THE DEVELOPMENT OF JOHN WESLEY'S DOCTRINE OF ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION

A THESIS

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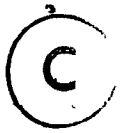
By



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ABSTRACT

Eighteenth-century British moral philosophy contributed to the development of an ambiguous, dual, doctrine of sin in John Wesley's theology which was vital to his notion of entire sanctification. Wesley early developed habits of religious discipline and in his days at Oxford a monastic piety. Both George Berkeley and William Law promoted the idea that what was most reasonable was most godly. William Wollaston's definition of omission influenced Wesley's notion of sin as a voluntary transgression of a known law of God. Having taken reason to its limits, Wesley rebelled on May 24, 1738, accepting the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Fighting Deism, "enthusiasm," and quietism he appealed to both the men of reason and the men of religion in an attempt to balance his theology. The process of sanctification emerged out of this attempt. With a dual conception of sin as its motivating force entire sanctification developed in its own right rather than as a tool of reaction. Happiness and holiness prevailed as long as the dialectical relation between reason and faith, justification and sanctification prevailed. The philosophical concept of necessity provided a common link between Deism and Calvinism. The theological crises prompted by both these thought systems always resulted in a re-clarification of the duality of sin --- both original and personal --- and a consequent reiteration of the doctrine of entire sanctification.

RÉSUMÉ

La philosophie morale britannique du dix-huitième siècle contribua au développement d'une doctrine du péché ambigue et double dans la théologie de John Wesley qui était vitale à sa notion de l'entière sanctification. Wesley se développa tôt des habitudes de discipline religieuse et durant ses jours à Oxford une piété monastique. George Berkeley et William Law tous les deux promurent l'idée que ce qui était le plus raisonnable était le plus saint. La définition de l'omission de William Wollaston influença la notion du péché de Wesley en tout que transgression volontaire d'une loi connue de Dieu. Ayant amené la raison à ses limites, Wesley se rébella le 24 mai 1738, acceptant la doctrine de la justification par la foi seulement. Combattant le déisme, "l'enthousiasme," et le quiétisme il en appela aux hommes de raison et aux hommes de religion pareillement dans le but de balancer sa théologie. Le processus de la sanctification émergea de cette tentative. Avec une conception double du péché comme force motivante, l'entière sanctification se développa de son propre droit plutôt que comme un outil réactionnaire. Le bonheur et la sainteté prévalurent aussi longtemps que la relation dialectique entre la raison et la foi, la justification et la sanctification prévalurent. Le concept philosophique de la nécessité fournit un lien commun entre le déisme et le calvinisme. Les crises théologiques incitées par ces deux systèmes de pensée résultèrent toujours en une reclarification de la dualité du péché --- aussi bien originel que personnel --- et une réitération conséquente de la doctrine de l'entière sanctification.

PREFACE

To attempt an organization of John Wesley's thought into a systematic theology is contrary to his method of doing theology. Reiteration, or the constant re-examination and perusal of a doctrine in the light of a new crisis or situation and the telling of a story repeatedly, is more appropriate to Wesley than systematization. Boredom is the risk one assumes with such a method. An effort has been made to show Wesley in a human as well as a reasonable light and to indicate the context in which his doctrine of entire sanctification developed. To give an authentic picture of the Methodist leader's thought, the context and the doctrine must be treated together. My attempted contribution in this presentation is the re-examination of Wesley's doctrine in the intellectual milieu of his era and the unfolding of entire sanctification chronologically. At every opportunity I have allowed Wesley to speak for himself.

The writing of a thesis in Wesley studies is to discover the great need for a critical edition of John Wesley's works. Of the thirty-four proposed volumes of the Oxford Edition only the eleventh volume, edited by Gerald R. Cragg, has appeared. This volume contains Wesley's appeals to men of reason and religion and proved most valuable in the preparation of this paper. Several Wesley scholars have been especially helpful to me. Among these I will name the three who spurred my interest for further research --- V. H. H. Green in his The Young Mr. Wesley: A study of John Wesley and Oxford, Harald Lindström's insightful analysis in Wesley and Sanctification: A Study in the Doctrine of Salvation, and George C. Cell's The Rediscovery of John Wesley. The books by Gerald R. Cragg and Sir Leslie Stephen provided essential help in discerning the intellectual milieu of eighteenth-century

England.

The former Dean of Yale Divinity School, Colin Williams, was instrumental in developing my interest in John Wesley along with Father Henri J. M. Nouwen who helped develop an appreciation for Christian spirituality and the quest for holiness. I am indebted to the library staff --- especially, Mr. Tapas Majumdar and Ms. Jennifer Wheeler --- at the Faculty of Religious Studies of McGill University for their indispensable assistance.

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INTRODUCTION

No person can read John Wesley's sermon "The Case of Reason Impartially Considered" without recognizing the fact of this great evangelist's immersion in the thought of eighteenth-century England. The following words from his sermon give evidence for this assertion:

> Among them that despise and vilify reason, you may always expect to find those enthusiasts who suppose dreams of their own imagination to be revelations from God. We cannot expect that men of this turn will pay much regard to reason. [1]

Following the rule of his period of history Mr. Wesley proclaimed, "Let reason do all that reason can: employ it as far as it will go." [2] From his birth in 1703 through his days at Oxford and his sojourn in the Georgia colony reason was pushed to its limits. During this period Wesley was discovering, experiencing, and developing the truth expressed by Alexander Pope that man was "Created half to rise, and half to fall." [3] The founder of the Methodists attempted to balance the rising and falling of man in the crucible of eighteenth-century British thought. This paper's thesis is that the British moral philosophy of the period contributed to the development of an ambiguous and dual doctrine of sin in John Wesley's theology which was vital to his notion of entire sanctification. The connection between Wesley's theology and British thought has been recognized; however, it has not been given sufficient treatment in the development of Wesley's doctrines. This holds true even for Harald Lindström's magnificent work Wesley and Sanctification: A Study in the Doctrine of Salvation. [4] Professor W. E. Sangster in his The Path

to Perfection: An Examination and Restatement of John Wesley's Doctrine of Christian Perfection recognizes the influence; but, he assigns it no lasting significance. He writes, "None of the great philosophers of the age seems to have affected him deeply . . ." [5] Dr. Sangster appears concerned only with the surface agitation of Wesley's thoughts regarding the philosophers. George C. Cell's important work The Rediscovery of John Wesley asserts the philosophical connection; however, his main concern seems to be elsewhere rather than primarily in the connection between Wesley and the British philosophers. The same can be said of Gerald R. Cragg's significant study Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century. Sir Leslie Stephen has been an invaluable guide for many in discerning the philosophy of this period. His treatment of the Wesleyan Revival is important as an antithesis. In the second volume of his two-volume work History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century he makes the following statement:

> It is not only possible, but it is the normal case, that two and more normal currents of thought should exist side by side in a country with very little mutual influence. [6]

Sir Leslie indicates further it is not entirely correct to explain the growth of the movement begun by the Wesleys and Whitefield as deriving from the speculation of the time or as a reaction against it. He claims the movement represented "heat without light" ending "only in a recrudescence of obsolete ideas." [7] Is this understanding correct? Maximin Piette in his John Wesley in the Evolution of Protestantism provides an instructive analogy for the relation between Wesley's theology and British thought when he says, "The two points in a circle

closest to each other can, in some sense, be said to be furtherest removed; for if, in one respect, they touch, in the other they are separated by the entire length of the perimeter." [8] Sir Leslie seems to view only the "the length of the perimeter" rather than the point at which the two streams of thought touch.

The thesis is an attempt to show the point of contact between Wesley's theology and eighteenth-century thought in the development of his central doctrine of entire sanctification. Although the attempt will be made to expose the doctrine of sanctification as it emerges from its crucible, Wesley's work itself cannot be read "as a considered, balanced piece of doctrinal instruction." [9] An initial reading of Wesley reveals he viewed man as a created being possessing the freedom either to reject or to accept God's grace. The total corruption of man was a result of original sin which is imputed and not personal. Man in his freedom is able to make a personal choice leading either to his salvation or his damnation. R. Newton Flew has indicated that one of the major defects in John Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification is his stress on the conscious and deliberate intentions of man. Professor Flew writes, "Our worst sins are often those of which we are unconscious." [10] Personal sins were divided into two categories --- inward and outward. Sin itself was viewed as an illness or an extractable entity. From these notions one can begin to detect an ambiguous, perhaps faulty, idea of sin. If a faulty sense of sin is present in a theology, then that theology will also possess a corresponding faulty sense of salvation. Is Wesley's apparent duality merely that found at the very heart of Christianity in its balancing acts between reason and revelation, free will and grace, and the historical Jesus and the phenomenalist Christ? One clue to

answering this question is sought in the operation of Wesley's theological method in the crucible of eighteenth-century British philosophy. One can detect in Wesley's doctrinal development an empirical growth subject to delay and loss and motivated or empowered by the mutual authorities of scripture, tradition, experience, and reason. The growth confirms the validity of the thesis.

Integral to the thesis is the interpretive method. It is practically impossible to separate Wesley the man, his church, the social context, and his doctrines from the central doctrine of entire sanctification without presenting a theological distortion. For this reason the method employed must be both historical-critical and dialectical. A need exists in Wesley research on entire sanctification to show the doctrine in its chronological development. Luke Tyerman's three-volume The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M. A., Founder of the Methodists has been an inspiration here; however, he is not concerned with any one specific doctrine. A danger exists in a chronological development to isolate a doctrine in some sterile form pushing it along a linear path. Such an isolation would be alien to the thought patterns of the eighteenth century. Ernst Cassirer in his The Philosophy of the Enlightenment expresses this idea quite well in the following statement:

> The true nature of Enlightenment thinking cannot be seen in its purest and clearest form where it is formulated into particular doctrines, axioms, and theorems; but rather where it is in process, where it is doubting and seeking, tearing down and building up. [11]

Where the thinking is in process rather than static, it is possible to

escape the prison of systems. One can witness this happening in Wesley by his extension of the philosophical argument beyond the speculation of ecclesiastical authorities and thinkers of the age to a place where the masses could actively participate in a living doctrine rather than a static system. The moral transformation of the believer through the process of Christian perfection was taken seriously.

The historical-critical method merges into the dialectical method by means of a reasoned disputation of distinguishing true assertions from false ones. The development of Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification demonstrates the evangelist's dialectic in praxis. Professor Cell comments, "Wesley brought the whole Christian world back to religion as experience; in religion, experience and reality came to the same thing." [12] Wesley attempted to transcend the conceptual abstractions of thought through the unfolding of a vision into concrete, reasonable substance. Dr. Louis Dupré identifies this method in the following:

> The identity of thought and reality, by which the real reveals itself in thought and thought realizes itself in reality, is not static: it is a dialectical process which is never completed. [13]

The dialectical process is gradual incorporating instantaneous events, or moments, identifiable as new paths of thought. Between 1725 and 1738 one can observe the disciple of reason --- John Wesley --- moving gradually through the morass of Christian tradition and biblical interpretation. A bifurcation in the concept of sin is discernable. Reason was pushed to its limits just prior to Wesley's Aldersgate event in May of 1738 setting in motion an experiential religion in

which justification by faith and the process of sanctification culminated in and extended beyond the point of entire sanctification.

The authoritative guidelines in judging the data are those employed by Wesley himself. The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 1976 specifies the following:

> There is a primacy that goes with Scripture . . . however, theological reflection may find its point of departure in tradition, "experience," or rational analysis. What matters most is that all four guidelines be brought to bear upon every doctrinal consideration. [14]

Mr. Wesley called himself a bigot of the Bible. He writes, "My ground is the Bible . . . I follow it in all things both great and small." [15] Some of the conflict he encountered over his doctrines derived from his reliance on scriptural terms. The term "perfection" gave him an abundance of argument with his contemporaries; however, he persisted in the use of this term because it was found in the Bible. Wesley had a great respect for church tradition and was greatly influenced by the teachings of the Church Fathers. His reliance on their writings remained persistent even following the Georgia debacle when he had to modify some of his Church of England principles. [16] Experience became a profound teacher when he attempted to apply High Church tradition to the new settlers in Georgia. Wesley did not mean by "experience" a mere emotionalism. He willingly applied rigid ethical tests to that which was experienced. He questioned the feeling to discover its authenticity. In one of his sermons Wesley lamented, "How ready are we to believe that God has 'fulfilled in us the whole 'work of faith with power!' that because we feel no sin, we have none

in us; but the soul is all love!" [17] Along with the Bible, tradition, and experience Wesley appealed for the use of reason in matters of religion. In An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion published in 1743 he wrote, "We therefore not only allow, but earnestly exhort all who seek after true religion to use all the reason which God hath given them in searching out the things of God." [18] Although some of his followers "have sometimes despised the way of God through the mind," Wesley cannot be counted among their number. [19] The eighteenth century is correctly called the Age of Reason. Ernst Cassirer rightly observes, " 'Reason' becomes the unifying and central point of this century, expressing all that it longs and strives for, and all that it achieves." [20] Wesley did not treat these guidelines for theological reflection in isolation. The four elements constantly interacted counterbalancing each other. This interaction is observable as Wesley evolved into the pattern of experiential thinking.

Finally, a brief comment needs to be made concerning Wesley's use of the terms "entire sanctification" and "Christian perfection." Harald Lindström indicates, "As being synonymous with entire sanctification Christian perfection is incorporated as one of the stages in the process of salvation." [21] Other terms used to express this doctrine are "second blessing," "second change," and "full salvation." The essence of the doctrine is represented by the terms "perfect love" or "pure love." With regard to the process of salvation Wesley is not always consistent in his terminology. Although used synonymously, "entire sanctification" when distinguished from "Christian perfection" is that instantaneous moment in which "Christian perfection" is realized. [22] The instantaneous moment specified by "entire sanctification" is then utilized to expedite

the continual growth toward spiritual maturity. The term "entire sanctification" when distinguished from "perfection" is narrower in scope. Wesley used the term "perfection" more frequently. It cannot be denied Wesley is guilty of a terminological carelessness which became especially characteristic in his later years.[23] "Perfection" has always suggested something absolute in status; whereas, "sanctification" does not have this distastefulness.

FOOTNOTES

1. John Wesley, The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A. M. Fourth Edition, ed. Thomas Jackson (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1865-1866), VI, p. 331. The scripture text for this sermon appears in "Wesley's Sermon Register" under January 8, 1753 (John Wesley, The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A. M. Standard Edition, ed. Nehemiah Curnock (London: Charles H. Kelley, 1909-1916), VIII, p. 205).

2. Works, VI, p. 340. The quotation is from "The Case of Reason Impartially Considered."

3. Alexander Pope, "An Essay on Man: Epistle II," in Eighteenth-Century English Literature, ed. Geoffrey Tillotson, Paul Fussell, Jr., and Marshall Waingrow (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1969), p. 640.

4. Cf. Harald Lindström, Wesley and Sanctification: A Study in the Doctrine of Salvation (London: The Epworth Press, 1956), p. 184, footnote 6.

5. W. E. Sangster, The Path to Perfection: An Examination and Restatement of John Wesley's Doctrine of Christian Perfection (London: The Epworth Press, 1957), p. 104.

6. Sir Leslie Stephen, History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1902), II, p. 423.

7. Ibid., p. 424.

8. Maximin Piette, John Wesley in the Evolution of Protestantism, trans. J. B. Howard (London: Sheed and Ward, 1937), p. 61. Piette's analogy is between the Calvinist and Zwinglian Churches.

9. John Deschner, Wesley's Christology: An Interpretation (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1960), p. 180. Cf. Robert C. Monk, John Wesley: His Puritan Heritage (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 130.

10. R. Newton Flew, The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology: An Historical Study of the Christian Ideal for the Present Life (New York: Humanities Press, 1968), p. 333. Cf. Gerald R. Cragg, Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), pp. 170f.

11. Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of the Enlightenment, trans. Fritz C. A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), p. ix.

12. George C. Cell, The Rediscovery of John Wesley (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1935), p. 73.

13. Louis Dupré, The Philosophical Foundations of Marxism (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1966), p. 42.

14. The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 1976, ed. Emory S. Bucke (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1976), p. 81.

15. John Wesley, The Works of John Wesley Reprinted from the 1872 edition, ed. Thomas Jackson (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), III, p. 251. Hereafter this edition will be referred to as Works (1978). The quotation here is from a Journal entry dated June 5, 1766.

16. Cf. H. E. Lacy, "Authority in John Wesley," The London Quarterly and Holborn Review, CLXXXIX, Sixth Series, XXXIII (1964), p. 116.

17. Works, VI, p. 80. The quotation is from the sermon "The Wilderness State."

18. John Wesley, The Oxford Edition of the Works of John Wesley, ed. Frank Baker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), XI, p. 56, paragraph 31. This particular volume of The Oxford Edition of the Works of John Wesley is titled The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters, ed. Gerald R. Cragg. Hereafter this edition will be referred to as Works (Oxford Edition).

19. Bernard E. Jones, "Reason and Religion Joined: The Place of Reason in Wesley's Thought," The London Quarterly and Holborn Review, CLXXXIX, Sixth Series, XXXIII (1964), p. 110.

20. Cassirer, p. 5.

21. Lindström, p. 126.

22. Cf. John L. Peters, Christian Perfection and American Methodism (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 185.

23. Cf. Ibid., p. 63.

CHAPTER I

THE SOCIAL MILIEU, OR SETTING THE STAGE IN THE LATTER PART OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The eighteenth century actually begins in the year 1660 with the Restoration of Charles II to the English throne. The landing of this sovereign on English soil marked the close of an age many perceived to be anarchistic and religiously chaotic. The Puritan Republic under Oliver Cromwell had been ". . . one of those epochs in history when virtue in all its austerity occupied the middle of the road, while vice, to its dismay, was forced to hide in the ditch." [1] The picture changes with the new king and his corrupt court. A member of the king's court John Wilmot conveyed the changed mood through his "[A] Satyr [Against Mankind]" published in 1679. Wilmot asked, "Is there a Church-Man who on God relyes?/ Whose Life, his Faith, and Doctrine Justifies?" [2] John Wesley himself referred to Charles II as "one of the most dissipated mortals that ever breathed." [3] Wesley summarized the religious attitude of this period in the following words from his sermon "The Wisdom of God's Counsels":

> What little religion was left in the land received another deadly wound at the Restoration, by one of the worst Princes that ever sat on the English throne, and by the most abandoned court in Europe. And infidelity now broke in amain, and overspread the land as a flood. Of course, all kind of immorality came with it, and increased to the end of the century. [4]

Allegiance to the new king became a prominent teaching of the Church of England. [5] A noticeable dread of Catholicism pervaded the English

mind. An ominous cloud appeared with the ascension to the throne of the Catholic James II in 1685. The Protestant cause seemed endangered. By means of the bloodless Revolution of 1688 and probably with the assistance of the Pope in his intrigue against Louis XIV of France, James II was deposed. William III and Mary came to power under Whig sponsorship in 1689. The transfer of power cost England its insular position in regards to the Continent. To balance such involvement was the increasing power of the Tory party which promoted a policy of isolation and peace. [6] The centers of intellectual life --- the universities --- became thoroughly Tory and remained so at Wesley's entrance to Christ Church, Oxford.

Although Thomas Hobbes was the most influential philosopher of the Restoration, [7] another light was soon to appear in the form of John Locke. This man was to become the philosophical father of eighteenth-century England. Locke's An Essay concerning Human Understanding was first published in 1690 and became the "psychological gospel of the eighteenth century." [8] His purpose was " --- to inquire into the original, certainty and extent of human knowledge, together with the grounds and degrees of belief, opinion, and assent . . ." [9] The more immediate purpose was to attack the concept of innate ideas as promulgated by Descartes in the middle of the seventeenth century. The validity of these innate ideas, according to Descartes, went beyond any understanding one could gain by experience. In this scheme the self is the indestructible unit called the "soul" whose essence is thought and whose necessary opposite is that which does not think --- matter. Matter is identified with space. An idea must have a counterpart in reality. To bridge the gap between the contradictory entities of soul and matter, God is required.

Sir Leslie Stephen explains Descartes in the following statement:

> . . . the soul and matter are like two separate clocks wound up by God to go in perfect correspondence. Thinking, and the object of thought, being torn asunder by the metaphysical analysis, God is introduced as the correlating and unifying principle. [10]

The above operation reveals a Euclidean, or two-dimensional, world where entities are prone to a mysterious disappearance. A confusion exists between subject and object which is explained through the Deity. A central problem is the establishment of identity between the soul and matter, between the idea and its counterpart in reality, between subject and object. The real world becomes that which is unchangeable and constantly identical. The search is for a kernel of unity; and, since human experience in the world shows flux and disunity, then reality must reside outside all possible human experience. [11] Observation of the world or human experience does not yield truth. The difficulties in Descartes' system were to be attacked by John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume.

The full measure of Locke's attack on Descartes is observed in "Book I. Neither Principles nor Ideas Are Innate" of <u>An Essay concerning Human Understanding</u>:

> . . . I should only show . . . how men, barely by the use of their natural faculties, may attain to all the knowledge they have, without the help of any innate impressions; and may arrive at certainty, without any such original notions or principles. [12]

In addition to the above Locke argued he could discover no "innate practical principles" except "a desire for happiness and an aversion to misery" which have been placed in man by nature and are described as

"inclinations of the appetite to good, not impressions of truth on the understanding." [13] The desire for happiness is a universal motive; however, no moral motive exists, explained Locke, which cannot be examined by reason. [14] Locke concluded his argument in "Book I. Neither Principles nor Ideas Are Innate" with the following assessment:

> . . . our knowledge depends upon the right use of those powers nature hath bestowed upon us, and how little upon such innate principles as are in vain supposed to be in all mankind for their direction . . . [15]

Locke has expressed the negative thesis of no innate ideas and the positive thesis of experience.

Where do ideas have their origin? Locke answered, "in one word, from experience"; that is, sensation or reflection upon sensation. [16] Experience has two notions --- the operations of experiencing and the objects experienced. In "Book II. Of Ideas" Locke explained:

> External objects furnish the mind with the ideas of sensible qualities, which are all those different perceptions they produce in us; and the mind furnishes the understanding with ideas of its own operations. [17]

On this basis Locke developed his thought. Ernst Cassirer correctly states, "Locke successfully attacked innate ideas but he permitted the prejudice regarding innate operations of the mind to survive." [18] Is Locke's duality of experience recognizable in Wesley's conceptions of sin and salvation?

Does Locke retain a place for God in his thinking? He answered, "God when he makes the prophet does not unmake the man." [19] A place is retained for God and God's revelation; however, reason

remained to judge that which comes by revelation. "Reason must be our last judge and guide in everything." [20] Revealed truth is affirmed by questioning and examination. Locke felt there should be no incompatibility between reason and revelation. The desire was to show a balanced relation. "Reason is natural revelation" and "revelation is natural reason enlarged." [21] Although he gave a place to revelation, Locke remained a rationalist. [22] Reinforcing Locke's general position on reason and revelation was the method of Isaac Newton. The high esteem in which Newton was held is reflected by Alexander Pope's comment, " 'Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in might:/ God said, Let Newton be! and all was light!' " [23] Newton penetrated the universe by mathematical analysis. Although never repudiating the claims of revelation, Newton ignored them. Relying on causation Mr. Locke indulged in a proof of God's existence. [24] The basis for morality was God's law which was enforced with eternal rewards and punishments. In his discussion of morality Locke stresses voluntary actions.

> Moral good and evil . . . is only the conformity or disagreement of our voluntary actions to some law, whereby good or evil is drawn on us, from the will and power of the law-maker . . . [25]

John Locke's philosophy became the foundation of several arguments not always reflecting his true thoughts. The deist controversy was such an argument. Deism as a distinct thought system had its origin among the English people. The deist argument came to life in the remaining years of the seventeenth century. This thought system took various forms ranging from the idea of an absent God --- one who created the universe and the governing laws, and then left the

world to operate itself by means of those divinely created laws --- to the idea of God's active intervention in the affairs of the world by means of natural rather than supernatural laws. Today the writings of the deists are recognized as those ". . . shabby and shrivelled little octavos, generally anonymous, such as lurk in the corners of dusty shelves, and seem to be the predestined prey of moths." [26] But for those in the eighteenth century who were to join battle against the atheists, the heathen morality, and the almost-Christian thought, these "little octavos" lurked prominently in the shadows as an ominous evidence of the reality of the demons. Deism's aim was to examine religion in the bright light of reason and thereby to rid religion of its miracles and mysteries. The title to John Toland's book Christianity Not Mysterious published in 1696 describes this theme. Toland used Locke's thoughts on reason as a basis for introducing his theory of knowledge in the arena of religion. Revelation was to be judged by reason. Locke may have exalted reason; however, he realized its inadequacy taken alone. [27] Gerald R. Cragg summarizes the essentials of Deism in the following statement:

> Human reason, unaided by revelation, can grasp the fundamental truths of religion; and human happiness is promoted when these truths are intimately related to the practical duties of life. [28]

Cragg's statement reveals two phases in the movement described by Ernst Cassirer as the "constructive" and the "moral." [29] The shift from the strictly intellectual system, or the "constructive" phase, to that of "practical reason," or the "moral" phase occurred in the early portion of the eighteenth century. John Wesley's attacks were

focused more on the latter phase of the movement.

On the whole the seventeenth century showed an alliance between reason and Christian theology. Many theologians of the middle and end of this century including Jeremy Taylor desired to build a philosophical religion. What they did not seem to realize was the possibility that this type of religion might lose its Christian identity. The alliance between philosophy and Christianity began to show signs of strain as early as the last part of the century. Locke's An Essay concerning Human Understanding appeared pointing to new sources of certainty for both churchmen and philosophers. Although the Bible remained authoritative for Locke, experience was emphasized as a new starting point for philosophers. Deism came alive stressing reason to the exclusion of revelation. The close of the seventeenth century marked the divorce proceedings between thought and feeling in a suspicion of emotion and a love affair with logic. Along with the divorce came the birth of the Age of Reason. The baby carried a double-edged sword bearing the name "experiential thought." The effectiveness of the sword for the eighteenth century was the balance of the thrust of its point rather than the angle of its cutting power.

FOOTNOTES

1. Piette, p. 90.

2. John Wilmot, "[A] Satyr [Against Mankind]," in Eighteenth-Century English Literature, ed. Geoffrey Tillotson, Paul Fussell, Jr., and Marshall Waingrow (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1969), p. 35. Wilmot concluded, "If upon Earth there dwell such God-like Men,/ I'le here recant my Paradox to them./ Adore those Shrines of Virtue, Homage pay,/ And with the Rabble World, their Laws obey. If such there are, yet grant me this at least,/ Man differs more from Man, than Man from Beast." (Ibid., p. 36).

3. Works, VI, p. 420. The quotation is from the sermon "On Dissipation."

4. Ibid., p. 311.

5. Cassirer states, " 'One king, one law, one faith' --- such was the motto of the epoch." (Cassirer, p. 23).

6. Cf. William E. H. Lecky, A History of England in the Eighteenth Century (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1878, 1882, 1890-1891), I, pp. 25-26.

7. The Tory mind would have found agreement in the following statement from the Leviathan first published in 1651: "The greatest of human powers, is that which is compounded of the powers of most men, united by consent, in one person, natural, or civil, that has the use of all their powers depending on his will . . ." (Thomas Hobbes, "Leviathan," in British Moralists 1650-1800, ed. D. D. Raphael (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), I, p. 29. Cf. Stephen, I, p. 80 and Stephen, II, p. 136.

8. Carl L. Becker, The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 64. Stephen states, "From Locke's 'Essay' (1689) we may learn what were to be the dominant ideas of the next century . . ." (Stephen, I, p. 74. Cf. Stephen, II, p. 94). Cf. Cassirer, p. 99.

9. John Locke, "An Essay concerning Human Understanding," in Great Books of the Western World, ed. Robert M. Hutchins and Mortimer J. Adler (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1952), XXXV, p. 93.

10. Stephen, I, p. 26.

11. Stephen ~~writes~~, "To find reality is to find the permanent thing which remains when all qualities of a perceived object are changed. To find truth must be to find a proposition which remains in spite of all changes in the perceiving subject." (Stephen, I, p. 28). This means that one must seek the core of unity or correspondence in a transcendental nexus, or God. Malebranche intensified this theory (Cf. Cassirer, p. 96).

12. Locke, p. 95. James Collins indicates, "Locke invites us to interweave our general knowledge (in the strong sense of certitudinal intuition and demonstration) with the many degrees of opinion and belief needed for practical living." (James Collins, Interpreting Modern Philosophy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 117).

13. Locke, p. 104.

14. Cf. Ibid., paragraph 4, p. 104.

15. Ibid., p. 120.

16. Ibid., p. 121.

17. Ibid., p. 122. Ernst Cassirer mentions that Locke stopped short in his analysis of psychological forms (Cassirer, p. 17). Both Berkeley and Hume attempted to combine the two forms --- sensation and reflection --- of Locke's dualism in the expression "perception." (Cf. Cassirer, pp. 99-100).

18. Cassirer, p. 101.

19. Locke, p. 387.

20. Ibid., pp. 387-388.

21. Ibid., p. 385.

22. Stephen writes, "A rationalist to the core, he does not even contemplate as possible an appeal to any authority but that of ordinary reason. The truth of Christianity was to be proved like the proof of any historical or philosophical theory. It was simply a question of evidence, and especially of the overwhelming evidence of the Christian miracles." (Stephen, I, p. 100).

23. Quoted from Basil Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background: Studies on the Idea of Nature in the Thought of the Period (London: Chatto and Windus, 1950), p. 5.

24. Cf. Locke, p. 349.

25. Ibid., p. 229. Cf. ibid., paragraph 14, pp. 231-232.

26. Stephen, I, p. 86.

27. Cf. R. I. Aaron's statement quoted in Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century, p. 12. John Redwood comments, "He [Locke] had distinctly noted revelation as a method of perceiving ideas." (John Redwood, Reason, Ridicule and Religion: The Age of Enlightenment in England 1660-1750 (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), p. 100).

28. Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century, p. 66.

29. Cassirer, p. 174.

CHAPTER II

BECOMING REASONABLE -

WESLEY IN HIS YOUTH (1703-1724)

About one or two years before the death of William III the parents of John Wesley --- Samuel and Susanna --- had a marital disagreement which some have said resulted in the birth of their son. Samuel Wesley, an ardent Whig during this period of his life, supported the kingship of William III while his wife counted herself among those refusing an oath of allegiance to his reign. When Samuel prayed for good King William, no amen could be construed to pass from Susanna's Jacobite lips. This fact was noticed during a worship service resulting in a confrontation. Susanna remained stubborn over the issue, and Samuel left the house vowing not to return until his wife gave verbal allegiance to the king. The separation lasted for several months until, at the death of William III and the accession of Anne to the throne, Samuel's viewpoint changed to Tory. The child born following their reconciliation was John Benjamin Wesley. The national situation at the time of birth was not a peaceful one. Immediately following her coronation Anne declared war on France. The Tory majority in Commons objected to fighting a country which believed in the doctrine of divine right; however, they upheld Queen Anne's royal prerogative of declaring war. The familiar labels "High Church" and "Low Church" came into use about this time. [1] The political intrigue between these two parties was plentiful during Anne's reign. Jonathan Swift commenting in a letter to Stella said, " 'The very ladies are split asunder into High and Low, and out of zeal for religion have hardly time to say their prayers.' " [2]

John Wesley was the fifteenth of nineteen children born to Samuel and Susanna. At the time of his birth in June of 1703 six children resided at the parsonage.[3] Although both parents were Church of England adherents, their family backgrounds were with Nonconformity. Samuel's father --- John Westley --- was a Puritan, and Samuel himself was educated in Dissenting schools until 1683 when he entered Exeter College, Oxford, in preparation for the priesthood in the Church of England.[4] Susanna's father was the famous Puritan Dr. Samuel Annesley. Both of John's grandfathers had refused to conform in 1662 and were ejected from their living by the Act of Uniformity. Samuel Annesley raised his children in an intense theological atmosphere which demanded strict ethical and devotional standards. At the age of nineteen his daughter Susanna accepted the Church of England and soon after married Samuel. John Wesley himself did not seem to be aware of the strong Dissenting strain in his forebears until his middle years. Professor Frank Baker comments, "Indeed, it seems fairly certain that his parents deliberately withheld from him that part of his inheritance."[5]

The somewhat eccentric and domineering Samuel left the running of the household and the raising of the children at the Epworth parish entirely in the hands of his wife. She was well-suited for such a task. The philosophical and theological learning she had received in her own home prepared her to be a good educator. It is significant for John Wesley's development to note some of his mother's favorite books. One was the Pugna Spiritualis written by the Italian Lorenzo Scupoli and translated into Spanish by the Benedictine Juan de Castaniza. A central focus of the book was the call to Christian perfection which could be attained through man's apprehension of God's goodness simultaneously with

man's nothingness. [6] God alone could overcome the spiritual conflict. Two other significant authors in Susanna's devotional reading were Richard Baxter and Henry Scougal both of whose writings were included in John Wesley's A Christian Library. Scougal's book The Life of God in the Soul of Man strongly affirmed the power of God's love. [7] One cannot help but surmise that the young Wesley was imbued at his mother's knee with the thought of these authors. [8]

Living at Epworth was not an easy matter. The parishioners were onery folks, and the financial sustenance was not the greatest in England. In modern terms it was a poor appointment. Samuel did not help the situation by his imprudent money management and his outspoken political views. The height of the pastor's unpopularity was reached when he was thrown into debtors' gaol at Lincoln in 1705. In the meantime Susanna had a house full of children to mind. She could not have managed this task without an efficient system. Everything had its time and place, and the household was run on a well-coordinated schedule. The deliberate breaking of a known rule was not tolerated. The child's will was to be broken to the parent's command. This was the first parental task after which the education of the mind could readily flow. Professor Martin Schmidt comments, "Following Scougal she linked together piety and joy, holiness and happiness." [9] Each child had its own special time with the mother to discuss religious matters. Susanna's regime was austere; but, it was not cruel. Schmidt indicates, "Her chief concern was to make the greatness and perfection of God absolutely real to the children and to convince them of His continual presence." [10]

John's childhood at Epworth was spent in the company of women. Samuel, Jr. was twelve years older than John and had left the home for

Westminster in 1704. Four sisters --- Sukey, Molly, Hetty, and Nancy --- were present at John's birth, and two more sisters --- Patty and Kezzy --- were born afterwards. Charles did not come along until 1707. There was not much opportunity to meet male peers as Mrs. Wesley would not allow her children to play with those in the parish. The games and activities played in the rectory were predominantly feminine. Although he did not disdain the presence of men in mature life, John Wesley seemed to prefer women's company, and his character portrayed a bent for the feminine. [11] It was to his mother rather than his father he most often turned for both personal and theological advice. Susanna remained a constant influence through his Oxford and Georgia periods. Professor V. H. H. Green suggests that perhaps Wesley's reticence in choosing a wife can be attributed to his mother whose standard of excellence must have seemed inaccessible in her son's eyes. [12] No woman was able to measure up to his mother.

The year 1709 was significant in Wesley's life. A fire started in the rectory completly destroying the house and nearly resulting in John's death. He was rescued from the flames at the very last moment. It is possible that the fire was deliberately set by the kindly parishioners. The fire is important for two reasons. First, Mrs. Wesley took the deliverance of her son as a divine statement of sorts. She felt even more impelled to fulfill diligently her religious duty to her son. [13] Second, Wesley himself attached a great amount of significance to his being plucked out of the flames. After the fire the child seemed to have become more serious-minded. Maximin Piette relates the following incident told in A. Clarke's <u>The Memoirs of the Wesley Family</u>:

> One day, seeing his son consider carefully the reason for his actions, Samuel laughingly said to his wife, "I profess, sweetheart, I think our Jack would not attend to the most pressing necessities of nature unless he could give a good reason for it." [14]

The young John Wesley was a reflective child considering things carefully before taking an action. When at the dinner table he was asked whether he wanted a piece of bread or some fruit, he would respond, " 'I thank you; I will think of it.' " [15]

Another fire was being started by Dr. Henry Sacheverell. Preaching strongly against the Dissenters in his sermon "Perils from Fake Brethren," he demanded unconditional obedience to the throne. Needless to say he was a Tory , a very popular one. Early in 1710 Parliament brought impeachment proceedings against him causing a considerable national stir. Mobs ran about shouting "High Church and Sacheverell" while looting Dissenting chapels. Business nearly came to a stop. Samuel Wesley was among those who helped to draw up Sacheverell's defense. [16] He was convicted; however, due to his immense popularity and the people's belief in the divine right of the monarchy, his punishment was a failure. [17] Statesmen such as Robert Walpole were becoming aware of the power the clergy possessed among the English people of this period. The elections of 1710 gave the Tories the majority in Parliament, and, as a result, the law against Occasional Conformity by Dissenters was finally passed. Jacobite sentiment was running high in the nation.

About a year or so before the signing of the Peace of Utrecht in April of 1713 the young Wesley had contracted the small-pox. He braved it like a true Christian and recovered. Ten and a half years of age,

John upon entering the Charterhouse, London, passed from the close attention and nurturing care of his mother into a more public phase of life. Wesley later reflected on his own spiritual state just prior to his entering the Charterhouse:

> . . . I believe, till I was about ten years old I had not sinned away that "washing of the Holy Ghost" which was given me in baptism; having been strictly educated and carefully taught, that I could only be saved "by universal obedience, by keeping all the commandments of God;" in the meaning of which I was diligently instructed. [18]

Queen Anne died in 1714 ending an era which had witnessed the continuing expansion of interest in physical science, the publishing of the first daily newspaper in England, the genius and skill of Marlborough commanding the English troops, the famous Sacheverell impeachment case, and the fitful lethargy of the Church of England. [19] James could not be recognized as the rightful king unless he adhered to the Church of England. George I of Hanover tranquilly assumed the power of the English throne. More significant was the rise to power of Robert Walpole in the Parliament. He was to maintain control in English politics until around 1742. The Trinitarian controversy lifted its head once again giving air to fourth-century Arianism in eighteenth-century England. [20]

Very little is known of Wesley's life as a gown-boy at the Charterhouse. He was under the guidance of Dr. John King who was said to carry about with him a copy of Thomas à Kempis' Imitation of Christ. [21] Luke Tyerman comments, "Terrible is the danger when a child leaves a pious home for a public school. John Wesley entered the Charterhouse a saint, and left it a sinner." [22] Perhaps the term "sinner" is too harsh for this period in Wesley's life. His increasing awareness of himself and

the world combined with the thoughts inculcated by his mother more than likely prompted a strong feeling of sinfulness in the youngster. In such circumstances of human development it is most often the saint who feels himself more trapped in the flesh of sin. The ghost of conscience was with the young Wesley. Other significant events were occurring. In March of 1717 Benjamin Hoadley delivered a sermon provoking the Bangorian Controversy. The same year saw the silencing of Convocation which effectively prevented the reform of any ecclesiastical abuses. Professor Alfred Plummer accurately describes the consequence of the silencing in the following:

> . . . henceforth the Church of England . . . was deprived of that right of managing its own affairs . . . and had to deal with the religious, moral, and social evils of the time with its hands tied behind its back. [23]

This was also a time when the deist arguments were getting hot.

In June of 1720, the year the South Sea Bubble burst, John Wesley entered Christ Church, Oxford. At this time Oxford was a strong adherent to the monarchy and the Church of England as well as the loose morals associated with the Court. Oxford proscribed everything which even hinted at dissent or enthusiasm. From the scant evidence available it would appear that Wesley entered into the social life of the coffee-house where he drank his tea, read the newspaper, and conversed with friends. Many students had a tendency to neglect their studies; however, John was not among their number. Although indebtedness was a constant problem, he was able to manage sufficiently. His tutors were George Wigan and Henry Sherman, and the Christ Church Precentor was Jonathan Colley. All these men were High Churchmen, and through their recommended

readings, they gave their position to Wesley. Scripture was taught as the primary source of authority with the Church of England tradition as the sedondary authority. God's will could also be ascertained by the independent means of human reason. Although his first year at Oxford represented a mild reaction against the discipline of Epworth and the Charterhouse, by the end of 1721 Wesley had returned to an endeavor to better regulate his life. [24] The undergraduate atmosphere did not provide him with the discipline to which he had been accustomed, New resolutions of reform were made, broken, and made again. The four-year undergraduate period could be characterized as the somewhat agitated calm before the beginning of a religious race. Wesley received his bachelor's degree in 1724. A holy vocation was already beginning to appear on the horizon.

From 1703 to 1725 Wesley grew in an atmosphere pervaded with religious discipline. He had a predilection towards the use of his mind in a regular, logical fashion. His own father, while John was yet six years old, said to him, " 'Child, you think to carry everything by dint of argument; but you will find how little is ever done in the world by close reasoning.' " [25] Recognizing John's disposition he would probably have replied, " 'I thank you; I will think of it.' " [26] His older brother thought he was at times too serious-minded. While at Epworth the dominant influence had been his mother Susanna. The fire of 1709 served to promote her attention devoted to John increasing his own seriousness. Charterhouse continued the discipline of the home. The sphere of London was different; however, the emphases on habits of religious discipline, outward diligence, and inward devoutness were the same as at Epworth. At Oxford the authorities of the Bible and tradition were sealed. Reason was the independent means by which a man of good

conscience could discern the ways of God. The following words of Frank Baker properly conclude this period of Wesley's life and thought:

> The simple religious faith of childhood had hardened into a conventional habit of religion, punctuated by moments of regret at allowing himself to become too much engrossed in 'the innocent comforts and pleasures of life.' [27]

FOOTNOTES

1. Cf. Alfred Plummer, The Church of England in the Eighteenth Century (London: Methuen and Co., 1910), p. 40; and Lecky, I, p. 95.

2. Quoted from Plummer, p. 42.

3. Several of the children had died. A mother in eighteenth-century England could count on half her offspring dying of either disease or violence.

4. Martin Schmidt makes the following comment about Samuel: "On the one hand he always owed a great deal to the Puritan emphasis upon the importance of repentance, conversion and rebirth; on the other hand he had the historical interest of the Enlightenment." (Martin Schmidt, John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, trans. Norman P. Goldhawk (London: The Epworth Press, 1962), p. 40).

5. Frank Baker, John Wesley and the Church of England (London: Epworth Press, 1970), p. 6. Professor Baker states, "Had John Wesley depended solely on parental information and enthusiasm, he would certainly not have developed that sympathy with the Puritans which he reached in later years along with the realization that even his own Puritan ancestry had in part foreshadowed the Methodist movement." (Frank Baker, "Wesley's Puritan Ancestry," The London Quarterly and Holborn Review, CLXXXVII, Sixth Series, XXXI (1962), p. 184).

6. For a summary of the contents of this book the reader is referred to John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, pp. 48-52.

7. For a summary of the contents of Scougal's book the reader is referred to John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, pp. 53-57.

8. Schmidt writes, "It must not be overlooked that certain essential characteristics of John Wesley's own system are contained in them [Scupoli and Scougal], and questions are apparent with which he was constantly concerned in his maturity." (John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, p. 58).

9. John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, p. 60.

10. Ibid., p. 62.

11. V. H. H. Green states, "His neatness, his meticulous, at times fussy, concern with detail, his personal sensitivity, his histrionic approach, must have been in part conditioned at this early age." (V. H. H. Green, The Young Mr. Wesley: A Study of John Wesley and Oxford (London: Edward Arnold Ltd., 1961), p. 52. Cf. Piette, pp. 248-249).

12. V. H. H. Green, p. 52.

13. In 1711 she wrote in her private meditations these words: " 'I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child, that thou hast so mercifully provided for, than ever I have been; that I may do my endeavour to instil into his mind the principles of Thy true religion and virtue. Lord, give me grace to do it sincerely and prudently, and bless my attempts with good success!' " (Quoted from Piette, p. 229).

14. Piette, pp. 228 and 544, footnote 43.

15. Quoted from L. Tyerman, The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M. A., Founder of the Methodists (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1872), I, p. 18.

16. Cf. John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, p. 41; and V. H. H. Green, p. 47, footnote 5. Green probably gives the more accurate account.

17. Cf. John H. Overton and Frederic Relton, The English Church: Vol. VII From the Accession of George I. to the End of the Eighteenth Century (1714-1800) (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1906), p. 12.

18. Works (1978), I, p. 98. This Journal entry is dated May 24, 1738.

19. M. Piette describes the fifty years from 1689 to 1739 as a period of hibernation for both the Dissenters and the Church of England (Piette, p. 180. Cf. Overton and Relton, p. 1).

20. Cf. S. C. Carpenter, Eighteenth Century Church and People (London: John Murray Ltd., 1959), p. 116.

21. Cf. John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, p. 67.

22. Tyerman, I, p. 22. Under May 24, 1738, in his Journal Wesley wrote, "The next six or seven years were spent at school; where, outward restraints being removed, I was much more negligent than before, even of outward duties, and almost continually guilty of outward sins, which I knew to be such, though they were not scandalous in the eye of the world." (Works (1978), I, p. 98). For a more balanced explanation of Tyerman's sentiment the reader is referred to Piette, pp. 232-234 (Cf. John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, pp. 69, footnote 3).

23. Plummer, p. 72. Cf. Piette, p. 132.

24. The year 1721 also marks the period when Wesley began to write his first notes on his life.(Cf. Journal, I, p. 42). J. S. Simon in his John Wesley and the Religious Societies comments about this period of time, ". . . something occurred which induced him to take a more serious view of life. The moving cause cannot be discovered, but it is clear he then formed and carried out a plan for the regulation of his work. He knew that he was

wasting his time, and determined to squander his hours no longer. . . ./ The attempt to stop a prodigal waste of time was only a first stroke in Wesley's battle for self-mastery." (Quoted from J. Brazier Green, John Wesley and William Law (London: The Epworth Press, 1945), p. 25).

25. Quoted from Tyerman, I, p. 18.

26. Quoted from Ibid.

27. John Wesley and the Church of England, p. 12.

CHAPTER III

THE CRUCIAL PERIOD - THE RULE OF REASON AND THE SEEDS OF DISCONTENT (1725 - MAY 1738)

ASSENT ON RATIONAL GROUNDS

The year 1725 is important in Wesleyan studies, and it is equally important to the thesis that the British philosophers served as an indispensible crucible in the development of Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification. Harald Lindström rightly marks the significance of this year in the following statement:

> He never abandoned the general position with regard to Christian perfection which derives from his introduction to practical mysticism in 1725 and was then first expressed . . . [1]

In January of 1725 Wesley had begun to prepare himself for ordination. He sought the advice of his father as to how best to prepare himself for the church vocation. Samuel was reluctant to encourage his son towards an immediate ordination. He probably had two main reasons for this reluctance. First, he rightly wanted his son to be absolutely sure of the proper motives for entering the Church of England as a minister. It seems John's initial motivation was to further his knowledge in languages and philosophy rather than to become actively involved in a pastor's life. [2] Second, Samuel probably felt his son needed more academic preparation in the biblical languages and the study of the Bible. Susanna thought differently on the subject of immediate ordination. As was often the case, her wishes prevailed.

On April 5 Wesley began to reveal his spiritual life through his

notebook entries. [3] The entry for April 14 introduces the reader to the delightful Cotswolds scene and to Sally Kirkham who played a vital role in the deepening of Wesley's spiritual life. Partly through the influence of Miss Kirkham he came to view the priestly vocation more as a calling rather than a mere living. During the years 1725 and 1726 Wesley spent a good portion of his holidays in the Cotswolds area which comprised the villages of Buckland, Broadway, and Stanton. The social milieu in the Cotswolds offered the young scholar relaxation in leisurely walks and rides, card playing, singing, dancing, and the ever-present religious conversing. The atmosphere was freer and more refined than the coffee-house scene at Oxford, and to a certain extent freer than at Epworth where he would have been employed as his father's assistant at Wroote which was rather isolated from the finer social amenities. [4] The Cotswolds society was filled with men and women Wesley's own age with whom he seemed to have a semi-romantic and idyllic relation. [5] During a May visit to Stanton a fellowship at Lincoln College became vacant. Wesley desired to fill the vacancy.

Sally Kirkham had become an important religious friend to John. [6] It was probably Sally who recommended Thomas à Kempis' Christian Pattern, or a Treatise of the Imitation of Jesus Christ for his reading. On May 28, 1725, after a visit to Stanton, he wrote his mother from Oxford, "I was lately advised to read Thomas à Kempis over, which I had frequently seen, but never much looked into before." [7] In his A Plain Account of Christian Perfection referring to Thomas à Kempis he remarked, "The nature and extent of inward religion, the religion of the heart, now appeared to me in a stronger light than ever it had done before." [8] His father gave hearty support to John's reading of this work. The following words of

Kempis had their fruitful growth in the young man preparing for ordination:

> You have not made your burden lighter,
> But you have bound yourself by closer bonds of discipline,
> And linked yourself into a higher ideal of a holy life.
> A priest should be adorned with every virtue,
> Giving a pattern of good life to all.
> His goings are not with the crowd, nor in the common
> walks with men,
> But with the angels in the heavens,
> Or with the perfect on the earth. [9]

The purity of motive became paramount for Wesley. Kempis promoted this idea when he wrote:

> If you were good and pure within,
> You would see all things clear, nothing between,
> And you would understand them all;
> And a pure heart
> Sees right inside --- to heaven and hell. [10]

Wesley's struggle was set to attain a pure intention and the righteous motive. The goal was to strengthen his internal life. This became the very purpose of his reading and writing.

It is likely Sally Kirkham mentioned to Wesley during one of their discussions Jeremy Taylor's Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying. John wrote his mother on June 18, 1725, "I have heard one I take to be a person of good judgment say that she would advise no one very young to read Dr. Taylor Of Living and Dying . . ." [11] Wesley did not take the advice of his friend, but plunged headlong into Taylor's work. In the same letter to his mother he wrote the following:

> [Taylor comments:] A true penitent must all the days of his life pray for pardon and never think the work completed till he dies. Whether God has forgiven us or no we know not, therefore still be sorrowful for ever having sinned.
> I take the more notice of this last sentence . . . [12]

No doubt the book greatly affected him; especially, ". . . that part in particular which relates to purity of intention." [13] Wesley instantly resolved to dedicate his whole life to God and to examine it closely each day. The benefit of such an examination was to hinder the growth of sin. [14] But this was merely the negative purpose for daily examination. Jeremy Taylor commented:

> . . . indeed no man can well observe his own growth in grace but by accounting seldomer returns of sin, and a more frequent victory over temptations; concerning which every man makes his observations according as he makes his inquiries and search after himself. [15]

The intention of the daily examination was not to appear religious to others, but to become pure in heart and to be created anew in God's spirit. For ". . . that which was imperfect, he leads on to perfection . . . he opens the heart . . . to hear the word of God." [16] No half measures or the road of mediocrity could be taken. The individual was called upon to sacrifice himself completely to the will of God. No purgatory existed. One was bound for either heaven or hell. Total faith in God was the intention.

What was faith? In July John again wrote to his mother these words:

> I call faith an assent upon rational grounds, because I hold divine testimony to be the most reasonable of all evidence whatever. Faith must necessarily at length be resolved into reason. God is true; therefore what He says is true . . . [17]

The context of the above statement was the issue of predestination which Wesley held to be a contradiction. He was soon to be ordained; however, he could not see the reasonable sense of Article 17 of "The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion" of the Church of England and the

damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed.[18] The crucible in which the argument against predestination was constructed was that of the Lockean conceptions of reason and revelation. Along with Locke, Wesley would have agreed here that reason ". . . must be our last judge and guide in everything."[19] Wesley's argument bears the stamp of Lockean rationalism. Both men attempted to hold a balance between reason and revelation; however, one's belief was felt to stand upon a rational ground without which there could be no belief and no faith.[20] The final authority in Wesley's letter is reason.

> As I understand faith to be an assent to any truth upon rational grounds, I don't think it possible without perjury to swear I believe anything, unless I have rational grounds for my persuasion.[21]

John was not prepared to accept in an uncritical fashion any doctrine of the Church of England especially if he felt it went against his conscience; however, he could be persuaded by reason. Here the full force of his mother entered the scene. She replied to his letter on August 18, 1725, with the following:

> You are somewhat mistaken in your notions of faith. All faith is an assent, but all assent is not faith. Some truths are self-evident, and we assent to them because they are so. Others, after a regular and formal process of reason by way of deduction from some self-evident principle, gain our assent. This is not properly faith but science. Some again we assent to, not because they are self-evident, or because we have attained the knowledge of them in a regular method by a train of arguments; but because they have been revealed to us, either by God or man, and these are the proper objects of faith. The true measure of faith is the authority of the revealer . . . Divine faith is an assent to whatever God has revealed to us, because he has revealed it.[22]

For Susanna the revelation from God took precedence over the reasoning of man. In the next paragraph of her letter she touched on John's scruples against predestination. She then left any further discussion to her husband. John's father was disturbed by his son's reasoning over Article 17 and made the following reply:

> I like your way of thinking and arguing; and yet must say, I'm a little afraid on't. He that believes without or against reason is half a Papist, or enthusiast. He that would mete Revelation by his own shallow reason is either half a Deist, or a heretic. O my dear! steer clear between this Scylla and Charybdis. . . .
>
> If you have any scruples about any p[oin]t of Revelation, or the scheme of the Church of England (which I think exactly agreeable to it) I can answer'em. [23]

Evidently John Wesley's scruples over the Athanasian Creed and Article 17 were sufficiently removed or explained so that he was ordained deacon by Bishop Potter of Oxford on September 19, 1725.

Had Wesley displaced his view of faith primarily as an assent upon rational grounds with the view of his mother showing forth the primacy of revelation? A clue to the answer is found in Wesley's letter to his mother dated November 22, 1725. Once again the crucible for his argument was the thought of a British philosopher --- George Berkeley. Following his ordination as deacon John continued his reading in theology and philosophy. He was concerned with the conceptions of Locke and several of the critical problems those views raised for his own theological development. [24] His readings at this time not only included George Berkeley but also Francis Hutcheson and Samuel Clarke. Hutcheson's An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue was first printed in 1725, and Wesley was busy with its pages. [25] Hutcheson was

probably the most influential, although not the most important, British philosopher setting the trends in eighteenth-century British thought.[26] This philosopher hoped to further the argument between Samuel Clarke and Lord Shaftesbury with an analysis of man's moral knowledge.[27] How does one account for moral knowledge, and is it a revelation from God? Can reason apprehend the moral quality of an existing relation? Hutcheson answered by indicating that reason could not apprehend moral qualities and that God has given us a moral sense. He wrote, " '...[the Author of nature] has given us a moral sense, to direct our actions, and to give us still nobler pleasures . . .' "[28] The term "moral sense" was derived from Shaftesbury and should not be supposed as any innate idea.[29] Probably the most convincing, although not thoroughly satisfying due to the lack of an adequate analysis of psychological dispositions, was Hutcheson's section on the motives to virtuous actions. He wrote the following:

> . . . Every action, which we apprehend as either morally good or evil, is always supposed to flow from some affection toward sensitive natures; and whatever we call virtue or vice, is either some such affection [whether toward God or man], or some action consequent upon it.[30]

The approval of the moral sense and the public good were identical.[31]

Wesley was also reading George Berkeley's Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous published in 1713 and reissued in 1725. The work was not that well received even by those who knew of Berkeley's philosophy. In his November letter to his mother Wesley was concerned with the first portion of Berkeley's "Second Dialogue." Berkeley had already published his first important book titled An Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision

in 1709 which was followed by A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge propounding his immaterialist philosophy. The Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous was a further stating of the latter work in a more popular form. H. B. Acton observes, ". . . Berkeley regarded himself as protesting against the excesses of uncontrolled rationalism" and felt that insufficient attention had been given to experience by the mathematicians and natural scientists. [32] Berkeley's famous argument is concisely expressed in the following statement from his A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge:

> Insomuch that I am content to put the whole upon this issue; if you can but conceive it possible for one extended moveable substance, or in general, for any one idea or any thing like an idea, to exist otherwise than in a mind perceiving it, I shall readily give up the cause . . . [33]

The same argument was carried through in the "First Dialogue." The "Second Dialogue" argued that since sensible things do not depend on human thought, ". . . and have an existence distinct from being perceived by me, there must be some other mind wherein they exist." [34] The "other mind" was, of course, God. It was the God who had ordered things for man's benefit. Berkeley concluded with the following statement from the "Third Dialogue":

> God is a pure spirit . . . To know everything knowable is certainly a perfection; but to endure, or suffer, or feel any thing by sense, is an imperfection. The former, I say, agrees to God, but not the latter. God knows or hath ideas; but His ideas are not convey'd to Him by sense, as ours are. [35]

In the above a duality between that which feels, suffers, and endures --- the body --- and that which is pure mind or spirit can readily be observed.

If this thought is combined with Hutcheson's concept of the moral sense and Kempis' striving for purity of intention, one can begin to sense the developing moral intention in Wesley's thoughts. Moral intention contained a purity that physical actions could not match. Berkeley viewed the world of bodily phenomena by the two means of sense and intellect. The mind was primary over the sense. He naively attempted to unite the object of sense and the real sensible thing. Sensible things and the ideas of sense held by the mind became identical to Berkeley. John Locke would have agreed that ". . . sensible things are those only which are immediately perceived by sense. . . . Sensible things therefore are nothing else but so many sensible qualities, or combinations of sensible qualities." [36] But Locke would have balked at the uniting of sensible things and the mind's ideas of sense. [37]

George Berkeley's concern had been to counteract the atheism, skepticism, and irreligious materialism which seemed in vogue in both intellectual and general circles. [38] Although Wesley held this common concern with the philosopher, he found Berkeley's argument unacceptable. In the November letter he summarized Berkeley's argument as set forth in the early portion of his "Second Dialogue":

> He introduces Hylas charging Philonous with scepticism for denying the existence of sensible things: to which Philonous replies that, if denying the existence of sensible things constitute a sceptic, he will prove those to be such who assert sensible things to be material; for if all sensible things are material, then, if it be proved that nothing material exists, it will follow that no sensible thing exists; and that nothing material can exist he undertakes to demonstrate. [39]

Wesley criticized the philosopher for his use of the terms "idea" and "sensation," and felt Berkeley's definitions to be of no consequence. [40]

Essentially Wesley was saying Berkeley had not logically proven his point. The metaphysical foundation was not in dispute, but rather the manner in which a proof was attempted and its consequence. Wesley at this time confessed, ". . . I had been under a mistake in adhering to that definition of Faith which Dr. Fiddes sets down as the only true one." [41] That definition of faith was the one expressed in his July letter. It would appear that Susanna's son had been convinced by her argument. John's mind was at times stubborn to change. It was curious, yet cautious. Appearances can be deceiving. On closer examination one might still catch a glimpse of reason upon its throne. The November letter closed in the following manner:

> An assent grounded both on testimony and reason takes in science as well as faith, which is on all hands allowed to be distinct from it. I am, therefore, at length come over entirely to your opinion, that saving faith (including practice) is an assent to what God has revealed because He has revealed it and not because the truth of it may be evinced by reason. [42]

God's existence was not dependent on the human mind. It would also hold true that revelations originating from the pure mind of God would not need reasonable assent by the human mind. Therefore God's revelations could stand separately as an authority. Wesley's approach to the problem of faith through Berkeley's argument indicated one might assent to "what God has revealed" merely "because He has revealed it." Revelation's authority was recognised by the use of reason. Reason was not denigrated. Revelation was merely placed beside reason as a coequal authority. Reason in the Wesley of this period still maintained its active primacy as a ". . . <u>last judge and guide in everything</u>"; however, it was balanced by revelation. John Locke's conceptions of reason and revelation were not

exceeded. Wesley simply had problems with Berkeley's logic and immaterialism. He would have agreed with Berkeley's statement in the "Second Dialogue" that ". . . the things by me perceived are known by the understanding, and produced by the will, of an infinite spirit."[43] But simply to have faith in another mind was not to logically evince a reasonable validity to that mind. Both the mind of God and the mind of the human might be reasonable but not necessarily demonstrable by reason alone. This seems to have been Wesley's thinking by the close of 1725.

The year 1725 had been a crucial one for Wesley. He was convinced that ". . . we may know if we are <u>now</u> in a state of salvation . . ." since it was promised in the Bible.[44] The theological argument was with predestination, the means to the assurance of pardon was by the faculty of reason rather than by experience, and the crucible of the argument was eighteenth-century British philosophy. The year closed with Wesley attending the wedding of his religious friend --- Sally Kirkham --- and John Chapone.

DEVELOPING MONASTIC PIETY

Following Sally's marriage Wesley becameemore intent on self-examination. He drilled himself with the following questions:

> Have I loved women or company more than God? . . .
> Have I taken God's name in vain? . . . Irreverent behavior at Church? . . . Indevotion? . . . Pride? . . . Idleness? . . . Intemperate sleep? . . .
> Unclean thoughts? . . .[45]

The first couple of months in 1726 were anxious ones as Wesley was concerned about his fellowship prospects at Lincoln College. His thoughts and dispositions would have certainly agreed with the fellows of Lincoln.

He was a High Churchman with a dislike for the Hanoverian regime; however, his loyalty to England and suspicions of Roman Catholicism prevented his being a Jacobite. In March his hopes were realized in his election to Lincoln College. For the first time Wesley had a financially secure base. The fellowship was to promote an increasing asceticism and, perhaps mental inelasticity, for the next three years. [46] The ascetic tendency can be observed in Wesley's own description of his spiritual endeavors at this time:

> . . . I executed a resolution which I was before convinced was of the utmost importance, --- shaking off at once all my trifling acquaintance. I began to see more and more the value of time. I applied myself closer to study. I watched more carefully against actual sins; I advised others to be religious, according to that scheme of religion by which I modelled my own life. [47]

And what was this "scheme of religion"? He sought a new life in daily religious meditation and weekly communion. "I watched against all sin, whether in word or deed. I began to aim at, and pray for, inward holiness. . . . I doubted not but I was a good Christian." [48] The piety is frightening. Although he was becoming more careful with the use of his time and the type of acquaintances he made, Wesley did not cut himself off from the congenial and cultured atmosphere in the Common Room at Lincoln. His fellowship widened his intellectual contacts. Easter was spent at Oxford, and on April 29 he took the oath as fellow at Lincoln giving the customary banquet to his new colleagues. After these formalities Wesley set out for home to enjoy several months of rest and religious retreat.

While home Wesley served as his father's assistant at both Epworth and Wroote. The summer witnessed his involvement in the various

pastoral duties, some family problems, the somewhat limited but active social resources of Epworth and its neighborhood, and an archaeological expedition to a dilapidated hermit's cell and grave. A romantic entanglement with a Miss Kitty Hargreaves was also on the agenda. Wesley was split between his attraction for Miss Hargreaves and his own severe conscience. Passion flared. The result was new resolutions. " 'Never touch Kitty's hand again'? . . . never touch any woman's breasts again." [49] The flame never really burned brightly. Too much conscience obstructed his normal physical attraction.

The summer ended with Wesley's return to Oxford. The autumn and early winter of 1726 progressed in an uneventful and regular fashion. The split between natural inclinations and conscious intentions continued. With his friends in the Cotswolds he read plays and attended the theatre at a cost of a feeling of irresolve. Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels had just been published, and Wesley delighted in its reading. To atone for this light reading he undertook a translation of Justin Martyr. The year witnessed work on his themes for the master's degree [50] and an appointment as tutorial instructor in Greek at Lincoln. He visited the Cotswolds for the Christmas holidays remaining until the middle of January in 1727.

Information about Wesley's life and what he was reading is scant between February, 1727, and May, 1729. [51] While he was visiting in the Cotswolds, a friend Robert Griffiths, died. Although the death was not unexpected, it still gave Wesley a shock. He preached his friend's funeral sermon soberly recognising that passion could conquer reason. In his sermon "On Mourning for the Dead" Wesley preached the following words:

> . . . judgment . . . might be so clouded by passion, as to think it reasonable to be profuse in our sorrow at parting from a beloved object; but Revelation tells us, that all occurrences of life must be borne with patience and moderation . . . [52]

Shortly after the funeral he returned to Oxford immediately taking up a work on Fénelon's Discourse on Simplicity and plunging himself into a variety of works including Swift's The Battle of the Books, Southerne's The Fate of Capua, and Wycherly's The Plaindealer. This reading did not satisfy Wesley resulting in the feeling that his spiritual life was not adequately progressing. [53] More discipline was needed in the reading.

On January 20 Wesley breakfasted with Bishop Potter. The topic of their discussion focused on the recent dispute between Bishops Hoadly and Atterbury over the interpretation of a certain scriptural text. He resolved to read the works of Atterbury and Hoadly; however, only five days later he found he had no desire to complete the readings as they seemed rather useless. [54] A new resolution was made to devote himself to more serious reading. Shortly after this resolution Wesley discovered and read William Law's A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection which had just been published at the close of 1726. [55] The book appeared at a time in Wesley's life when he was weighing the merits of a scholar's life and thinking about his future career. The monastic emphasis of William Law would have added weight in favor of the scholar's life. The treatise on Christian perfection is usually considered with another publication by Law titled A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, adapted to the State and Condition of all Orders of Christians. Wesley in his own A Plain Account of Christian Perfection discussed the works as a unit. [56] Both works represent what has been called the "ethical period" in William Law's writings. [57] In A Practical

Treatise upon Christian Perfection the author's intention was to free the term "perfection" from certain narrow monastic associations which placed it out of reach for the common people; however, the treatise as a whole portrayed an austere monasticism. The world was to be overcome by religious activity consisting of a disciplined life of fasting, prayerful devotion, and resistance to worldly interests. Suffering was accepted as a just punishment for sins and became a means for the Christian to attain a higher form of godliness. Inner disposition was vital. In his introductory comments Law wrote the following:

> This is the Perfection which this Treatise endeavours to recommend; a Perfection which does not consist in any singular State or Condition of Life, or in any particular Set of Duties, but in the holy and religious Conduct of ourselves in every State of Life. [58]

In the above the attainment of perfection is not primary but rather the process, effort, disposition, or resolution made toward its attainment. The stress was placed on one's best endeavor towards the goal. Law wrote, "For surely it is a very different Case, to fall short of our Perfection after our best Endeavours, and to stop short of it, by not endeavouring to arrive at it." [59] The endeavor included the individual's death and new birth. [60] In the treatise Law had not surrendered himself totally to mysticism since the importance of the world and human life were not denigrated. The treatise holds points of similarity with the works of Henry Scougal and Jeremy Taylor; however, Law's work shows more awareness of man's spiritual struggle in laboring constantly to commit no sin and more stress on the human will. [61] He wrote the following:

> This is our true Standard and Measure by which we are to judge of ourselves; we are not true Christians unless we are born of God, and we are not born of God, unless it can be said of us in this sense that we cannot commit Sin. [62]

The newly born man was to imitate the love of God. Indeed, ". . . to be Christians, we must be born again, change our very Natures, and have no governing Desire of our Souls, but that of being made like God." [63] It is important for this study of Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification to emphasize that William Law was in no way promoting an absolute state of perfection, or holiness, from which one could not fall. He stated:

> This is not to be understood, as if he that was born of God, was therefore in an absolute State of Perfection, and incapable afterwards of falling into anything that was sinful. [64]

Wesley confronted A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, adapted to the State and Condition of all Orders of Christians in the year 1730.

On February 7 Wesley was examined for the master's degree disputing for it the following day. He presented three Latin dissertations titled Animal Souls, Julius Caesar, and The Love of God. Following the disputations Wesley relaxed with a few games of billiards and an evening with his brother Charles at Christ Church. He was awarded the Master of Arts degree on February 14, 1727. Despite his interest in school teaching Wesley seemed anxious for pastoral duties. Professor V. H. H. Green suggests the reason for this interest in parish work as deriving from a desire to escape some ribbing he might have received in the Senior Common Room at Lincoln College for his over-scrupulous conscience and scheme of work as well as Wesley's own lack of humor regarding these subjects. [65] Two months following the death of King George I Wesley had returned to Epworth in the

capacity of his father's curate. With little interruption he would remain at Epworth and Wroote until November of 1729. This period represents the only substantial experience he had as a parish clergyman.

Life during the summer was much the same as the previous one. Wesley followed a regular routine rising early, saying prayers, reading, and helping his father not only with the pastoral duties but also with Samuel's scholarly work on Job. Neighbors were visited with entertainment in the form of dancing. In its external aspects life took on the quality of a restful monotony. John was too serious a scholar to deny priority to reading and studying. He was such an avid reader that it has been suggested he cared more for what he read at this time than for his parishioners.[66] The long absence from Oxford also confirmed Wesley as a Church of England bigot, ". . . believing none but the members of it to be in a state of salvation."[67] In September, 1728, his loyalty to the Church of England was further strengthened by is ordination as priest by Bishop Potter. Dr. Hayward, his examiner for orders, made an impression on the young minister. The examiner warned Wesley in the following manner:

> Do you know what you are about? You are bidding defiance to all mankind. He that would live a Christian priest ought to know that whether his hand be against every man or no he must expect every man's hand should be against him.[68]

But as William Law had indicated, the suffering and sacrifice undertaken by the Christian would lead one on to a higher quality of holiness.[69] Wesley summarised his lack of accomplishment as a preacher in the following:

> . . . From the year 1725 to 1729 I preached much, but saw no fruit of my labour. Indeed, it could not be that I should: for I neither laid the foundation of repentance nor of believing the gospel; taking it for granted that all to whom I preached were believers and that many of them 'needed no repentance.'[70]

Wesley's routine at Epworth and Wroote was broken in 1729 by a series of expeditions. In the summer he made a visit to Gainsborough to visit Miss Kitty with whom he engaged in a happy intimacy of singing, playing, and fulfilling his role as a great entertainer of ladies. He went to Lincoln for a visit with his sister Kezzy, and he traveled to York in late October. Several visits were made to London to see his elder brother, some uncles, sister Hetty, and friends. In July he spent some time at Oxford returning to Epworth by the middle of August. During one of his visits with the Kirkhams Wesley discussed the ideas of John Locke with Sally. His reading list for the year included Thomas à Kempis, J. B. S. Jure's The Holy Life of Monr. de Renty, a late Nobleman of France and sometime Councellor to King Lewis the 13th, and Jeremy Taylor. It was also during 1729 the young Oxford don affirmed the primary authority of the Bible. He wrote, ". . . In the year 1729 I began not only to read but to study the Bible, as the one, the only standard of truth, and the only model of pure religion." [71] His secondary authorities remained reason and, increasingly in this period, the Church of England. [72]

In October Wesley received a letter from the Rector of Lincoln College --- Dr. Morley --- requesting his return to Oxford to assume his tutoring duties. He willingly returned on November 22. Epworth afforded only limited cultural opportunities, and although he was devoted to his family, parental relations had been strained on occasions. Oxford seemed to provide the double opportunity of further pastoral work and scholarly activities. Despite some of his idiosyncracies the Lincoln College fellows seemed to enjoy each other's company. Wesley actively participated in the Senior Common Room where after dinner there was congenial conversation, wine, and sometimes cards ". . . as the sea-coal glowed in the grate and

candlelight softly illuminated the panelled walls and the decanters."[73] The scholarly community and the ease with which one could establish a routine discipline attracted Wesley. Another community also had its appeal. Robert Kirkham,[74] William Morgan, and John's brother Charles had formed a Holy Club[75] interested in studying the liturgies of the ancient Church, devotionals, Bible study, and frequent communion. The fourth-century desert fathers were a guide for their monastic piety. John was uniquely equipped to assume the leadership of this Holy Club.[76] Upon his return to Oxford he became its leader.[77]

In The Arminian Magazine dated June of 1781 appeared an article titled "A Scheme of Self-Examination, used by the first Methodists in Oxford" exemplifying the Puritan self-control and self-criticism employed by the Holy Club members. A member was obligated to examine himself with several questions. Two of these questions were:

> Have I been zealous to do, and active in doing good? . . . Have I, in speaking to a stranger, explained what Religion is not (not negative, not external) and what it is, (a recovery of the image of God,) . . . ?[78]

In following the rules and exercises of self-discipline these early Oxford Methodists were endeavoring to strengthen their religion of conscience and to balance that which was properly outward in good actions with that which was properly inward by the striving to recover the very image of God. Wesley was deriving much of his thought and actions from Jeremy Taylor's Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying. In a letter to his mother dated February 28, 1730, he wrote about Taylor's work:

> What I so much like is his account of the pardon of sins, which is the clearest I ever met with: 'Pardon of sins in the gospel is sanctification. . . . As we hate sin, grow in grace,

> and arrive at the state of holiness, which is also a state of repentance and imperfection, but yet of sincerity of heart and diligent endeavour . . . Forgiveness of sins . . . is a state of change effected upon us . . .' [79]

This is an important statement indicating Wesley's doctrinal development in identifying forgiveness of sins with sanctification and a visible change in the person. Here one can perceive the first notion of the conception of forgiveness as dominion over sins. [80] To discern the change effected and to assure its constant presence the individual must rigorously examine himself to discover where he has been remiss so as to actively correct the sin.

Jeremy Taylor was not the only major influence at this juncture in Wesley's life. As his diary indicates Wesley was reading William Law's A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, adapted to the State and Condition of all Orders of Christians. Law had a powerful and lasting influence on Wesley's spiritual pilgrimage. His reading Law's treatise on Christian perfection and the above work convinced him ". . . more than ever of the absolute impossibility of being half a Christian." [81] And consequently he became even more determined through God's grace ". . . to be all devoted to God, --- to give Him all my soul, my body, and my substance." [82] R. N. Flew places Law in a proper light when he says, ". . . in the depth and power of his religious life he stood out far above most of his contemporaries in an irreligious age." [83] It would be very difficult for one to read A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, adapted to the State and Condition of all Orders of Christians without a great searching of the heart. In his sermon "On a Single Eye" written in 1789 Wesley gave a resounding tribute to this ". . . treatise which will hardly be excelled,

if it be equaled, in the English tongue, either for beauty of expression, or for justness and depth of thought." [84] The Oxford don endeavored mightily to follow the teachings of William Law; especially, to become a devoted man and to give over his life entirely to God. Law wrote, "If our common life is not a common course of humility, self-denial, renunciation of the world, poverty of spirit, and heavenly affection, we do not live the lives of Christians." [85] The devotion was not restricted solely to the liturgical worship but entered the morality of daily life. An individual's intention should be to please God in all his actions. This thought is vital as a connecting link in understanding Law's influence on Wesley. Law explained further:

> And it is so far from being impossible now, that if we can find any Christians, that sincerely intend to please God in all their actions, as the best and happiest thing in the world, . . . if they have but this intention, it will be impossible for them to do otherwise. This one principle will infallibly carry them to the height of charity, and they will find themselves unable to stop short of it. [86]

The sincere intention more than the actual attainment of perfection is the focus in the above statement. Law's book demonstrates a dialectic at work in the world's renunciation and the striving for happiness by the pursuit of holiness. [87]

William Law's two works revealed a certain process of salvation. [88] First, the element of conversion was necessary. The individual was to become a new person in the Christ. Only by means of this change could one be given any assurance of salvation. The rebirth involved an overcoming of the world in such a way as to cancel the desire for commiting sin. [89] Second, the ethical demands in daily life were stressed.

The new life in Christ ". . . calls no one to a Cloister," but to those duties ". . . common to all States of Life." [90] Third, the life of salvation was an imitation of Christ. One was to strive to be Christ-like not only in outward actions but also in mental and emotional intention and direction. Through his reading of Law's two treatises, Wesley was convinced that by his own continuing efforts to keep the whole law of God, both internal and external, he would be accepted by God and ". . . was even then in a state of salvation." [91]

IS LOVE THE HIGHEST REASON?

It would be an incorrect view to present Wesley as constantly involved in serious studies. There were very few evenings in 1730 when one could not witness him sitting in the Senior Common Room talking with the various guests and visitors to Lincoln College. He readily participated in the social activities enjoying the dinners, the coffee-house, music, and the entertainment of his colleagues. Wesley was concerned about rationing his time for life's more serious pursuits; however, this fact did not prevent his occasionally going on the river, gathering walnuts, taking pleasant walks in the garden, dancing, and attending a concert. Occasional visits to London and the Cotswolds were on the agenda. In May he was at the Winnington's partaking of tea, music, and dancing. Interspersed with his duties at Oxford and various travels, he took the worship services at several churches in the vicinity of Oxford. In August Wesley was in Stanton preaching and giving prayers at the Church. While there he also entertained Mary Pendarves and her sister Anne Granville. Mrs. Pendarves requested a copy of one of his sermons putting in motion further correspondence and another semi-romantic relationship.

In June of 1730 Wesley had been assigned his first pupils, eleven in all.[92] He had the responsibility of guiding them in a study of the classics, divinity, and logic. These tutorial tasks were taken seriously. The students were invited regularly to breakfast and prayers, and if a student was found to have a particular bent in the religious direction, encouragement was given to Holy Club activities. August saw the increase in the Holy Club's outward activities. As William Law had indicated, the individual was to please God in every action. This activity would lead to the very height of charity. Although Wesley took this teaching seriously, it was William Morgan who first put it into action for the Holy Club. Morgan had discovered the deplorable penal system that put hardened criminals and debtors into the same jail, and he began to take an interest in the welfare of those in the Castle and Bocardo prisons at Oxford. On August 24 John and his brother Charles in company with Morgan visited the Oxford Castle. John felt it was a worthwhile experience deserving repetition. The following week they visited a sick woman in town. In the autumn John sought the advice and approval of his father regarding these visitations. Samuel gave strong approval making the very wise suggestion that his son seek the consent of both the prison governor and the bishop. Wesley did so and received their consent. The increased charitable activity of the Holy Club was within the boundaries of the day's philanthropic spirit. Prison reform was in vogue, and a parliamentary committee had been established in February, 1729, to address itself to the brutalities, neglect, and diseases of the prisoners' conditions. James Oglethorpe was amongst the members of this committee which brought forth two reports --- one in 1729 and another in May, 1730. Although the Holy Club's activities were nothing out of the ordinary, their increased external concern brought a corresponding increase

in the hostility, at first good-natured raillery, displayed towards them. The ethical implications of Law's writings were being put into practice, and any hostility would only serve to enhance the quality of the sacrifice being made. For Wesley the primary aim remained the image of God, the inward holiness.

It is instructive at this point to make a closer examination of William Law's idea of love as mentioned in his two previously mentioned books. Love for Law flowed more in the direction of man to God and neighbor rather than from God to man. [93] In the process of his religious pilgrimage man was to be raised to the divine nature. In the increased external activities of the Holy Club can be discerned a Christianity defined as the following:

> . . . a Course of holy Discipline, solely fitted to the Cure and Recovery of fallen Spirits, and intends such a Change in our Nature, as may raise us to a nearer Union with God, and qualify us for such high Degrees of Happiness. [94]

The end was the union with God, and the means was the sacrificial and internal imitation of Christ. Since the present state of man was one of corruption, self-denial and sacrifice were necessary for purification. These thoughts from Law's treatise on Christian perfection were further explained in the following statement:

> Charity to the Poor is founded in the Necessities and Infirmities of this Life, yet it is as real a Degree of Holiness, and as much to be performed for its own Sake, as that Charity which which [sic] will never have an End. [95]

Love was the elevator to God, and a most reasonable elevator it was. William Law's association of religion with reason was more prominent in his other works titled Remarks upon a late Book, entitled, 'The Fable of

the Bees,' etc. published in 1723 and The Case of Reason, or Natural Religion, fairly and fully stated. In Answer to a Book, entitled, Christianity as old as the Creation published in 1731; however, reason was by no means absent from the two books greatly influencing John Wesley. Men were God's rational creatures in need of deliverance ". . . from the Unreasonableness and Corruption of our Natures . . ." [96] In A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, adapted to the State and Condition of all Orders of Christians Law commented, "... . Piety requires us to renounce no ways of life, where we can act reasonably, and offer what we do to the glory of God." [97] From the seventh chapter of his A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection titled "Some further Considerations upon the Reasonableness of Self-denial" one reads the following statement:

> Let such consider, that God is Wisdom and Reason itself, and consequently everything that is contrary to Reason and Wisdom, is contrary to his Nature; so that a State of Sin, is a State of Contrariety to God. . . . every Instance of Sin, as it is an unreasonable Act, is contrary to his Nature, who is Reason itself.
>
> There is therefore a necessity from the Nature of Things, that every Creature be delivered from Sin, before it can enter into the beatific Presence of God; for if God could reward wicked Beings, and make them Happy by the Enjoyment of his Presence, he would as much cease to act according to the Nature of Things, as if he should punish a Being that lived in Innocence, for to punish Innocence, and to reward Sin, are equally contrary to the Nature and Reason of Things. [98]

The method of argument above is similar to Wesley's own contention against predestination prior to his ordination as a deacon in 1725. Law has defined sin as an act contrary to reason. Unless the human creature was delivered from his unreasonable acts, he would not enter into the glory of God.

Sinners were restored to God by Christ's atonement, merits, and mediation. All that was required of the sinner was repentance and devotion.

Again William Law defined sin as an act opposed to reason in the following:

> Thus if we consider what Reason is in ourselves, that it necessarily dislikes unreasonable Persons as well as Things, we may have some Notion, how all Sin and Sinners, that is, all Beings which act contrary to Reason, must be in the State of the utmost Contrariety to God, who is the highest Reason. 99

In the very next paragraph of his treatise on Christian perfection Law united love with rationality. God was both love and the highest reason. To desire no union with God was plainly not logical. Holiness was an entity attainable by reasonable actions. Under Law's influence Wesley was encouraged to visit the sick and the imprisoned as a path of holy discipline reasonably designed to procure his happiness in union with God. The external activity of the Holy Club was always to elicit an internal effect. The orientation was primarily internal rather than external. Perhaps this is one reason why the early Oxford Methodists were never noted for their growth statistics. One year after Wesley had assumed the Holy Club leadership only one person had joined. This was November, 1730, which also witnessed the appointment of Wesley as Moderator in Philosophy at Lincoln College.

Along with Thomas à Kempis, Jeremy Taylor, and William Law Wesley's diary shows he was reading St. Augustine's Confessions, Justin Martyr's First Apology, and George Berkeley's Of Passive Obedience first published in 1712. Berkeley's work concerns this paper more for its method and presuppositions than for its political content. Although Berkeley was accused of being a Jacobite, he, like Wesley was not one. Berkeley's essay argued against the Whig theory of conditional loyalty. In his presentation both reason and religion agreed. The argument began with a statement on

the essay's moral goal. He wrote, ". . . nothing in a natural state can entitle one man more than another to the favour of God, except only moral goodness . . ." which consists ". . . in a conformity to the laws of God. . . ." [100] The case was purposely built not on the authority of the Bible ". . . but altogether on the principles of reason common to all mankind . . ." [101] The reading of Of Passive Obedience would have reinforced the conceptions expressed by William Law. That which was most reasonable was most godly.

DEISM AND THE SEEDS OF DISCONTENT

In February of 1731 Wesley was in London visiting friends, relatives, and an actress by the name of Mrs. Buchanan with whom, along with his brother Charles, there might have been some romantic intrigue. The Wesley brothers were in the Cotswolds in May where John is seen reading a life of de Renty to Sally. The Holy Club was active with William Morgan beginning a school for prisoners' children. The last day of May Wesley returned to Oxford. Only a few weeks later he was saddened to hear of the death of his friend Rector Morley. [102] The curious correspondence with Mrs. Pendarves was in full swing. [103] A letter Wesley wrote this woman is instructive. In the letter Wesley repudiated Matthew Tindal, the leading proponent of Deism, who he felt was denying the atoning work of Jesus Christ in the contemporary world. In view of dogmatic history Wesley placed Tindal beside Faustus Socinus who had ". . . roundly maintained that Christ never purchased any Church at all, nor "gave His life a ransom for any man, all those phrases being purely metaphorical." " [104] Matthew Tindal had just published in 1730 his Christianity as old as the Creation. It has not been listed among Wesley's readings until 1734;

however, his letter to Mrs. Pendarves indicates he was most aware of the controversy raging between the orthodox theologians of the Church of England and the deists during the reigns of the first two Georges. Bishop William R. Cannon in his book The Theology of John Wesley: With Special Reference to the Doctrine of Justification makes the following comment:

> . . . the religious skepticism engendered by deism seems to have passed him by . . . The forces which produced John Wesley's theology are not . . . to be found in the intellectual subtleties of various and conflicting modes of philosophical thought. [105]

The skepticism might have passed Wesley by, but certainly not the philosophical thought. It serves as the cup in which the religious tradition was mixed and refined providing the methodological parameters of his theology. Both William Law and George Berkeley were very active in the attack on Deism. In the middle of these mentors sat John Wesley seeking holiness by the grace of a God who was both love and the highest reason.

In Matthew Tindal one can recognize the shift from the constructive phase of Deism to its moral phase. His book has been called the Deist's Bible and represents the most important work on Deism up to this period. [106] Tindal described a religion founded on right reason and the "nature of things." He wrote in his Christianity as old as the Creation, " "The Religion of nature was so perfect, that nothing cou'd be added to it; and that the Truth of all Revelation was to be judg'd of it by its agreement with it." " [107] Natural and revealed religion were answerable to one another, and reason remained the only sufficient guide to truth. [108] The coffee-house provided the appropriate setting for the free flowing debate on the issues being raised by such men as Tindal. While the ridicule of

church traditions prevailed in the coffee-houses, the Oxford Holy Club's activities reflected a more serious concern for the revival of primitive Christianity. A turn toward more serious reading in the Early Fathers and a concern for such writings as the one of Matthew Tindal on the religious morals of the period probably induced Wesley to spend less time at the coffee-house. Too many eighteenth-century clergy were ready to enter the fight against a deist and defeat him in logical combat rather than to save the soul of a single coal-heaver in Newcastle. John Redwood comments, "To Christianize the country they should have been energetic to achieve both." [109] Wesley was drawn into the middle of the deist controversy. As with the typical clergy of his day Wesley's concern seemed to be with providing a reasoned argument against deist tenets and consequently providing himself with a proof for the importance of his personal striving for the vision of God. The actual saving of others' souls was of secondary importance. His focus at this time was intellectual and inner directed.

Three men set the issues of Deism in a new light. They were William Law with his The Case of Reason, or Natural Religion, fairly and fully stated. In Answer to a Book, entitled, Christianity as old as the Creation, George Berkeley with his Alciphron: or the Minute Philosopher published in 1732, and Joseph Butler with his The Analogy of Religion published in 1736. William Law's book was a direct answer to Matthew Tindal. The intention of his rebuttal was stated as ". . . being only to appeal to the reason of the Reader, and to add nothing to it, but the safe, unerring light of divine Revelation." [110] Although there is no indication Wesley read this particular work of Law, he did read Berkeley's Alciphron: or the Minute Philosopher in 1732.

Following his comment on Matthew Tindal in the June letter to

Mrs. Pendarves, Wesley wrote this revealing statement on sin:

> . . . all sin being a voluntary breach of a known law, none but He who seeth the heart, and consequently how far this breach of His law is voluntary in each particular person, can possibly know which infidel shall perish and which be received to mercy. [111]

Sin was a "voluntary breach of a known law" with God being the final arbiter as to the degree of voluntariness. The intent was to strive fervently not to break any known law of God. In a July letter to Mrs. Pendarves Wesley wrote the following:

> To love God I must be like Him, holy as He is holy; which implies both the being pure from vicious and foolish passions and the being confirmed in those virtuous and rational affections which God comprises in the word charity. [112]

Law's influence is evident. God was both love and the highest reason. What means was to be used to attain the purity? The "vicious and foolish passions" were to be rooted out, and the "virtuous and rational affections" planted in their place. The tools used for this excavation and planting were, "(1) such means as are ordered by God; (2) such as are recommended by experience and reason." [113] The context of these thoughts was the deist controversy. Sin must be an entity which reason could grasp. How else could one know he had committed a sin? The intention of such knowledge was holiness. Wesley's attitude in securing holiness was active rather than passive. One was "not to stand still." [114] The individual's hope in his quest for holiness was "sincerity, not perfection; not to do well, but to do our best . . ." [115]

In the letters to Mary Pendarves and Ann Granville one detects the development of a martyr theology. [116] To embrace the difficult and the

painful was a means of extracting the "vicious and foolish passions." The Holy Club prompted the development of this theology. Although William Morgan was ill and many leading members had left Oxford, the Holy Club made substantial progress during the year 1731. A school for the children of prisoners had been started, and some prayer meetings were probably being held in town. More of Wesley's energies were devoted to the Holy Club narrowing his acquaintances and spending less time in the Senior Common Room. With this more serious bent of mind came the anxiety that his religious life might become unbalanced. During a summer visit to the Kirkhams' rectory in Stanton strictness of religion and over righteousness were the topics of discussion. [117] Wesley felt he was maintaining the correct balance, and that holiness could be achieved through a disciplined existence. Frank Baker gives a good insight into the life style Wesley was seeking at this time:

> The solitary pursuit of holiness he eschewed, but a company of like-minded devotees could both urge each other on to better churchmanship by the benevolent rivalry of good example, and also provide spiritual checks against any fanciful or misguided behaviour. [118]

Although William Morgan had returned to Oxford from his sick retreat at Holt, his illness alarmed Wesley to the extent that he felt his colleague was dying. [119] Wesley observed ". . . how fast life flies away, and how slow improvement comes . . ." in the path of holiness. [120] By March of 1732 Morgan's illness prevented him from reading. The sickness was both mental and physical, and on August 26 he succumbed. The gossip among student groups at Oxford was that excessive fasting by the Methodists had brought on Morgan's death. [121] This, of course, was not the truth; however, Wesley felt compelled to write William's father --- Richard Morgan --- a

letter explaining the organization called Methodists. The disputations centered around Morgan's death found an able apologist for the Methodist cause in the figure of William Law who defended these aspirants to holiness in a pamphlet titled The Oxford Methodists, Being some Account of a Society of Young Gentlemen in that City so denominated. [122] Morgan had gone mad and at the end of his life was apparently in spiritual darkness. The man's over-concern for religion must have been a factor contributing to his demise. His religious enthusiasm had created a mental crisis in a particularly sensitive man who did not have the emotional tools to overcome it. V. H. H. Green gives a valuable insight into Wesley's personality on this occasion when he writes, "John Wesley was himself so very far from being a neurotic that he often failed to see where the relentless pressure of religious zeal could lead young men." [123]

Reflecting the philanthropic mood of the period a gentleman by the name of James Oglethorpe desired to found a colony in the New World to which poor debtors might go for refuge and a new lease on life. [124] A charter for the colony of Georgia was signed on April 21, 1732, and in the early portion of 1733 Oglethorpe became the new colony's governor. [125] During the summer of 1732 on a visit to London Wesley met Colonel Oglethorpe and became a corresponding member of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. [126] On another visit in July he met William Law for the first time. After his meeting with Law he began reading the mystical medieval work Theologica Germanica. This reading reinforced his pursuit of "a union of the soul with God." [127] The Theologica Germanica added to the impetus set in motion by John Clayton prior to Wesley's meeting with Law. In an apparent reference to Clayton's influence Wesley, writing a review of his life in 1738, indicated, the following:

> . . . a contemplative man convinced me still more than I was convinced before, that outward works are nothing, being alone; and in several conversations instructed me how to pursue inward holiness, or a union of the soul with God. [128]

Wesley received Clayton's instructions ". . . as the words of God" discouraging him from doing outward works. [129] This contemplative man recommended ". . . mental prayer, and the like exercises, as the most effectual means of purifying the soul and uniting it with God." [130] Clayton urged the importance of fasting and linked the Holy Club more closely with the primitive church. [131]

London was probably a welcome relief from the provincial character of Oxford. Wesley's acquaintances and meetings with Oglethorpe, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and William Law were of a serious nature; however, the London visits were by no means a case of all work and no play. With sister Patty he visited the theatre seeing Congreve's The Old Bachelor, sat at the coffee-house, played cards, and sang. [132] He still enjoyed visits with the Kirkhams in Stanton mixing himself with female companions and serious conversation. In September he was reading the moral tale The Second Spira to a Susan Boyse, and in December he was talking with Sally and Susan on the topic of self-denial. [133] His reading for the year included Thomas à Kempis, William Law, Robert Nelson's On the Sacraments and A Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England: with Collects and Prayers for Each Solemnity, [134] John Roger's The Necessity of Divine Revelation and the Truth of the Christian Religion, an answer to the Deistic Writings of Anthony Collins, 1727 and The Strength and Weakness of Human Reason, John Locke's An Essay concerning Human Understanding, and Bishop Berkeley's Alciphron: or, the Minute Philosopher.

George Berkeley along with William Law attempted to disestablish the co-identity of revelation and reason in their attacks on the deist position. They wanted to show Christianity's ability to stand on its feet intellectually. Skepticism was the result although not the intention of their endeavors. From both his reading list and his letters it becomes apparent Wesley was dipped and dyed in the thought of George Berkeley. In the development of his doctrine of entire sanctification Wesley attempted to steer clear of the sceptic rock proclaiming a religion of the mind and heart in a dialectical relationship. Wesley read Alciphron: or, the Minute Philosopher in the year it was first published. It was the most important attack against the deist position he ever read. [135] A danger exists in employing a philosophical argument for theological purposes. As Professor Redwood states, Berkeley's logic ". . . to him[self] reaffirming God the more successfully, to others seemed to open the way to Hume." [136] Out of the mouth of Crito in Alciphron: or, the Minute Philosopher comes the very tool for Wesley's defense of his doctrines and beliefs after the Aldersgate experience in 1738:

> It is sufficient if we can shew there is nothing absurd or repugnant in our belief of those points, and, instead of framing hypotheses to explain them, we use our reason only for answering the objections brought against them. [137]

Berkeley attacked Bernard de Mandeville's position as given in The Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Public Benefits that private vices could be to public advantage and Shaftesbury's "moral sense" as being ill-defined and his not adequately distinguishing between morality and aesthetics. [138] Berkeley gave reason full scope insisting that natural religion occupy its very own place. He wrote, "Reason, therefore, being

the principle part of our nature, whatever is most reasonable should seem most natural to man." [139] From this presupposition a defense was mounted for the doctrines of traditional Christianity with the application of his own theory to the theological conceptions of Grace, Original Sin, Incarnation, and Trinity. By silencing one's passions and listening to the truth Berkeley felt it was entirely possible for Christianity to stand the test of reasonable enquiry. [140] In "Dialogue VII" he placed faith ". . . in the will and affections rather than in the understanding . . ." with its purpose being to produce ". . . holy lives rather than subtle theories." [141] Expressing one side of Berkeley's mind Crito says, "Faith . . . is not an indolent perception, but an operative persuasion of mind, which ever worketh some suitable action, disposition, or emotion in those who have it . . ." [142] Elsewhere in the seventh dialogue Alciphron asks, ". . . how comes it to pass that, in proportion as men abound in knowledge, they dwindle in faith?" [143] Euphranor, expressing yet another side of Berkeley's thought answers with the following statement:

> The objections made to faith are by no means an effect of knowledge, but proceed rather from an ignorance of what knowledge is . . . Sciende and faith agree in this, that they both imply an assent of the mind . . . [144]

In this last dialogue Berkeley also explained that the existence of an all-knowing deity did not imply predetermination. Man was free to do as he desired. Wesley would have agreed with his concern over predestination.

The year 1732 is a watershed year not adequately recognised as such by Wesleyan scholars. Wesley made a turn from the passive, philosophical concerns to the more practical and active endeavors of the Holy Club. [145] The seeds of discontentment with his former dream of studying the philosophical questions and learned languages had been planted. He was

becoming less interested in pursuing the fashionable arguments with "the people of fashion." [146] Perhaps Wesley's mind had thoughts of serving God across the ocean in the colony of Georgia.

In a letter to John Newton written in 1765 Wesley made the following comment:

> January 1, 1733, I preached the sermon on the Circumcision of the Heart, which contains all that I now teach concerning salvation from all sin and loving God with an undivided heart. [147]

The above mentioned sermon was the first he preached before Oxford University. In his A Plain Account of Christian Perfection he referred to this sermon emphasizing the following:

> This is the view of religion I then had, which even then I scrupled not to term Perfection. This is the view I have of it now, without any material addition or diminution. [148]

The essence of the doctrine of entire sanctification was love. He preached, "If thou wilt be perfect, add . . . charity; add love, and thou hast the circumcision of the heart." [149] This directly implied a cleansing of the individual from sin. The content of the sermon was clearly derived from William Law. Its method came from both George Berkeley and Law. [150] By silencing one's passions and listening to the truth it was, in Berkeley's opinion, entirely possible that Christianity would stand the test of reasonable inquiry. Man possessed an intellect by which he could lend reasonable support to the doctrines of the Christian faith. Knowledge and faith, although separate, were not necessarily contradictory. By means of an unpredetermined will man could participate in the heavenly perfections. But the "people of fashion" were blind and foolishly following a corrupt

reason which could not heal their affliction. Wesley provided in his sermon what he thought would be a sufficient cure:

> The best guide of the blind, the surest light of them that are in darkness, the most perfect instructor of the foolish, is faith. But it must be such a faith as . . . to the overturning all the prejudices of corrupt reason. . . . [151]

The "corrupt reason" was identifiable in the arguments and life styles of the deists. It was they who ridiculed reason with their foolish arguments. Wesley would not crash upon the sceptic's rock; however, he would come dangerously close to being swamped by its backwash.

TRANSITION THROUGH WILLIAM WOLLASTON

Shortly following his sermon at Oxford Wesley returned to Epworth to attend to his seriously ill father. On this occasion both his father and mother discussed the prospect of Wesley's assuming the Epworth living. Despite his desire to assist his mother, John had no wish to accept the pastoral duties at Epworth. To leave Oxford at this time would have meant desertion of the Holy Club in its moment of great need. [152] Fortunately Samuel recovered sufficiently by the end of January to be out of death's grasp; however, the question of the Epworth living would againsbe pressed on John in November of the same year. After his visit home Wesley visited with William Law but not understanding all that Law had to say. His first book titled A Collection of Forms of Prayer for Every Day in the Week was published for the benefit of his pupils and included questions for self-examination. [153] Wesley was visiting at Stanton the first part of the summer helping to shell peas, talking in the garden, playing cards, and reading what Sally had written. His contacts at Stanton were beginning to grow

weaker, and his stays were becoming shorter. Although there was evidence of a philanthropic mood, the general social climate of the day portrayed an apparent absence of concern for the poor. The exceptions to this general rule were few. The slave trade had become an important part of British enterprise few wanting to refute. Early in 1733 Oglethorpe founded the colony of Georgia to provide a refuge for the needy classes and to evangelise the Indians in the New World. He forbade slavery. In England executions had become a brutal form of entertainment for the public.[154] In this social atmosphere Wesley read and searched. His reading included Lactantius' de Morte, St. Francis de Sales' Introduction to a Devout Life, Jeremy Taylor's Golden Grove, Fenelon's The Maxims of the Saints, explained concerning the Interior Life, the Life of de Renty, William Wollaston's The Religion of Nature delineated, and John Wynne's Abridgement of Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding.[155]

During the summer of 1733 Wesley was in a despondent mood. Something of a rebellion had occurred within the ranks of the Holy Club with some of his pupils making an appeal on the basis of John Locke's attack on authority.[156] John's focus remained unchanged. In a letter to his father he wrote the following:

> And as for reputation, though it be a glorious instrument of advancing our Master's service, yet there is a better than that --- a clean heart, a single eye, a soul full of God! A fair exchange, if by the loss of reputation we can purchase the lowest degree of purity of heart.[157]

The language is reminiscent of Henry Scougal. Membership in the Holy Club was suffering decline; but, Wesley himself was determined to persevere. Whether or not he retained any pupils would be a providential sign as to his taking the living at Epworth or remaining at Oxford. Regardless of his

assignment in life he was determined to pursue holiness. The following letter to his mother dated August 17, 1733, is revealing:

> . . . I depend upon the Holy Spirit to direct me, [but also] in and by my own experience and reflection, joined to the advices of my religious friends here and elsewhere. [158]

Martin Schmidt indicates the reference to the mediation of the Holy Spirit in the above is only incidental and does not appear to be the guiding principle determining the entire process of sanctification. [159] Professor Schmidt further explains, "The limits of natural theology are not transcended, since the ethical correlative to this is the law." [160] Reason remained the authority and guide to fulfilling God's Word. At this point one meets with Wesley reading William Wollaston's The Religion of Nature delineated.

Wollaston's book was a popular one running through eight editions by 1750. Professor Mossner comments:

> . . . unlike much of the deistical writing of the period [The Religion of Nature delineated] is not a work of polemic but an honest and moderate, if perhaps in some aspects a misguided, effort to determine, without recourse to revelation, what a rational man would consider natural religion to be. [161]

Wollaston's work is important to this paper not only for its appeal to reason but also for its possible connection with Wesley's definition of sin as a voluntary transgression of a known law of God. Wollaston's discussion of an omission is relevant. For him an omission was a neglect to act, or a voluntary act not to act. If an individual voluntarily omitted to do something after indicating by oath to do it, ". . . he would behave himself as if there had been no such promise or engagement; which is

equal to denying there was any: and truth is as much contradicted in this . . ." as in voluntarily not undertaking to do something for which an oath was not given. [162] Here a sin of omission was actively committed. In the case of a covenant having been made between God and a people, an unconscious or conscious sin of omission would still be considered as a voluntary transgression of a known law. It would seem most likely that Wesley would have drawn this conclusion from his reading of Wollaston. The basis of Wollaston's argument falls on reason. He wrote:

> Lastly, to deny things to be as they are is a transgression of the great law of our nature, the law of reason. For truth cannot be opposed, but reason must be violated. [163]

Wesley would have agreed. Wollaston's system of morality did not depend on revelation. The intention was not to repudiate revelation or endorse Deism; however, the result was a promotion of the cause of human reason. [164] Samuel visited Oxford for Christmas having an enjoyable time with his son. In a letter to Thomas Church dated June, 1746, Wesley commented briefly on his spiritual focus at this time:

> From the year 1729 to 1734, laying a deeper foundation of repentance, I saw a little fruit. But it was only a little; and no wonder: for I did not preach faith in the blood of the covenant. [165]

Wesley's reading for the year 1734 included Henry Scougal's Life of God in the Soul of Man, Francis de Sales' Introduction to a Devout Life, Jeremy Taylor's Opuscula, Matthew Tindal's Christianity as old as the Creation, William Law's A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection, and various works concerning the Church Fathers. [166] Wesley was at Stanton at the year's opening accompanied by William Morgan's younger brother Richard.

The relationship between this wiley pupil and his strong-willed tutor would evolve into a personal struggle for Wesley. In a letter to Richard's father Wesley mentioned sins of omission. He wrote, "It is for what they have not done that the unprofitable servants are condemned to utter darkness." [167] The context of this statement was the covenant with Christ, the "inward vital principle," the clean heart, renewal of the mind, and conformity to God's image. The definition of an omission shows Wollaston's influence. A right heart and doing good belonged together. [168] Wesley's life at Oxford was now being lived with clockwork regularity. A vigorous routine was to be maintained even in the face of illness. Oglethorpe returned to England from Georgia in April bringing with him the Indian chief Tomochici. In June Wesley preached his so-called Jacobite sermon before the University. [169] The same month he corresponded with William Law requesting advice from his mentor on the spiritual development of a student. [170]

By the end of the year John's father made yet another plea for his son to accept the Epworth living. Wesley's older brother joined in the plea but to no avail. Why did John refuse? In December he wrote a long letter to his father explaining his decision. He was seeking a life style that would "most promote holiness in ourselves and others." [171] By holiness John meant the following:

> . . . not fasting . . . or bodily austerity, or any other external means of improvement, but the inward temper, to which all these are subservient, a renewal of the soul in the image of God. [172]

His criterion for making the decision not to accept the Epworth living was of course reason. [173] He then proceeded to provide the rational ground

for his decision to remain at Oxford as a pastor to students. The experiences he was having at Oxford were "worth a thousand reasons" for his not taking the Epworth living.[174] Perhaps Wesley was in a confused state of mind at this time; however, it is obvious he was drawn to the monastic ideal engendered by Oxford. He was still attached to the benefits provided by an academic life. Professor Albert Outler gives the best summary of Wesley's decision in the following statement:

> It seemed to him all too likely that the life of a parish priest would inhibit his ascetic discipline and would deprive him of the communal support of the Holy Club, on which he was still heavily dependent.[175]

AN ATTEMPTED ESCAPE FROM CORRUPT REASON

On April 25, 1735, in the presence of both John and Charles, the rector of Epworth died. The death was the end of a stage in Wesley's life. The family pressure seemed finally to have prevailed upon John to the extent of his applying indirectly for his father's living just two months prior to Samuel's death.[176] The request came too late. Three months after his father's passing and in an apparent state of confusion he met with Dr. John Burton who was a trustee of the Georgia Colony and patron of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. A chaplain was needed for the colony. Dr. Burton invited Wesley to fill the position by transferring the Holy Club to Georgia and becoming a missionary to the Indians and colonists. Before giving an answer Wesley consulted with several of his friends including Law, Clayton, and his mother.[177] Ten days following Dr. Burton's invitation Wesley accepted. The very same drive that had kept him at Oxford --- his quest for personal holiness --- drove him to Georgia. He desired to escape the decay of the Old World civilization by immersing himself among the noble savages of the New World and to learn from them

the true meaning of the Gospel.[178] The monastic element was still very much a part of Wesley; however, it was gradually being transformed into the mode of the evangelist. His new pupils in Georgia would be instructed in the Gospel rather than in Greek and Latin.

By going to Georgia Wesley would not only escape the fashionable arguments in the deist controversy but also secure his own salvation through evangelization. Two writings indicate this conclusion. The first is his sermon "The Trouble and Rest of Good Men"[179] preached at Oxford on September 21, 1735, and the second is his letter to Dr. Burton dated October 10, 1735. The view expressed in the sermon was that man was made perfect through suffering. He preached, ". . . as perfect holiness is not found on earth, so neither is perfect happiness. . . . we must be . . . subject to the pain of cure, as well as the pain of sickness."[180] And how was one to escape the disease of sin? He answered, "Death will deliver us."[181] Further in the sermon this same idea was expressed in these words:

> For in the moment wherein they shake off the flesh, they are delivered, not only from the troubling of the wicked, not only from pain and sickness, from folly and infirmity; but also from all sin.[182]

A very likely reference to the deists can be observed in the following comment from the same sermon:

> How many of those who profess to believe the whole, yet, in effect, preach another Gospel; so disguising the essential doc doctrines thereof, by their new interpretations, as to retain the words only, but nothing of "the faith once delivered to the saints!"[183]

In his letter to Dr. Burton the same idea was expressed when he wrote, ". . . these who <u>have</u> the gospel trample upon it . . ."[184] The perfection

preached in the sermon was not attainable in this life; however, Wesley felt that he could attain a higher degree of holiness in Georgia rather than among the deistical heathens of England.

Wesley's second publication in 1735 was an abridgment of Thomas à Kempis' The Christian's Pattern or, a Treatise of the Imitation of Christ. In the "Preface" to this work Wesley took the opportunity to sally another blast at "those who are fond of controversy": [185]

> They are always ready, by starting unnecessary doubts and questions, to turn a spiritual conference upon the most clear, practical truths, into a wholly unspiritual debate upon some point of mere speculation. [186]

He went on to explain further that by the grace of God man could approach perfection by degrees in order to fully purge the soul "from all wilful, habitual sin . . ." [187] Observing the teachings of the Primitive Church would be an assistance in this purge. The intellectual milieu and the controversy surrounding Deism served as the cup for the priceless wine of tradition. Much time at Oxford had been spent with the thoughts of Irenaeus, Clement, Origen, and Tertullian. Wesley was familiar with both Gregory of Nyssa and Macarius of Egypt. [188] Gregory of Nyssa stressed an endless struggle for perfection. For Macarius purity of heart was attainable only through the Christ hanging on the Cross. Perfection was by degrees. From the Homilies of St. Macarius one reads, "It is only gradually that a man grows and comes to a perfect man . . ." [189] No man was considered completely free from the taint of sin. The following comment from Albert Outler best illustrates the influence of the Eastern Church on Wesley:

> Thus it was that the ancient and Eastern tradition of holiness as disciplined love became fused in Wesley's mind with his own Anglican tradition of holiness as aspiring love, and thereafter was developed in what he regarded to the end as his own most distinctive doctrinal contribution. [190]

In the West Tertullian's thoughts were further developed in the figures of Ambrose and Augustine. Augustine developed the conception of sin to the fullest --- involuntarily acquired but deserving punishment and involving guilt. Opposed to this thought was the thinking of Pelagius who felt sin was the deliberate and conscious self-expression of the whole personality. With Pelagius the responsibility for sin resided with the individual who deliberately committed the sin.

In the history of the Church the prominence of Augustinian thought declined for a period of time. This decline was manifested in two forms --- the Dominican theology represented by the modified Augustinianism of St. Thomas Aquinas and the Franciscan (and later Jesuit) theology represented by the anti-Augustinainism of John Duns Scotus. St. Thomas Aquinas made a distinction between Christian perfection and full perfection. [191] The essence of Christian perfection was a love attainable in this life while the soul's full perfection was attainable only in that life beyond the grave. With the Reformation Augustinianism developed to excess, and Augustine's twice-born anthropology was enthusiastically revived. The notions of total depravity and absolute, double predestination developed. For two centuries these dismal thoughts were dominant in Continental Protestantism. Martin Luther had no adequate doctrine of perfection, and for him sin remained unconquerable in the present life. For Calvin the goal of perfection was not attainable until the entire body of sin was left behind and the individual came into complete union with God.

In 1733 Wesley's reading had included François de Sales' Introduction to a Devout Life and Fénelon's The Maxims of the Saints. For François de Sales the devout life, or perfection, was available in all walks of life. He held a conception of degrees of perfection. For Fénelon pure, disinterested love was the essence of perfection. This pure love was subject to change and liable to loss. [192] It is most evident that Wesley's search was for the devout life. His quest carried him through much of the thought and ideas of the Church Fathers. By the time Wesley landed in Georgia, Frank Baker indicates, "It is quite clear that the authority of the Early Fathers was now almost if not quite as important for Wesley as the Scriptures themselves, and reason was a poor third." [193] Extensive research has demonstrated the connections between Wesley and the Early Fathers; however, little attempt has been made to connect his thought with the British philosophers. Perhaps one reason for this fact is the feeling that an unbridgeable gap exists between the religious and philosophical streams of thought. It is a contention of this paper that a connection between these two streams exists in the thought of John Wesley. What has been demonstrated prior to his departure for Georgia? First, in the middle of his reading in patristics; his being influenced by Jeremy Taylor, Thomas à Kempis, and William Law; and his activities with the Holy Club, the greatest controversy of the period --- over Deism --- was raging. William R. Cannon's assessment of Wesley's thought in this controversy cannot be entirely supported. The value of the deistic controversy as a crucible is undeniable. It is the cup in which Wesley's thoughts and doctrines were refined and seven times purified. Second, it has been demonstrated that Wesley was strongly influenced by the writings of John Locke, George Berkeley, Francis Hutcheson, and William Wollaston..Both Berkeley and Law

were significantly involved in the deist controversy. Third, it has been shown how the contemporary controversy over Deism and the quest for the devout life were mixed in Wesley's developing thoughts on sin and salvation. His departure for Georgia would in one sense remove him from the fashionable controversy.[194] However, the soil of controversy contained the seed of discontent. This seed would blossom and bear fruit in the doctrine of entire sanctification. Wesley needed medicine to cure the diseases of the soul festering in the deistic manure. Seeking that medicine he boarded the ship Simmonds carrying with him the Holy Club's method of life. On October 14, 1735, Wesley embarked for Georgia leaving England on December 10.

The move to Georgia was an escape from a reasoned and externally correct image to an internal pureness of heart. He sought relief from both the pretenders to faith and to reason. Wesley wrote in his sermon "On the Holy Spirit" the following comments:

> But I think this age has made it particularly necessary to be well assured what Christ is to us: when that question is so differently resolved by the pious but weak accounts of some pretenders to faith on one hand, and by the clearer, but not perfectly Christian, accounts of some pretenders to reason on the other: . . . while some so interpret the Gospel, as to place the holiness they are to be saved by in something divine, but exterior to themselves; and others, so as to place it in things really within themselves, but not more than human.[195]

The above words were most likely written in 1736.[196] The same sermon displays a possible reaction to the argument of Francis Hutcheson when he wrote:

> The fruits of this Spirit must not be mere moral virtues, calculated for the comfort and decency of the present life; but holy dispositions, suitable to the instincts of a superior life already begun. [197]

AN "ALMOST CHRISTIAN"

Wesley was accompanied on board the Simmonds by his brother Charles, Benjamin Ingham, and Charles Delamotte. Also on board were twenty-six Moravians from Herrnhut with their bishop David Nitschmann plus eighty English passengers including General Oglethorpe himself. The books Wesley carried with him included William Law's A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection and A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, adapted to the State and Condition of all Orders of Christians, Thomas à Kempis' Christian Pattern, or a Treatise of the Imitation of Jesus Christ, and some works by August Hermann Franke who sought out the fear of man as a symbol of unfaithfulness to the pattern of a suffering Jesus. Law and Kempis were his constant companions both on the voyage and throughout the sojourn in Georgia. [198] Their books were used for meditation and sermon preparation. While at sea Wesley busied himself with all the usual duties of the Holy Club including prayer meetings, teaching the children, regular worship services, and communion. His brother Charles served as Oglethorpe's secretary, and the two brothers dined frequently with the founder of the colony.

The ship encountered several storms on the mighty Atlantic. These storms had a significant effect on Wesley. On January 17, 1736, he commented, " . . . much ashamed of my unwillingness to die. Oh how pure in heart must he be who would rejoice to appear before God at a moments warning!" [199] Another storm hit the ship on January 23. Wesley felt devoid

of faith. On January 25 a third storm began ". . . more violent than any we had had before." [200] This was a momentous day for he witnessed the screaming fear of his English brethren in contrast to the calm serenity of the Moravians at the height of the storm. The Moravian resoluteness of character fascinated Wesley. [201] Franke's Nicodemus containing the fear theme must have been on his mind. Fear should not have been a companion for the pilgrim seeking the devout life. The evident calm of the Moravians confirmed this. Following the great storm Wesley wrote:

> I can conceive no difference comparable to that between a smooth and a rough sea, except that which is between a mind calmed by the love of God and one torn up by the storms of earthly passions. [202]

He desired a reason calmed by God's love rather than a reason torn by the passions. Fear was his passion at sea. Love for a woman would become his distressing passion on Georgian soil.

On February 4 the Simmonds anchored off the coast of Georgia, and two days later Wesley set foot in the New World. Oglethorpe had taken a boat up the Savannah River returning to the ship with August Spangenberg --- the leader of the Herrnhut settlement near Savannah and later successor to Zinzendorf at Herrnhut itself. Wesley was immediately drawn to the man. [203] Three conversations with Spangenberg followed. The Moravian leader posed several questions to Wesley:

> 'Do you know yourself? Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?' I was surprised, and knew not what to answer . . . 'Do you know yourself?' I said, 'I do.' But I fear they were vain words. [204]

The hopes for the Georgia adventure were high. In his diary for February 19

he wrote, "Beware America, be not as England!" [205] Martin Schmidt indicates he was probably thinking of the controversy over Deism, the problems the Holy Club had encountered at Oxford, and the population's indifference towards the Church. [206]

Wesley met Sophia Christiana Hopkey on March 13. The romantic entanglement with this woman evolved into one of the major contributing factors prompting Wesley to depart Georgia in December of 1737. He fell in love with this eighteen year old girl and proposed marriage to her. It is thought that Thomas Causton --- the chief magistrate and Sophia's uncle --- and Oglethorpe promoted the Wesley-Hopkey relationship in order to keep Wesley permanently in Georgia. His love for Sophia and his professed mission to the Indians made for a major conflict of interest. [207] He spent much of the summer with Miss Sophy in a relationship reminiscent of his semi-romantic adventures in the Cotswolds. William Law's A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, adapted to the State and Condition of all Orders of Christians was the topic of conversation between them in October, 1736, and January, 1737. [208] Although some disillusionment was beginning to creep over his Georgian expectations, for the most part he had found some satisfaction in his ministry to the Savannah congregation.

The year 1737 proved to be a very stressful period as a result of Miss Sophy's engagement and marriage to a Mr. Williamson. The marriage cut the irresolute Wesley to the heart. [209] Sophia's marriage did not prevent Wesley from performing pastoral duties on her behalf. This meticulous conscientiousness led to his repelling Sophia from Holy Communion on August 7. The following day her husband obtained a warrant for Wesley's arrest. The events that followed culminated in John's escape to Charlestown. Just prior to Christmas he boarded the ship Samuel for England. Albert

Outler summarizes the mission to Georgia as a "fiasco." [210] Wesley definitely sailed back to England a defeated and disillusioned man; however, it cannot be denied that an important transitional period in his life had been accomplished. [211] He had passed from the academic ivory tower into the world of the heathens. This stressful period reveals several areas of doctrinal development. First, Wesley grew in his understanding of prevenient grace. He observed in the following statement:

> . . . the entire mistake of those who assert, 'God will not answer your prayer, unless your heart be wholly resigned to His will.' My heart was not wholly resigned to His will . . . He heard my voice, and did send forth His light and His truth. [212]

Second, as evidenced in the answers received from Spangenberg, the concept of salvation by degrees made an appearance. [213] Third, he had probably by this time defined original sin as ". . . corruption, that evil disease, which every man brings with him into the world . . ." [214] In all this development he began to see that ". . . holiness comes by faith . . . [and] that men are justified before they are sanctified . . ." [215]

The passage back to England gave Wesley a time for reflection on the events of the past two years. He had failed to convert Georgia into an idealistic, monastic community. On January 8, 1738, he was convinced of his own unbelief --- ". . . having no such faith in Christ as will prevent my heart from being troubled . . ." [216] His prayer then was a request for salvation. "Lord, save, or I perish!" [217] Although intellectually he knew belief's contents, he did not feel converted and had no sense of experiential faith. He realised the difference between faith experienced and faith reasoned. The former he lacked and desired. Writing again on

January 24 he said:

> I went to America, to convert the Indians; but oh, who shall convert me?. . . . I have a fair summer religion. I can talk well; nay, and believe myself, while no danger is near. But let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled. [218]

The faith he desired was that ". . . which none can have without knowing that he hath it . . . for whosoever hath it, is "freed from sin, the" whole "body of sin is destroyed" in him: he is freed from fear . . . And he is freed from doubt . . ." [219] Could all his works justify him? Wesley answered in the negative. On February 1 the ship Samuel landed in England. With the voyage at an end a more positive note is discovered in the disillusioned man. Two days later he wrote, "Many reasons I have to bless God, thoughtthe design I went upon did not take effect . . ." [220] He then gave thanks for being humbled, for deliverance from a fear of the sea, and for his association with the Moravians. He had come to realise where reason fails and one acknowledges God, then one's path would be directed by the Lord.

On a "day much to be remembered" --- February 7, 1738 --- John met another Moravian by the name of Peter Böhler. During the next three months this man would serve as Wesley's spiritual guide into a new life structure. The two men set out for Oxford on February 17. Wesley assumed the dialectical form of conversation, and Böhler responded,""My brother, my brother, that philosophy of yours must be purged away." " [221] To a Lincoln College Fellow this must have seemed like an absurd piece of advice. John admitted he did not understand him. The rejection of all "philosophy" implying a repudiation of natural theology seemed new and strange to an Englishman steeped in the philosophical tradition of his day. [222] Wesley

capitulated on March 5 before Böhler's attacks and again became "clearly convinced of unbelief, of the want of that faith whereby alone we are saved." [223] J. Ernest Rattenbury describes the two day period beginning with March 5 as Wesley's "intellectual conversion." [224] Not only was he convinced of his unbelief, he also felt unfit to preach. Peter Böhler advised Wesley to continue his preaching with the well-known admonition, " "Preach faith <u>till</u> you have it; and then, <u>because</u> you have it, you <u>will</u> preach faith." " [225] He heeded the advice and began preaching the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. His conversations with his Moravian mentor had convinced Wesley that faith was " "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 favour of God." " [226] Had he stuffed his "philosophy" in the stove? The method was not put to the flames. When Böhler introduced yet another concept --- instantaneous conversion ,--- Wesley demanded proof. Even after discovering the proof in the Bible, he remained sceptical. He wrote, " "Thus, I grant, God wrought in the <u>first</u> ages of Christianity; but the times are changed. What reason have I to believe He works in the same manner now?" " [227] The clencher came in the presentation of living witnesses. With the presence of living proof he could not deny the fact of instantaneous conversion. [228]

Böhler's influence on Wesley was decisive and led to a negative reaction against his old mentor William Law. [229] An unpleasant but revealing correspondence between Law and Wesley ensued. The essence of the conflict was Wesley's realisation that Law's balance of mysticism with a high Christian ethic was an error. [230] Wesley had made the attempt to follow this very ethic in North America. It had not proven adequate. Whether or not his accusations against Law were justifiable is not relevant here.

Law had simply not grasped Wesley's desperate need to find a living and justifying faith in the blood of the Savior. Harald Lindström is helpful in explaining the conflict. In discussing Wesley's teleological view, placing love as the end effected through the means of grace, Lindström says:

> . . .[Wesley's] way of basing the idea of love on that of atonement is not Law's way. Side by side with the teleological leaning a causal view can also be seen in Wesley and is much more stressed than it was by Law. [231]

The causal view would stress God's love as opposed to man's love and place Luther's doctrine of faith without works in a back seat position. [232] William Law had maintained some continuity between natural man and God. This continuity possessed the link of reason. In A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, adapted to the State and Condition of all Orders of Christians Law wrote the following:

> But as the Religion of the Gospel is only the refinement, and exaltation of our best faculties, as it only requires a life of the highest Reason, as it only requires us to use this world, as in reason it ought to be used, to live in such tempers as are the glory of intelligent beings, to walk in such wisdom as exalts our nature, and to practise such piety, as will raise us to God . . . [233]

Wesley's view of man as totally corrupt would not permit this continuity between man's love and the divine love. Neither would the linking factor of reason prove satisfactory. David Hume had already demonstrated this fact in his A Treatise of Human Nature completed by 1737 but not printed until 1739-1740. [234] Wesley greatly desired the love from above as an experience within his own heart. Moral reasoning had taken him as far as it could go. The way of holiness had encountered the presence of sin. [235] Moral reasoning would not and could not yield a demonstrative knowledge of

God's love. Three days of depression preceded May 24. A letter written to a friend on the very day of his Aldersgate experience reveals a mind in turmoil:

> . . . how am I fallen from the glory of God! I feel that 'I am sold under sin.' . . . All my works . . . need an atonement for themselves. . . . I am altogether a sinner, meet to be consumed. . . .
> . . . Let us be emptied of ourselves, and then fill us with all peace and joy in believing; and let nothing separate us from Thy love, in time or in eternity! [236]

Wesley had become an "almost Christian."

FOOTNOTES

1. Lindstrom, p. 126.

2. Cf. John Wesley and the Church of England, p. 15.

3. Cf. Richard Heitzenrater, "Decoding Wesley's Diaries: Each Page a "Storehouse of Information"," The Circuit Rider, II (January 1978), pp. 6-8. V. H. H. Green comments, "He noted down his principal occupations, the books he read, the people he saw, sometimes particularizing as to the hour and in his later diaries to the minute; but he rarely expressed his personal opinion or commented upon the people whom he met." (V. H. H. Green, p. 69).

4. Cf. V. H. H. Green, p. 206.

5. Concerning Wesley's relationship with Sally Kirkham, Schmidt suggests, "The romantic element is restrained, perhaps actually replaced, by the religious." (John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, p. 73).

6. The circumstantial evidence favors Sally Kirkham as Wesley's religious friend. For the argument over the identity of the religious friend the reader is referred to V. H. H. Green, pp. 206 and 207, footnote 3.

7. John Wesley, The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A. M., Standard Edition, ed. John Telford (London: The Epworth Press, 1931), I, pp. 15-16.

8. John Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection (London: The Epworth Press, 1976), p. 5. Wesley confused his dates here (Cf. William R. Cannon, The Theology of John Wesley: With Special Reference to the Doctrine of Justification (New York: Abingdon Press, 1946), p. 56, footnote 34).

9. Thomas Kempis, The Imitation of Christ (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph and Co., 1889), pp. 122-123.

10. Ibid., pp. 74-75.

11. Letters, I, p. 18.

12. Ibid., pp. 18-19.

13. A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 5.

14. Jeremy Taylor stated, "By a daily examination of our actions we shall the easier cure a great sin, and prevent its arrival to become habitual. For to examine we suppose to be a relative duty, and instrumental to something else." (Jeremy Taylor, The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying (Cambridge: University Press, 1864), p. 64).

15. Ibid., p. 62.

16. Jeremy Taylor, The Works of Jeremy Taylor, ed. T. S. Hughes (London: A. J. Valpy, 1831), IV, p. 25. The quotation is from Taylor's sermon "Via Intelligentiae."

17. Letters, I, p. 23.

18. Wesley's letter on the Athanasian Creed has been lost (Cf. John Wesley and the Church of England, p. 18).

19. Locke, pp. 387-388.

20. Cf. ibid., pp. 380-382 and Samuel C. Pearson, Jr., "The Religion of John Locke and the Character of His Thought," The Journal of Religion, LVIII (1978), pp. 248-256.

21. Letters, I, p. 22. George C. Cell states, "All this has been identified as rank humanism, and that too of the intellectualist sort. It savors of religion within the limits of reason alone. . . . Wesley's religious ideas at this stage were scholastic, bookish, with just a tincture of experiential thinking in them." (Cell, p. 166).

22. Quoted from Piette, p. 257.

23. Quoted from John Wesley and the Church of England, p. 18.

24. Cf. V. H. H. Green, p. 71, footnote 3.

25. Cf. ibid., pp. 70 and 306.

26. Cf. David Norton, Lecture Notes on the Eighteenth-Century British Philosophers (unpublished) (Montreal: McGill University, 1978).

27. Elmer Sprague states, "Clarke and his followers held that moral distinctions are made by reason on the basis of our knowledge of the unchanging and changeable fitness of things. The other side, owing its original allegiance to Shaftesbury, held that moral distinctions are the deliverances of a moral sense." (Elmer Sprague, "Hutcheson, Francis," The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press, 1967), IV, p. 99).

28. Francis Hutcheson, "An Inquiry concerning Moral Good and Evil," in British Moralists 1650-1800, ed. D. D. Raphael (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), I, p. 269. This addition is a revision from the first edition (Cf. Sprague, p. 101).

29. Cf. Hutcheson, p. 269.

30. Ibid., p. 270.

31. Hutcheson first stated these familiar words: ". . . the moral evil, or vice, is as the degree of misery, and number of sufferers; so that action is best, which procures the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers; and that worst, which, in like manner, occasions misery." (Ibid., p. 284).

32. H. B. Acton, "Berkeley, George," The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press, 1967), I, p. 296.

33. George Berkeley, The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, ed. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1948-1957), II, p. 50.

34. Ibid., p. 212.

35. Ibid., p. 241.

36. Ibid., p. 175.

37. Cf. James Collins, The British Empiricists: Locke, Berkeley, Hume (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1967), p. 66.

38. Cf. Berkeley, II, pp. 211-215.

39. Letters, I, p. 24.

40. Cf. Ibid., p. 25.

41. Ibid., p. 24.

42. Ibid., p. 25.

43. Berkeley, II, p. 215.

44. Letters, I, p. 22.

45. Quoted from Piette, p. 261.

46. Cf. V. H. H. Green, p. 102.

47. Journal, I, p. 467.

48. Ibid.

49. V. H. H. Green, p. 106.

50. The main theme involved the problem of reasoning in the brute creation (Cf. V. H. H. Green, p. 76).

51. The reason for this is the missing portion of Wesley's diary.

52. Works, VII, pp. 443-444. Cf. V. H. H. Green, p. 216, footnote 1.

53. Professor V. Green noting the wide range of Wesley's reading at this time suggests a lack of depth (V. H. H. Green, p. 115).

54. He wrote, " '. . . there are many truths it is not worthwhile to know.' " (Quoted from V. H. H. Green, p. 116).

55. A considerable argument has centered on the issue of when Wesley actually read this work. Wesley himself is no help in determining the exact date (Cf. A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 6). Frank Baker in his debate with Frederick Hunter has indicated the parameters of the argument by writing, ". . . Wesley may indeed have read William Law's Christian Perfection in 1727 or 1728, a year or two after its publication, and that he may have read the Serious Call almost immediately upon its publication in the dying months of 1728, but that it is much more probable that he first read the Serious Call in December 1730, followed by Christian Perfection in 1732." (Frank Baker, "John Wesley and William Law: A Reconsideration," Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society, XXXVII (1970), p. 173. Cf. John Wesley and the Church of England, p. 19). The judgment of this paper is that Wesley read Law's treatise on Christian perfection sometime in the early portion of 1727. Sarah Chapone might have been the one who suggested the reading (Cf. Piette, p. 269); however, it is felt Wesley probably discovered Law independently (Cf. J. B. Green, p. 51). In his meeting with Wesley Bishop Potter might have mentioned Law's Three Letters to Benjamin Hoadly published in 1717-1719. By referring to the Three Letters Wesley might have discovered Law's just published treatise on Christian perfection.

56. A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 6.

57. Cf. J. B. Green, p. 46. Eric Baker states, "These two works represent the second phase of Law's outlook, and reveal a remarkable change of emphasis. Instead of the ecclesiastical purist of the Bangorian letters, we discover a man dominated by a consuming passion for the ethical implications of his religion." (Eric W. Baker, "William Law," The London Quarterly and Holborn Review, CLXXXVI, Sixth Series, XXX (1961), p. 140).

58. William Law, The Works of the Reverend William Law, M. A. (London: Setley, Brockenhurst, New Forest, Hampshire for G. Moreton, 1892-1893), III, p. 5.

59. Ibid., p. 9.

60. Cf. ibid., pp. 31 and 36-48.

61. Cf. John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, p. 109.

62. Law, III, p. 27.

63. Ibid., p. 29.

64. Ibid., p. 27.

65. V. H. H. Green, p. 119.

66. Cf. Piette, p. 274.

67. Works (1978), XIII, pp. 268-269.

68. Quoted from John Wesley and the Church of England, pp. 20-21.

69. For a discussion of the martyr theology Wesley was to develop prior to his departure for Georgia the reader is referred to John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, pp. 118-119, p. 119, footnote 1.

70. Letters, II, p. 264. The letter is to Thomas Church dated June of 1746.

71. A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 6.

72. Frank Baker states, "On his return from Georgia he was to confess his error in "making antiquity a co-ordinate rather than a subordinate rule with Scripture"." (John Wesley and the Church of England, p. 33).

73. V. H. H. Green, p. 124.

74. V. Green suggests that Wesley's memory failed him here and indicates Francis Gore instead of Kirkham. Kirkham probably joined in February, 1730 (V. H. H. Green, p. 155).

75. The Holy, or Oxford, Club was given various names (Cf. Albert C. Outler (ed.), John Wesley (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 8).

76. Piette comments, Wesley was ". . . in the full strength and development of his twenty-six years, had already arrived at a well considered stand on many important questions; above all, his spiritual life was full of vigour and well disciplined. He was well skilled in formulating his ideals; and once formulated, in devoting every ounce of energy and will-power to putting them into practice." (Piette, p. 277. Cf. V. H. H. Green, p. 154).

77. John had been aware of the Holy Club activities from his brother Charles and from his previous summer's visit to Oxford. When he became the leader of the Holy Club, he was engaged in an abridgement of William Wake's Apostolic Fathers (Cf. John Wesley and the Church of England, p. 32).

78. John Wesley, The Arminian Magazine: consisting of Extracts and Original Treatises on Universal Salvation (London: J. Paramore, at the Foundery, 1778-1791), IV, p. 321.

79. Letters, I, pp. 47-48. Cf. The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying, pp. 312-313.

80. Cf. John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, p. 117, footnote 3.

81. A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 6.

82. Ibid.

83. Flew, p. 293.

84. Works, VII, p. 284.

85. Law, IV, p. 12.

86. Ibid., pp. 18-19.

87. Law wrote that there exists a ". . . greater happiness, than all the poor enjoyments of this world can give." (Ibid., p. 116). Worldly happiness was empty.

88. Cf. Flew, p. 294 and J. B. Green's comments on Flew in J. B. Green, p. 47.

89. Law wrote, "Let them remember that they are not Disciples of Christ, till they have like him offered their whole Body and Soul as a reasonable and lively Sacrifice unto God; that they are not Members of Christ's mystical Body, till they are united unto him by a new Spirit; that they have not entered into the Kingdom of God, till they have entered with an infant Simplicity of Heart, till they are so born again as not to commit Sin, so full of an heavenly Spirit, as to have overcome the World./ Nothing less than this great Change of Heart and Mind can give anyone any Assurance, that he is truly turned to God. There is but this one Term of Salvation, He that is in Christ, is a new Creature." (Law, III, p. 35).

90. Law, III, p. 5.

91. Journal, I, p. 467. This quotation is from a review of his life in May of 1738.

92. One of these students --- Thomas Waldegrave --- later became Edward Gibbon's first tutor (Cf. V. H. H. Green, pp. 131-132).

93. Cf. Lindström, p. 162.

94. Law, III, p. 25.

95. Ibid., p. 83. A Serious Call words this sentiment better: "God loves us, not because we are wise, and good, and holy, but in pity to us, because we want this happiness: He loves us, in order to make us good. Our love therefore must take this course; not looking for, or requiring the merit of our brethren, but pitying their disorders, and wishing them all the good that they want, and are capable of receiving." (Law, IV, p. 223).

96. Law, III, p. 101. God's gracious method of salvation was able to restore one "to Reason" so ". . . as to be fit for the Rewards of an infinitely Wise and Perfect Being." (Ibid.).

97. Law, IV, p. 98.

98. Ibid., III, pp. 100-101.

99. Ibid., p. 101.

100. Berkeley, VI, pp. 20-21.

101. Ibid., p. 17.

102. Cf. the letter to Ann Granville dated June 17, 1731 in Letters, I, p. 89. Euseby Isham replaced Morley and was very helpful to Wesley by his advice and willingness to listen to Wesley's sermons before they were preached. At times Isham would become concerned over John's religious fervor; however, for the most part he recognized Wesley's good merits (Cf. V. H. H. Green, p. 130).

103. Cf. John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, pp. 113-116.

104. Letters, I, p. 91.

105. The Theology of John Wesley: With Special Reference to the Doctrine of Justification, p. 53.

106. Cf. Plummer, p. 97.

107. Quoted from Redwood, p. 145.

108. Cf. Stephen, I, p. 138.

109. Redwood, p. 40.

110. Law, II, p. 58.

111. Letters, I, p. 91.

112. Ibid., pp. 92-93.

113. Ibid., p. 93.

114. Ibid., p. 101. This quotation is from a letter to Mrs. Pendarves dated August 12, 1731.

115. Ibid., p. 111. This quotation is from a letter to Ann Granville dated October 3, 1731. In this same letter sin was again defined as "a voluntary breach of a known law."

116. Cf. John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, p. 118.

117. Cf. V. H. H. Green, p. 163.

118. John Wesley and the Church of England, p. 26.

119. Cf. Letters, I, pp. 119-120.

120. Ibid., p. 120.

121. Cf. John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, p. 104.

122. Prior to the first edition in 1733 Fog's Weekly Journal for December 9, 1732, published a letter in which the Holy Club was hostilely attacked. Law's defense emphasized that the Methodists' ". . . law of life was the gospel, their rule the scriptures, and their orders those of the (Anglican and primitive) Church." (Ibid., p. 106). Wesley himself had evidently supplied Law with this pertinent information (Cf. V. H. H. Green, p. 200).

123. V. H. H. Green, p. 171.

124. Wesley read an account of Georgia in 1732 (Cf. Ibid., p. 252, footnote 4).

125. Cf. Lecky, I, pp. 544-545. Oglethorpe sailed his pioneer voyage to Georgia on November 17, 1732.

126. Cf. V. H. H. Green, pp. 140 and 252. On July 15 Wesley was reading An Account of the sufferings of the Persecuted Protestants in the Archbishopric of Salzburg. Many Protestants at Salzburg would be settling in Georgia.

127. Journal, I, p. 469.

128. Ibid., pp. 468-469.

129. Cf. ibid., p. 469.

130. Ibid. John Clayton had become a member of the Holy Club around the first of May. V. Green points out, "His influence on the Holy Club and indeed on John Wesley himself was decisive . . . A High-Churchman and Tory, who had been educated in the Non-juring tradition, the Holy Club appealed to Clayton because it seemed to him a return to apostolic tradition. His orthodoxy was unimpeachable." (V. H. H. Green, p. 173).

131. It was probably at this time the term "Methodist" came into vogue and was associated with the Holy Club members. The various uses and meanings of the term are given in Schmidt's John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, p. 102.

132. Cf. V. H. H. Green, p. 140. In December he would portray a reluctance to play cards.

133. Cf. ibid., p. 224.

134. Cf. John Wesley, p. 8, footnote 22. Nelson in his 1703 "Preface" gives what can be described as an adequate summary of the Holy Club's purpose. He wrote, "And I see no reason why men may not meet and consult together, to improve one another in Christian knowledge, and by mutual advice take measures how best to further their own salvation, as well as promote that of their neighbours . . ." (Robert Nelson, A Companion for

the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England: with Collects and Prayers for Each Solemnity (London: Gilbert and Rivington, n. d.), p. xvi).

135. John Redwood feels it is probably the best literary production deriving from the deist controversy (Redwood, p. 65). The work was received equivocally. T. E. Jessop gives a good summary of the initial reaction to the work in Berkeley, III, pp. 1-2. Some feel that Berkeley was attempting to alter Locke's philosophy which was being used as a proof text by the deists thereby making Berkeley appear the sceptic.

136. Redwood, p. 68. Cf. ibid., p. 65 and p. 238, footnote 245; and The British Empiricists: Locke, Berkeley, Hume, p. 90. One can observe the opening to scepticism in Alciphron when Crito says, "The being of a God is capable of clear proof, and a proper object of human reason: whereas the mysteries of His nature, and indeed whatever there is of mystery in religion, to endeavour to explain and prove by reason is a vain attempt." (Berkeley, III, p. 327).

137. Berkeley, III, p. 327. Emphasis is added.

138. Cf. Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century, p. 107. Lysicles in the dialogues is akin to Mandeville while Alciphron's position is a popular caricature of Shaftesbury (Cf. A. D. Ritchie, George Berkeley: A Reappraisal, ed. G. E. Davie (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1967), pp. 118-119 and 130-131). The caricature is a misrepresentation (Cf. Berkeley, III, pp. 10-11). A good comparison of Mandeville and Shaftesbury is given in Stephen, II, pp. 38-41.

139. Berkeley, III, p. 86.

140. Cf. Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century, p. 111.

141. Berkeley, III, p. 301.

142. Ibid.

143. Ibid., p. 303.

144. Ibid.

145. Cf. Wesley's statement to his mother in the February 28, 1732 letter: "I once desired to make a fair show in languages and philosophy, but it is past; there is a more excellent way: and if I cannot attain to any progress in the one without throwing up all thoughts of the other --- why, fare it well!" (Letters, I, p. 119).

146. Cf. Crito's statement in Alciphron: "I imagine that thinking is the great desideratum of the present age; and that the equal cause of whatever is amiss may justly be reckoned the general neglect of education in those who need it most --- the people of fashion." (Berkeley, III, p. 328).

147. Letters, IV, p. 299.

148. A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 8.

149. Works, V, p. 194.

150. John L. Peters indicates that ". . . the method of attainment [of perfection] was evolved only through successive periods of empirically determined judgments." (Peters, p. 21). Colin Williams criticizes Peters' position as implying an ". . .overly neat distinction between content and method. In 1733 Wesley looked upon perfection in terms of ethical stature, and . . . by grace alone . . ." (Colin Williams, John Wesley's Theology Today (London: Epworth Press, 1969), p. 176. Cf. Rob L. Staples, John Wesley's Doctrine of Christian Perfection: A Reinterpretation (unpublished doctoral dissertation) (California: Pacific School of Religion, 1963), p. 8). Wesley would have suppressed the passions at this point in order to maintain a purity of intention. He wrote, "Love, cutting off both the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, --- engaging the whole man, body, soul, and spirit, in the ardent pursuit of that one object, --- is so essential to a child of God, that, without it, whosoever liveth is counted dead before him." (Works, V, pp. 198-199). Ethical stature is indeed a prominent feature here; however, both Peters and Williams miss the crucible --- the argument with the deists.

151. John Wesley, Wesley's Standard Sermons, ed. Edward H. Sugden (London: The Epworth Press, 1955), I, p. 269.

152. Cf. Letters, I, pp. 134-135.

153. Cf. V. H. H. Green, pp. 133-134.

154. Cf. Lecky, I, pp. 545-546 and 548-550.

155. Cf. the list of V. H. H. Green, pp. 315-318.

156. Cf. the letter to his father in June of 1733 (Letters, I, p. 136) and John Locke's comments on authority in Locke, p. 394. Although several pupils were using Locke as their reason for retreating from the Holy Club, Wesley encouraged two pupils to read Wynne's commentary on Locke's Essay concerning Human Understanding to better help their faith (V. H. H. Green, p. 191).

157. Letters, I, p. 137.

158. Ibid., p. 138.

159. John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, p. 123. Cf. John Wesley and the Church of England, p. 28.

160. John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, p. 123.

161. Ernest C. Mossner, "Wollaston, William," The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press, 1967), VIII, p. 344.

162. William Wollaston, "The Religion of Nature delineated," in British Moralists 1650-1800, ed. D. D. Raphael (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), I, p. 246.

163. Ibid., pp. 245-246. Further in his work Wollaston stated, "And indeed it is true, that whatever will bear to be tried by right reason, is right; and that which is condemned by it, wrong. And moreover, if by right reason is meant that, which is found by the right use of our rational faculties, this is the same with truth. . ." (Ibid., p. 252).

164. Cf. Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century, p. 32.

165. Letters, II, p. 264.

166. Cf. V. H. H. Green, pp. 318-319.

167. Letters, I, p. 159. This letter is dated March 15, 1734.

168. Cf. ibid., p. 160.

169. The text has not survived (Cf. V. H. H. Green, p. 186, footnote 3).

170. Letters, I, pp. 161-163. The letter is dated June 26, 1734.

171. Ibid., p. 167.

172. Ibid., p. 168.

173. Wesley wrote in the same letter, "Which of these [two ways of life] have I rational ground to believe will conduce most to my own improvement?" (Ibid.).

174. Cf. ibid., p. 172.

175. John Wesley, p. 10.

176. Cf. Tyerman, I, p. 98 and Piette, pp. 288 and 554, footnote 30.

177. Piette reminds, "All the advisers, whom John interviewed outside his own family, were Non-jurors, and very advanced adherents of the High Church --- a party most distinctly favourable to the re-establishment of those forms which distinguished the Primitive Church." (Piette, p. 293).

178. The chief note here was not one of fulfillment but rather of escape (Cf. V. H. H. Green, p. 251).

179. This seems to have been Wesley's first published sermon (Cf. the editorial note in Works, VII, p. 349).

180. Works, VII, p. 350.

181. Ibid.

182. Ibid., p. 354.

183. Ibid., p. 352.

184. Letters, I, p. 191.

185. Works, XIV, p. 198.

186. Ibid.

187. Ibid., p. 195.

188. Wesley had a high regard for Macarius. He was reading him on July 30, 1736 (Cf. Journal, I, p. 254). Werner Jaeger's book on Gregory of Nyssa and Macarius has demonstrated an important linkage between these two individuals (Cf. Werner Jaeger, Two Rediscovered Works of Ancient Christian Literature: Gregory of Nyssa and Macarius (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1954), pp. 10-11 and John Wesley, pp. 9-10, footnote 26).

189. Quoted from Flew, p. 183.

190. John Wesley, p. 10.

191. Cf. Flew, p. 230. From the Summa Theologica Christian perfection could be attained in two ways: "First by the removal from man's affections of all that is contrary to love, such as mortal sin . . . Secondly, by the removal from man's affections, not only of whatever is contrary to love, but also of whatever hinders the mind's affections from tending wholly to God. . . ." (Quoted from Flew, p. 236).

192. Cf. ibid., pp. 266-269.

193. John Wesley and the Church of England, p. 43.

194. Schmidt comments, "Indeed it is most likely that he saw the missionary urge and missionary successes of his time as a judgement upon the deism and atheism of Europe." (John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, p. 134).

195. Works, VII, pp. 484-485.

196. This sermon was either preached just prior to Wesley's departure for Georgia or submitted in writing while he was in Georgia.

197. Works, VII, p. 491.

198. The references to these two men in Wesley's diary are numerous (Cf. Journal, I, pp. 115, 122, 133-134 for November and December of 1735; p. 138 for January of 1736; p. 182 for March of 1736; pp. 191, 198, 222-223, 230, 232-233, 241, 253, 258-261, 264, 267-269, 277-278, 283, 285, 300 for April through December of 1736; pp. 314, 318, 330, 337-338, 344, 356 for January through May of 1737; and pp. 364, 381, and 388 for July through September of 1737).

199. Journal, I, p. 138.

200. Ibid., p. 141.

201. Why did the Moravian strength in the face of death impress Wesley so? Piette answers, "Because it showed him that religion is not solely an affair of the understanding and the will." (Piette, p. 295).

202. Journal, I, p. 143.

203. Martin Schmidt indicates he must have seen a second Gregory Lopez in Spangenberg (John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, p. 151).

204. Journal, I, p. 151.

205. Ibid., p. 166.

206. John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, p. 155.

207. Piette writes, "John, who always cherished the idea of remaining single so that eventually he might take up his ministry among the Indians, was completely upset in mind by the prospect of married life; which, however, did not displease him." (Piette, p. 298).

208. Cf. Journal, I, pp. 283, 285, and 314.

209. Cf. C. E. Vulliamy, John Wesley (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1933), pp. 77-78. For a more complete analysis of this tragedy the reader is referred to Frederick E. Maser, "The Human Side of John Wesley," Religion in Life, XXVII (1957-1958), pp. 551-553.

210. John Wesley, p. 11.

211. It is of passing interest to note the recent study by Daniel J. Levinson on the developmental periods in a man's life. Wesley was experiencing the Age Thirty Transition in which he had the tasks of questioning and reappraising his existing life structure, exploring "various possibilities for change in self and world," and moving "toward commitment to the crucial choices that form the basis for a new life structure in the ensuing stable period." (Daniel J. Levinson, The Seasons of a Man's Life (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), p. 49). The Georgia debacle served as a bridge from one fairly stable life structure at Oxford to another.

212. Journal, I, p. 327. This also demonstrates Wesley was coming more to the realization that Christianity was not merely based on abstract principles but rather on a personal encounter with God.

213. Conversion is " "sometimes wrought in a moment . . . but the passage itself is gradual . . . " " (Journal, I, p. 372).

214. Works, VI, p. 102. This quotation is from his sermon "Self-Denial" begun in Savannah (Cf. Sermons, II, p. 280).

215. Quoted from Minutes of several conversations in Franz Hildebrandt, From Luther to Wesley (London: Lutterworth Press, 1951), p. 24.

216. Journal, I, p. 415.

217. Ibid. In a letter to his brother Samuel dated October 30, 1738, he referred to this unbelief confirming his feelings in the bitterness of his soul (Letters, I, p. 263).

218. Journal, I, p. 418. Cf. Ibid., p. 422, footnote 2. Daniel Levinson states, "Some preoccupations with death --- fearing it, being drawn to it, seeking to transcend it --- is not uncommon in all transitions, since the process of termination-initiation evokes the imagery of death and rebirth." (Levinson, p. 51). For Wesley this fear had been translated into sin and unbelief. It is interesting to note Wesley's reflections on this period of unbelief in his "A Second Letter to the Author of the Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compar'd" written in 1751. He said, "I am here describing the thoughts which passed through my mind when I was confessedly an unbeliever. But even this implies no scepticism, much less atheism: no "denial of the truth of revelation"; but barely such transient doubts as I presume may assault any thinking man that knows not God." (Works (Oxford Edition), p. 401).

219. Journal, I, p. 424.

220. Ibid., p. 435.

221. Ibid., p. 440. Leon Hynson indicates, ". . . this critique of reason was to be one of the recurrent issues" in Wesley's relationship to the Moravian brethren (Leon O, Hynson, "John Wesley and the 'Unitas Fratrum': A Theological Analysis," Methodist History, XVIII (1979), p. 31).

222. Martin Schmidt writes, "Like Zinzendorf Böhler rejected every idea of God which was derived, however indirectly, from any general principle of human reason." (John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, p. 235).

223. Journal, I, p. 442.

224. J. Ernest Rattenbury, The Conversion of the Wesleys: A Critical Study (London: The Epworth Press, 1938), pp. 70-71. V. H. H. Green also marks this day as "a turning-point in his religious history." (V. H. H. Green, p. 281).

225. Journal, I, p. 442.

226. Ibid., p. 454.

227. Ibid., pp. 454-455.

228. Cf. Charles Wesley's reaction to his brother's belief on this matter in Journal, I, p. 456, footnote 1.

229. For an interesting psychological discussion of the mentoring relationship the reader is referred to Levinson, pp. 97-101.

230. Cf. Flew, pp. 300-301. For a fuller account of the correspondence the reader is referred to J. B. Green, pp. 67-72; Kenneth Harper, "Law and Wesley," The Church Quarterly Review, CLXIII (1962), pp. 63-65; and Letters, I, pp. 238-244.

231. Lindström, p. 174.

232. Cf. Piette, p. 307 and William R. Cannon, "Perfection," The London Quarterly and Holborn Review, CLXXXIV, Sixth Series, XXVIII (1959), p. 215.

233. Law, IV, p. 46. First emphasis is added.

234. Cf. The British Empiricists: Locke, Berkeley, Hume, pp. 113-115. A comparison of Hume and Wesley is given in Cell, pp. 227-229. Cell notes, Wesley ". . . reached exactly the same conclusion as Hume did about natural religion." (Cell, p. 227). Gerald Cragg comments, "This radical and two-fold challenge [--- one from Hume and the other from Wesley ---] to the supremacy of reason seemed to presage the end of an era, but reason, though shaken, continued to be one of the controlling concepts of eighteenth-century thought." (Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century, p. viii).

235. Law had laid stress on the ". . . realization of fellowship with God on the basis not of sin but of holiness." (Lindström, p. 171).

236. Letters, I, p. 245.

CHAPTER IV

REACTION AGAINST THE AGE OF REASON, OR REBELLION IN FULL MEASURE (MAY 24, 1738 - 1756)

THE REACTION EVENT

May 24, 1738, is the date marking the Wesleyan reaction against the Age of Reason and the strengthening of a new religious impulse for the eighteenth century. This new religious impulse was the most important phenomenon of the century.[1] A potent mixture of Eastern notions of synthesis, classical Protestant conceptions of sola fide and sola Scriptura, and a stress on international purity had been prepared in the cup of British philosophical thought. The rebellion is attributable both to Hume's scepticism and Wesley's appeal for a living faith rather than merely a hypothetical, intellectual, faith.[2] The concern of this chapter is Wesley's appeal.[3] The doctrine of Christian perfection was the religious manifestation of this appeal. Such an appeal represented a life time of self-questioning, of balancing the natural and the spiritual.

Under the peace of Robert Walpole England was growing in financial power. Walpole's control over Parliament would continue until 1742. Peace was difficult as hostilities were building against the Spanish. British troops had been sent to Georgia to reinforce the colony against a possible Spanish invasion. Into this social milieu of prosperity and an agitated peace walked John Wesley down the lanes of Aldersgate Street on the evening of May 24, 1738. His Journal records the events of that evening in the following words:

> 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 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. [4]

A great argument has revolved around the significance of this event for Wesley's life and thought. [5] Frank Baker echoes the sentiments accepted in this paper in the following statement:

> No longer did he hope that he might be saved by a faith that implied a rational assent to the truths of Christianity backed up by the most devout and scrupulous Christian conduct . . . [6]

On May 24 rebellion against the supremacy of reason occurred. Eighteen days following this date the trumpet was sounded invoking the beginning of the Evangelical Revival. The instrument was the sermon preached before Oxford University titled "Salvation by Faith." [7] Wesley's preaching style appealed more to human reason than to the will or feeling. [8] Nevertheless the sermon was a challenge to the fashionable arguments of the day. He preached, "At this time, more especially, will we speak 'by grace are ye saved through faith:' because, never was the maintaining of this doctrine more seasonable than it is at this day." [9] He defined saving faith in contradistinction to the thought of the Age of Reason as ". . . not barely a speculative, rational thing, a cold, lifeless assent, a train of ideas in the head; but also a disposition of the heart." [10]

The content of "Salvation by Faith" can be delineated briefly in five points. First, in an attempt to guard against any kind of semi-Pelagian misunderstanding, Wesley defined faith as a gift of God proclaiming

that prior to justification there could be no good works. [11] Second, Wesley strongly promoted the idea of the absence of sin in the believer defining sin properly so-called as involving a willful action. Third, he discussed both justification and regeneration perhaps confusing the two in the following statement:

> . . . justification . . ., taken in the largest sense, implies a deliverance from guilt and punishment, by the atonement of Christ actually applied to the soul of the sinner now believing on Him, and a deliverance from the [whole body] of sin, through Christ formed in his heart. So that he who is thus justified, or saved by faith, is indeed born again. [12]

Fourth, the seeds of an attainable perfection in the present life can be discerned in the sermon. The process of salvation was affirmed with its goal being perfection. Wesley preached that salvation through faith ". . . is something attainable, yea, actually attained, on earth, by those who are partakers of this faith." [13] Salvation was a progressive experiencing of God's grace. Last, Martin Luther was given a prominent role at the sermon's end. Shortly after preaching "Salvation by Faith" Wesley departed for Herrnhut. His meeting with Zinzendorf, the sermons of Christian David at Herrnhut, and the several intimate conversations with the Moravian brethren [14] served to clarify the Aldersgate experience. Christian David's fourth sermon made a particularly strong impression on Wesley. David had preached, "So shall you be cleansed from all sin. So shall you go on from strength to strength, being renewed day by day, in righteousness and all true holiness." [15] The Herrnhut visit intensified the belief in Luther's doctrine bringing it into a vivid, living perspective.

Wesley respected the thought of Martin Luther; however, a difference in emphasis existed between the two men. The difference was already apparent

in the Oxford sermon "Salvation by Faith" and would become even more pronounced as the years passed. The difference is most evident in the sermon "On God's Vineyard." [16] Wesley commented:

> Many who have spoken and written admirably well concerning justification, had no clear conception, nay, were totally ignorant of the doctrine of sanctification. Who has 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? [17]

Wesley cited Luther's "Epistle to the Galatians" as proof of Luther's ignorance in the area of sanctification. [18] Due to his ignorance in this area, the great Reformer could not appreciate the doctrine of Christian perfection. [19]

After two weeks among the Moravians at Herrnhut Wesley reluctantly departed for England. He arrived in London on September 16 imbued with a sense of mission and prepared to begin the campaign of the Revival. He would never again leave the British Isles except for a few days in his old age. On October 9 John set out from London on his way to Oxford. Along the way he read an account of the North Hampton conversions in America. This account had a great impact on Wesley --- perhaps as great an impact as the Aldersgate experience. [20] He accepted a great portion of what Edwards had to say; however, he filtered out Edwards' high Calvinism. Both John and Charles Wesley spent most of the morning of October 20 with the bishop of London --- Edmund Gibson --- answering complaints lodged against them concerning doctrine and church discipline. The bishop found no objection to their teaching of justification by faith alone as long as they had disposed of the danger of antinomianism. An authentic faith necessarily resulted in good works. Wesley by the grace of God in Christ had realized that sin had no dominion over him. [21] This did not mean a state of sinlessness. Wesley's

rebellion against the Age of Reason could only be a partial one. Although his reaction against the deistic reduction of religion to reason had taken good root, his own propensity to reason made him realize that his own natural inclinations cleaved to the things of God. Reflecting on the state of his soul on December 16, 1738, Wesley commented, "But my love is only partly spiritual and partly natural. Something of my own cleaves to that which is of God. Nor can I divide the earthly part from the heavenly." [22]

Wesley's Journal notes for January 4, 1739, reveal an inner tension. Although a person may participate in the ecclesiastical means of grace throughout his life cycle, this participation did not assure one of salvation. Wesley would not be restrained to the inner caverns of the Church of England. Neither would he be confined to Lincoln College teaching duties although the idea must have surely crossed his mind. He would not stand for the quietistic tendencies developing in certain Moravians. Nor would he adhere to the more rigorous theories of Calvin being sponsored by George Whitefield. Wesley desired an equilibrium, a settling down structure, in his spiritual life. Such an equilibrium would promote a stable doctrinal structure for his reaction. Over a period stretching from 1739 to 1743 one observes a process leading to the fulfillment of the above goals.

REFINEMENT OF THE TOOL OF REACTION

In February of 1739 Wesley's good friend George Whitefield began field-preaching and invited John to join him in this practice at Bristol. Compliance with the request occurred on March 31. [23] On April 2 Wesley preached his first open-air sermon. [24] Except for a hurried visit to London in June, he remained in Bristol for the next five months field-preaching. His activities and successes at Bristol mark the beginning of a growing

sense of equilibrium. [25] To his brother Samuel he wrote about the Bristol successes:

> Ten persons, till then in sin, doubt, and fear, found such a change that sin had no more dominion over them; and, instead of the spirit of fear, they are now filled with that of love and joy and a sound mind. [26]

Wesley was discovering in the gospel promises the teaching of ". . . an assurance of present salvation only; therefore not necessarily perpetual, neither irreversible." [27] The Bristol ministry presented irrefutable witnesses to the fact of present salvation. The fact could not readily be explained away. Reason had no reign in the fields of Bristol.

Wesley's doctrine of sanctification was being refined in this period. The refinement is observed in his sermons. In May he preached "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount: Discourse V." [28] The dialectic operating between sin and salvation remained prominent. He preached:

> . . . we are not saved by faith, unless so far as we are delivered from the power as well as the guilt of sin. And when we say, "Believe, and thou shalt be saved," we do not mean, "Believe, and thou shalt step from sin to heaven, without any holiness coming between . . ." [29]

Wesley was professing a religion of the heart as an alternative to the Age of Reason. The religion of the heart demanded a purity ". . . from every unkind or turbulent passion . . ." [30] During the same month the first Methodist chapel was founded. An organizational structure was forming in which faith (the root), holiness (the tree), and good works (the fruit) would have their proper nurture. [31] Wesley married all three of these entities into an indissoluble relationship. Sin remained the bonding catalyst in this scheme and could not be escaped. Wesley argued that his

doctrine did not differ from the Church of England. His preaching at Bristol revealed five points of agreement with the home church. First, justification and sanctification were two distinct areas in the process of salvation with justification antecedent to sanctification. Second, man was justified by the atoning action of Christ and not by any action or merit of man. Third, this justification was by faith alone. No good work was previous to or a condition of justification. Fourth, sanctification, or holiness, was ". . . an inward thing, namely, the life of God in the soul of man; a participation of the divine nature; the mind that was in Christ; or, the renewal of our heart after the image of Him that created us." [32] Last, new birth was also ". . . an inward thing . . . an entire change of our inmost nature from the image of the devil (wherein we are born) to the image of God . . ." [33] This refinement of conceptions was continued in the sermon "Justification by Faith" which was probably preached in October. [34] In this sermon justification and sanctification were clearly distinguished. Justification ". . . is not the being made actually just and righteous. This is sanctification . . ." [35] Justification was the forgiveness of sins, or pardon. Sin or the realization of sin was the necessary presupposition to the salvation process. The argument against the possibility of good works prior to justification was repeated. [36] Faith was clearly defined as ". . . a divine, supernatural . . . evidence or conviction . . ." and the ". . . necessary condition of justification; yea, and the only necessary condition thereof." [37] Shortly after "Justification by Faith" Wesley preached "The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption." [38] In this sermon he described the state of the natural man and in doing so took an obvious poke at the men of learning. They were the ones in a state of sleep and utter ignorance. Wesley stated:

> If a natural man be one of these, he can talk at large of his rational faculties, of the freedom of his will, and the absolute necessity of such freedom, in order to constitute man a moral agent. He reads, and argues, and proves to a demonstration, that every man may do as he will . . . [39]

These men were blind. Three often intermingled states of man existed in the thought of Wesley --- natural, legal, and evangelical. In the natural man no fear or love of God was evident. Through the operation of God's prevenient grace man was able to come to love God. In belief man found true peace --- ". . . the peace of God filling and ruling the heart." [40] The conviction of sin was previous to faith. A few days later Wesley was preaching "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount: Discourse II" [41] in which it was observed that the religious man truly seeking after holiness would have no rest until he found the purity of God's righteousness. "This thirst shall endure for ever." [42]

During the year 1739 preaching occupied Wesley's energies to such an extent that he had little time for reading. The exception to this was his perusal of William Law's book on new birth. Wesley's criticism was scathing and to the point --- "philosophical, speculative, precarious; Behmenish, void, and vain!" [43] He was too busy to dwell at length on his old mentor's errors. A related error, however, was beginning to preoccupy Wesley --- the error of quietism. A Moravian personality by the name of Philip Molther had taken up residence in London and was encouraging abstention from good works both prior to and after justification. According to Wesley good works in the proper sense prior to justification were not possible; however, this fact should not prevent one's participation in the means of grace. Several discussions between Molther and Wesley ensued. The sermon titled "The Means of Grace" was an attack on Molther's position. [44]

For Wesley the means of grace were understood as ". . . outward signs, words, or actions, ordained of God . . . to be the ordinary channels whereby he might convey to men, preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace." [45] The intention in using the means of grace was always to seek God. An individual stands still only by marching forward. Wesley's battle was on two fronts --- one over quietism and the other over good works as meriting salvation. He confronted the good works issue when on December 13, 1739, he refuted twofold justification. [46] In a conversation with Molther on December 31 the argument was well defined. Molther admitted no degrees of faith, no means of grace, and no fruits of faith. [47] Wesley of course strongly disagreed and undertook a preaching campaign in London, Oxford, and Bristol to rebuild the proper foundation of faith in the various societies. [48] By the end of the year Methodist activity had definitely increased along with a corresponding increase in hostility displayed towards the Methodists. The tool of the initial reaction against the Age of Reason was being sharpened in the fire of controversy. By the close of the year England was at war with Spain. On the home front the land was hit with a devastating frost. And The Character of a Methodist was published describing the perfect Christian. [49] The term "love" was paramount in the description.

The harvest following the great frost was a miserable one. Bread rose in price resulting in riots and the looting of bakers' shops. The people were understandably in an angry mood. Much of Wesley's preaching resulted in "Methodistical madness" among his listeners. [50] Fire was being fought with fire. The struggles with the Moravians were becoming more pronounced. The friendship between Wesley and Whitefield was under a gathering storm cloud. To counteract the Calvinism of his friend, Wesley

preached "Free Grace" later publishing it for greater distribution. [51] Whitefield had left for the fields in America; however, several letters between the two preachers crossed the Atlantic. [52] In the sermon Wesley proclaimed, "The grace or love of God, whence cometh our salvation, is free in all, and free for all. . . ./ It does not depend on any power or merit in man . . ." [53] Wesley proceeded to demonstrate that the doctrine of predestination was not a doctrine of God and that it tended to destroy holiness, zeal for good works, and Christian revelation. He was within a "hair's breadth" of Calvinism. Justification by faith through God's grace was the way of salvation followed by the Primitive Church. In this he agreed with Calvin; however, he disagreed over the nature of the operation of God's grace.

Wesley's relation to Calvinism is important in understanding both the negative and positive roles reason was playing in his theology. Alfred Pask comments, "Despite all the special pleading of the late Dr. Cell, Wesley, like Arminius, stood firm, if but on a narrow field, against what he believed to be misdirection of thought on the part of Geneva." [54] Wesley thoroughly disagreed with Calvin's concept of predestination and limits to justification. Wesley himself labeled his own view of grace as Arminian. [55] Being aware of Arminius' earlier reaction to Calvin's thought and the distinctive manifestation of English Arminianism, Wesley refuted absolute predestination. In his reaction one can glimpse a reassertion of the attempt to rid the gospel and Christianity from irrationalism showing by reasonable argument religion's ability to stand on its own feet. [56] Balanced with this concern to save religion from irrationalism was the equal concern to demonstrate and to affirm that area beyond the limits of pure speculation. In this task too Wesley would have discovered an ally in

the figure Arminius.[57]

Growth in holiness was vital to Wesley. He felt Calvin's concept of predestination discouraged such growth. In the sermon "The Wilderness State" Wesley promoted the process of salvation.[58] He said, ". . . the whole work of sanctification is not . . . wrought at once; that when they first believe they are but as new-born babes, who are gradually to grow up, and may expect many storms before they come to the full stature of Christ."[59] The usual cause of the various storms on the ocean of salvation was sin. In his definition of sins of commission and of omission William Wollaston's influence is evident. Wesley stated, ". . . only a train of omissions, wilfully persisted in, can bring us into utter darkness."[60] A sin of omission was a voluntary transgression of a known law of God. Under the guidance of Molther the Moravians seemed to abound in sins of omission. Wesley broke away from the Moravian society on July 20 forming a society of Methodists at the Foundery.[61] The actual doctrinal break with the Moravians came in a long letter to the church at Herrnhut on August 8, 1740.[62] In his Journal Wesley declared against the Moravian brethren in England, "That a man may have a degree of 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."[63] On June 24, 1740, Wesley stated, "Your finding sin remaining in you still is no proof that you are not a believer. Sin does remain in one that is justified, though it has not dominion over him."[64]

The tool of reaction continued to be clarified with the sermon "The Great Privilege of Those That Are Born of God."[65] The difference between justification and new birth was refined in the sermon. Justification was a relative change taking away guilt and restoring one to the favor of God while new birth was a real change taking away the power of sin and

restoring one to the image of God. Wesley explained new, or spiritual, birth by analogy to a child's birth. The moment the child is born he ". . . feels the air with which he is surrounded . . ." and his ". . . eyes are now opened to perceive the light . . ."[66] The individual truly born of God has all the senses of his soul awake ". . . and capable of discerning spiritual good and evil."[67] Man must abide in the faith or he was likely to commit sin, outward sin --- ". . . an actual, voluntary transgression of the law . . ."[68] One fell into outward sin by a process which led from negative, inward sin through positive, inward sin resulting in a loss of faith and consequent committing of outward sin. He affirmed, ". . . Some sin of omission, at least, must necessarily precede the loss of faith; some inward sin: but the loss of faith must precede the committing outward sin."[69] Sin as well as grace has a growth. With an emphasis on the experience of God's grace and the feeling of salvation in believers, the danger of enthusiasm existed. To fight this peril the sermon "The Nature of Enthusiasm" was preached.[70] The Methodists were accused of being enthusiasts. Wesley defined enthusiasm as ". . . a disorder of the mind; and such a disorder as greatly hinders the exercise of reason."[71] One's sanctification was the will of God, and such sanctification excluded enthusiasm. Inward and outward holiness were intricately bound together. To separate the two forms of holiness would expose oneself to the charge of enthusiasm. Wesley would make another attempt to refute the charge of enthusiasm in his An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion published in 1743.

THE TOOL HONED TO A FINE SHARPNESS

In the middle of savage hostility and mob violence displayed toward

the Methodist preachers Wesley continued to preach the love of God. He said, ". . . we must love God, before we can be holy at all; this being the root of all holiness." [72] The actual break with George Whitefield came in March of 1741. [73] Perhaps, as Susanna Wesley pointed out in her Some Remarks on a Letter from the Reverend Mr. Whitefield to the Rev. Mr. Wesley, in a Letter from a Gentlewoman to her Friend, the main source of contention between the two preachers was over Wesley's stress on the teaching of Christian perfection. [74] Questions other than the one of justification by faith were beginning to assume a more prominent role. On May 16 Böhler indicated to Wesley, " "Sin will and must always remain in the soul." " [75] At this time in his life John felt that since the ". . . true, living, Christian faith . . . is not only assent, an act of the understanding; but a disposition which God hath wrought in his heart . . . ," [76] one was purged from inward sin and gained power over outward sin. A pure heart could admit no sin. The tool of reaction continued to be refined on a double anvil --- sin and grace.

In the sermon "The Almost Christian" preached at Oxford on July 25, 1741, Wesley confessed he himself was "almost a Christian" in his strivings. What was implied in being "altogether a Christian"? He answered the love of God, the love of our neighbor, and faith which was the ground of all. [77] In a sense the sermon was a pause to reflect on his spiritual journey and to affirm again Luther's great doctrine of justification by faith. The respect for Luther is obvious; however, he continued to disagree with the Reformer not only in regards to sanctification but also over the issue of the use of reason. Writing in his Journal on June 15, Wesley while criticizing Luther's Comment on the Epistle to the Galatians said the following:

> How does he . . . decry reason, right or wrong, as an irreconcilable enemy to the gospel of Christ! Whereas, what is reason (the faculty so called) but the power of apprehending, judging, and discouraging? Which power is no more to be condemned in the gross than seeing, hearing, or feeling. [78]

Reason maintained its position of authority.

In a milieu of reasoned disposition Wesley had honed his instrument of reaction against the Age of Reason to a fine point. In September of 1741 at the insistance of Bishop Edmund Gibson he published the sermon Christian Perfection.[79] The sermon indicated man was not free from ignorance, mistakes in things not central to salvation, infirmities not of a moral nature, and temptation. Wesley expected no living man to be infallible, and he realized, "The word perfect is what many cannot bear." [80] Christian perfection was merely a different expression for holiness and was not considered to be some static point. Wesley asked, "In what sense, then, are Christians perfect?" [81] The answer was given in relation to sin and the various stages in the Christian life. First, one was freed from outward sin. He stated, "From this ceasing from sin, if it be interpreted in the lowest sense, as regarding only the outward behaviour, must denote the ceasing, from the outward act, from any outward transgression of the law." [82] Then freedom from sinful thoughts and evil tempers was accomplished. The deliverance from inward as well as outward sin was viewed as a purification of the heart. Wesley's perfection was attainable in this world. He wrote the following:

> . . . Christians are saved in this world from all sin, from all unrighteousness; that they are now in such a sense perfect, as not to commit sin, and to be freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers. [83]

He was not primarily concerned with original sin in this sermon. Colin

Williams' contention that Wesley was working with two definitions of sin is doubtful with respect to the sermon.[84] The view of sin as a voluntary transgression of a known law of God appears strengthened in this sermon. One could be blameless "as not to commit sin" without being infallible, or absolutely perfect on earth.[85] The doctrine continued to be misunderstood, and in an attempt to further explain it Wesley wrote, " "This great gift of God, the salvation of our souls, is no other than the image of God fresh stamped on our hearts." "[86] By this "great gift" one grew daily in the love of God and neighbor. To stop growing was to fall from the path of sanctification.

The end of an era in domestic politics occurred with the resignation of Robert Walpole from his office as Prime Minister on January 28, 1742. At this time Wesley's itinerant preaching had increased to full throttle accompanied by riots and beatings. It was becoming a sport to bait the Methodist preachers. Most pulpits were closed to Wesley including his father's former parish at Epworth. This fact did not deter the evangelist. He preached a series of sermons from his father's tombstone. The first was given on June 6, 1742, and titled "The Way to the Kingdom."[87] The nature of true religion was defined as deriving from the heart. He warned, ". . . neither does religion consist in orthodoxy, or right opinions; which, although they are not properly outward things, are not in the heart, but the understanding."[88] While still at Epworth he preached "The Righteousness of Faith."[89] The covenant of works and the covenant of grace were defined and clarified in the following statement:

> . . . Again: the covenant of works, in order to man's <u>continuance</u> in the favour of God, in his knowledge and love, in holiness and happiness, required of perfect man a <u>perfect</u> and uninterrupted <u>obedience</u> to every point of the law of God.

> Whereas, the covenant of grace, in order to man's recovery of the favour and the life of God, requires only faith; living faith in him who, through God, justifies him that obeyed not. [90]

In this sermon fallen man was described as "a mere lump of ungodliness" and "an unclean, guilty, helpless worm." [91] The Augustinian conception of original sin prevailed in Wesley. Works would not save fallen man. He must first believe. "Let this good foundation first be laid, and then thou shalt do all things well." [92] Wesley had learned the truth of this statement through his own bitter experiences prior to May 24, 1738. Faith remained the ". . . root of all . . . present as well as future salvation." [93] Fallen man must be both outwardly and inwardly changed, ". . . throughly renewed in the spirit of his mind; otherwise he cannot pass through the gate of life, he cannot enter into glory." [94]

Wesley's last publication in 1742 was "The Principles of a Methodist" which was yet another summary of his thoughts on the subjects of justification and sinless perfection. Since man was "very far gone from original righteousness," justification by faith alone was necessary, and until a man was justified, he had ". . . no power to do any work which is pleasing and acceptable to God." [95] Justification was not man's action but rather God's action. Good works were the fruits following justification. Concerning sinless perfection Wesley maintained his position that no perfection in the present life relinquished one from attending the means of grace or implied ". . . an entire deliverance, either from ignorance, or mistake, in things not essential to salvation, or from manifold temptations, or from numberless infirmities . . ." deriving from the corruptible body. [96] Wesley followed through on these various thoughts in his sermon "The New Birth." [97] Again justification related ". . . to that great work which God

does for us, in forgiving our sins." [98] New birth was distinguished from justification and defined as ". . . the great work which God does in us, in renewing our fallen nature." [99] In order of time justification came before new birth. Man was created in a threefold image --- natural, political, and moral. The death of Adam was understood as a spiritual death, or a loss of God's life and image. Wesley, as elsewhere, laid an important foundation to his thought on the consequences of original sin. He preached the following:

> . . . And in Adam all died, all human kind, all the children of men . . . The natural consequence of this is that everyone descended from him comes into the world spiritually dead, dead to God, wholly dead in sin; entirely void of the life of God; void of the image of God, of all that righteousness and holiness wherein Adam was created. . . . This, then, is the foundation of the new birth, --- the entire corruption of our nature. [100]

New birth was necessary to holiness, and holiness was necessary to seeing God in glory. [101] New birth was merely the beginning of sanctification. The process was elucidated as follows:

> . . . the new birth is not the same with sanctification. . . . 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." . . . a child is born of God in a short time, if not in a moment. But it is by slow degrees that he afterwards grows up to the measure of the full stature of Christ. The same relation, therefore, which there is between our natural birth and our growth, there is also between our new birth and our sanctification. [102]

Wesley indicated baptism and new birth were not the same. At the end of August, 1743, he had written his sentiments on unconditional election, irresistible grace, and final perseverance in an attempt to stop what he considered to be a needless dispute between himself and his good friend

Mr. Whitefield. In such a spirit he was willing to say that at certain moments grace was irresistible; however, before and after such moments God's grace could be and was resisted. He also affirmed, "That there is a state attainable in this life, from which a man cannot fall . . ." [103]

THE APPEALS TO MEN OF REASON AND RELIGION

At this point in time the transitional period of sorting out and defining the theological parameters to Wesley's reaction against the Age of Reason is closed. The desire had been to combat irrationalism in religion while at the same time pointing to that valid area beyond the limits of reason. William Law had made his case with his The Case of Reason, or Natural Religion, fairly and fully stated. In Answer to a Book, entitled, Christianity as old as the Creation in 1731, George Berkeley with his Alciphron: or, the Minute Philosopher in 1732, and Joseph Butler with his The Analogy of Religion in 1736. [104] It was now Wesley's turn to give his reaction definitive written form in his brief but effective An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion. [105] For Wesley, still the Fellow of Lincoln College, faith could not be separated from reason. This fact was adequately demonstrated in his above appeal. The work was carefully written in an attempt to banish misconceptions in Methodist theology and to show the movement was not mere enthusiasm. George C. Cell correctly expresses, "Wesley's Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion in the early forties are a true index of his mind." [106] To the "men of no religion" and the "men of a lifeless, formal religion" Wesley offered the religion of love. He wrote, "This love we believe to be the medicine of life . . ." [107]

An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion was an exposition of the dialectic relationship between the eye of the spiritual man --- faith --- and the eye of the natural man --- reason. Faith was defined as ". . . the demonstrative evidence of things unseen, the supernatural evidence of things invisible, not perceivable by eyes of flesh, or by any of our natural senses or faculties." [108] Wesley then proceeded to describe this faith in terms familiar from his sermons. After a brief doctrinal summary he made his initial appeal to the men of reason by writing, "If therefore you allow that it is reasonable to love God, to love mankind, and to do good to all men, you cannot but allow that religion which we preach and live to be agreeable to the highest reason." [109] The religion of love was truly a reasonable religion. Those who were called believers in this period of time did not profess the faith of this reasonable religion. These so-called Christians could not be used as an objection to Christianity. True Christianity included reason. "So far as he departs from true genuine reason, so far he departs from Christianity." [110] Wesley continued, "We therefore not only allow, but earnestly exhort all who seek after true religion to use all the reason which God hath given them in searching out the things of God." [111] A portion of John Locke's epistemology was being assumed by Wesley when ideas were viewed as not innate but rather derived from the senses. [112] In order to discern objects of a spiritual nature, one was to exercise the spiritual senses, or the "new class of senses," not depending on one's natural being. [113]

How did reason pass from those things natural to the spiritual realm? The answer was that by means of faith one attained "enlightened reason," and enlightened reason was capable of bridging the great gulf existing between things visible and things invisible. With this foundation

laid Wesley moved to attack Henry Dodwell's Christianity Not Founded on Argument. Although Wesley admitted his "prejudice in its favour," he could not bring himself to overthrow entirely the assumption that reason had a place in Christianity. To do so would have opened him to the charge of enthusiasm. Dodwell's book was published in 1741 and drew a vehement popular reaction. Wesley could not admit as Dodwell had sought to prove that " ". . . Christianity is contrary to reason" --- or "that no man acting according to the principles of reason can possibly be a Christian." [114] A delicate balance between the claims of reason and the claims of faith was being attempted. Immediately following his refutation of Henry Dodwell, Wesley addressed the deists in the following:

> To you who do receive it, who believe the Scripture, but yet do not take upon you the character of religious men, I am therefore obliged to address myself to you likewise under the character of men of reason. [115]

He made a scathing inquiry into the deist moral character and concluded this character was not consistent with reason.

As to the men of religion, or those following merely a formal religion, Wesley wrote the following comments:

> See at length that outward religion without inward is nothing . . . And inward religion you have not. . . . Your faith . . . is not the Apostle's faith . . . So far from it, that this faith is the very thing which you call 'enthusiasm'. [116]

If a man were born of God, he would not commit sin. To live without sin was to live "without committing sin." [117] Love was lacking in formal religion. An unfeeling heart could only promote itself in love of the world. The men of religion objected to the preaching of perfection. Wesley

contended, as he had in his sermons previous to this, the term "perfection" was scriptural and did ". . . not imply an exemption from ignorance, or mistake, or infirmities, or temptations . . ." but was ". . . a state of soul devoutly to be wished for by all who have tasted of the love of God." [118] The natural man was saved by faith, by ". . . "a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that by the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God"." [119] Wesley proclaimed the Methodist confessed and preached ". . . inward salvation, now attainable by faith." [120] This doctrine was declared fundamental to the Church of England. An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion was a forceful work reaching a second edition in the same year it was first published. Wesley made frequent reference to it in his other works.

Between 1738 and 1744 the doors of the Church had become increasingly closed to the preaching of John Wesley. The number and intensity of the attacks on the Methodists had multiplied; however, these storms were being weathered. Many had thought of the Methodists as Jacobites. This attitude was a dangerous one for the Methodists as the nation was in a state of political agitation. Consequently, on March 5, 1744, Wesley prepared an address of loyalty to King George II. War against France was declared on March 29, 1744. A little over three months after the loyalty address the first Methodist Conference was held at which the six clergymen and several Methodist preachers seriously considered the doctrine of Christian perfection. It was declared that such a degree of sanctification implied ". . . all inward sin is taken away." [121] No "wilful sin" was consistent with justifying faith. "If a believer wilfully sins, he casts away his faith. Neither is it possible he should have justifying faith again, without previously repenting." [122] At the Conference it was urged that Wesley make

a farther appeal to the men of reason and religion. The end of the year would see the appearance of such an appeal. The last sermon Wesley preached before Oxford University was delivered on August 24, 1744. By the end of the year Wesley was meeting with people who claimed they had attained by faith Christian perfection. He was seemingly reluctant to accept the validity of such claims. The charge of enthusiasm was still too present for him to readily accept without thorough examination the claim of perfection.

The first part of A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion gives an excellent summary of Wesley's doctrinal position up to 1745. Holiness remained a condition of final acceptance, or final justification. He wrote, ". . . both inward and outward holiness are consequent on this faith, and are the ordinary, stated condition of final justification." [123] Growth in perfection was described as ". . . the growing in grace and goodness by degrees . . . Those who are fathers in Christ grow in grace by degrees as well as the new born babes." [124] Love remained Wesley's favorite tenet. ". . . true Christian perfection is no other than humble love." [125] When charged with enthusiasm for such beliefs, Wesley would often revert to the rational element in religion. When fighting the attitudes and tenets of Deism, he would revert to demonstrating the limits of reason. Since by nature man was totally corrupt, every good gift including love had to come from God. Merely because a person felt the love of God did not prove him to be an enthusiast. [126]

Towards the end of 1744 Thomas Church's Remarks on the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Last Journal . . . appeared to which Wesley completed a reply in February, 1745. [127] Thomas Church had charged Wesley both with commending the Moravians and their principles too highly and with enthusiasm.

In his An Answer to the Rev. Mr. Church's Remarks on the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Last Journal: In a Letter to that Gentleman Wesley reaffirmed the growth process in holiness following justification. Good works followed justifying faith but could not ". . . go before it. Much less can sanctification, which implies a continued course of good works, springing from holiness of heart. But --- entire sanctification goes before our justification at the last day." [128] Good works were a condition of final salvation. By this doctrinal means Wesley had refuted the Moravian tendency to quietism. Rev. Church had also attacked the doctrine of Christian perfection. Wesley refused further disputation on this matter and simply referred Church to the sermon on Christian Perfection. The last portion of the reply was given over to the charge of enthusiasm. Briefly, it was asserted that for the most part Rev. Church had accurately defined the enthusiast; however, he had incorrectly identified Wesley himself with enthusiasm.

In the midst of persecution Methodism in Engalnd was bearing fruit. On July 15, 1745, the leader of this great movement continued to expound on his doctrines in the sermon. "The First Fruits of the Spirit." [129] To the sensitive person sins seemed to be rampant in the nation. As always the evangelist was present to clarify the meaning of sin. Sins properly defined were ones of choice incurring guilt. A person was not condemned for the corruption of nature remaining ". . . even in those who are the children of God by faith . . ." [130] In Wesley's thought one must knowingly commit a sin to be found guilty, or as Wesley put it in a letter on September 28, 1745, "To have sin is one thing; to commit sin is another." [131] Sin expressed the negative action in a growth process. Wesley was fighting the antinomian belief that all one really needed to do was to

believe. The antinomian felt justification established a purity in the believer precluding the positive action in the growth process. [132] Wesley once again affirmed the validity of reason in the believer. Growth in grace was by no means inconsistent with reason. He wrote the following:

> Now, I believe and reason too; for I find no inconsistency between them. And I would just as soon put out my eyes to secure my faith, as lay aside my reason. [133]

Reason and faith properly balanced would dispel the charge of enthusiasm. The argument was intricately woven. The thread was the philosophical milieu of the age. The structure being pieced together was Wesley's basic theological position as defined by the doctrine of entire sanctification.

The year 1745 witnessed the landing in Scotland of the Young Pretender to the throne. He raised an army and proceeded to invade England. Wesley himself was mistaken for the Pretender during this rebellion. [134] The invasion had aroused a certain amount of fear in the people. It was during this period Wesley's A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Parts II and III appeared. He asked the people who read his publication to question themselves, "Is this true or is it false? Is it reasonable, or is it not? . . . I appeal to the light of your own mind." [135] The attack was again carried to the deists. [136] In the attack he alluded to George Berkeley's Alciphron: or, the Minute Philosopher. [137] The deist position is undeniably present in Wesley's following statement:

> . . . in the plain scriptural account. This informs us that although God dwelleth in heaven, yet he still 'ruleth over all'; that his providence extends to every individual in the whole system of beings which he hath made; that all natural causes of every kind depend wholly upon his will . . . that he uses preternatural causes at his will . . . that he hath never yet precluded himself from exerting his own immediate

> power, from speaking life or death into any of his creatures, from looking a world into being, or into nothing. [138]

Following a proclamation that perfect love was to be found on the earth and that one was not to stop short of the goal, Wesley warned the philosophers and theologians a true opinion of something differed from the thing itself. "And you may have a true opinion concerning faith all your life, and yet die an unbeliever." [139] Speculation about something could only go so far. It stopped short of the thing itself. The interconnected struggle with both quietism and Deism has been previously observed. This same struggle is witnessed again in A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Parts II and III. The children of God are led ". . . by our eye at least as much as by the hand; and by light as well as by heat." [140] Man was convinced of the necessity of moral action by the inculcation of God's love. To Wesley this method was ". . . the plain, rational account of the ordinary leading of the Spirit." [141] Wesley's weapon was the obedient love of God requiring moral action. With this one stone he disposed of the moral laxity of both the religious quietists and the deistical philosophers. The religion he was so fervently spreading across England was scriptural. Balancing this thought he immediately declared, "It is likewise rational, as well as scriptural; it is as pure from enthusiasm as from superstition." [142] The appeal was closed with some timely comments to a nation cognizant of the Young Pretender's invasion.

Thomas Church continued his pursuit of the Methodist leader with a 150-page book. This elicited another reply from Wesley in July of 1746 titled The Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained. The rebuttal followed along similar lines, perhaps more amplified, as his first answer

to Church. The charges of doctrinal error and enthusiasm were again treated with references being supplied to A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion. The third Methodist Conference held just previous to the second reply to Rev. Church had seen fit not to alter the Methodist teachings from the first two conferences. At the end of the year Wesley published the first volume of his Sermons on Several Occasions. In the "Preface" to these sermons he wrote, "I design plain truth for plain people: Therefore, of set purpose, I abstain from all nice and philosophical speculations; from all perplexed and intricate reasonings . . ." [143] He exhorted these plain folk of England, "Be not content with any religion which does not imply the destruction of all the works of the devil; that is, of all sin. . . . sin need not remain." [144] By the Son of God's workings holiness was attainable in the present life. Wesley reminded his listeners man was created in the threefold image of God --- natural, political, and moral. [145]

The charge of enthusiasm was again laid upon Wesley's head by the eminent Bishop Edmund Gibson who in 1740 had urged Wesley to publish his doctrine of Christian perfection to the world. His reply to this highly respected churchman was direct and courteous. On June 11, 1747, he completed A Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London in which the doctrine of gradual growth in sanctification was explained and the charge of holding to an absolute, sinless perfection as implying a freedom from temptation was refuted. Wesley felt one should devote himself to more serious problems such as Deism rather than consume one's energies attacking the Methodist movement. He wrote, "Are there no Papists, no deists left in the land? Or are these errors of less importance? Or are their numbers in England less considerable, or less likely to increase?" [146] Much of the controversy Wesley felt compelled to enter could have been avoided if his

antagonists had taken the time to read the appeals made to men of reason and religion. Most opponents were merely satisfied to throw out the cant term "enthusiasm" before investigating the tenets to which they applied the term.

On June 15, 1747, the fourth Methodist Conference was convened. Two doctrines were discussed --- divine assurance and entire sanctification. The central question addressed relating to the second of these doctrines was, "Whether we should expect to be saved from all sin, before the artice of death?" [147] Wesley supported his affirmative answer to the question by means of scripture references. He then attempted to answer some of the more practical and pastoral considerations involved in affirming entire sanctification prior to death. He indicated, ". . . if the love of God fill all the heart, there can be no sin there." [148] This command was received from the scripture which was felt to address itself to the living and not the dead. In an important letter to his brother Charles dated July 31 John indicated the assurance of pardon was not a necessary condition of salvation. [149] He claimed this was not only contrary to scripture and experience, but to reason as well.

Wesley remained closely tied to the thought patterns of John Locke. This fact is evident in his sermon preached at Kingswood on June 24, 1748. [150] In the sermon he listed atheism among the spiritual diseases the child brought with him into the world. The Lockean disciple preached the following:

> After all that has been so plausibly written concerning "the innate idea of God;" . . . it does not appear, that man has naturally any more idea of God than any of the beasts of the field . . . Whatever change may afterwards be wrought, (whether by the grace of God, or by his own reflection, or by education,) he is, by nature, a mere Atheist. [151]

Other diseases natural to every child were pride, love of the world, anger, deviation from truth, and proneness to act contrary to justice. Wesley gave parents advice as to how to cure these diseases in their children. During the year 1748 he continued his busy itinerary of preaching and visiting in the various Methodist societies maintaining the following teaching:

> . . . doctrine of free, full, present justification, on the one hand, and of entire sanctification both of heart and life, on the other; being as tenacious of inward holiness as any Mystic, and of outward, as any Pharisee. [152]

The year witnessed the close of the bloody and useless war on the Continent. In August John had proposed marriage to his second great love --- Grace Murray. [153]

THE REBELLION REACHES INTELLECTUAL EXHAUSTION

On January 2, 1749, the following comments were recorded in Wesley's Journal:

> I had designed to set out with a friend for Rotterdam; but being much pressed to answer Dr. Middleton's book against the Fathers, I postponed my voyage, and spent almost twenty days in that unpleasing employment. [154]

Conyers Middleton's book published in 1748 was A Free Inquiry into the Miraculous Powers, which are supposed to have subsisted in the Christian Church through several successive Ages. The book was important for at least two reasons. First, it served as a precursor to Edward Gibbon's significant historical work. Middleton anticipated the foundational principles of the historical method of inquiry and challenged the idea of an existing gulf between sacred and profane history. [155] Conyers Middleton,

with an appeal to historical evidence, and David Hume, with an appeal to logic, stood at a critical point in the philosophical development of the eighteenth century. [156] Second, with the publication of Middleton's book the deist controversy essentially came to an abrupt close. [157] A basic intellectual shift had occurred, and through Wesley's reply to Dr. Middleton, one is able to witness this change.

Wesley began his "A Letter to the Reverend Dr. Conyers Middleton. Occasioned by his late 'Free Inquiry.' " by accusing Middleton of contradicting his own stated method of " '. . . plain reasoning, grounded on plain facts, and published with an honest and disinterested view to free the minds of men from an inveterate imposture.' " [158] Wesley made the logical conclusion from Middleton's methodology that ". . . all history, sacred or profane, is utterly precarious and uncertain." [159] In the concluding section of his reply he arrived at an important insight in his comparison of traditional evidence and internal evidence. He said, "The traditional evidence of Christianity stands, as it were, a great way off; and therefore, although it speaks loud and clear, yet makes a less lively impression." [160] To shake the foundations of the external, traditional evidence of Christianity would not collapse the genuine ground of Christian faith. Such faith relied on the internal evidence. Even if Middleton was correct in his argument, the internal evidence would stand unscathed. To recognize the evidence of the heart would bring over all reasonable deists to the side of genuine, experiential Christianity. Although the traditional evidence may be clouded --- and Wesley seemed willing to concede this point --- the reverence of the Church Fathers should be maintained for their authentic profession of the Christian faith. If the traditional evidence had in fact been clouded, then God must have had his own purposes for this fact. Wesley

explained in the following statement:

> I have sometimes been almost inclined to believe, that the wisdom of God has, in most later ages, permitted the external evidence of Christianity to be more or less clogged and incumbered for this very end, that men (of reflection especially) might not altogether rest there, but be constrained to look into themselves also, and attend to the light shining in their hearts. [161]

Faith experienced was the all sufficient evidence of things unseen. [162] In the growth of this assurance one may attain holiness and happiness. Wesley had come to the full realization that Christianity could not admit merely the abstract speculation of the philosophers for its support.

The controversy with the deists had reached a point of intellectual exhaustion close to the middle of the century, and from 1742 to 1760 one is able to observe the rapid decline of English Deism. [163] John Orr places the decline's beginning with the publication of Dodwell's Christianity Not Founded on Argument in 1742. [164] Determining the causes for the decline might be instructive in grasping the intellectual milieu of Wesley's rebellion. Deism was never a very well defined sect. It had little organization and no set creed. What definitive creed existed was never really living in the hearts and minds of its adherents. The attention of the nation had been diverted from religious issues to political ones for the most part. The schemes of the Pretender in 1745 had promoted such a diversion. Although the critics of Deism were more able and incisive in their literary attacks than the deists, one cannot place these assaults as the reason for the movement's decline. Internal weakness was more the case than external bombardment. Deism's assumptions and focus were too optimistic to be viable. Sir Leslie Stephen agrees when commenting, "A purely optimistic creed always wants any real stamina; for the great

stimulant of religious emotions is a profound sense of the evils of human life." [165] A belief in original sin was considered by the deist immoral and absurd. Other causes of the decline might be listed including the general moral laxity associated with those influenced by Deism and the religious revival itself along with the growing scepticism most prominently displayed by David Hume and foreshadowed by Henry Dodwell. All these possible causes converged to push Deism out of the arena of hot debate into a remote area of irrelevance by the century's end.

Perhaps the major reason for Deism's rapid decline in England was its "sheer intellectual exhaustion." [166] Where could one turn for a solution to the dilemmas presented? The deistical optimism contradicted human experience, and no person could sincerely turn for warmth to an effete theology. The time had come to examine the facts in a reasonable manner and arrive at some conclusion. The internal evidence as described by Wesley in his reply to Conyers Middleton proved to be the clencher. Gerald R. Cragg expresses the Wesleyan solution best when he writes, "The argument for the sufficiency of reason is ultimately to be settled not by appeal to theory but by reference to experience." [167] Wesley had paid attention to the deist arguments and listened with his heart to the theological current. The two streams --- one philosophical and one theological --- were being mixed and refined in Wesley's mind. The pestle in the mortar was experience. It should be crystal clear by now that the following statement of Bishop William R. Cannon is inaccurate:

> In the writings of John Wesley deism is conspicuous more in the absence of attention paid to it than in any careful consideration of its tenets or any methodical refutation of its arguments. [168]

The year 1749 heralded a distinct maturity of the people called Methodists. For some the religion of the Wesley brothers had become somewhat fashionable. In May Horace Walpole writing to Sir Horace Mann commented, "If you ever think of returning to England . . . you must prepare yourself with Methodism. . . . this sect increases as fast as almost ever any religious nonsense did." [169] Such "religious nonsense" Wesley was perpetuating in his sermons "On the Discoveries of Faith," [170] "The Important Question," [171] and "Catholic Spirit." [172] The year saw the publication of A Plain Account of the People called Methodists in which Wesley outlined the organizational structure of Methodism. The first volume of his Christian Library appeared. And from "A Serious Answer to Dr. Trapp's Four Sermons on the Sin, Folly, and Danger of being Righteous Overmuch. Extracted from Mr. Law." Wesley warned:

> Human learning is by no means to be rejected from religion; but if it is considered as a key, or the key, to the mysteries of our redemption, instead of opening to us the kingdom of God, it locks us up in our own darkness. [173]

The fall of the year found Wesley in a personal darkness over the marriage of his beloved Grace Murray to another man. It was a tragic event, not only because of the personal trauma involved, but mainly because of the resulting marriage to Mrs. Vazeille in 1751. [174]

RE-CLARIFYING THE DOCTRINE WITH THE MEN OF RELIGION

At the end of 1749 Wesley was still involved with the antinomian controversy. He wrote three sermons on the subject at this time with two discourses titled "The Law Established Through Faith." [175] Faith did not preclude the necessity for holiness. He stated, "Therefore the nature of the

covenant of grace gives you no ground . . . to set aside any insistence or degree of obedience; any part or measure of holiness." [176] The perfect work of faith, working internally by means of love, purified the heart ". . . from every earthly, sensual desire; from all vile and inordinate affections; yea, from the whole of that carnal mind which is enmity against God." [177] The sermon "A Caution Against Bigotry" published in 1750 was probably meant as a companion-piece to "Catholic Spirit." It expressed the idea that all Christian ministers were with the help of God's power to bring sinners to repentance and to ". . . an entire inward as well as outward change, from all evil to all good." [178] A renewed clarification of the doctrine of entire sanctification was also delineated in the sermon "Satan's Devices." [179] Faith remained the very foundation of holiness, and one was to expect perfection in love. He preached, "We look for such an increase in the experimental knowledge and love of God our Saviour . . ." [180]

On February 1, 1750, Wesley completed his reply to the charges leveled against the Methodists by Bishop George Lavington. [181] The charges included the familiar one of enthusiasm. The social milieu in which the reply was made could be fairly described as one of superstitious terror. At the year's beginning all the heavens seemed to be aflame with the Aurora Borealis. On February 8 and March 8 earthquakes shook London. Predictions were being circulated that on April 8 London and Westminster would be destroyed by a third and most horrible earthquake. Elements in the Methodist movement had contributed to the high level of superstition. Enthusiasm, if not refuted, might have proved a devastating charge to the Methodists. The chief medical enemy --- imbibing gin --- was another major contributor to the period's superstitious mania. The year closed with a letter to George Stonehouse dated November 27, 1750, in which Wesley

succinctly defined his disagreements with the Moravian brethren. Faith and reason remained in cooperative agreement. Wesley complained:

> Let a plain, open-hearted man, who hates controversy and loves the religion of the heart, go but a few times to Fetter Lane, and he begins to dispute with every man he meets . . . [182]

The tension between the Calvinist and Arminian branches of the revival remained adequately submerged while George Whitefield remained alive. When Whitefield died in 1770 the rapprochement collapsed.

The doctrine of Christian perfection continued to be spread with evangelical fervor. The positive side of perfection was expressed as universal holiness and the enjoyment of God's total love prior to death. The negative side of the doctrine was expressed as salvation from all sin. Such perfection did ". . . not exclude ignorance, and error, and a thousand other infirmities." [183] The perfection preached was neither angelic nor Adamic but rather that attainable by corrupted man. Objections to the notion of Christian perfection were given answers in the sermon "On Perfection." The definition of sin as "a voluntary transgression of a known law" was stressed as bearing the correct scriptural sense. [184] Wesley denied that all transgression was a sin while affirming all sin was a transgression. [185] He asked, "Why should any man of reason and religion be either afraid of, or averse to, salvation from all sin." [186] The sermon closed with a request for patience for those who professed the doctrine of Christian perfection. Even if the doctrine was incorrect, Wesley felt the expectation of perfection did great good.

The year 1751 was marked with a considerable amount of anxiety due in part to Wesley's disastrous marriage to the widow Mrs. Vazeille. [187]

The expulsion of a Methodist preacher in June for behavioral problems added to Wesley's marital anxiety and led to a thorough investigation of the behavior and creeds of all the itinerant and local preachers. This concern would explain the frequent use of his sermon "On Perfection." Wesley found himself on April 10 in the midst of the disciples of Taylor of Norwich --- a most able proponent of naturalistic humanism whose teaching on original sin Wesley felt to be corrupt. Wesley wrote the following:

> . . . I enlarged much more than I am accustomed to do, on the doctrine of Original Sin; and determined, if God should give me a few years' life, publicly to answer his [i. e., Taylor of Norwich] new gospel. [188]

Wesley was attacking Pelagian doctrine. [189] In his sermon "Spiritual Worship" he preached, "Expect that the power of the Highest shall suddenly overshadow you, that all sin may be destroyed, and nothing may remain in your heart, but holiness unto the Lord." [190] God in his power would preserve one in the state of entire sanctification; however, the cooperation of man was required. In his "Serious Thoughts upon the Perseverance of the Saints" published in 1751 Wesley commented, ". . . I believe a saint may fall away; that one who is holy or righteous in the judgment of God himself may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly." [191] The year is closed with "A Second Letter to the Author of the Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compar'd." [192] In the letter the distinction between the assurance of faith and the assurance of hope was made:

> [Some Christians] . . . have faith, but mixed with doubts and fears. Some have also the full assurance of faith, a full conviction of present pardon: and yet not the full assurance of hope --- not a full conviction of their future perseverance. . . . The faith which we preach as necessary to all Christians is the first of these, and no other . . . [193]

The Methodists could not be accused of promoting any quietism as the following statement showed:

> That all Christians have an assurance of future salvation is no Methodist doctrine: and an assurance of present pardon is so far from causing negligence that it is of all others the strongest motive to vigorous endeavours after universal holiness. [194]

With the appearance of "Predestination Calmly Considered" in 1752 Wesley summarized his attitude toward the predestinarian position in writing, ". . . unconditional election I cannot believe . . . Find out any election which does not imply reprobation, and I will gladly agree to it." [195] Neither the sovereignty of God nor original sin were the cause of a man's eternal damnation. God did not will that any believer should perish. But since God's grace was resistible, a true believer could yet fall and perish everlastingly. Man was to work out his own salvation in cooperation with the will of God to the whole glory of God. The argument was given in full in the following explanation from the sermon "On Working Out Our Own Salvation":

> . . . working out implies the doing the thing thoroughly. . . . Your own salvation; salvation begins with what is usually termed (and very properly) preventing grace; including the first wish to please God, the first dawn of light concerning his will, and the first slight transient conviction of having sinned against him. . . . Salvation is carried on by convincing grace, usually in Scripture termed repentance . . . Afterwards we experience the proper Christian salvation . . . consisting of those two grand branches, justification and sanctification. By justification we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favour of God; by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God. All experience, as well as Scripture, shows this salvation to be both instantaneous and gradual. It begins the moment we are justified . . . It gradually increases from that moment . . . till, in another instant, the heart is cleansed from all sin, and filled with pure love to God and man. But even that love increases more and more, till . . . we attain "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." [196]

Increasing love would bear fruit in good works. Wesley preached, "By bearing fruit, and by this alone, it [the tree] attains the highest perfection it is capable of, and answers the end for which it was planted." [197]

It is not surprising that in the midst of his dealings with the Calvinists Wesley should preach the sermon titled "The Case of Reason Impartially Considered." It has been previously mentioned that the rejection of Calvinist tenets late in the sixteenth century demanded a thorough examination of the rightful place of reason in matters of theology. Wesley following this traditional demand preached his sermon to the men of religion. The antinomians had undervalued reason while others had overvalued it. Wesley sought the medium between the two extremes. He began by acknowledging his philosophical father John Locke:

> That great master of reason, Mr. Locke, has done something of the kind, something applicable to it, in one chapter of his Essay concerning Human Understanding. But it is only remotely applicable to this: He does not come home to the point. [198]

The Methodist leader was intent to supply the defect first by defining the term "reason" and then by pointing out reason's abilities and limits. Two definitions of reason were given with the second one being the working definition in the sermon. First, ". . . reason is sometimes taken for argument." [199] Second, ". . . reason is much the same with understanding." [200] Wesley felt reason could not only do much in the present affairs of men but also in the affairs of religion. In the area of religion reason could ". . . do exceeding much, both with regard to the foundation of it, and the superstructure." [201] By the use of reason man could come to understand the Bible, the meaning of repentance, faith,

justification, and the fruits subsequent to justification. Indeed, ". . . God has given us our reason for a guide." [202]

Reason had its limits. Wesley stated, ". . . reason cannot produce faith." [203] Faith was however ". . . always consistent with reason." [204] In expounding on the limits to reason and its inability to produce faith, Wesley spoke from his own struggle prior to May 24, 1738. He quoted the dying words of that "great admirer of reason" Thomas Hobbes, " 'I am taking a leap in the dark!' " and commented, "Just such an evidence of the invisible world can bare reason give to the wisest of men!" [205] Experience had confirmed that reason could not produce hope or the love which necessarily flowed from both faith and hope. Cold reason ". . . may present us with fair ideas; it can draw a fine picture of love: But this is only a painted fire. And farther than this reason cannot go." [206] Since reason could not produce love, then neither could it produce virtue. Without faith, hope, love, and virtue ". . . there can be no happiness for any intelligent creature." [207]

Wesley concluded the sermon's argument by advocating the middle way between the two extremes in the following statement:

> Let reason do all that reason can: Employ it as far as it will go. But, at the same time, acknowledge that it is utterly incapable of giving either faith, or hope, or love; and, consequently, of producing either real virtue, or substantial happiness. Expect these from a higher source . . . [208]

By bitter experience Wesley had come to realize that reason taken to its extreme limits could provide him only with "a painted fire." He personally had overvalued reason prior to 1738; however, many of his critics and fellow Methodists had committed the opposite error. This mistake Wesley never made. Perhaps John Locke would have smilingly concluded:

> Such a submission as this, of our reason to faith, takes not away the landmarks of knowledge: this shakes not the foundations of reason, but leaves us that use of our faculties for which they were given us. [209]

One of Wesley's early philosophical mentors --- George Berkeley --- died at Oxford on January 14, 1753. One observes Mr. Wesley following the electrical experiments of Benjamin Franklin and discovering electricity's efficacious value in the treatment of nervous disorders. On May 22 the annual Methodist Conference began. During the proceedings the preachers were admonished to give stronger attention to the subject of inward and outward holiness. The Conference agreed that a courteous letter should be sent to George Whitefield requesting him to advise his preachers not to speak against the Methodist doctrine of perfection. September probably witnessed Wesley preaching "The Difference Between Walking by Sight, and Walking by Faith." [210] He continued to be concerned with the dimensions of faith and reason in the following:

> Do not all men of unprejudiced reason allow the same thing (the small number of Materialists, or Atheists, I cannot term men of reason,) that there is an invisible world, naturally such, as well as a visible one? But which of our senses is fine enough to take the least knowledge of this? We can no more perceive any part of this by our sight, than by our feeling. [211]

In the above the definitions of Locke regarding sensation were being employed. [212] Faith was able to discern the eternal and invisible world. This alone was ". . . true Christian religion; not this or that opinion, or system of opinions, be they ever so true, ever so scriptural." [213] Since both visible and invisible worlds were natural, one could almost perceive Wesley using faith as a natural extension of reason to bridge the gap between these two worlds. The charge of enthusiasm was again given an

answer in this sermon. Those who by faith had experienced the invisible, eternal world were charged with "a heated imagination." Wesley replied, "It cannot be otherwise, when men born blind take upon them to reason concerning light and colours." [214] Had Wesley really escaped the Lockean conceptions through faith?

On September 14, 1753, Wesley recorded in his Journal his reading of Andrew M. Ramsay's Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion explained and unfolded in a General Order. In a letter to Dr. Robertson ten days later he attacked Ramsay's work as an example of ". . . the fallaciousness and unsatisfactoriness of the mathematical method of reasoning on religious subjects." [215] During the month of October an estrangement developed between the two Wesley brothers probably due to various family responsibilities and problems encountered with John's wife. On top of these domestic problems was added the contraction of a serious illness. Wesley thought himself so close to death he devised his own epitaph on November 26, 1753. A reconciliation was accomplished with his brother; however, his health was in such a sorry state it became necessary for him to take an extended period of semi-retirement before resuming his busy itinerant life. Although not able to travel or preach, John could still read and write. While in the process of recuperation, he began writing his Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament on January 6, 1754. [216]

REBELLION COMPLETE

For a period of three years following the death of Henry Pelham in March of 1754 turmoil and corruption ruled English politics. While the nation was experiencing a political sickness, Wesley recovered from his own serious illness. He published in 1755 the notes on the New Testament

demonstrating how his basic principles were not inconsistent with the Bible. He continued to re-clarify his doctrines as opposed to the men of reason. This fact is observed most vividly in his sermon "An Israelite Indeed" which was possibly preached on June 22, 1755.[217] The sermon began by mentioning Francis Hutcheson's two treatises on An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue. Wesley warned:

> . . . I cannot see this beautiful Essay of Mr. Hutcheson's in any other light, than as a decent, and therefore more dangerous, attack upon the whole of the Christian Revelation: seeing this asserts the love of God to be the true foundation, both of the love of our neighbour, and all other virtues . . .[218]

Wesley then mentioned another writer --- William Wollaston --- who he claimed advanced a totally different hypothesis from that of Hutcheson. He explained:

> Mr. Wollaston, in the book which he entitles, "The Religion of Nature Delineated," endeavours to prove, that truth is the essence of virtue, or conformableness to truth. But it seems, Mr. Wollaston goes farther from the Bible than Mr. Hutcheson himself. . . . for his [, or Wollaston's,] hypothesis does not place the essence of virtue in either the love of God or of our neighbour.[219]

In an earlier developmental period Wesley was probably more agreeable to the thoughts of these two philosophers. Now he claimed these two ingenious writers had split what God had joined --- namely, truth and love. He concluded, ". . . truth and love, united together, are the essence of virtue or holiness."[220] Truth was vital; however, separated from love it was nothing in the sight of God. The rebellion was complete. At this time Wesley entered into an important correspondence with a Richard Thompson over the doctrine of assurance with some peripheral references to Christian perfection. He felt the proper Christian faith

which purified the heart implied an assurance of pardon. Wesley welcomed this correspondence for he felt Thompson had discovered the great secret of which "An Israelite Indeed" had spoken --- ". . . speaking the truth in love." [221]

In 1755 the clouds of war were beginning to gather over America as the French and English were disputing the extent of their colonial territories. By 1756 the public had become visibly frightened over the prospect of a French invasion. Preparations to meet such an invasion were lacking. On May 15, 1756, England formally declared war on France. Another conflict of a less serious nature was coming to a close. On January 6, 1756, Wesley wrote an open letter refuting much of William Law's philosophy as found in the latter's Spirit of Prayer and Spirit of Love. [222] Law was accused of denying and confusing the meaning of the scriptural doctrine of justification and charged with denying God's justice which for Wesley was a "main hinge on which the controversy between Christianity and Deism" turned. [223] Wesley continued:

> To convert a thousand Deists, therefore, by giving up this point, with the doctrine of justification which is built upon it, is little more than it would be to convert as many Jews by allowing the Messiah is not yet come. . . . Consequently, it is no other than establishing Deism, while it pretends to overturn it. [224]

For Wesley this was too central an issue to ignore. Here one can readily view the connection between the philosophical milieu of the period and the theological doctrine. While loving the person, Wesley felt compelled to state his complete abhorence for Law's "miserable philosophy" as being "totally subversive of the very essence of Christianity." [225] Wesley used Law to refute Law in the following

confession:

> At a time when I was in great danger of not valuing this authority [of the inspired scriptures] enough, you made that important observation: "I see where your mistake lies. You would have a philosophical religion; but there can be no such thing. . . . So far as you add philosophy to religion, just so far you spoil it." [226]

Religion was a plain, simple thing of loving God because of his love for humanity. Wesley never forgot this; however, it was felt Law had forgotten it. "Is there a writer in England who so continually blends philosophy with religion?" [227] The finger pointed to Law. Wesley desired to build on no other authority than the Bible. By this standard the doctrine of entire sanctification was developed in opposition to the "miserable philosophy" of the age.

The English were in a serious mood fearful of an impending French invasion. A national fast was declared for February 6. Businesses were closed and churches were filled to capacity. People were looking for guidance. Wesley was busy guiding the reading of a young friend --- Samuel Furly. He recommended Francis Hutcheson's System of Moral Philosophy published by Hutcheson's son in 1755, [228] Jean Le Clerc's Ontologia, Malebranche's De la Recherche de la Vérité, and the Bishop of Cork's Procedure (or Progress), Extent, and Limits of Human Understanding. [229] Most of all Wesley stressed the study of the Greek and Hebrew Bible and the seeking after the love of Christ. [230] Correspondence with Richard Tompson continued over questions regarding assurance of pardon and justification. A letter to William Dodd on March 12 stressed the term "perfection" as being entirely scriptural and bearing the meaning "holiness" or "the image of God in man." [231] Those born of God did not commit outward sin, and the

being cleansed from all unrighteousness related ". . . chiefly, if not wholly, to sanctification." [232] According to the Journal Wesley read Bernard de Mandeville's The Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Public Benefits on April 14, 1756. [233] Mandeville had drawn several eminent opponents including William Law whose reply in 1723 was probably the most able. Mandeville's theory attempted to resolve virtue into selfishness. [234] The Methodist leader summarily dismissed the theory saying, ". . . the Englishman loves and cordially recommends vice of every kind; not only as useful now and then, but as absolutely necessary at all times for all communities!" [235] Wesley's interest in British moral philosophy remained only as a means of refusing its entry into the theological domain.

FOOTNOTES

1. Cf. Stephen, II, p. 389.

2. Cf. Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century, p. 124.

3. Sir Leslie Stephen explains the growth of Methodism not ". . . as an offshoot from the speculation of the time, nor yet, as is more commonly done, as a reaction against it." (Stephen, II, p. 424). This might be true in explaining the growth of a whole movement; however, it is felt to be invalid in explaining the development of that movement's leader. What Sir Leslie says about Wesleyanism cannot be said about Wesley himself. He writes, "Wesleyanism in the eighteenth century represents heat without light --- a blind protest of the masses, and a vague feeling after some satisfaction to the instinct which ends only in a recrudescence of obsolete ideas." (Ibid.). In his doctrine of entire sanctification Wesley was attempting a balance between the heat and the light. Prior to May 24, 1738, the light had thrown Wesley off balance. Reason had been taken as far as it could go. Wesley's appeal would be to both the heat and the light in proper balance. Sir Leslie would have one believe there exists an unbridgeable gap between the philosophical thought of the period and John Wesley (Cf. ibid., p. 423). Wesley was by no means indifferent to this thought. Stephen argues, "Wesley could as little t[ouch] the reason of Hume's scholars as Hume could touch the hearts of Wesley's disciples." (Ibid., p. 424. Cf. V. H. H. Green, p. 12). The fact is that Wesley himself attempted such an appeal, and it was an appeal that concerned him throughout the remainder of his life. Reason and faith were to be balanced in such a manner as to dynamically interact. Such an interaction would prevent an individual's being burned in the excessive heat of faith or being blinded by the brilliant light of reason. The dialectic operating between reason and faith had to appeal to ". . . the passionate yearnings and the dumb instincts of the multitude" if it was to be more than an esoteric doctrine (Stephen, I, p. 71).

4. Journal, I, pp. 475-476.

5. Cf. Rattenbury, pp. 21-41; V. H. H. Green, pp. 285-288; Lecky, II, p. 607; and Deschner, p. 197. Arthur S. Yates, The Doctrine of Assurance: With Special Reference to John Wesley (London: The Epworth Press, 1952), pp. 3-11 and Lindström, pp. 2-16 are particularly good summaries of the argument surrounding Wesley's Aldersgate experience.

6. John Wesley and the Church of England, p. 54.

7. Sugden suggests the sermon was probably written in America as he believes it has the marks of an earlier period (Sermons, I, p. 36). George C. Cell feels the sermon represents Wesley ". . . in the epoch of his maturity." (Cell, p. 218).

8. Cf. Lecky, II, p. 683 for a good summary of Wesley's general preaching style.

9. Works, V, p. 13.

10. Ibid., p. 7. Cell comments, "No bolder, more dynamic challenge was ever thrown down to public opinion on religious subjects than this Oxford Sermon . . . The doctrine of religion in full control of most pulpits in that critical period of Protestantism consisted of an easy ascent of human thought and conduct from man to God." (Cell, p. 223).

11. Wesley wrote, ". . . there is nothing we are, or have, or do, which can deserve the least thing at God's hand. . . . whatever righteousness may be found in man, this is also the gift of God./ . . . Wherewithal then shall a sinful man atone for any the least of his sins? With his own works? No." (Works, V, p. 5. Cf. Works (Oxford Edition), pp. 419-420).

12. Sermons, I, p. 45. Cf. Williams, p. 170; John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, p. 272; and Sugden's notes in Sermons, I, p. 45.

13. Works, V, p. 7.

14. Cf. the comments on his conversation with Michael Linner in Journal, II, p. 37 and Curnock's notes in Journal, II, p. 36, footnote 1.

15. Journal, II, p. 27. Cf. Hynson, p. 37.

16. The scripture text for this sermon was used as early as December 4, 1748 (Cf. "Wesley's Sermon Register" in Journal, VIII, p. 182).

17. Works, VII, p. 195.

18. Cf. Lindström, p. 76, footnote 1 and Albert C. Outler, "The Place of Wesley in the Christian Tradition," The Place of Wesley in the Christian Tradition, ed. Kenneth E. Rowe (Metuchen: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1976), pp. 24-25. W. D. Allbeck suggests Wesley had time to read only a portion of this work by Luther not going beyond the fifth chapter (W. D. Allbeck, "Is There a Neo-Wesleyanism?: 2. Plenteous Grace With Thee Is Found," Religion in Life, XXIX (1959-1960), p. 502. Cf. Robert W. Burtner, Justification and Sanctification: A Study of the Theologies of Martin Luther and John Wesley (unpublished S. T. M. thesis) (New York: Union Theological Seminary, 1948), p. 89, footnote 65).

19. Cf. Paul S. Sanders, "Is There a Neo-Wesleyanism?: 1. 'What God Hath Joined Together'," Religion in Life, XXIX (1959-1960), p. 498; John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume I, From 17th June 1703 until 24th May 1738, pp. 308-309; and Lindström, pp. 75-92. Frederick Norwood writes, "Wesley was dazzled by the perfection of God. Luther was blinded by the imperfection of man." (Frederick A. Norwood, "Is There a Neo-Wesleyanism?: 5. Continuity and Change in Methodism," Religion in Life, XXIX (1959-1960), p. 520. Cf. Hildebrandt, pp. 24, 52, 55-64, 85-91, 129-130, 183, and 187). Burtner comments, "The presumption of merits was cut off at its roots in man's sin; and the presumption of fulfillment was denied by the continual forgiveness before God. Herein lies the greatness and the weakness of Luther's thought." (Burtner, p. 16).

20. Cf. John Wesley, pp. 15-16.

21. Cf. the letter to his brother Samuel dated October 30, 1738, in Letters, I, p. 262. Samuel had been concerned over John's statement about not being a Christian until May 24, 1738. Many years later John realized he had made an overstatement. Due to problems in publication and neglect from future editors, his attempt at correcting the earlier viewpoint was almost totally lost (Cf. Frank Baker, "The Oxford Edition of Wesley's Works and Its Text," The Place of Wesley in the Christian Tradition, ed. Kenneth E. Rowe (Metuchen: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1976), pp. 129-130).

22. Journal, II, p. 116.

23. Cf. Lecky, II, p. 612 and Horton Davies, Worship and Theology in England: From Watts and Wesley to Maurice, 1690-1850 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 148.

24. For the reaction of the Church of England to the itinerant Methodist preachers and their field-preaching the reader is referred to Lecky, II, pp. 610-611.

25. Outler states, "Up to this point the story is full of anxiety, insecurity, futility. Hereafter, the instances of spiritual disturbances drop off sharply and rarely recur, even in the full records of a very candid man." (John Wesley, p. 17).

26. Letters, I, p. 309.

27. Ibid., p. 308.

28. Cf. Sugden's introductory notes in Sermons, I, p. 398.

29. Works, V, p. 298.

30. Ibid., p. 261. This quotation is from the sermon "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount: Discourse III."

31. Cf. Journal, II, p. 265.

32. Ibid., p. 275.

33. Ibid.

34. Cf. Sugden's introductory notes in Sermons, I, p. 112.

35. Works, V, p. 51.

36. Cf. ibid., pp. 54-55. Sugden does not feel Wesley's argument is convincing (Sermons, I, p. 124, footnote 6).

37. Works, V, pp. 55-57.

38. Cf. Sugden's introductory notes in Sermons, I, p. 178.

39. Works, V, p. 93.

40. Ibid., p. 100.

41. Cf. Sugden's introductory notes in Sermons, I, p. 335.

42. Works, V, p. 252.

43. Journal, II, p. 297.

44. This sermon was preached on November 15, 1739 (Cf. Sugden's introductory notes in Sermons, I, p. 237).

45. Works, V, p. 176.

46. Cf. Journal, II, p. 326.

47. Cf. ibid., pp. 328-331.

48. Piette comments, "This controversy marks a turning point in John's mental development, and forms the preparatory work for a new emancipation." (Piette, p. 357).

49. Cf. Tyerman, I, p. 289 and A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 11.

50. Cf. Lecky, II, pp. 636-640.

51. Tyerman comments, ". . . in some respects, ['Free Grace'] was the most important sermon that he ever issued." (Tyerman, I, p. 317). It would lead to the division with Whitefield eventually culminating in the fierce argument of 1770.

52. For an interesting discussion of this correspondence the reader is referred to Susan F. Harrington, "Friendship Under Fire: George Whitefield and John Wesley, 1739-1741," Andover Newton Quarterly, XV (1974-1975), pp. 167-181.

53. Works, VII, p. 357.

54. Alfred H. Pask, "The Influence of Arminius on John Wesley," The London Quareterly and Holborn Review, CLXXXV, Sixth Series, XXIX (1960), p. 260. Cf. Cell, p. 19 and Rattenbury, pp. 184-185.

55. Cf. Arminius' view in F. Stuart Clarke, "The Theology of Arminius," The London Quarterly and Holborn Review, CLXXXV, Sixth Series, XXIX (1960), pp. 249-250. For a description of the use of the term "Arminian" as applied to Englishmen the reader is referred to Owen Chadwick, "Arminianism in England," Religion in Life, XXIX (1959-1960), p. 548.

56. Cf. Gordon S. Wakefield, "Arminianism in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," The London Quarterly and Holborn Review, CLXXXV, Sixth Series, XXIX (1960), p. 257. In the last few years of the sixteenth

century Owen Chadwick indicates, "It was rapidly found that the confutation of Calvinism demanded a study and consideration, at a fundamental level, of the rightful place of reason, its modes, its limits, to the theological evidence and even the evidence provided by revelation." (Chadwick, p. 550). Deism was an eventual offshoot of this confutation of Calvinism.

57. Cf. G. J. Hoenderdaal, "The Life and Thought of Jacobus Arminius," Religion in Life, XXIX (1959-1960), pp. 541-542.

58. Elements of this sermon were probably preached on March 28, 1740 (Cf. Sugden's introductory notes in Sermons, II, p. 244).

59. Works, VI, p. 85.

60. Ibid., p. 76. Emphasis is added.

61. Cf. John Wesley and the Church of England, p. 77. From this date onward George Cell feels, "Wesley began to safeguard the doctrine of Christian experience not only from the negative dogmatism of atheistic humanism, but also from the psychological extravagances into which untutored minds so easily run." (Cell, p. 143).

62. Cf. Letters, I, pp. 344-351.

63. Journal, I, p. 430. Cf. John Telford, The Life of John Wesley (New York: Hunt and Eaton, n. d.), p. 138. Lecky comments, "The Moravian doctrine that no man is in a state of salvation if he has any doubt about his condition, which appears to have been at first accepted by Wesley, now became incredible to his mind. He preached openly against it, and taught that there were degrees of justifying faith." (Lecky, II, pp. 624-625).

64. Journal, II, p. 359.

65. The substance of this sermon might have been given in a study series in August of 1740 at the Foundery (Cf. Sugden's introductory notes in Sermons, I, p. 298).

66. Works, V, pp. 211-212. Before the new birth ". . . he is not sensible of God; he does not feel, he has no inward consciousness of, His presence." (Ibid., p. 212).

67. Ibid., p. 213.

68. Ibid., p. 214.

69. Ibid., p. 218.

70. Cf. Sugden's introductory notes in Sermons, II, p. 84.

71. Works, V, p. 441. John Locke defined enthusiasm as ". . . though founded neither on reason nor revelation, but rising from the conceits of a warmed and overweening brain . . ." (Locke, p. 385). Enthusiasm set up revelation without reason. Frank Baker feels, ". . . Wesley himself came to

maintain the teaching castigated by Locke as the heresy of the enthusiasts." (John Wesley and the Church of England, p. 28). It is felt Baker's point is made out of context, or at the least is not comprehensive enough, when Wesley's concern over irrationalism in religion is considered. Locke's attack was on those who thought themselves above reason. Wesley would have agreed; however, he would not have agreed with any denigration of human experience. Locke had stated, "Thus they the enthusiasts support themselves, and are sure reasoning hath nothing to do with what they see and feel in themselves: what they have a sensible experience of admits no doubt, needs no probation." (Locke, p. 386) For Wesley the experience would admit of no doubt for it was in the area beyond reason. This is the point at which Baker's comment would be valid. However, for Wesley also, the existence of an area beyond reason did not place an individual above the parameters of reason. The aim was to hold at bay superstition and fanaticism (Cf. Stephen, II, p. 336). One's faith must be reasonable. For Wesley bad enthusiasm was equated with ". . . those blind zealots who tack together a set of opinions and an outside worship, and call this poor, dull, lifeless thing by the sacred name of "Christianity"." (Works (Oxford Edition), p. 270. The quotation is from A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion. Cf. Cell, p. 66 and James Downey, The Eighteenth Century Pulpit: A Study of the Sermons of Butler, Berkeley, Secker, Sterne, Whitefield and Wesley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 198-199).

72. Works, V, p. 108.

73. Piette points to the importance of this event when he writes, "The Wesleyan Reaction was definitely launched in 1741. Before this year it had run a great risk of being absorbed into the Moravian Movement; later, of being no more than a Puritan Renaissance . . ." (Piette, p. 369).

74. Cf. Frank Baker, "Whitefield's Break with the Wesleys," The Church Quarterly, III (1970-1971), p. 111 and Downey, pp. 158-159.

75. Journal, II, pp. 456-457.

76. Works, V, p. 201. The quotation is from the sermon "The Marks of the New Birth" which was likely first preached on April 3, 1741 (Cf. Sugden's introductory notes in Sermons, p. 280).

77. Works, V, p. 18. Faith was " '. . . a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that, by the merits of Christ, his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God; whereof doth following a loving heart, to obey his commandments.' " (Ibid., p. 20).

78. Journal, II, p. 467.

79. Cf. A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, pp. 15-16 and John Wesley and the Church of England, p. 72. In this same month Count Zinzendorf and Wesley argued over the meaning of Christian perfection. Zinzendorf said justification and sanctification occurred in the same moment (Cf. A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 24 and Tyerman, I, pp. 339-341).

80. Works, VI, p. 1.

81. Ibid., p. 5.

82. Ibid., p. 7.

83. Ibid., p. 18.

84. Colin Williams contends Wesley is working with two definitions of sin in order to demonstrate two degrees of perfection --- imperfect perfection and absolute perfection (Williams, p. 170).

85. Wesley commented, "There is no perfection of degrees . . . none which does not admit of a continual increase." (Works, VI, p. 5).

86. A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, pp. 21-22.

87. At least the first portion of this sermon was preached at Epworth on this occasion (Cf. Sugden's introductory notes in Sermons, I, pp. 147-148).

88. Works, V, p. 72.

89. The sermon was preached on June 12, 1742 (Cf. Sugden's introductory notes in Sermons, I, pp. 131 and 147).

90. Works, V, p. 64.

91. Ibid., p. 66.

92. Ibid., p. 68.

93. Ibid., p. 380. The quotation is from the sermon "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount: Discourse X" possibly preached in June of 1742 (Cf. Sugden's introductory notes in Sermons, I, p. 517).

94. Works, V, p. 384. The quotation is from the sermon "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount: Discourse XI."

95. Works, VIII, p. 347. Cf. Wesley's letter to Howell Harris on August 6, 1742, in Letters, II, p. 8.

96. Works, VIII, p. 349.

97. This sermon was first published in 1760; however, it was probably first preached on May 29, 1743 (Cf. Sugden's introductory notes in Sermons, II, p. 226).

98. Works, VI, p. 61.

99. Ibid.

100. Ibid., p. 64.

101. On October 30, 1743, Wesley wrote, ". . . mere outside religion

would not bring us to heaven; that none could go thither without inward holiness, which was only to be attained by faith." (Journal, III, pp. 109-110).

102. Works, VI, p. 70.

103. Journal, III, p. 86.

104. Cf. Gerald R. Cragg, The Church and the Age of Reason 1648-1789 (Great Britain: Hodder and Stoughton, 1962), pp. 162-163 and 167. Wesley wrote in his Journal on January 21, 1746, "I read Bishop Butler's discourse on Analogy; a strong and well-wrote treatise; but, I am afraid, far too deep for their understanding to whom it is primarily addressed." Journal, III, p. 232). The Journal entry dated May 20, 1768, reads, "I went on in reading that fine book, Bishop Butler's Analogy. But I doubt it is too hard for most of those for whom it is chiefly intended. Freethinkers, so called, are seldom close thinkers. They will not be at the pains of reading such a book as this." (Journal, V, p. 264).

105. Albert Outler comments, "The Appeals are apologiae; they have Joseph Butler's famous Analogy of Religion in mind and at least some of his antideistic aims in view." (John Wesley, p. 349).

106. Cell, p. 232.

107. Works (Oxford Edition), p. 45. Cf. Wesley's statement: "What religion do I preach? The religion of love: the law of kindness brought to light by the gospel." (Ibid., p. 51).

108. Ibid., p. 46.

109. Ibid., p. 53.

110. Ibid., p. 55.

111. Ibid., p. 56.

112. Cf. Locke, pp. 121-122.

113. Was Wesley familiar with the Molyneaux Problem? He stated, ". . . as you cannot reason concerning colours if you have no natural sight --- because all the ideas received by your other senses are of a different kind, so that neither your hearing nor any other sense can supply your want of sight, or furnish your reason in this respect with matter to work upon --- so you cannot reason concerning spiritual things if you have no spiritual sight . . ." (Works (Oxford Edition), p. 57).

114. Ibid., p. 58.

115. Ibid., p. 59.

116. Ibid., p. 63.

117. Ibid., p. 65.

118. Ibid., pp. 66-67.

119. Ibid., p. 69. This definition of faith is the one most frequently used by Wesley. Faith defined as the "demonstrative evidence of things unseen" is used more in the appeal to the men of reason.

120. Ibid., p. 74.

121. A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 33. Cf. Minutes of the Methodist Conferences, from the First, Held in London, by the Late Rev. John Wesley, A. M., in the Year 1744 (London: The Wesleyan Conference Office, 1862), I, p. 4.

122. Minutes, I, p. 7. Cf. ibid., p. 1 and Colin Williams's comments on Wesley's recognition of repentance as "a species of faith" prior to justification in Williams, p. 64. Wesley explained repentance and the fruits thereof as previous to justification; however, he maintained that "Faith alone . . . justifies . . ." (Cf. Works (Oxford Edition), pp. 115-117).

123. Works (Oxford Edition), p. 115.

124. Ibid., p. 126. An excellent summary statement distinguishing between final salvation and present salvation was given when Wesley wrote, "With regard to the condition of salvation, it may be remembered that I allow not only faith, but likewise holiness or universal obedience, to be the ordinary condition of final salvation. And that when I say faith alone is the condition of present salvation, what I would assert is this: (1), that without faith no man can be saved from his sins, can be either inwardly or outwardly holy; and (2), that at what time soever faith is given, holiness commences in the soul; for that instant "the love of God (which is the source of holiness) is shed abroad in the heart"." (Ibid., p. 130).

125. Ibid., p. 126.

126. Ibid., p. 140. In A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Part II Wesley commented, "Be not prejudiced against Christianity by those who know nothing at all of it. May, they condemn it, all real, substantial Christianity . . . They have a kind of cant word for the whole religion of the heart. They call it "enthusiasm"." (Ibid., p. 268).

127. For determining the date of these publications the reader is referred to Ibid., p. 202, footnote 1.

128. Works (1978), VIII, p. 387.

129. Cf. Sugden's introductory notes in Sermons, I, p. 162.

130. Works, V, p. 84. At the second Methodist Conference held in August of 1745 Wesley proclaimed that even in the moment of a man's justification, "Yet sin remains in him; yea, the seed of all sin, till he is sanctified

throughout." (A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 33. Cf. Minutes, I, p. 10). However, from the moment one is justified the ". . . believer gradually dies to sin, and grows in grace." (A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 33).

131. Letters, II, p. 47.

132. Cf. "A Dialogue Between an Antinomian and His Friend" in Works, X, pp. 265-266.

133. Ibid., p. 258.

134. Cf. John Wesley and the Church of England, p. 132. The 1745 rebellion was finally crushed on April 16, 1746 (Cf. Cragg's notes in Works (Oxford Edition), p. 323, footnote 3).

135. Ibid., pp. 203-204. Responding to an attack on the Methodist doctrines in a letter dated July, 1745, Wesley stressed the "experimental knowledge" of religion. "By this religion we do not banish reason, but exalt it to its utmost perfection . . ." (Letters, II, p. 37).

136. Wesley wrote, "Into what a state is this Christian nation fallen! Nay, the men of eminence, of fortune, of education! Would not a thinking foreigner who should be present at such an interview be apt to conclude that the men of quality in England were atheists? That they did not believe there was any God at all --- or at best but an Epicurean God, who sat at ease upon the circle of the heavens, and did not concern himself about us worms of the earth?" (Ibid., p. 215).

137. Cf. ibid., p. 226.

138. Ibid., p. 227.

139. Ibid., p. 253.

140. Ibid., p. 258.

141. Ibid., p. 259.

142. Ibid., p. 277. Tradition is not excluded here. Wesley stated, "We prove the doctrines we preach by Scripture and reason; and, if need be by antiquity." (Ibid., p. 310).

143. Works (1978), V, p. 2.

144. Works, VI, p. 260. This quotation is from the sermon "The End of Christ's Coming" possibly first preached on March 27, 1747, and subsequently preached several times on December 25, 1752; June 26, 1757; and December 4, 1757 (Cf. "Wesley's Sermon Register" in Journal, VIII, pp. 172, 205, 224, and 227).

145. Cf. Works, VI, pp. 253-255 in the sermon "The End of Christ's Coming."

146. Works (Oxford Edition), p. 347.

147. Minutes, I, p. 18. Cf. A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 35.

148. Minutes, I, p. 19. Cf. A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 37.

149. Letters, II, pp. 108-109. Cf. Williams, p. 112.

150. The sermon was "On the Education of Children" (Cf. "Wesley's Sermon Register," in Journal, VIII, p. 178).

151. Works, VII, p. 84.

152. Quoted from the sermon "On God's Vineyard" in Works, VII, p. 196. The scripture text for this sermon is listed in "Wesley's Sermon Register" under December 4, 1748; July 29, 1749; August 1, 1749; and October 11, 1749 (Journal, VIII, pp. 182, 185-186).

153. For a full account of this relationship the reader is referred to Tyerman, II, pp. 45-56.

154. Works (1978), II, p. 128.

155. Cf. Stephen, I, pp. 263-264. Gerald R. Cragg states, ". . . Free Inquiry took the revolutionary step of setting the Scriptures in the context of secular history and examining them in the light of human experience." (Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century, p. 84. Sir Leslie indicates Middleton is a transitional figure (Cf. Stephen, I, p. 88).).

156. David Hume's "Essay on Miracles" appeared in the same year as Middleton's Free Inquiry.

157. Cf. Stephen, I, p. 269.

158. Works (1978), X, p. 7.

159. Ibid., p. 65. This conclusion is drawn from Middleton's statement as quoted by Wesley: " 'The credibility of facts lies open to the trial of our reason and senses. But the credibility of witnesses depends on a variety of principles wholly concealed from us. And though, in many cases, it may reasonably be presumed, yet in none can it certainly be known.' " (Ibid.).

160. Ibid., p. 76.

161. Ibid.

162. David Hume expressed this idea in the following comment: ". . . causes and effects are discoverable, not by reason but by experience . . ." (David Hume, Enquiries concerning Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals, Third Edition, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford:

Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 28).

163. Alfred Plummer dates the decline of Deism from 1745 to 1760 (Plummer, p. 97).

164. John Orr, English Deism: Its Roots and Its Fruits (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1934), p. 171. Redwood states, ". . . their hey-day was over by the middle of the eighteenth century . . . England settled down to the conformity of natural religion, and to the enjoyment of the apologia and positions adopted during the hectic decades of the earlier eighteenth century when it had seemed that the atheists would win from force of numbers and shrillness of tongue." (Redwood, p. 222).

165. Stephen, I, p. 170. Cf. Gerald R. Cragg's agreement in Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century, p. 86.

166. Cf. Orr, p. 174.

167. Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century, p. 97.

168. The Theology of John Wesley: With Special Reference to the Doctrine of Justification, p. 20.

169. Quoted from Lecky, II, p. 672.

170. The scripture text for this sermon is first listed in "Wesley's Sermon Register" under April 21, 1749 (Journal, VIII, p. 184), and was preached frequently subsequent to this date. Wesley promoted a familiar theme in the sermon: "By faith I know that the Holy Spirit is the giver of all spiritual life . . . of holiness and happiness by the restoration of that image of God wherein we are created." (Works, VII, p. 223).

171. The scripture text here was a very popular one with Wesley. It first appears in "Wesley's Sermon Register" under May 10, 1749 (Journal, VIII, p. 184). Wesley voiced the opinion and astonishment ". . . that a creature endued with reason . . ." should choose eternal damnation (Works, VI, p. 472).

172. The "Catholic Spirit" was probably first preached on September 8, 1749 (Cf. Sugden's introductory notes in Sermons, II, p. 126). A beautiful description of love can be found in this ecumenically spirited sermon (Cf. Works, V, p. 470).

173. Quoted from Tyerman, II, p. 64. This is an all too-prevalent danger in the task of writing a thesis on the development of entire sanctification. To accept this doctrine as a mere mental key to some academic degree is to rob it of its truthfulness and value as applied to the heart of the individual.

174. Cf. Telford, p. 252 and Maser, p. 550.

175. Sugden dates the writing of these sermons either in November or December of 1749 (Sugden's introductory notes to Sermon XXIX in Sermons, II, p. 38).

176. Quoted from the first discourse in Works, V, p. 426. Cf. the same notion in the second discourse in ibid., p. 434.

177. Ibid., p. 437.

178. Ibid., p. 454.

179. Cf. Sugden's introductory notes in Sermons, II, p. 191.

180. Works, VI, p. 30.

181. The reply was titled "A Letter to the Author of the Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compar'd." A good account of Lavington is given in Martin Schmidt, John Wesley: A Theological Biography - Volume II, John Wesley's Life Mission, Part I, trans. Norman P. Goldhawk (New York: Abingdon Press, 1972), pp. 173-176.

182. Letters, III, p. 57.

183. Works, VI, p. 390. The quotation is from the sermon "On Perfection." "Wesley's Sermon Register" indicates the scripture text for this sermon was used very frequently with the first mention of it under January 7, 1751 (Journal, VIII, p. 193).

184. Works, VI, p. 394. Cf. ibid., p. 400.

185. Ibid., p. 394. E. J. Bicknell holds the opposite view in his comments upon Romans 5:12-21 (E. J. Bicknell, The Christian Idea of Sin and Original Sin, in the Light of Modern Knowledge (Toronto: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1922), p. 23). Bicknell argues with F. R. Tennant's confinement of sin to actual sin in the latter's book titled The Concept of Sin. An interesting discussion of Tennant's conception of sin is found in Bicknell, pp. 30-41. It could be said that to some extent Wesley's position would be a synergism of the above two opponents' positions.

186. Works, VI, p. 399.

187. Wesley's wife died on October 8, 1781, leaving her husband nothing more than a ring. Luke Tyerman comments, "It must be remembered . . . that John Wesley's marriage affected and tinged thirty years of his public life." (Tyerman, II, p. 114). Wesley was not without fault as he married too hastily and wrote pastoral letters of encouragement and advice to female friends of whom his wife was jealous. He was not lacking in affection, merely in a wife who could receive it. Too, he was already married to his work. He wrote in his Journal on March 27, 1751, "I cannot understand, how a Methodist Preacher can answer it to God, to preach one sermon, or travel one day less, in a married than in a single state. In this respect surely, 'it remaineth, that they who have wives be as though they had none.' " (Works (1978), II, p. 224). His marriage necessarily meant his resignation as a Fellow of Lincoln College (Cf. Ibid., pp. 231-232).

188. Ibid., p. 226.

189. Cell states, "Well does Wesley say of such a natural religion, of a religion confined to considerations of natural reason, without any root or resource in historical Christianity, untouched by the unique revelational and experiential nature of the Christian faith, that it simply is 'no religion at all.' " (Cell, p. 292).

190. Works, VI, p. 411. The sermon text seems to appear only once --- December 1, 1751 --- in "Wesley's Sermon Register" (Journal, VIII, p. 198).

191. Works, X, p. 275.

192. Under November 19, 1751, Wesley wrote in his Journal, "I began writing a letter to the Comparer of the Papists and Methodists. Heavy work, such as I should never choose; but sometimes it must be done. Well might the Ancient say, 'God made practical divinity necessary, the devil controversial.' " (Works (1978), II, p. 247).

193. Works (Oxford Edition), pp. 398-399. Cf. Williams, p. 124.

194. Works (Oxford Edition), p. 414.

195. Works, X, p. 203.

196. Ibid., VI, pp. 482-483. A portion of the sermon text was used on August 9, 1752 (Cf. "Wesley's Sermon Register" in Journal, VIII, p. 203). An abbreviated version of this doctrinal summary is found in A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 41.

197. Quoted from the sermon "The Reward of the Righteous" in Works, VII, p. 124. The scripture text here first appears under January 1, 1753, in "Wesley's Sermon Register" in Journal, VIII, p. 205.

198. Works (1978), VI, p. 352. Perhaps the chapter to which Wesley made reference is Chapter XVIII in Book IV titled "Of Faith and Reason, and their Distinct Provinces." Locke stated, "For till it be resolved how far we are to be guided by reason, and how far by faith, we shall in vain dispute, and endeavour to convince one another in matters of religion." (Locke, p. 381).

199. Works (1978), VI, p. 352.

200. Ibid., p. 353.

201. Ibid., p. 354.

202. Ibid., p. 355.

203. Ibid. Robert G. Tuttle, Jr. would relate this as a rejection of the Aristotelian model, and consequently of John Locke's assertions (Cf. The British Empiricists: Locke, Berkeley, Hume, p. 13), which indicated ". . . reality had to do only with those things perceivable by sense experience."

(Robert G. Tuttle, Jr., John Wesley: His Life and Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), pp. 70-71).

204. Works (1978), VI, p. 355.

205. Ibid., p. 357.

206. Ibid., p. 359.

207. Ibid.

208. Ibid., p. 360. George C. Cell indicates Wesley was here attempting ". . . to guide Christian faith between the opposite perils of Gnosticism and of Agnosticism, i. e., between too much and too little intellect in religion." (Cell, p. 315).

209. Locke, p. 384.

210. The scripture text for this sermon appears frequently in "Wesley's Sermon Register." The first appearance is under September of 1753 in Journal, VIII, p. 207.

211. Works, VII, p. 246.

212. Cf. ibid., p. 247 and Locke, p. 121.

213. Works, VII, p. 251.

214. Ibid., p. 252.

215. Letters, III, p. 104.

216. Cf. Works (1978), II, p. 310. Wesley used extensively J. A. Bengel's Gnomon Novi Testamenti published in 1742. Bengel's edition of the Greek New Testament ". . . was an important landmark in the scientific study of the text." (Cragg's comments in Works (Oxford Edition), p. 478, footnote 1).

217. The sermon text seems to appear only once in "Wesley's Sermon Register" (Journal, VIII, p. 213).

218. Works, VII, p. 36.

219. Ibid., p. 37.

220. Ibid., p. 43.

221. Letters, III, p. 138.

222. J. B. Green writes, ". . . the value of the Open Letter lies in its witness . . . clarifying the essentials of the faith for himself and his followers. As such, the letter is perhaps the most effective statement of his most cherished theological beliefs that John Wesley ever produced." (J. B. Green, p. 160).

223. Works (1978), IX, p. 480.

224. Ibid.

225. Ibid.

226. Ibid., p. 466.

227. Ibid.

228. Cf. Letters, III, p. 163, footnote 2. In a letter to Samuel Furly dated March 8, 1757, Wesley made a negative comment regarding Hutcheson's work (Letters, VIII, p. 270).

229. In the Journal under December 6, 1756, Wesley commented, "I began reading to our preachers the late Bishop of Cork's [--- Dr. Peter Browne ---] excellent Treatise on Human Understanding, in most points far clearer and more judicious than Mr. Locke's, as well as designed to advance a better cause." (Journal, IV, p. 192).

230. Cf. the letter to Samuel Furly dated February 18, 1756, in Letters, III, p. 163.

231. Ibid., p. 168.

232. Ibid., p. 172. Cf. ibid., p. 169.

233. Works (1978), II, p. 361. The Fable of the Bees was first printed in 1714 with the poem itself appearing in 1705 (Cf. Stephen, II, p. 33, footnote 2).

234. Cf. Stephen, II, pp. 39-41 for a fuller discussion of Mandeville in comparison to Shaftesbury, and Willey, pp. 96-99.

235. Works (1978), II, p. 361.

CHAPTER V

SYNERGISM IN ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION

(1757 - 1775)

SIN ABOUNDS = THE DARKNESS OF DUALITY

In the previous chapters the pervasive influence of the eighteenth-century intellectual milieu on the thought of John Wesley has been considered and hopefully demonstrated. The realms of philosophy and theology were not mutually exclusive but rather interacted in a complex synergistic manner. In Chapter IV entire sanctification developed mainly as a tool of reaction. The present chapter will attempt to show the doctrine not as a mere tool but as the very focus of Wesley's theology. Reason and faith, justification and sanctification have represented bolders between which Wesley has effectively walked without injury. With the development of entire sanctification the effectiveness of reason and faith, justification and sanctification was magnified. Along with this magnification came an amplification of criticism in at least two areas. First, Wesley was accused of tampering with perfection's meaning by reducing it to something relative and dynamic rather than something absolute and static. Such perfection was imperfect. Second, Wesley's definition of sin as a voluntary transgression of a known law of God excluding ignorance, infirmities, and various mistakes, opened him to the criticism that he had not realized or fathomed the internal and most often unconscious depth of sin. Can these criticisms be justified? Is Professor R. N. Flew's criticism regarding the weakness in Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification valid? [1] Do such criticisms take into account the philosophical milieu and its influence on

Wesley? Is the defect Flew describes a misunderstanding of the dialectic operating between sin and salvation, original sin and the atonement? If this question is answered affirmatively, then could one say that Wesley elevated perfection, rather than reduced it, to its proper meaning?

Central to the development of entire sanctification was the doctrine of sin. A consistency in Wesley's conception of sin has been readily observed in his sermons. This fact is not always detectable in Wesley studies because no real attempt to place and to treat the sermons in proper historical sequence has been accomplished.[2] A dual conception of sin was held --- original sin and personal sin. This is judged to be a necessary duality and not a defect as R. N. Flew would lead one to believe. The validity of this judgment is confirmed in the 1757 publication of one of the longest of Wesley's essays titled "The Doctrine of Original Sin, according to Scripture, Reason, and Experience." This publication would surely not have been welcomed in the general social context of the time. James Downey comments, "To an age which prided itself on its progress and sophistication, talk of original sin seemed somehow uncouth, certainly irrelevant."[3] The essay was a rebuttal of John Taylor's The Doctrine of Original Sin which represented a revival of Pelagian thought in eighteenth-century England.

Wesley viewed John Taylor's scheme as none other than ". . . old Deism in a new dress . . ."[4] For the Methodist leader a ". . . denial of original sin contradicts the main design of the gospel . . ."[5] Original sin was viewed as a vital component in the operation of salvation. From the "Preface" to the essay Wesley stated, "If we are not diseased, we do not want a cure. If we are not sick, why should we seek for a medicine to heal our sickness?"[6] Sin was regarded primarily as an illness, or disease, needing a cure. Since sin was thusly regarded, it follows that salvation

would ". . . be seen primarily from a subjective-medical rather than an objective-judicial angle." [7] As Professor Lindström rightly concludes, "In this way sin is organically incorporated in a theology primarily determined by the idea of sanctification." [8]

Wesley's understanding of natural man reflected both his opposition to Deism and his acceptance of the tradition of the Church Fathers, especially Augustine. Natural man's total corruption was the result of original sin and Adam's fall. [9] The consequence of Adam's fall was death and inbred sin. [10] The mere prevalence of custom could not account for sin's presence. In taking this stance on sin Wesley was attacking John Taylor's theory and showing himself ". . . distinctly and strikingly at variance with the beliefs of the Enlightenment." [11] For Wesley as for Augustine original sin implied guilt. However, Wesley stated, "No other could be conscious of it as their sin, in the same sense as Adam and Eve were; and yet others may 'charge it upon themselves' in a different sense, so as to judge themselves 'children of wrath' on that account." [12] With this statement Wesley began to move a little distance from the strictly orthodox view to one influenced by the Moravians and akin to the Arminian view of election. By the atonement of Christ natural man was absolved from the guilt of original sin. The very soteriological element was set in motion by original sin. To deny such was to contradict ". . . the main design of the gospel, which is to humble vain man, and to ascribe to God's free grace, not man's free will, the whole of his salvation." [13]

One may be able to comprehend the objective fact of original sin for collective man; however, Wesley extended the conception to include the necessity of a conviction, or actual experiencing, of sin. He wrote, ". . . no man truly believes in Christ, till he is deeply convinced of his own

sinfulness, guiltiness, and helplessness. But this no man ever was, neither can be, who does not know he has a corrupt nature." [14] Following the Arminian strain the guilt was imputed and not personal. When actual sin incurring personal guilt was added to original guilt, then one had the full sense of guilt in the Wesleyan conception. Only by a personal choice was one liable to eternal damnation. [15] Original sin and personal sin remained intimately connected; however, only a personal choice could incur guilt in the full sense. [16] Through the strength of God's saving grace man could overcome the inclination to evil in original sin. If one chose not to follow God's saving grace, then he committed actual sin.

A further duality existed in personal sin. Actual transgressions of a known law of God were divided into inward sins and outward sins. The outward sin was the end product in a process of sinning. This notion has been previously observed in the sermon "The Great Privilege of Those That Are Born of God." Professor Lindström lists sins of omission as "negative inward sins." [17] He feels Wesley made a distinction between sins of omission and inward sins in the sermon "The Wilderness State." [18] It is felt the distinction is one of degrees and not of substance. Lindström does not take into consideration William Wollaston's influence on Wesley with regard to the notion of omissions.

Dangers always lurk in the darkness of duality. Striving for unity of thought man is constantly prone to accept a painted fire rather than the actual warmth of the real entity. In a letter to Thomas Olivers dated March 24, 1757, Wesley warned, "Barely to feel no sin, or to feel constant peace, joy, and love, will not prove [the attainment to Christian perfection]." [19] In the same letter he indicated such perfection ". . . implies salvation from all sin, inward and outward, into all holiness." [20] A gradual growth

in grace preceded the instantaneous giving of the gift. Could one fall away from this gift? Wesley's answer at this time was negative. [21] A few months prior to the publication of "The Doctrine of Original Sin, according to Scripture, Reason, and Experience" William Pitt had come to power in English politics. With his ascendancy came a heightened sense of morality. Persecution of the Methodists, although still evident, was not as severe as in former years.

Continuing his rebuttal of Dr. John Taylor's doctrine respecting original sin, Wesley preached his sermon "Original Sin" on February 1, 1758. [22] The sermon gave more stress to the fact of universal sin than to its origin. Wesley stated, "No man loves God by nature, any more than he does a stone, or the earth he treads upon." [23] For those who denied original sin, ". . . an outside religion, without any godliness at all, would suffice to all rational intents and purposes." [24] An "outward reformation" would be the only thing needful in this instance; however, for those who were convinced of original sin more was needed. Wesley described the need:

> Ye know that the great end of religion is, to renew our hearts in the image of God, to repair that total loss of righteousness and true holiness which we sustained by the sin of our first parent. [25]

The subjective-medical conception of sin and salvation is most evident in the sermon. Mr. Wesley admonished the sick, "Know your disease! Know your cure! Ye were born in sin: therefore . . . [be] born of God. By nature ye are wholly corrupted: by grace ye shall wholly be renewed." [26]

CONTENDING WITH THE DUALITY OF PERSONAL SIN

Many began professing the attainment of entire sanctification in the year 1758. Consequently, Wesley began promoting the doctrine in its own right rather than as a mere tool of reaction. The increased emphasis can be observed with his letter to Elizabeth Hardy dated April 5, 1758. The question addressed was Christian perfection. He was convinced it was attainable previous to death.[27] To attain perfection one did not need to expect it. At the annual Conference meeting in August the doctrine of entire sanctification was further discussed. The discussion had been precipitated by Elizabeth Hardy's letter. Following the Conference Wesley met with John Fletcher and other preachers spending ". . . a considerable time in close conversation on the head of Christian Perfection."[28] An agreement was concluded, and the description of the agreement was incorporated into Thoughts on Christian Perfection which was published in 1759 and included in A Plain Account of Christian Perfection.[29] For several days beginning November 4, 1758, Wesley was engaged in making a reply to charges brought against the Methodists by Potter's sermon "On the Pretended Inspiration of the Methodists." He had answered many such attacks. Wesley indicated in his reply that new birth did not mean any outward work but rather an inward working of the Holy Spirit. In this same year he published the remarkable volume titled A Preservation against Unsettled Notions in Religion as a help to his young preachers in guarding them against perverted doctrines. The first piece in this work was "An Extract of a Short and Easy Method with the Deists" by the avid pursuer of atheists Charles Leslie.[30] From 1758 for a period of a decade Thomas Secker was Archbishop of Canterbury. During this period one can detect a growing distrust

of the Methodists by the Church of England, Wesley was making a last effort to hold Methodism within the mother institution.

On the day of the public fast --- February 16, 1759 --- appointed due to a threatened French invasion, Wesley appropriately preached "On the Fall of Man." [31] He recognized, " '. . . Adam sinned in his heart before he sinned outwardly . . .' " following in proper order the dynamic process of actual sin. [32] Wesley reiterated that both mistakes and ignorance were a natural part of humanity's present state affirming the willful rebellion of Adam and the consequences of that rebellion. In the moment of Adam's rebellion man ". . . lost the moral image of God, and, in part, the natural: he commenced unholy, foolish, and unhappy . . ." entitling ". . . all his posterity to error, guilt, sorrow, fear, pain, diseases, and death." [33] This was the negative consequence. The glorious consequence of Adam's death was the showing forth of Christ's mercy. God spoke to the heart, and if one continually listened to "his inward voice," then he would be kept "from all dissipation." [34]

Wesley was indefatigable in promoting the process of holiness. In a letter to Lady Huntingdon on March 1, 1759, he wrote the following:

> . . . those who have but lately come into the harvest are led to think and speak more largely of justification, and the other principles of the doctrine of Christ. And it may be proper for them so to do. Yet we find a thirst after something farther. We want to sink deeper and rise higher in the knowledge of God our Saviour. We want all helps for walking closely with Him whom we have received, that we may the more speedily come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. [35]

Witnesses to entire sanctification were cropping up everywhere. At the yearly Conference held on August 8 and running for several days Wesley dealt more at length on the subject of Christian perfection. [36] Soon after

the Conference he published Thoughts on Christian Perfection.[37] The publication was a summary of what Wesley included and excluded in the concept of Christian perfection.[38] The thoughts expressed in the summary are not unfamiliar ones. Pure love remained the essence of Christian perfection which did not exclude various mistakes, ignorance, and infirmities. A mistake springing from love was not properly called a sin. One perfected in the love of Christ was in continual need of the merits of Christ due to the various mistakes, ignorance, and bodily infirmities derived from the natural consequence of original sin.[39] The point was a difficult one, and Wesley tried to better explain himself in the following statement:

> '. . . (1) Not only sin, properly so called (that is, a voluntary transgression of a known law), but sin, improperly so called (that is, an involuntary transgression of a divine law, known or unknown), needs the atoning blood. (2) I believe there is no such perfection in this life as excludes these involuntary transgressions, which I apprehend to be naturally consequent on the ignorance and mistakes inseparable from mortality. (3) Therefore, sinless perfection is a phrase I never use, lest I should seem to contradict myself. (4) I believe, a person filled with the love of God is still liable to these involuntary transgressions. (5) Such transgressions you may call sins, if you please: I do not, for the reasons above mentioned.[40]

Robert C. Monk in his comparison of Wesley's concept of Christian perfection with the Puritan author John Preston makes the following critical remark about the above scheme:

> It would be difficult to reconcile this concept of "involuntary transgression" with Wesley's own earlier criticism of a perfection which means only that a man does not willfully or habitually sin. . . . Surely voluntary and involuntary transgression is what is meant by willingly and unwillingly sinning.[41]

Professor Monk is referring to the sixth paragraph of Wesley's sermon Christian Perfection.[42] Is Monk's criticism valid? An affirmative answer

to this question might be ventured if one accepted an ambiguous text upon which to base a criticism, if one disregarded the context of Wesley's supposedly own criticism, if one had not recognized Wesley's own definitions regarding sin, and if one had little regard for the philosophical milieu in which Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification developed. It has been indicated earlier that Wesley was not primarily concerned in his sermon Christian Perfection with original sin. An involuntary transgression was the result of original sin. If one were cognizant of the influence William Wollaston had on Wesley in regards to sins of omission, then he would have a better understanding of Wesley's inclusion of sins of omission as sins in the proper sense. Has Monk confused an involuntary transgression with inward sin? It is felt Wesley was making a critical remark in the sixth paragraph of his sermon because he felt that one born of God neither committed outward nor inward sin. The context of his statement would seem to imply Wesley's concern for not including inward sin. The emphasis should not be placed on the willingness or unwillingness of the transgression but rather on the dialectical relation assumed between outward and inward sins. If this holds true, then Monk's criticism is misplaced. A danger Wesley's critics seem to ignore is that in attacking the dual conception of personal sin they tend to ignore the dialectical operation working between original sin and personal sin. It is doubtful that Monk's equating of an involuntary transgression with unwillingly sinning is entirely accurate. One could willingly commit an error in ignorance. For Wesley this would still be classified as an involuntary transgression. The Methodist leader continued his efforts to clarify the notion of an involuntary transgression by indicating, "Many mistakes may consist with pure love." [43] It was a difficult task to discern

who was saved from all sin. Wesley explained, "Nay, the mind itself may be deeply distressed . . . while the heart cleaves to God by perfect love, and the will is wholly resigned to Him." [44] The whole of scriptural perfection was to be expected at any moment before the article of death. Once attaining entire sanctification and all the thoughts and actions continued to be animated by love, the individual was free from fear.

French troops landed at Carrickfergus on February 21, 1760; however, Wesley was more preoccupied with another event which had its beginning at Otley on February 13. There the stream of the revival broke out of its banks and began to spread. Wesley reported in his Journal, " 'One received remission of sins; and three more believed God had cleansed them from all sin.' " [45] Christian perfection as an instantaneous, attainable experience was claiming more witnesses. On March 6, 1760, referring to two accounts of accomplished perfection, Wesley wrote the following in his Journal:

> Constant communion with God the Father and the Son fills their hearts with humble love. Now this is what I always did, and do now, mean by perfection. And this I believe many have attained, on the same evidence that I believe many are justified. [46]

A few days later on March 12 Wesley was examining those who claimed to have received the gift of entire sanctification. He reported the following:

> . . . they feel no inward sin; and to the best of their knowledge commit no outward sin . . . they see and love God every moment . . . they have constantly as clear a witness from God of sanctification as they have of justification. [47]

The Methodist leader was overjoyed by these accounts and proclaimed, "Let them afterward experience as much more as God pleases." [48]

While Wesley was at Bristol, the news of the sudden death of King George II was received.[49] With the accession of George III England gladly received an English King.[50] The French invasion and a King's death could not deter Wesley in his preaching Christian perfection. Intending to reject any notion of a static or "sinless" perfection, he wrote three sermons --- "Wandering Thoughts," "On Sin in Believers," and "The Repentance of Believers." "Wandering Thoughts" was first preached on November 30, 1760.[51] Wesley preached, "How many wanderings of thoughts may arise from those various associations of our ideas which are made entirely without our knowledge, and independently on our choice?"[52] Even the men of great wisdom and holiness could not break these associations. Wesley had borrowed the phrase "association of our ideas" from John Locke.[53] He then examined the question of which wandering thoughts were sinful and which were not. Those wandering thoughts were sinful which left no room in one's mind for God and tended to alienate the person from God. The thoughts brought on by weakness or disease could become sinful ". . . when they either produce or cherish and increase in us any sinful tempers . . . "[54] This clarification indicates the Wesleyan process of sin and remains within the definition of sin as entailing man's willful cooperation. It was when an individual gave way to the evil tempers and made them his own that personal sin properly so called occurred. However, those "unaccountable and involuntary associations of our ideas" which an individual did not willfully allow to take root in his mind were not inconsistent with perfect love. The origin of these wandering thoughts was original sin. Although the body remained corruptible, the Christian could expect absolute deliverance ". . . from all sinful wandering thoughts . . . All that are perfected in love are delivered from these; else they were not saved from sin."[55] At the sermon's close the hope

of final salvation from all sin, including original sin and personal sin, was expressed. The year is closed with a letter dated December 1 indicating the reasonableness of his notion of sanctification. "True religion," Wesley wrote, "is the highest reason. It is indeed wisdom, virtue, and happiness in one." [56]

Methodism was no "new discovery in religion" as some of its critics ridiculed. Wesley saw the Methodist movement with its stress on the process of salvation as ". . . the one old religion; as old as the Reformation, as old as Christianity, as old as Moses, as old as Adam." [57] In the discernment of the many heart-felt accounts of a living doctrine, especially in the period from 1759 to 1764, and in the process of explaining an old metaphor --- entire sanctification --- in a new day, Wesley was promoting a doctrine that had grown from an unproductive soil into the freshness of creativity. Such creativity filled his letters and Journal. At Manchester he ". . . met the believers, and strongly exhorted them to 'go on unto perfection.' . . . they all received it in love; and a flame was kindled . . ." [58] The flame spread like a wild range fire with the Methodist leader fanning it with his preaching ". . . the three grand scriptural doctrines --- Original Sin, Justification by Faith, and Holiness consequent thereon . . ." [59]

In the midst of all the joy of salvation Wesley still found himself contending over his doctrine of sin and explaining the "grand scriptural doctrines." In a letter to John Hosmer dated June 7, 1761, he was answering questions regarding transgressions of the perfect law and whether or not sin's definition as a voluntary transgression of a known law was proper. [60] On the very day Wesley made his reply to Hosmer, Rev. George Horne was preaching before Oxford University a sermon titled "Works wrought through Faith a Condition of our Justification" in which the preacher's goal was to

demonstrate justification was by faith and works operating together. The thoughts in the sermon demanding Wesley's attention were the identification of Methodism with antinomianism and the alienation of the doctrine justification by faith alone from the Church of England. George Horne was highly esteemed by Wesley, and it was with reluctance he replied to a man regarded as generally sympathetic to the Methodist movement. A Letter to the Rev. Mr. Horne: Occasioned by his late Sermon Preached before the University of Oxford gave a concise summary of theological views.[61] The attack was begun by scolding Rev. Horne for not reading A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion. Wesley had already spent a great portion of his life refuting antinomianism. Horne should have been aware of this fact. The second objection to Horne's sermon was answered by a review of the Church's Articles of Faith and the following statement:

> As earnestly therefore as our Church inculcates justification by faith alone, she nevertheless supposes repentance to be previous to faith, and 'fruits meet for repentance'; yea, and universal holiness to be previous to final justification . . .[62]

He backed his argument with references to the Church Fathers and the Bible. "It is living faith whereby St. Paul affirms we are justified; it is dead faith whereby St. James affirms we are not justified."[63] Both Paul and James affirmed for Wesley the process of sanctification. It was only when either saint's doctrine was taken in static isolation from the other did they seem to be contradictory.

GRACE DOES MUCH MORE ABOUND

On July 13, 1761, Wesley was engaged with a Mr. Grimshaw in smoothing over the difficulties derived from the term "sinless perfection."

A few days later Wesley was teaching the continual need of God's grace due to bodily imperfection. At Seacroft and Otley he found many saying God had saved them from sin. All the persons with whom he had a conversation regarding their profession of salvation still felt a need for the atoning blood of Christ. Wesley preached a faith he considered the remedy for the plague of Deism.[64] The remedy was pouring forth from its bottle, and by November, in order to keep a full stock in supply, he was preparing his Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection. Wesley observed in his Journal:

> I retired again to Lewisham, and wrote Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection. Had the cautions given herein been observed, how much scandal had been prevented! And why were they not? Because my own familiar friend [Thomas Maxfield] was even now forming a party against me.[65]

Serious trouble was in the offing for 1762-1763 precipitated by Thomas Maxfield and George Bell; however, before the waters were muddied by these figures, Wesley was disseminating his Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection.

Wesley warned human reason had been negatively affected by the fact of original sin. Due to this circumstance it was just as natural for a man to make mistakes as it was for him to breathe. In the "room of angelic perfection" God had substituted love. He wrote, " "The foundation is faith, purifying the heart; the end, love, preserving a good conscience." "[66] Man was warned even the most holy were still in need of Christ because God gave the light only on a moment to moment basis. " "Is then, the term sinless perfection proper? " "[67] Wesley felt, " "It is not worth disputing about." "[68] Once justified the individual continued his growth in the process leading to final salvation. Temptation continued to be a problem even for the person saved from sin; however, this temptation was derived from original sin. How

could one know he was sanctified, or saved from the inbred corruption? The answer was given in the following:

> '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. Indeed, the witness of sanctification is not always clear at first (as neither is that of justification). . .' [69]

And when a person was entirely sanctified, could he sin again? " "They who are sanctified, yet may fall and perish . . ." " [70] So from the moment of justification they need to " ". . . gradually die to sin and grow in grace, till, ... God perfects them in love." " [71] For most people, but not all, entire sanctification occurred at or a little before the moment of death. The work of entire sanctification was accomplished at God's own pace, and therefore, one could ". . . affirm the work is gradual, another it is instantaneous, without any manner of contradiction." " [72] In closing his Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection Wesley reaffirmed that those who attained Christian perfection still grew in grace, and in asking, " "Can they fall from it?" " answered, " "Formerly we thought, one saved from sin could not fall; now we know the contrary. . . . There is no such height or strength of holiness as it is impossible to fall from"," unless decreed by God. [73] Could one fallen from the state of entire sanctification regain it? Many lost it more than once in their lives and were yet re-established in it.

The revival Wesley was witnessing in the communities he visited from 1759 through 1763 he deemed the greatest contemporary work of God on the earth; however, in the baptismal waters of purity Wesley could recognize the oil of human weakness. " "That there have been a few weak, warm-headed men, is no reproach to the work itself; no just ground for accusing a multitude of sober-minded men, who are patterns of strict holiness." " [74] The year 1761

had been an eventful one and, in spite of the illnesses of his brother Charles and his beloved friend George Whitefield, a joyful one. The year had also witnessed the passing of another Wesley mentor. William Law died on April 9.[75] By the beginning of 1762 through October of the same year the revival had reached its high water mark with the preaching of Christian perfection its primary feature. The people were desirous and earnest ". . . not to be almost, but altogether, Christians."[76] It was a time of great happiness and holiness. Contention over the doctrine and its various terms became secondary to the actual experience of receiving entire sanctification. Writing to Jenny Lee on June 7 Wesley said, ". . . be not careful about this or that name for the blessing you have received. Do not reason one moment what to call it, whether perfection or anything else."[77] The flame continued to increase with many reports of those being perfected in love.[78] No sign of "whimsical or enthusiastic persons" was apparent at this time to the leader of the revival.[79]

Wesley, unlike the great majority of his twentieth-century heirs, considered the preaching of Christian perfection vital to growth in grace.

> The more I converse with the believers in Cornwall, the more I am convinced that they have sustained great loss for want of hearing the doctrine of Christian Perfection clearly and strongly enforced. I see, wherever this is not done, the believers grow dead and cold. Nor can this be prevented, but by keeping up in them an hourly expectation of being perfected in love. I say an hourly expectation; for to expect it at death, or some time hence, is much the same as not expecting it at all.[80]

On the same day as the above Journal notation he wrote two letters --- one to Dorothy Furly and the other to Samuel Furly --- attempting to clarify entire sanctification. He spoke against the absolute sense of Christian perfection. The perfection he taught was all love and ". . . consistent with

a thousand nervous disorders, which that high-strained perfection is not." [81] Since trouble was beginning to brew with Thomas Maxfield and George Bell, Wesley was becoming more and more reluctant, or perhaps irritable, to argue for terms he had explained countless number of times. Despite his growing consternation he could express the "day of Pentecost" had "fully come." He reported, ". . . accordingly we did hear of persons sanctified . . . as frequently as of persons justified . . ." [82]

REVOLT IN THE RANKS:
A CASE OF FAILURE TO RECOGNIZE THE DIALECTICAL RELATION

In November of 1762 disregard for the dialectical relation between faith and reason, sin and salvation in the London Methodist society had grown to such an extent as to promote not only full-blown pride and confusion, but also that pitfall against which Wesley had striven so diligently to defend Methodism --- "enthusiasm." The rats in the cupboard were Maxfield and Bell. Colin Williams intimates the duality existing in Wesley's conception of sin resulted in the serious split precipitated by Maxfield and Bell causing the considerable confusion over the doctrine of entire sanctification among the adherents to Methodism. [83] Both culprits began proclaiming an absolute perfection. Trouble had been in the works for a considerable period. [84] Traveling from Bristol and arriving in London on October 29, 1762, Wesley found the London society in an uproar. [85] Reflecting on what he had observed, Wesley immediately wrote what he liked and disliked about the Maxfield-Bell interpretation of doctrine. [86] The only thing he liked about their interpretation was what he could discern of his own explanations of entire sanctification. He disliked the following:

> . . . supposing man may be as perfect as an angel; that he can be absolutely perfect; that he can be infallible, or above being tempted; or that the moment he is pure in heart, he cannot fall from it. . . . directly or indirectly depreciating justification . . . [87]

The list continued. He disliked ". . . saying that one saved from sin needs nothing more than looking to Jesus . . . needs no self-examination . . . needs not mind little or outward things . . ." [88] He disliked the appearance of pride, enthusiasm, antinomianism, and most of all the ". . . littleness of love to your brethren, to your own society . . ." [89] Wesley closed his list by reproving their outward behavior. When there exists a bright light in one area of a field, surely great darkness prevails elsewhere on that same field. The dialectical relationship between sin and grace was working itself out in actual experience. [90]

While Maxfield and Bell were busy fanning the flames of enthusiasm, Wesley was witnessing the death of that "burning and shining light" --- Jane Cooper. [91] Trouble within the Methodist ranks did not deter Wesley's usual pastoral duties including his care for Jane Cooper or his tiresome occupation of answering attacks on himself and his doctrine. Wesley became engaged in answering an attack from the preponderant and abusive Bishop William Warburton. To say the least Warburton was an incredibly arrogant man relying mainly on words rather than facts in his arguments. Bishop Warburton had just published his two-volume work attacking both freethinkers and religious enthusiasts --- The Doctrine of Grace: or, the Office and Operations of the Holy Spirit vindicated from the insults of infidelity and the abuse of fanaticism. Wesley and the Methodists were once again charged with enthusiasm. The attack could not have come at a more inappropriate moment. While dealing with actual enthusiasm within the London Methodist

society, Wesley was being charged with enthusiasm from outside the fold by one who held great authority. The Methodist leader had the distinction of receiving one of the most vehement of Warburton's polemical writings. As was the case with other critics the Bishop had not read Wesley's explanations of his doctrine and seemed merely content to indulge in the peculiar eighteenth-century sport of ridicule. Wesley thought his opponent's intellectual integrity questionable.[92] For a few days beginning on November 26 Wesley employed himself in answering Warburton.

The Methodist leader laid hold to the charge of enthusiasm by saying he did not separate reason from the service of religion. He claimed he was neither an enemy to reason nor natural religion as Warburton had contended in quoting from his Journal entry dated July 9, 1739. The entry had alluded to William Wollaston's The Religion of Nature delineated. The issue was clarified when Wesley said the Journal notation was referring to "men's natural manners" rather than to a "system of principles." The former " ". . . flow from their natural passions and appetites", with that degree of reason which they have. And this, in other instances, is not contemptible; though it is not sufficient to teach them true religion."[93] The reply was closed with a long quotation from his own "A Letter to the Reverend Dr. Conyers Middleton, occasioned by his late Free Inquiry" for the purpose of demonstrating ". . . whether I represent religion as a reasonable service . . ."[94] The letter to the Bishop of Gloucester was published in the early portion of 1763.

With the answer to the Bishop completed Wesley returned to the issues surrounding the London society fiasco. Trying to remedy the misunderstanding he attempted to show ". . . in what sense sanctification is gradual, and in what sense it is instantaneous . . ."[95] For those persons authentically

renewed in love Wesley advised they constantly beware against pride, enthusiasm, antinomianism, sins of omission, desire of anything but God, and schism. George Bell began foretelling the coming end of the world. This Wesley could not abide, and he took great pains without results to convince Bell of his mistakes. The straw breaking the camel's back came on January 25, 1763, when a Mrs. Coventry interrupted a meeting at which Wesley was present saying, ". . . Mr. M.[axfield] preached Perfection, but Mr. W.[esley] pulled it down." [96] Wesley wryly admitted, "So I did, that perfection of . . . G. Bell, and all who abetted them. So the breach is made! The water is let out. Let those who can, gather it up." [97] On February 4 George Bell left the Methodist society.

Wearied from the struggle with the Methodist enthusiasts, Wesley retired on March 28, 1763, to the home of his good firend Ebenezer Blackwell in Lewisham and wrote the sermon "Sin in Believers" so as ". . . to remove a mistake which some were labouring to propagate, --- that there is no sin in any that are justified." [98] Original sin remained a fact in the believer. The whole Christian tradition declared this fact; however, lately, as Wesley witnessed, there had been those in the London society who had not recognized such teachings. He could not hold that the believer had no sin in his heart. Sin remained in the flesh at justification. A "natural tendency to evil" resided in the human heart; however, Christ ". . . <u>is</u> and <u>dwells</u> in the heart of every believer, who is <u>fighting against</u> all sin; although it be not yet purified, according to the purification of the sanctuary." [99] Experience validated this fact. Human hearts could be "truly" but not "entirely" renewed. Between the two points of justification and entire sanctification was the dynamic process of sanctification. The carnal mind might be "truly" nailed to the Cross; but, it was not "entirely"

destroyed.[100] If the nails of the Cross gave way and a propensity for sin was willingly indulged, then the individual incurred guilt. Unregenerate men obeyed sin while the believer did not. "Having sin does not forfeit the favour of God; giving way to sin does."[101] These arguments have been observed in different form previous to this time.

Thomas Maxfield did not heed the teachings of his mentor, and on April 28 he left the London society. Wesley commented, "So the breach is made; but I am clear. I have done all I possibly could to prevent it."[102] It was a sad and discouraging moment for Wesley and for Methodism. The consequences of the London fiasco were far-reaching.[103] On June 7, 1763, he wrote in his Journal:

> The wildness of our poor brethren in London has put it [i. e., the doctrine of Christian perfection] out of countenance above two hundred miles off; so these strange advocates for perfection have given it a deeper wound than all its enemies together could do![104]

And again on October 2 he recorded:

> All this week I endeavoured to confirm those who had been shaken as to the important doctrine of Christian Perfection, either by its wild defenders, or wise opposers, who much availed themselves of that wildness.[105]

The revival begun in 1759 had fairly sputtered out. The darkness of duality could not be tolerated by many of Wesley's contemporaries. In a letter to Mrs. Maitland on May 12, 1763, he repeated what he had said many times previously. "Sinless perfection? Neither do I contend for this, seeing the term is not scriptural."[106] Wesley argued against absolute or infallible perfection. R. N. Flew believes, "It is difficult to reconcile his statements on this point."[107] It may be difficult, but not impossible if one

carefully observes the dynamics of a dialectical relationship operating not only between reasonable concepts, but also in the actual life process of those concepts. Is the work of salvation an easy and uncomplicated task? The theologian assigns himself/herself a complex task in discerning all the nuances of a dynamic process known as sanctification. To an average parishioner it is a simple task of "loving God with all our heart, and serving Him with all our strength." [108] Wesley was both a pastor and a theologian who could live in the darkness of duality without willfully succumbing to the temptation to make a run for the light.

DEVELOPMENT COMPLETED AND THE SOIL TO BE TENDED

Christian doctrine is most often formed in the crucible of crisis and controversy into which is poured a prophet or a preacher from the great bowl of God to give nourishment and health to his people. Such a preacher and his doctrine are at times too heady for those not acquainted with the higher reaches of the theological atmosphere. This proved to be the case for those following after Thomas Maxfield and George Bell. The doctrinal mixture was too potent. The London fiasco left Wesley with a diminished flock frightened of the doctrine of entire sanctification. What could Wesley do but continue to preach. On April 4, 1764, he recorded in his Journal, "I explained at large the nature of Christian Perfection. Many who had doubted of it before were fully satisfied. It remains only to experience what we believe." [109] On March 30 Wesley had met with sixty persons professing salvation from all sin. On examination of these people he could find no evidence of "London enthusiasm." [110] At this time he preached "The Scripture Way of Salvation." [111] The scripture text was the same as his Oxford sermon "Salvation by Faith"; however, the treatment of it

was quite different due to the passage of several years and the contemporary concerns generated by the Maxfield-Bell trouble. Salvation was described as not something distant but rather close at hand. The process of salvation was very carefully delineated. Justification, or pardon, marked the beginning of sanctification. Through the experiencing an actual change in one's life, it became natural for the individual to imagine all their sin had vanished, that it was indeed taken completely from their heart. But at this point in the process sin was merely "suspended" and not destroyed. "From the time of our being born again, the gradual work of sanctification takes place." [112] Wesley made a clear distinction in his sermon between the terms "entire sanctification" and "perfection." Previously the distinction had not been noted, and the two terms had been used synonymously. Now he separated the terms for the purpose of defining the process. He preached:

> . . . It is thus that we wait for entire sanctification; for a full salvation from all our sins, --- from pride, self-will, anger, unbelief; or, as the Apostle expresses it, "go on unto perfection." But what is perfection? The word has various senses: here it means perfect love. It is love excluding sin; love filling the heart, taking up the whole capacity of the soul. [113]

Entire sanctification was then the first moment experienced in the process of Christian perfection. Wesley was trying to point out the following idea as expressed by Andrew Hodgson in the twentieth century:

> . . . truth must be seen not as knowledge securely discovered, nor as confidently possessed, but as that which for ever beckons us to its discovery; and when we make our discoveries, they prove not to be secure resting places, but merely signposts pointing out new directions to be explored. [114]

Faith remained the only condition of both justification and sanctification.

Wesley was careful to warn, "There is no place for repentance in him who believes there is no sin either in his life or heart: consequently, there is no place for his being perfected in love, to which that repentance is indispensably necessary." [115] Entire sanctification was both instantaneous and gradual, attainable by faith at any moment. It was this faith Wesley continued to declare in the midst of all the misunderstanding surrounding it.

Wesley had a long list of correspondents. When they wrote him for advice, the Methodist leader endeavored to recommend a course of action that would result in their maintaining a proper balance between faith and reason. To a Margaret Lewen he recommended Locke's An Essay concerning Human Understanding, [116] and to Miss J. C. March he warned not to carry perfection too high unless it should be destroyed. [117] An enlightened reason was vital to Wesley. [118] The proper use of reason would have prevented the extravagant imagination indulged by George Bell. Some of the difficulties and misunderstandings were recognized to have originated from the tendency in human beings to form ". . . general rules from our own particular experience." [119] While the individual believer was confined in his own experience and the experiences of his primary group, Wesley had observed and questioned many experiences of salvation from all sin. The doctrine of Christian perfection had a broader conception than many in a xenophobic community would permit.

The doctrine as believed and taught by Wesley from 1725 to 1765 was summarized in the closing pages of A Plain Account of Christian Perfection. [120] The summary was given in eleven short propositions. Wesley began first with the proposition that perfection was scriptural, and then proceeded to indicate it did not occur as early as justification or as late

as death. It was not absolute or infallible. He wrote, " "Is it sinless? It is not worth while to contend for a term. It is 'salvation from sin.' " "[121] The essence of Christian perfection was a perfect love capable of improvement. "It is so far from lying in an indivisible point, from being incapable of increase, that one perfected in love may grow in grace far swifter than he did before."[122] Although Wesley admitted he was not thoroughly convinced some five or six years previously that Christian perfection could be lost, he was now. A gradual growth came before and after entire sanctification. As there was an instant when a man took his last breath and died, likewise there was such an instantaneous moment when sin ceased.[123] All preachers under Wesley's direction were admonished to preach perfection, and all believers were to constantly attend to its process. These demands are evident all through his letters and Journal entries. As he traveled throughout the land, he learned of the damage precipitated by the trouble with Maxfield and Bell.[124] He continued to insist on Christian perfection. He wrote, ". . . wherever this is not done, be the Preachers ever so eloquent, there is little increase, either in the number or the grace of the hearers."[125] The speed of his proclamation was slowed only by a serious fall on his horse on December 18, 1765. Wesley was filled with the holy purpose of preaching the doctrine of entire sanctification and proceeded on his way by coach. With the publication of A Plain Account of Christian Perfection on January 31, 1766, one has the most complete statement of the doctrine's development.[126] What was left to be accomplished? The soil into which the seed had been sown needed proper cultivating and tending. The man with the hoe remained the faithful Mr. John Wesley.

Again in London Wesley once more ". . . began a course of sermons

on Christian Perfection; if haply that thirst after it might return which was so general a few years ago." [127] The garden he tended contained a particularly rich soil which seemed to nourish just as many weeds as legitimate doctrine. Few persons were ". . . agonizing to be altogether Christians." [128] On April 4, 1767, Wesley wrote "The Witness of the Spirit --- Discourse II" more as a treatise than as a sermon. [129] One of the sermon's purposes was to confirm perfection's validity by the experience of those multitudes claiming its attainment. Wesley wrote, "Experience is sufficient to confirm a doctrine which is grounded on Scripture." [130] Although many might have fallen into the pit of enthusiasm, no one could deny the fact that many had authentically experienced entire sanctification in their personal lives. How did one know whether or not an experience was genuine? Wesley answered, "The true witness of the Spirit is known by its fruit . . . following it." [131] Twenty days later his sermon "The Repentance of Believers" was written. [132] The garden cultivator indicated two degrees of repentance. One was prior to justification, and the other was found in the process of sanctification. "And this repentance and faith are full as necessary, in order to our continuance and growth in grace, as the former faith and repentance were, in order to our entering into the kingdom of God." [133] At justification the power of sin was broken; however, sin did remain in the believer although he might not immediately perceive it. Convincing oneself of this fact was "one great branch" of the repentance necessary for growth in grace. Wesley wrote, ". . . a conviction of all this sin remaining in their hearts is the repentance which belongs to them that are justified." [134] In order to attain the cure, one had to first know the disease. God was the Great Physician who could save one from all sin. If a continual growth in faith occurred, then the cure would take effect,

and the individual would be cleansed from all indwelling sin and all guilt. Repentance and faith respectively represented the negative and positive elements in the process of sanctification. Without the repentance following the moment of justification the sanctification process could not be implemented. "Hence it is, that those believers who are not convinced of the deep corruption of their hearts, or but slightly, and, as it were, notionally convinced, have little concern about entire sanctification." [135] A mere rational assent to some proposition would not implement the process.

As he approached the time for the yearly Conference, Wesley's conviction grew toward the insistance on the preachers earnestly promoting Christian perfection. Evidently the issue was not settled at this Conference of 1767 for Wesley wrote to his brother Charles on May 14, 1768, "I am at my wits' end with regard to two things --- the Church and Christian Perfection. Unless both you and I stand in the gap in good earnest, the Methodists will drop them both." [136] The battles among the preachers over the doctrine had tired him, and a month later in apparent exasperation he wrote another letter to Charles asking, "Shall we go on in asserting perfection against all the world? Or shall we quietly let it drop?" [137] The issue was still not settled at the Conference of 1768; [138] however, in his letter to Laurence Coughlan on August 27 his tone was positive. He said, "Blessed be God, though we set an hundred enthusiasts aside, we are still "encompassed with a cloud of witnesses," who have testified, and do testify, in life and in death, that perfection which I have taught these forty years!" [139] The perfection Wesley had taught all those years could not have been a delusion unless the Bible was a delusion. Again, by perfection he meant ". . ."loving God with all our heart and our neighbour as ourselves." I pin down all its opposers to this definition of it. No evasion! No shifting the question! . . .

Either you received this love or you did not . . ." [140] The doctrine was simply too much a part of his life to simply drop it quietly. But the weeds continued to grow for Wesley's hoe. Inattentiveness and evil reasoning could choke the gift of sanctification. [141] A constant watchfulness was necessary to prevent any unwanted growth such as promoted by temptation. [142] One was to strive continually for the goal. In a letter to John Fletcher on March 20, 1768, he wrote, "I seldom find it profitable for me to converse with any who are not athirst for perfection and who are not big with earnest expectation of receiving it every moment." [143].

SPEAKING AGAIN TO THE MEN OF RELIGION

By the year 1770 mob violence against Wesley's preaching had ceased, and the signs of acceptance and respectability for the Methodists and their leader were becoming more evident. Wesley's concerns were now turned to securing Methodism's place within the religious heritage either as a movement of the Church of England or as a denomination outside the Church's boundaries. The Calvinists would be a major source of trouble in the last portion of Wesley's ministry, and as a result he would call upon his old friend reason to counterbalance the men of religion and faith. On March 6, 1769, while on the road between preaching engagements, he ". . . read over Dr. Campbell's excellent answer to David Hume's insolent book against miracles . . . " [144] His interest in the philosophers had not diminished. Although he disagreed with many of their statements using the eighteenth-century method of ridicule, Wesley could not deny their use of reason when confronted with the excesses of the religious. In the area of affirming the importance of experience David Hume was more of an ally than an enemy. At the same time Wesley continued to promote the cause of

Christian perfection to counterbalance the arguments of both the men of reason [145] and the not so reasonable. Unbalanced thought plagued the Methodist leader. In February of 1770 he was confronted by Thomas Maxfield over the doctrine of perfection while on a visit to the Countess of Huntingdon's mansion. He also reported a preacher leaving the fold because the Methodists attended church and professed entire sanctification. Although the difficulties persisted, the witnesses to entire sanctification were ever-present. The doctrine continued to be preached. He wrote to Mrs. Bennis on July 27, 1770, "Nothing is more clear, according to the plain Bible account, than sanctification, pure love reigning in the heart and life." [146]

The yearly Conference began on August 7, 1770. Taking great offense to the Conference "Minutes" the chaplains of the Countess of Huntingdon sparked the smoldering Calvinist controversy. [147] Whatever rapprochement existed previous to this time was shattered by the doctrinal "Minutes" of 1770 published simultaneously with the death of George Whitefield on September 30, 1770. The "Minutes" indicated the Methodists had leaned too much toward Calvinism in receiving the following maxim:

> . . . that 'a man is to do nothing in order to justification.' Nothing can be more false. . . . Does not talking of a justified or sanctified <u>state</u> tend to mislead men? almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every hour or every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, 'according to our works'; --- according to the whole of our inward tempers, and our outward behaviour. [148]

The storm center of the controversy was the doctrine of Christian perfection, in particular the active ethical implications of the doctrine. Entire sanctification would be no terminal point for the Methodists. The controversy was a bitter one. Professor Cell gives an adequate interpretation in the

following statement:

> It appears . . . that the Calvinists may have had a true impression of Wesley's Catholic leanings in the doctrine of Christian Perfection as the Anglican Arminians may have had a true impression of his Calvinistic leanings in the doctrine of sin and salvation by faith. [149]

At this juncture John Fletcher assumed the major burden of arguing Wesley's position with his Checks to Antinomianism completed in 1775 including as the Last Check the Treatise on Christian Perfection. [150] In The Last Check to Antinomianism Fletcher wrote, " 'Perfection!' Why should that word frighten us? Is it not common and plain?" [151] Wesley had spent his life trying to convey the scriptural plainness of this common term.

Over the next several years Wesley preached to thousands the possibility of their deliverance from the "inbred enemy" using the terms "sanctification," "Christian perfection," and "entire sanctification" synonymously. [152] The essence of entire sanctification remained love. In a letter to Walter Churchey on February 21, 1771, he wrote:

> Entire sanctification, or Christian perfection, is neither more nor less than pure love --- love expelling sin and governing both the heart and life of a child of God. The Refiner's fire purges out all that is contrary to love . . . [153]

The dialectical relation between sin and salvation continued in operation. On his way to Ireland he reminded John Fletcher, "I always did . . . clearly assert the total fall of man, and his utter inability to do any good of himself . . ." [154] Sin in the proper sense remained a voluntary transgression of a known law of God. He explained to Miss March, in a letter dated May 31, 1771:

> . . . though it be true all sin is a transgression of this [Adamic] law, yet it is by no means true on the other hand (though we have so often taken it for granted) that all transgressions of this law are sin: no, not at all --- only all voluntary transgressions of it; none else are sins against the gospel law. [155]

With this in mind Wesley encouraged all believers to go on to full salvation. [156] This was the same old doctrine based on the interacting authorities of the Bible, experience, and reason. [157] Although there was an optimistic tone conveyed in his pastoral letters of guidance, advice, and explanation, Wesley was concerned for the survival of the doctrine --- that it should not be set unrealistically high; [158] that it be constantly pressed upon the believers so they could grow in grace; [159] and that it was attainable any time prior to death. [160] In a letter to Charles dated March 25, 1772, the concern was expressed in these words:

> I find almost all our Preachers, in every Circuit, have done with Christian perfection. They say, they believe it: But they never preach it; or not once in a quarter. What is to be done? Shall we let it drop, or make a point of it? [161]

In the middle of serious illness, concern with the poor, and excitement over the overt rebellion of the American colonists in 1773 Wesley continued to make a point of Christian perfection. Of all the enemies he encountered, it seemed the Calvinist Christians, or men of religion, were the most bitter. In September of 1772 he had launched a counterattack with "Some Remarks on Mr. Hill's 'Review of All the Doctrines Taught by Mr. John Wesley.' " The battle was fought against absolute predestination. The Methodist leader emphatically claimed he had never believed it or anything connected with it. Again great pains were taken to argue regarding the term "sinless perfection." The fight was carried on against the men of religion in March of 1773 with

"Some Remarks on Mr. Hill's 'Farrago Double-Distilled.' " Wesley's concept of sin was repeated, and he admitted although he once felt individuals could not fall from Christian perfection, ". . . for ten or twelve years I have been fully convinced, that even these may make 'shipwreck of the faith.' " [162] Such arguments promoted frustration and weariness to the point where on December 15, 1772, he wrote to his brother, "Let me be again an Oxford Methodist! I am often in doubt whether it would not be best for me to resume all my Oxford rules, great and small. I did then walk closely with God, and redeem the time." [163]

SPEAKING AGAIN TO THE MEN OF REASON

As an antidote to the Calvinists it seems Wesley almost instinctively turned to reading the men of reason. This is not a surprising pattern but rather typical of a person living in the darkness of duality and constantly having to adjust the balance mechanism in the dialectical relation of concepts. The Journal entry for May 5, 1772, demonstrates his continued interest in the philosophical arguments:

> . . . I read over in my journey Dr. Beattie's ingenious Inquiry after Truth. He is a writer quite equal to his subject, and far above the match of all the 'minute philosophers,' David Hume in particular --- the most insolent despiser of truth and virtue that ever appeared in the world. . . . [Hume] is an avowed enemy to God and man, and to all that is sacred and valuable upon earth. [164]

While traveling to Luton on December 17, 1772, he read Francis Hutcheson's An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense first published in 1728. Wesley commented, "He is a beautiful writer, but his scheme cannot stand unless the Bible falls. I know both from Scripture, reason, and experience that his picture of man

is not drawn from the life."[165] Hutcheson painted a too virtuous picture of mankind for a Wesley steeped in the doctrine of original sin.

With the writing and publication in 1774 of Thoughts upon Necessity and A Thought on Necessity Wesley entered, according to Albert Outler, as deeply as he ever did into the mysterious realm of speculative theology.[166] The occasion for these publications was the Calvinist controversy and the vigorous debate among several British philosophers over the issue of necessity and liberty. What concerned Wesley was the implication for orthodox religion derived from the deterministic theories being promulgated by David Hume, Jonathan Edwards, David Hartley, and Lord Kames. Here an obvious connection between the British philosophers and Wesley's conception of sin exists. Wesley held Lord Kames in his "Essay on Liberty and Necessity," in Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion first published in 1751, had painted the most complete picture of the theory of the universal necessity of human actions. He succinctly summarized Lord Kames' theory in the following statement:

> This universe is a vast machine, winded up and set a-going. The several springs and wheels act unerringly one upon another. The hand advances and the clock strikes, precisely as the Artist has determined. In this plan, man, a rational creature, was to fulfill certain ends.[167]

Wesley proceeded to refute this theory by attacking not only Lord Kames' work but also Jonathan Edwards in his Freedom of the Will published in 1754 and David Hartley in his Observations on Man: His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations published in 1749. The Methodist leader wrote, "In this they all agree, that man is not a free but a necessary agent, being absolutely determined in all his actions by a principle exterior to himself."[168] A refutation of this theory had to be made in order not to

collapse the whole of his theology. He argued:

> If all the passions, the tempers, the actions of men, are wholly independent on their own choice, are governed by a principle exterior to themselves, then there can be no moral good or evil; their can be neither virtue nor vice, neither good nor bad actions, neither good nor bad passions or tempers. The sun does much good; but it is no virtue; but he is not capable of moral goodness. Why is he not? For this plain reason, because he does not act from choice. [169]

Freedom was essential to the religious system; otherwise, one could not be found guilty and in need of salvation. [170] Necessity killed the concept of voluntary action, and consequently, the definition of sin properly so-called involving culpability. Man must be held accountable for a willful transgression. A person could not be held answerable for actions that ". . . proceeded from nothing in him that is durable and constant, and leave nothing of that nature behind them. . . ." [171] Wesley rejected the side of the debate which denied all culpability on the part of man while accepting the position that man could not be held accountable for actions performed out of ignorance or casually. [172] Wesley as well as David Hume had seen the dangers involved in the theory of the universal necessity of human actions. Wesley called it, ". . . a doctrine totally inconsistent with the scriptural doctrines of a future judgment, heaven and hell, strikes hereby at the very foundation of Scripture, which must necessarily stand or fall with them." [173] David Hume would have replied, ". . . it is not certain that an opinion is false, because it is of dangerous consequence." [174] This whole debate is a topic within itself, and it is felt sufficient merely to expose that portion which seems to add proof to the thesis of this paper. It would appear both Wesley and Hume arrived at a similar conclusion regarding the use of reason. [175] They had different purposes and argued from different directions.

Both knew the limits of reason with Hume relying more exclusively on experience than Wesley. The argument for Wesley dissolved into a total reliance on the creative will of God while Hume found the argument beyond the power of philosophy.

Affinities exist between Wesley's argument in Thoughts upon Necessity and Thomas Reid's attack on Hume's premises.[176] The Journal entry for May 31, 1774, indicates Wesley was reading Thomas Reid with a resulting mixture of ridicule and delight.[177] Wesley's whole foray into the area of debate over necessity and liberty was prompted by a concern over the motive power of his doctrine of entire sanctification; namely, his conception of sin as a voluntary transgression of a known law of God which incurred guilt. Through his Thoughts upon Necessity and A Thought on Necessity he was able to speak not only to the men of reason but also to the men of religion in a refutation of both Calvinism's doctrine of absolute predestination and Deism in their common link in the philosophical concept of necessity. The developmental tasks in the doctrine of entire sanctification had come to full maturity. The doctrine was an antidote to what Wesley perceived as the poison of the period --- Deism and its theological parallel in Calvinism.

FOOTNOTES

1. Gerald R. Cragg agrees with Flew here (Cf. Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century, p. 171). For another discussion of this argument the reader is referred to Staples, pp. 265-270.

2. Such an attempt at dating is most difficult, and in many instances one is able to determine only an approximate date.

3. Downey, p. 190.

4. Quoted from Wesley's "Preface" to the essay on original sin written on November 30, 1756, and found in Works (1978), IX, pp. 193-194.

5. Works (1978), IX, p. 429. In the "Preface" Wesley stated, "If, therefore, we take away this foundation, that man is by nature foolish and sinful. . . . the Christian system falls at once . . ." (Ibid., p. 194).

6. Ibid.

7. Lindström, p. 41.

8. Ibid., p. 44.

9. Cf. Wesley's notes for Romans 6:6 in John Wesley, Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament (London: Epworth Press, 1976), p. 540.

10. Cf. Wesley's notes for Romans 5:12 and 14 in ibid., pp. 537-538.

11. Lindström, p. 26.

12. Works (1978), IX, p. 243.

13. Ibid., p. 429.

14. Ibid., p. 313.

15. Wesley wrote, ". . . for not one child of man finally loses thereby, unless by his own choice . . ." (Ibid., p. 332). In the same essay Wesley commented, "I believe none ever did, or ever will, die eternally, merely for the sin of our first father." (Ibid., p. 315).

16. Colin Williams gives warning regarding this conception for the modern day (Cf. Williams, pp. 180-181). It must be granted that the dual conception has dangers if the dialectic operating between original sin and personal sin is not maintained. Wesley did not fail in this maintenance.

17. Lindström, p. 38.

18. Ibid., p. 38, footnote 9.

19. Letters, III, p. 212.

20. Ibid., p. 213.

21. Cf. ibid.,

22. Cf. Sugden's introductory notes in Sermons, II, p. 208.

23. Works, VI, p. 55.

24. Ibid., p. 60.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., p. 61.

27. Cf. Letters, IV, p. 12.

28. Journal, IV, p. 285.

29. The agreement begins in A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 43. Following this account it is not possible to distinguish between 1758 and 1759.

30. Cf. Works (1978), XIV, p. 239. For brief comments on Leslie's work the reader is referred to Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century, p. 67.

31. The sermon text first appears in "Wesley's Sermon Register" on February 16, 1759, and again on February 18, 1759; April 18, 1760; and April 19, 1761, in Journal, VIII, pp. 236, 243, and 249. In the Journal on February 16, 1759, Wesley commented, "Every place of public worship was crowded on this, as on the two preceding fast-days. And, it is plain, even outward humiliation has been a means of outward blessings." (Works (1978), II, p. 468).

32. Works, VI, p. 203.

33. Ibid., p. 209.

34. Cf. the sermon "On Dissipation" in Works, VI, p. 427. The specific scripture text for this sermon first appears in "Wesley's Sermon Register" on June 21, 1759, and subsequently on January 8 and October 26 of 1760 in Journal, VIII, pp. 239, 241, and 246. In explaining the words of the mystics --- "introversion" and "extroversion" --- Wesley said, "The turning the eye of the mind from his [i. e., Christ's] to outward things they call extroversion. By this your thoughts wander from God, and you are properly dissipated: whereas by introversion you may be always sensible of his loving presence . . ." (Works, VI, p. 427).

35. Quoted from Tyerman, II, p. 324. One cannot stop at justification by faith. "The imagination, that faith supersedes holiness, is the marrow of Antinomianism." (Quoted from the sermon "On the Wedding Garment" in Works, VII, p. 203. The sermon text here seems to appear only once in "Wesley's Sermon Register" on August 10, 1759, in Journal, VIII, p. 240.

This was among one of the sermons written for The Arminian Magazine bearing the date of March, 1790 (Cf. Works, VII, p. 213).) Writing to a Mr. Jones on August 22, 1759, Wesley admonished, "Hold fast, therefore, that whereunto you have attained, and in peace and joy wait for perfect love." (Letters, IV, p. 71). From justification one was to go on in the deep quest for entire sanctification.

36. Cf. Works (1978), II, p. 510 and A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 41.

37. John Telford notes his fourth volume of sermons ". . . included six tracts. Thoughts on Christian Perfection is the fifth. . . . The Preface to it is dated Bristol, Oct. 16, 1759." (Letters, IV, p. 99, footnote 2. Cf. Works (1978), II, p. 516).

38. Outler claims, ". . . it remains Wesley's clearest answer to many of the dubieties about the doctrine which have continued to dog it to this day . . ." (John Wesley, p. 283).

39. Wesley commented, ". . . our perfection is not like that of a tree, which flourishes by the sap derived from its own root, but, as was said before, like that of a branch, which, united to the vine, bears fruit; but, severed from it, is dried up and withered." (A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 44).

40. Ibid., p. 45.

41. Monk, p. 116, footnote 34.

42. Cf. Sermons, II, p. 159.

43. A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, pp. 45-46.

44. Ibid., p. 49.

45. Works (1978), II, p. 525.

46. Journal, IV, p. 370.

47. Works (1978), II, p. 530. The same report is found in Journal, IV, p. 372.

48. Works (1978), II, p. 530.

49. In the Journal on October 25 Wesley commented, "King George was gathered to his fathers. When will England have a better Prince?" (Works (1978), III, p. 23). Indeed, on the whole George II's reign had been a prosperous one; however, half the population was still in poverty.

50. Alfred Plummer comments, ". . . the moral reformation of the country, which took place during his reign, was produced less by the example of the King than by the action of the Methodists, in whom the King took a friendly interest, but whose work he did not do much to further." (Plummer, p. 148).

51. Cf. Sugden's introductory notes in Sermons, II, p. 178.

52. Works, VI, p. 25.

53. Sermons, II, p. 184, footnote 6. Cf. Locke, pp. 248 and 251.

54. Works, VI, p. 26.

55. Ibid., p. 28.

56. Letters, IV, p. 118.

57. Ibid., p. 131. The letter is dated January 7, 1761.

58. Works (1978), III, p. 49. The date of this entry is March 29, 1761.

59. Letters, IV, p. 146. The letter is dated April 6, 1761.

60. Regarding the first question Wesley wrote, " '. . . perfect love is not the perfect law!' Most sure: For, by 'the perfect law,' I mean that given to Adam at his creation." (Works (1978), XII, p. 238). Answering the second question he said, "I think it is of all such sin as is imputed to our condemnation. And it is a definition which has passed uncensured in the church for at least fifteen hundred years." (Ibid., p. 239).

61. Wesley indicated he answered Horne's sermon while at Lewisham on March 8, 1762 (Cf. Works (1978), III, p. 81). Tyerman indicates the letter was published in 1762 (Tyerman, II, p. 457) while Cragg gives 1761 as the date (Works (Oxford Edition), p. 440, introductory notes).

62. Works (Oxford Edition), p. 446.

63. Ibid., p. 456.

64. Cf. Works (1978), III, p. 71.

65. Journal, IV, p. 481. This is dated December 21, 1761. Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection was incorporated in abridged form into A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, pp. 69-86. Cf. the Index in Works (1978), XIV, p. 416 for determining the extent of incorporation into A Plain Account of Christian Perfection. Although evidently written earlier, Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection was published with an abridgement of Cautions and Directions given to the greatest Professors in the Methodist Societies in 1763 (Cf. Richard Green, The Works of John and Charles Wesley: A Bibliography (London: C. H. Kelly, 1896), pp. 124-125 and Outler's notes in John Wesley, pp. 298-299).

66. A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 71.

67. Ibid., p. 73.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid., p. 76.

70. Ibid., p. 79.

71. Ibid., p. 80.

72. Ibid., p. 81.

73. Ibid., p. 85. This statement including the possibility of falling from Christian perfection might have been written consequent to the Maxfield-Bell problem. In a letter to his brother Charles dated by John Telford September of 1762, it is recorded that Wesley wrote, "I do not include a possibility of falling from it, either in part or in whole." (Letters, IV, p. 187). This statement appears contradictory since immediately after claiming not to include the possibility of falling from Christian perfection, Wesley is recorded as stating, "Therefore I retract several expressions . . . which . . . express . . . such an impossibility." The two sentences are not logically consistent and leads one to think it is a misprint. As to the manner and time of entire sanctification, the letter is consistent with what Wesley had been teaching on these subjects and expressed in Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection. Cf. "Brief Thoughts on Christian Perfection" in A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 112, or Letters, V, pp. 38-39, where the sentence in question in the above letter reads, "I do not include an impossibility of falling from it, either in part or in whole:" (Emphasis is added.). This is dated January 27, 1767, and precedes Charles Wesley's "The Promise of Sanctification." In An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal from May 6, 1760, to October 28, 1762 published in 1767, Wesley wrote under October 28, 1762, "That many . . . did not retain the gift of God, is no proof it was not given them." (Works (1978), III, p. 116). This is likely a statement cognizant of the Maxfield-Bell problem. In the Cautions and Directions given to the greatest Professors in the Methodist Societies published in 1762 Wesley warned against those ". . . who believe it impossible for them to sin and fall" following entire sanctification (Quoted from John Wesley, p. 305).

74. A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 86.

75. It appears the last major correspondence with Law was the letter dated September 17, 1760 (Cf. Journal, IV, pp. 409-411 or Letters, IV, pp. 105-107), disputing with Law's mystical philosophy (Cf. E. W. Baker, pp. 140-141 and Journal, V, p. 244).

76. Works (1978), III, p. 90. The date for this Journal entry is April 24, 1762.

77. Letters, IV, p. 183. The same sentiment is expressed in the letter to Jonah Freeman on December 20, 1762, in Ibid., p. 197.

78. Cf. Works (1978), III, pp. 101-110. Indeed, ". . . many believed that the blood of Christ had cleansed them from all sin." (Ibid., p. 110).

79. Cf. Journal, IV, p. 519.

80. Works (1978), III, p. 113 or Journal, IV, p. 529. The date of this entry is September 15, 1762.

81. Letters, IV, p. 188. The quotation is from the letter to Dorothy Furly. In the letter to Samuel Furly, Wesley expressed the same thought in different terms. Those persons cleansed from all sin ". . . feel more than ever their own ignorance, littleness of grace . . ." (Ibid., p. 189).

82. Works (1978), p. 116. The date of this Journal entry is October 28, 1762.

83. Williams, p. 170.

84. Actual problems began to arise as early as 1760 after Wesley had appointed Maxfield to meet with a sort of select band in London all of whom confessed to have received the gift of entire sanctification (Cf. Tyerman, II, pp. 432-433). In the yearly Conference of 1761 Maxfield had been accused of some minor charge with Wesley defending him against his accusers. But on December 26, 1761, Wesley wrote to his brother indicating the presence of the danger of enthusiasm in the London society (Cf. Works (1978), XII, p. 122). On January 5, 1762, another letter to his brother expressed concern over both Maxfield and Bell (Cf. ibid., pp. 122-123). Wesley wrote, "If Thomas Maxfield continues as he is, it is impossible he should long continue with us." (Ibid., p. 122). In his letter to Samuel Furly dated September 15, 1762, the issue was already defined. Wesley wrote, "If Mr. Maxfield or you say that "coming short is sin," be it so; I contend not. But still I say: "There are they whom I believe to be scripturally perfect. And yet these never felt their want of Christ so deeply and strongly as they do now." " (Letters, IV, p. 189. Cf. the letter to Samuel Furly on the same issue dated October 13, 1762, in ibid., p. 191).

85. For a description of the "enthusiasm" the reader is referred to A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, pp. 58-59. Wesley endeavored to reprove the offenders. He recorded, ". . . some of them stood reproved; but others were got above instruction. Meantime a flood of reproach came upon me from every quarter . . ." (A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 59).

86. The letter Wesley wrote is dated November 2, 1762, and can be found in Journal, IV, pp. 534-538.

87. Works (1978), III, p. 119.

88. Ibid., pp. 119-120.

89. Ibid., p. 120.

90. Cf. the letter from a friend Wesley included in paragraph 21 of A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, pp. 59-60.

91. A moving description of Jane Cooper's life and death is found in A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, pp. 62-69. Wesley performed her burial on November 25, 1762 (Cf. Works (1978), III, p. 122).

92. Cf. the letter to his brother Charles dated January 5, 1762, in Works (1978), XII, p. 122. Cragg indicates the date of this letter should be January 5, 1763 (Works (Oxford Edition), p. 463, footnote 3).

93. Works (Oxford Edition), p. 502.

94. Ibid., p. 527. The first part of Warburton's The Doctrine of Grace was an attack on Conyers Middleton.

95. Journal, IV, p. 540. This entry is dated December 5, 1762. As a further instruction he published Cautions and Directions given to the greatest Professors in the Methodist Societies (The abridged form of this publication is found in A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, pp. 86-97. The original edition of 1762 is found in John Wesley, pp. 299-305). The publication was meant to guard against the enthusiastic excesses of George Bell and his followers (Cf. the comments about George Bell in the Journal entries for November 24, December 8, December 22, and December 26 of 1762 in Works (1978), III, pp. 122-124). On hearing Bell pray at the Foundery on December 22 Wesley ". . . was convinced he must not continue . . . The reproach of Christ I am willing to bear; but not the reproach of enthusiasm, if I can help it." (Ibid., p. 124).

96. Ibid., p. 126.

97. Ibid.

98. Ibid., p. 130. Cf. Journal entry for June 12, 1763, in Journal, V, p. 18.

99. Sermons, II, p. 369.

100. Cf. ibid., p. 371. The treasure was in an earthen vessel (Cf. the letter to Miss March dated April 7, 1763, in Letters, IV, p. 208). One can be ". . . saved from sin; yet not entirely: it remains, though it does not reign." (Sermons, II, p. 373).

101. Ibid., p. 377.

102. Works (1978), III, p. 130. The whole of his relationship with Maxfield is summarized in a letter to a friend dated May of 1763 in Letters, IV, pp. 208-212.

103. John Peters writes, "The next few years found Wesley striving desperately to repair the extensive injury to both doctrine and discipline. In many areas the preaching of Christian perfection had altogether ceased." (Peters, p. 68. Cf. Wesley's letter to his brother dated May 25, 1764, in Works (1978), XII, p. 126).

104. Journal, V, p. 17.

105. Ibid., p. 35.

106. Letters, IV, p. 213.

107. Flew, p. 325.

108. Quoted from a letter to Henry Venn dated June 22, 1763, in Letters, IV, p. 216.

109. Works (1978), III, p. 165.

110. Cf. ibid., p. 164.

111. The sermon was published in 1765 (Cf. Tyerman, II, pp. 550-551). Sugden dates the sermon March 30, 1764, in Sermons, II, p. 442.

112. Works, VI, p. 43. Cf. Sugden's notes on Wesley's distinction between sanctification and regeneration in Sermons, II, p. 446, footnote 4 and Albert C. Outler, "John Wesley: Folk-Theologian," Theology Today, XXXIV (1977), p. 156.

113. Works, VI, p. 43.

114. Andrew Hodgson, "An Emerging New World," Theology, LXXXII (1979), p. 266.

115. Works, VI, p. 48.

116. Letters, IV, p. 249. The letter is dated June of 1764.

117. Ibid., p. 251. This letter is dated June 24, 1764. Cf. the letter to his brother dated July 9, 1766, in Letters, V, p. 20.

118. Cf. the letter to Ann Foard dated September 29, 1764, in Letters, IV, p. 265.

119. Ibid., p. 269. The letter is to Ann Foard dated October 12, 1764.

120. Cf. A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, pp. 106-111. Wesley described how he had come to this opinion in his letter to John Newton dated May 14, 1765, in Letters, IV, pp. 298-299.

121. A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 106.

122. Ibid.

123. Wesley wrote to his brother on June 27, 1766, "Press the instantaneous blessings: Then I shall have more time for my peculiar calling, enforcing the gradual work." (Works (1978), XII, p. 130).

124. Cf. Journal entries dated April 13 and 15, 1765; and February 10, March 27, and April 1 of 1766 in Works (1978), III, pp. 207, 242, and 245. Tyerman adds an explanation for the losses as Whitefield's setting the doctrine too low and Charles Wesley setting the doctrine too high (Tyerman, II, p. 562). Regardless of the source reaction against the doctrine was evident in the various Methodist societies (Cf. Journal, V, p. 162, footnote 1). Although most of the reports were bleak, a few rays of hope existed (Cf. Journal entry for July 10, 1766, in Works (1978), III, p. 256).

125. Journal entry for September 30, 1765, in Works (1978), III, p. 237. Cf. letter to George Merryweather dated February 8, 1766, in Letters, IV, p. 321 and letter to Mrs. Bennis dated March 29, 1766, in Letters, V, p. 6.

126. Cf. R. Green, pp. 134-135.

127. Works (1978), III, p. 270. This Journal entry is dated December 29, 1766.

128. Ibid., p. 274. This Journal entry is dated March 12, 1767.

129. Cf. Sugden's introductory notes in Sermons, I, p. 13 and II, p. 341.

130. Works, V, p. 124.

131. Ibid.

132. Cf. Sugden's introductory notes in Sermons, I, p. 13 and II, p. 379.

133. Works, V, p. 147.

134. Ibid., p. 151.

135. Ibid., p. 158.

136. Letters, V, p. 88.

137. Works (1978), XII, p. 136.

138. Cf. Minutes, I, pp. 80-81 and the 1770 and 1772 revisions in "The Large Minutes" in Minutes, I, pp. 600-663.

139. Letters, V, p. 102.

140. Ibid.

141. Cf. his letter to Peggy Dale dated January 30, 1768, in Letters, V, pp. 78-79.

142. Cf. his letter to Miss March dated March 14, 1768, in ibid., pp. 81-82.

143. Ibid., p. 83. Wesley advised George Cussons in a letter dated November 18, 1768, "It is by patient continuance in well doing, in using all the grace which is already given you, that you are to seek the whole gift of God, the entire renewal of your soul, the full deliverance from sin. And do not think it far off: this is the voice of unbelief." (Ibid., pp. 112-113).

144. Journal, V, p. 303. Wesley must have been too preoccupied with Conyers Middleton's Free Inquiry to have paid much attention to Hume's "Essay on Miracles" when it appeared.

145. Cf. the letter to an Irish lady dated June 27, 1769, in Letters, V, p. 141.

146. Ibid., p. 194. Cf. the letter to George Merryweather dated June 24, 1770, and the letter to Mrs. Woodhouse dated November 18, 1770, in ibid., pp. 192 and 208.

147. It is generally agreed the "Minutes" are carelessly worded (Cf. John Wesley, p. 23; Tyerman, III, p. 73; and John Wesley and the Church of England, p. 194.

148. Quoted from Tyerman, III, p. 73.

149. Cell, p. 27. One should be cognizant of the fact that Cell has made a distinction between humanistic Anglican Arminianism and Wesley's evangelical Arminianism (Cf. ibid., pp. 20-21).

150. For a good summary of this work the reader is referred to Peters, pp. 71-80. In agreement with Wesley, Fletcher held the concept of original sin vital to entire sanctification in distinguishing genuine Christianity from Deism (Cf. Peters, p. 73).

151. John Fletcher, The Last Check to Antinomianism, ed. N. Burwash (Toronto: William Briggs, 1907), p. 15.

152. Cf. his letter to Joseph Benson dated December 28, 1770, in Letters, V, p. 215.

153. Ibid., p. 223. In his letter to Joseph Benson on March 16, 1771, Wesley referred to those perfected in love as fathers in the faith. Using the same analogy he encouraged both babes and young men to seek after perfection (Cf. ibid., p. 226). Many still professed the attainment of pure love in full salvation (Cf. Journal entries for October 21-22, 1772, in Journal, V, p. 486).

154. Quoted from Tyerman, III, p. 92. Cf. the letter to John Valton dated November 12, 1771, in Letters, V, p. 289. Wesley wrote to Ann Bolton on March 15, 1775, "Certainly till persons experience something of the second awakening, till they are feeling convinced of inbred sin so as earnestly to groan for deliverance from it, we need not speak to them of present sanctification. We should first labour to work that conviction in them." (Letters, VI, pp. 144-145). In a letter to Samuel Sparrow on October 9, 1773, Wesley defined original sin as ". . . the proneness to evil which is found in every child of God." (Ibid., p. 49).

155. Letters, V, p. 255. A little over a year later on June 16, 1772, Wesley wrote to Mrs. Bennis these words: "Nothing is sin, strictly speaking, but a voluntary transgression of a known law of God. Therefore every voluntary breach of the law of love is sin; and nothing else, if we speak properly. To strain the matter further is only to make way for Calvinism. There may be ten thousand wandering thoughts and forgetful intervals without any breach of love, though not without transgressing the Adamic law. But Calvinists would fain confound these together." (Ibid., p. 322. Cf. the

letter to Philothea Briggs dated October 19, 1772, in ibid., p. 341). It has been pointed out that great dangers prevail for such a definition of sin. The dangers are indicated by Williams, pp. 179-181 and Peters, pp. 39-40. Williams rightly points out, ". . . as soon as the full dialectic of his two definitions of sin was overlooked, his description of perfection in terms of the absence of the sin of conscious violation of the law of God led easily to a failure to take seriously the depth of unexamined prejudices and inward sins. This was the more serious because an implicit individualism in this definition of sin prevented the implications of the doctrine for social relations from being clearly seen." (Williams, p. 180). Although Wesley might have fallen into the above trap prior to May 24, 1738, it is felt he had not forgotten subsequent to this date the dangers of such a definition of sin. It has been indicated throughout this chapter that Wesley maintained at all cost and with considerable hardship to himself the dialectical relationship.

156. Cf. the letter to Samuel Bardsley dated November 24, 1771, in Letters, V, p. 290. In another letter to the same person on April 3, 1772, Wesley exhorted, "Never be ashamed of the old Methodist doctrine. Press all believers to go on to perfection. Insist everywhere on the second blessing as receivable in a moment, and receivable now, by simple faith." (Ibid., p. 315). The same sentiment was expressed in a multitude of letters dating from July 1, 1772, to February 1, 1775 (Cf. ibid., pp. 325 and 346-347; VI, pp. 37, 42, 59, 66, 97, and 137).

157. Wesley wrote in his Journal on April 5, 1772, "The speculative knowledge of the truth has ascended here from the least to the greatest. But how far short is this of experimental knowledge! Yet it is a step toward it not to be despised." (Journal, V, p. 452). Writing to Samuel Sparrow on December 28, 1773, he said, "Upon the head of Authority we are quite agreed. Our guides are Scripture and reason." (Letters, VI, p. 60).

158. Cf. the letter to Philothea Briggs dated May 13, 1772, in Letters, V, p. 317 and the preface to "An Extract from the Journal of Elizabeth Harper" published in 1772 in Works, XIV, p. 249.

159. Cf. the letter to Martha Chapman dated February 25, 1774, and the letter to Mr.s Crosby dated June 3, 1774, in Letters, VI, pp. 74 and 87.

160. Cf. the letter to his brother Charles dated April 26, 1772, in ibid., V, p. 316 and the letter to Samuel Bardsley dated November 27, 1775, in ibid., VI, p. 191.

161. Works (1978), XII, p. 138. In "Thoughts Concerning Gospel Ministers" Wesley showed his concern when he warned, ". . . he that goes no farther than this [preaching justification by faith] , that does not insist on sanctification also, upon all the fruits of faith, upon universal holiness, does not declare the whole counsel of God . . ." (Works, X, p. 438. Cf. the concern expressed to his brother in the letter dated November 4, 1772, in Works (1978), XII, p. 140).

162. Works, X, p. 409.

163. Works (1978), XII, p. 141.

164. Journal, V, p. 458. Another negative reference to David Hume was made on December 11, 1772, in ibid., p. 491. On August 8, 1773, Hume was referred to as a promoter of infidelity (Ibid., p. 523). James Beattie's work Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth in Opposition to Sophistry and Superstition had just been published in 1770. The book surely influenced Wesley's attitude toward David Hume. Beattie not only vigorously defended orthodox religion but also misrepresented both Berkeley and Hume (Cf. William B. Piper, "Kant's Contact with British Empiricism," Eighteenth-Century Studies, XII (1978-1979), p. 174). Professor Piper explains Beattie's Essay as a possible connecting link between Hume and Kant because of its translation into German in 1772. George Berkeley's The Principles of Human Knowledge and David Hume's A Treatise of Human Nature had not been translated in time to affect Kant. Piper argues, ". . . Kant's knowledge of Hume, although seriously incomplete . . . is relatively correct . . ." while ". . . [Kant's] understanding of Berkeley . . . is seriously defective." (Ibid., p. 175). This paper does not deal with Kant because it is felt no Kantian influence on Wesley existed (Cf. Stephen, I, p. 60). The first work to be published on Kant in England was several years after Wesley's death (Cf. ibid., p. 409). Also, it seems the influence in regards to Deism which dominated much of Wesley's concern was from England to Germany rather than from Germany to England (Cf. Orr, p. 229). With regard to Wesleyan studies George C. Cell reinforces the idea that one need not detour through German speculative philosophy to discover the meaning of Christianity (Cf. Cell, p. 8).

165. Journal, V, pp. 492 and 495.

166. Cf. John Wesley, p. 472. Luke Tyerman comments, "This was one of his most thoughtful and able tracts." (Tyerman, III, p. 183). It is interesting to follow Hume's argument on the same topic in Section VIII of his Enquiries in Hume, pp. 80-103.

167. Works (1978), X, p. 461. Cf. ibid., p. 457 and the Journal entry dated May 24, 1774, in ibid., IV, p. 15.

168. Ibid., X, p. 462.

169. Ibid., p. 463. Emphasis is added.

170. Cf. ibid., p. 469.

171. Hume, p. 98.

172. David Hume stated, "Men are not blamed for such actions as they perform ignorantly and casually, whatever may be the consequences." (Ibid.).

173. Works (1978), X, p. 467.

174. Hume, p. 96.

175. Cf. ibid., p. 103 and Works (1978), X, p. 477.

176. Cf. Wesley's statement: "Certain it is, that no being can be accountable for its actions, which has not liberty, as well as will and understanding." (Works (1978), X, p. 468) with that of Reid's Essays on the Active Powers of Man in Thomas Reid, Inquiry and Essays, ed. Keith Lehrer and Ronald E. Beanblossom (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1975), p. 324.

177. Journal, VI, pp. 22-23. Reid's Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man was first published in 1785 followed by Essays on the Active Powers of Man in 1788 according to the introductory notes by Beanblossom in Reid, p. xii.

CHAPTER VI

THE DOCTRINE FULLY MATURED AS AN ANTIDOTE TO THE AGE OF REASON, OR AN OLD AND NEW CONTROVERSY — DEISM (1776 - 1791)

It should be evident by now Wesley's method of doing theology was by reiteration rather than by systematization. The basic doctrinal formulations have appeared over and over in different social and speculative contexts. This chapter will diverge somewhat from a strictly chronological treatment to a more topical one. The doctrine of entire sanctification has been laid out in its yearly development. The reiteration of the doctrine for the period of time from 1776 until Wesley's death in 1791 occurred in the context of the debate over necessity and concern with the systems developed by the British philosophers. Through the closing years of his ministry the Methodist leader continually exhorted and encouraged all believers to expect entire sanctification prior to the article of death.[1] The days of mob persecution were at an end, and everywhere Mr. Wesley traveled he was received with respect and even affection. Significant events during this period of time include the American Revolution, the publication of The Arminian Magazine, the Deed of Declaration in 1784 incorporating the Methodist Conference, and the storming of the Bastille in July of 1789. During the last half of the eighteenth century England was being transformed from an agriculturally-based economy to an essentially manufacturing one. The year 1782 witnessed the appearance of Joseph Priestley's History of the Corruptions of Christianity. The first volumes by Edward Gibbon appeared in 1776 initiating the opening into a genuine historical method. Thomas Paine's pen was busy. William Paley published his Principles of Moral and Political

Philosophy in 1785 promoting theological utilitarianism. God was viewed as the distant machine-maker.[2] Realizing the above historical and philosophical context, the argument of this paper will be closed with the reiteration of a controversy which had supposedly died by 1760 only to resurface for the aging Wesley in the form of the debate over necessity and liberty. The only true necessity for Wesley resided in man's total reliance on God's grace. With prevenient grace he would once again refute Deism. His conception of sin would act as the shock treatment to the philosophical concept of necessity. After the initial convulsion of being convinced of sin would come the soothing reintegration effected by the medicine of entire sanctification. The balm was applied frequently through Wesley's pastoral letters. While a disciple of John Locke, he promoted a principle of David Hume.

For a period of one month beginning on April 28, 1781, Wesley was occupied writing his "Remarks upon Mr. Locke's 'Essay on Human Understanding'."[3] His intended purpose was to point out some of the mistakes he had discovered in Locke's work while at the same time promoting the excellent quality and the "many curious and useful reflections" of An Essay concerning Human Understanding.[4] Wesley felt Locke's argument concerning the absence of innate ideas important. The Methodist leader's discussion of personal identity and consciousness are interesting. He argued that a person's identity did not end with the cessation of consciousness. Likewise, ". . . consciousness may be without identity. . . . There is a species of madness, which makes a man conscious of things he never did, and of words he never spoke."[5] The person could not be held accountable for such acts not actually performed. Man was rewarded according to his own actions "whether he be conscious of them or no."[6] A person might be rewarded for an

unconscious action; however, Wesley was not stating here that an individual would be punished eternally for a wrong action performed unconsciously. His sermon "On the Deceitfulness of the Human Heart" written in April of 1790 provides additional evidence for his continued interest in the British philosophers. In this sermon another attempt was made to refute the philosophical concept of necessity [7] as presented in David Hartley's theory which in Wesley's estimation undermined man's culpability and placed the blame on God. He felt these sentiments were the same as Lord Kames and Mr. Hume. [8] Francis Hutcheson received a negative comment as well. Although he refuted David Hume, Wesley's criticism of this great philosopher was not as harsh in "Remarks on the Count de Buffon's 'Natural History' " printed in 1782. In this work Wesley indicated that Hume had at least acknowledged the being of a God. [9] Both men followed the authority of experience. Experience indicated even to the believer that "the roots of sin" remained. Experience taught the believer that sin clung to the very best of his actions. In this fact Wesley discovered the "absolute necessity for the blood of the atonement." [10] In the sermon "On the Deceitfulness of the Human Heart" the Methodist leader had closely aligned the doctrine of sin to the argument with the philosophers. Wesley's theological conceptions always bore the imprint of philosophical refinement, and he recognized that such refinement was not necessary to genuine belief. [11] Belief, although an action of man, was also a gift of God. Necessity was again refuted in the sermon "On Predestination" published in 1788. Wesley did not perceive in the sermon's text --- Romans 8:29-30 --- an actual description of a ". . . chain of causes and effects; . . . but simply showing <u>the method in which God works; the order</u> in which the several branches of salvation constantly follow each other." [12] Man was by no means predetermined. It was only by his

own choice that he eternally perished. In his "Thoughts upon God's Sovereignty" in 1777 Wesley indicated, "All reward, as well as all punishment, pre-supposes free-agency; and whatever creature is incapable of choice, is incapable of either one or the other." [13] Could the concept of original sin be used by Lord Kames and others to give support to the philosophical concept of necessity? Was the human being designed to think he had freedom to counteract the effects of original sin? Wesley answered:

> Scripture, reason, and experience jointly testify, that, inasmuch as the corruption of nature is earlier than our instructions can be, we should take all pains and care to counteract this corruption as early as possible. The bias of nature is set the wrong way: education is designed to set it right. [14]

God's grace acted in cooperation with the willful action of man to deliver one from inbred sin. [15]

Through the avenue of prevenient grace, Wesley began another refutation of Deism. In his sermon "On Conscience" published in 1788 he explained Hutcheson's terms "the public sense" and "the moral sense" as derived from the latter's An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections. with Illustrations on the Moral Sense. Mr. Wesley agreed with the basic definition of the terms; however, he stated:

> . . . it is not true that either the public or the moral sense (both of which are included in the term conscience) is now natural to man. Whatever may have been the case at first, while man was in a state of innocence, both the one and the other is now a branch of that supernatural gift of God which we usually style "preventing grace." But the Professor does not at all agree with this. He sets God wholly out of the question. God has nothing to do with his scheme of virtue, from the beginning to the end. So that, to say the truth, his scheme of virtue is Atheism all over. This is refinement indeed! Many have excluded God out of the world: he excludes him even out of religion. [16]

Deism for Wesley was ". . . the not assenting to revealed religion." [17] The deist was one who believed in a God distinct from matter but did not believe the Bible. [18] A deist did not base his religion on the revealed word of God. In the sermon "On Faith" Wesley made the following statement:

> See your religion, the "Religion of Nature delineated," by the ingenious Mr. Wollaston; whom I remember to have seen when I was at school, attending the public service at the Charter-house chapel. Does he found his religion upon God? No; he sets him out of the question, and builds a beautiful castle in the air, without being beholden either to Him or his word. See your smooth-tongued orator of Glasgow [Hutcheson], one of the most pleasing writers of the age! Has he any more to do with God, on his system, than Mr. Wollaston? . . . Just the contrary. [19]

His full weight was brought against Deism in the sermon "The Unity of the Divine Being" dated April 9, 1789. He placed experiential, scriptural religion in opposition to the purely rational religion of the philosophers. Wollaston, Hutcheson, and Hume were attacked once more. Wesley wrote:

> . . . our own countryman, Mr. Wollaston, in that elaborate work, "The Religion of Nature Delineated," presents us with a complete system of religion, without anything of God about it; without being beholden, in any degree, to either the Jewish or Christian revelation. [20]

Hutcheson was attacked in a fashion identical to the refutation found in "On Conscience" and "On Faith." Wesley battled the humanism of his era placing Hume with Rousseau and Voltaire as "the great triumvirate" who had spared ". . . no pains to establish a religion which should stand on its own foundation, independent on any revelation whatever; yea, not supposing even the being of a God." [21] In The opinion of the Methodist leader the philosophers had split the great love commandment denying the duty to God in developing a system no better than Atheism. Their philosophical systems were merely ". . . a plausible way of thrusting God out of the world he has

made." [22] In his arguments with the men of reason Wesley stressed the Bible and experience. Conflicts with reason were resolved with experience. The debate over the philosophical concept of necessity had triggered, in spite of the demise of the deist controversy by 1760, a renewed attack upon Deism. Central to the whole refutation of the philosophers' systems was the concept of sin as the motive power in the process of sanctification. Without sin what need was there for the Atonement? In a letter to Mary Bishop dated February 7, 1778, he wrote, "Indeed, nothing in the Christian system is of greater consequence than the doctrine of Atonement. . . . Give up the Atonement, and the Deists are agreed with us." [23] Necessity destroyed sin. On the religious front the enemy had been Calvinism. On the philosophical front the enemy was Deism. Without sin the Atonement was devoid of meaning. Without the revelational element of the Atonement, the tenets of Deism would become logically irrefutable.

Entire sanctification destroyed the whole fabric of the "fashionable" religion of the Age of Reason. At the close of his life the venerable Wesley was reiterating the doctrine to fit individual and social contexts. The doctrine had remained essentially unchanged since 1738. [24] In his "Thoughts Upon Methodism" dated August of 1786 Wesley commenting on himself stated the doctrine simply, "His constant doctrine was, salvation by faith, preceded by repentance, and followed by holiness." [25] The doctrine in its complete development takes on the following shape. [26] Entire sanctification is attainable in the present life and is to be expected any moment. [27] The perfection attained has its limits. Its definition does not follow the medieval Latin perfectus meaning "faultless" or "unimprovable." [28] One perfected in love is not relieved from the consequences of original sin, infirmities, ignorance, or certain mistakes. [29] The terms "Christian perfection"

perfection," "entire sanctification," "holiness," "full salvation," and "sanctification" are used synonymously. The dictum "once saved, always saved" is not in Wesley's vocabulary. Entire sanctification is capable of being lost; however, it can also be regained if lost. Its method of operation in an individual is both instantaneous and gradual. [30] Growth in grace must continue beyond the moment of entire sanctification if the gift is to be retained. [31] The essence of entire sanctification is the pure love of God and neighbor. [32] It is a gift of God. [33] Justification plays an important role in the process of sanctification and is not to be undervalued. Both are woven together in the term "grace." [34] The above is a rather isolated and sterile description of the doctrine of entire sanctification. Only in its dynamic interaction with the social and intellectual milieu and its dialectical relation with sin does the doctrine present its authentic form. Slightly less than two months before his death on March 2, 1791, Wesley wrote, "A man that is not a thorough friend to Christian Perfection will easily puzzle others . . ." [35] Others will easily be puzzled over entire sanctification if the cup in which it is given its shape and from which it is poured is not properly identified and defined. The crucible and its mixture taken as a whole provide Christianity with ". . . the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists; and for the sake of propagating this chiefly He appeared to have raised us up." [36]

FOOTNOTES

1. Abundant proof of this fact exists in Wesley's letters, Journal, and sermons of the period. Cf. "To Mary Bishop," April 17, 1776; "To Samuel Bradburn," April 29, 1776; "To Hannah Ball," October 23, 1779; "To Mrs. Rose," 1780; and "To Samuel Bardsley," January 30, 1780, in Letters, VI, pp. 214-215, 360, 369, and 378; "To Robert Hopkins," July 25, 1781; "To Hannah Ball," November 17, 1781; "To William Walters," February 22, 1782; and "To Joseph Algar," February 24, 1782, in ibid., VII, pp. 76, 90, 107, and 109; Journal entry dated April 2, 1782, in Journal, VI, p. 347; "To Samuel Mitchell," April 6, 1782; "To Hannah Ball," December 1, 1782; "To John Baxendale," March 7, 1783; "To Mrs. Christian (Ellen Gretton)," April 25, 1783; "To Thomas Tattershall," May 3, 1783; "To Hannah Ball," October [18], 1783; and "To Samuel Bardsley," February 13, 1784, in Letters, VII, pp. 119, 153, 170, 176, 178, 193, and 209; Journal entry dated April 20, 1784, in Journal, VI, p. 498; "To Frances Godfrey," July 31, 1784; "To Christopher Hopper," September 11, 1784; "To John Baxendale," February 25, 1785; "To John Ogilvie," August 7, 1785; "To Mary Cooke," October 30, 1785, for a particularly beautiful description of the Holy Spirit's work within the individual; "To Peter Walker," February 21, 1786; "To Mrs. Bowman," March 4, 1786; and "To John King," February 16, 1787, in Letters, VII, pp. 226-227, 239, 259, 283, 298, 317, 322, and 369; his sermon "The Danger of Riches" published in 1788 in Works, VI, p. 27, especially paragraph 6; and "To Frances Godfrey," August 5, 1788; "To James Currie," January 24, 1789; "To Jonathan Brown," [October], 1789; "To George Baldwin," November 5, 1789; and "To Mrs. Pawson, November 16, 1789, in Letters, VIII, pp. 80, 111, 173, and 184.

2. Cf. Stephen, II, pp. 124-126.

3. Cf. Journal, VI, p. 318, footnote 3. The Arminian Magazine, V (1782), VI (1783), and VII (1784) contained extracts from Locke's Essay with Wesley's remarks.

4. Cf. Works (1978), XIII, pp. 455 and 464. He recommended the book to his niece Sarah Wesley in a letter dated September 8, 1781, and in a letter to Mary Bishop dated August 18, 1784, in Letters, VII, pp. 82 and 228.

5. Works (1978), XIII, pp. 459-460.

6. Ibid., p. 460.

7. His interest in this is further evidenced in The Arminian Magazine, XI (1788), XII (1789), and XIII (1790) which contained "An Extract from a Volume entitled, A Review of Dr. Priestl[e]y's Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity."

8. Cf. Works, VII, p. 321. Wesley wrote, "Did Mr. David Hume . . . know the heart of man? No more than a worm or bettle does." (Ibid., p. 326).

9. Cf. Works (1978), XIII, p. 455.

10. Cf. Works, VII, p. 326 and Journal entry dated October 14, 1778, in Journal, VI, p. 213. Writing to Ann Loxdale on July 12, 1782, the following comment was made: "By experience, the strongest of all arguments, you have been once and again convinced that salvation from inbred sin is received by simple faith, and by plain consequence in a moment; although it is certain there is a gradual work both preceding and following." (Letters, VII, p. 129).

11. Cf. the letter to Theophilus Lessey in January of 1787, and the letter to John King on April 21, 1787, in Letters, VII, pp. 361-362 and 380; and the letter to Mrs. Rose on July 29, 1789, in ibid., VIII, p. 156.

12. Works, VI, p. 212.

13. Ibid., X, p. 348. Cf. Wesley's comments regarding the irresistible element of God's grace in the same essay in ibid., pp. 348-349.

14. Quoted from Wesley's "A Thought on the Manner of Educating Children" printed in 1783 in ibid., XIII, p. 449.

15. Cf. "To Hester Ann Roe," May 3, 1776; "To Mrs. Freeman," May 27, 1776; and "To Lady Maxwell," May 3, 1777, in Letters, VI, pp. 217-218 and 264; "To Thomas Tattershall," May 3, 1783; "To his Nephew Charles Wesley," May 2, 1784; "To Joseph Entwisle and David Gordon," June 20, 1784; and "To John Ogilvie," August 7, 1785, in ibid., VII, pp. 178, 217, 220, and 283; and "To Sarah Rutter," December 5, 1789, in ibid., VIII, p. 190.

16. Works, VII, p. 180. In a letter to John Mason on November 21, 1776, Wesley stated, ". . . no man living is without some preventing grace . . ." (Letters, VI, p. 239).

17. Quoted from "An Estimate of the Manners of the Present Times" printed in 1782 in Works, XI, p. 152.

18. Cf. the sermon "On Faith" published in 1788 in Works, VII, p. 187 and the deist statement that the Bible is "too good" in the sermon "On the Single Eye" dated September 25, 1789, in ibid., p. 285.

19. Ibid., p. 191.

20. Ibid., p. 258.

21. Ibid., p. 259.

22. Ibid.

23. Letters, VI, pp. 297-298.

24. Cf. Journal entry for September 1, 1778, in Journal, VI, p. 209 and "Thoughts on Salvation by Faith" printed in 1779 in Works (1978), XI, p. 492.

25. Works, XIII, p. 245.

26. Cf. "The Large Minutes" in Minutes, I, pp. 581 and 583.

27. Cf. "To Elizabeth Ritchie," January 19, 1782; "To George Blackall," February 25, 1783; "To George Gibbon," April 9, 1785; and "To Mary Cooke," September 24, 1785, in Letters, VII, pp. 102-103, 168, 268, and 293.

28. Cf. John Wesley, p. 30.

29. Those perfected in love may prove to be a source of temptation to others ". . . for they are still encompassed with infirmities." (Quoted from the sermon "On Temptation" published in 1788 in Works, VI, p. 453). Actions deriving from a "defect of memory" or a "weakness of understanding" were not sins in the proper sense (Cf. the same sermon in ibid., p. 454).

30. Cf. "To Arthur Keene," June 21, 1784; "To George Gibbon," April 9, 1785; and "To Mary Cooke," September 24, 1785, in Letters, VII, pp. 222, 267, and 293. In the sermon "On Patience" published in 1788 the weight of evidence was placed on the side of the instantaneous change; however, Wesley's emphasis here was not on entire sanctification's method of operation but rather on the moment of its actual attainment (Cf. Works, VI, pp. 464-465).

31. Cf. the letter to Adam Clark on November 26, 1789, in Letters, p. 188. This same letter appears again dated November 26, 1790, in ibid., p. 249.

32. Entire sanctification ". . . does not imply any new kind of holiness. . . . Love is the sum of Christian sanctification; it is the one kind of holiness, which is found, only in various degrees . . ." (Quoted from the sermon "On Patience" in Works, VI, p. 462). Cf. Wesley's sermon "Of Former Times" published in 1788 in ibid., VII, p. 154; "To Hannah Ball," June 11, 1777, and "To Mrs. Barton," July 29, 1777, in Letters, VI, pp. 266 and 269: and "To Hester Ann Roe," December 9, 1781; "To Ann Loxdale," April 12, 1782; "To William Black," May 11, 1784; "To George Gibbon," April 9, 1785; and "To Elizabeth Ritchie," June 26, 1785, in ibid., VII, pp. 96, 120, 219, 267, and 277.

33. Cf. the letter to Hester Ann Roe on January 7, 1782, and the letter to Isaac Andrews on January 4, 1784, in ibid., pp. 98 and 202-203 and the sermon "On Patience" in Works, VI, p. 465.

34. A change in the object of love occurs at justification. In his sermon "On Patience" Wesley stated, "There is, in that hour [of justification], a general change from inward sinfulness to inward holiness." (Ibid., p. 462). Cf. the letter to Joseph Benson on April 2, 1781, in Letters, VII, p. 55.

35. Quoted from the letter to Edward Lewly written on January 12, 1791, in Letters, VIII, p. 255.

36. Quoted from the letter to Robert Carr Brackenbury on September 15, 1790, in ibid., p. 238.

CONCLUSION

The thesis of this paper has been that eighteenth-century British moral philosophy contributed to the development of an ambiguous, dual, doctrine of sin in John Wesley's theology which was vital to his notion of entire sanctification. Is this thesis affirmed or denied? The influence of the British philosophers upon the thought of John Wesley is undeniably affirmed. The Methodist leader possessed more than a passing interest in the controversy over Deism. The importance of original sin in his arguments with both the men of reason and the men of religion has been indicated. At the very least the concern over the tenets of Deism strengthened the traditional influence of the Church. The duality in Wesley's notion of sin has promoted the thought of a serious flaw in his theology. It has been the thinking of this paper that fault is realized only when the doctrine of sin is isolated from the intellectual milieu, when a breakdown of the dialectical operation occurs, and when one attempts to discover a theological "system" out of the reiterations of the doctrine in the various pastoral contexts.

Original sin always remained the motivating power behind the process of sanctification. Entire sanctification was not the attainment of infallibility. The doctrine remains ambiguous because it is a human experience. Dialectical relationships are in themselves ambiguous. The more one grows in the process of sanctification, the more aware he becomes of the consequences of original sin and the continual need of God's saving grace. Wesley's primary authority here was the Bible. He viewed the words of the Lord as pure. "Perfection" was such a word for him. The purity of the word is refined in the crucible of human intelligence --- the intelligence

of John Locke, William Wollaston, Francis Hutcheson, George Berkeley, and others. The purpose of the refinement was twofold --- to identify the impurities and to make the discovered purity digestible for the human stomach. By such means it was felt man could approach in a reasonable and discernable fashion his final justification. [1] Indeed, this was the whole purpose of Wesley's life.

What contributions has this paper made to the field of Wesley research? Reiteration of the doctrine of entire sanctification is in itself a contribution. The reiteration necessarily occurs within the twentieth century and is colored by the mind set of the present age. The research task has been not merely to rediscover the governing principles of eighteenth-century England as applied to the mind of Wesley but also to create the paradigm and to apply the metaphor which allows for the fewest anomalies in Wesley's thought. [2] The attempted chronological treatment of Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification with a stress on the intellectual milieu upon that development has provided this writer with the paradigm leaving the fewest anomalies. Without this method a greater distortion of Wesley's doctrine is inevitable. Wesley cannot be treated systematically. [3] He was a pastor with a multitude of parishioners to love, and his theological development is a reflection of that love. No great breakthrough in research has occurred. The reiteration of the doctrine has often bordered on boredom. It has been the conviction of this writer that boredom is the prelude to illumination. Through boring reiteration ancient simplicities are recovered and transformed by experience and discipline, reappropriated in new ways. [4] The theology is not new. The contribution is in the method and the stress.

FOOTNOTES

1. Cf. Louis P. Pojman, "Rationality and Religious Belief," Religious Studies, XV (1979), p. 164.

2. Cf. Gerald V. Lardner, "Evaluative Criteria and the Liturgy," Worship, LIII (1979), p. 360.

3. Cf. John M. Simmonds, "Pilgrimage in Theology," Theology, LXXXII (1979), p. 325.

4. Cf. David Martin, "Profane Habit and Sacred Usage," Theology LXXXII (1979), p. 86.

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