁶⁶ “Bell asserted that his Perfection rendered him infallible, above temptation, and superior to the instructions of all persons who were not perfect.” Letters from John Fletcher to Lady Huntingdon, May 9, 1763: Fletcher Vol. II, p. 85 (Manchester, Methodist Archives); quoted by Gunter, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

⁸⁶⁷ Gunter, *op. cit.*, p. 291.