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***Word & Deed Mission Statement:***

The purpose of the journal is to encourage and disseminate the thinking of Salvationists and other Christian colleagues on matters broadly related to the theology and ministry of The Salvation Army. The journal provides a means to understand topics central to the mission of The Salvation Army, integrating the Army's theology and ministry in response to Christ's command to love God and our neighbor.

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The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination.

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Contributions related to the mission of the journal will be encouraged, and at times there will be a general call for papers related to specific subjects. The Salvation Army is not responsible for every view which may be expressed in this journal.

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# WORD & DEED

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## Divine Imagination

In God's divine imagination, He imagines us in lives of holiness. As the song writer said, "Jesus is mighty to save, from the uttermost (of sin) to the uttermost (of Christ-likeness and holiness), mighty to save." In short, we were predestined for holiness. God's great imagination far exceeds our own in what we can and will become by His grace.

As noted in the editorial of the first issue of *Word & Deed*, we were convinced that the journal should strike a note immediately and clearly about the centrality of the doctrine of holiness in the Scripture and in our own theological tradition. In the first issue, a biblical foundation of holiness was presented, followed by articles on the holiness perspectives of Samuel Logan Brengle and Frederick Coutts. We stated then that we would continue our examination of the doctrine in this second issue, and are pleased to share with the readers further articles and insights into the doctrine within our larger theological context. Therefore, it is appropriate that we begin this issue with an article by William Francis on John Wesley's view of holiness, and thereby reiterate the fact that our understanding of holiness is rooted primarily and historically in John Wesley. That is not to discount the many American influences especially upon William and Catherine Booth as they concentrated on this doctrine, but merely to emphasize the primary theological foundation of the doctrine.

Wesley's many achievements for the sake of the Christ and His Kingdom are to be celebrated, not the least of which is his comprehensive theology of grace, which issued in a beautiful balanced theology. As Richard P. Heitzenrater has written in *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, "The horizon of his concern included many seemingly disparate emphases that had typically not been held together: knowl-

edge and vital piety, sacramentalism and evangelism, faith and good works, justification and sanctification, sola fidei and sola gratia, piety and mercy, personal holiness and social holiness" (p. 320). To understand Wesley's theology of grace, which is inclusive of sanctification, is to understand ourselves. We move from there to an article by Roger Green, who steps back from his editorial duties to write on the future of our Salvation Army theology. His writing, first presented as a paper to Salvationists in Sydney, Australia in 1998, is included at the insistence of this writer. Green's article moves from a focus on the past to reflection on the future, thereby underscoring the evolving nature of our theology and our movement.

In order to underscore the true significance of sanctification, we are introducing in this issue another genre of writing about the subject of holiness. We have included a sermon on holiness by Sharon Berry entitled "Broken Walls, Lasting Peace," not only for the worthiness of the sermon itself, but as a present sign that holiness must be preached, explained, taught and experienced if our people are going to understand the reality of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. We intend to remain faithful to the mission of the journal, which implies a theology that leads us to a deeper understanding of what it means to live out our doctrine in compelling ways in the world in which we find ourselves by God's grace. The sermon in Scripture, and yet with an eye to constant application of that Word, will be important to the purpose of *Word & Deed*. The reader should know of the intentional selection of a woman to write the sermon as a way of underscoring the historical importance of women in Salvation Army ministry and their importance to the ongoing formation of its theology as informed by their ministry.

All of the book reviews in this issue illuminate what Wesley termed in his great sermon of 1765 "The Scripture Way of Salvation." Some of these book reviews remind us of the great resurgence of Wesleyan studies presently taking place and the application of doctrine to the lives of believers. We encourage our readers to explore the many significant writings now available on John Wesley as a means to understanding their own theological heritage and Christian experience.

As Richard P. Heitzenrater has also noted "Wesleyan theology is a thoroughgoing theology of grace" (p. 320). We rejoice that grace is constantly present with the believer in faith issuing in works of mercy. However, we know that such expression of the doctrine of sanctification calls for constant attention, deliberate interpretation and the marriage of knowledge and vital piety which constantly demonstrate the work of holiness in the life of the believer. And part of that work moves us to

understand the relationship of sanctification at the moment of justification and entire sanctification as a subsequent experience for the believer.

It is both our intention and our prayer that this issue of *Word & Deed* will assist the reader in understanding many dimensions of the doctrine of holiness, as well as the historical discussions of the doctrine both within the Wesleyan tradition and within our own movement as a critical part of that tradition. However, a vital piety—the living out of the doctrine—is also of great importance, and perhaps this issue of the journal will benefit us all in helping us to be more intentional in our living witness. May all who read these pages find assistance in these great matters as they grow in grace, experience purity of heart and come to know God's divine imagination for this new creation.

JSR



# John Wesley and the Doctrine of Holiness

*William W. Francis*

In *A Collection of Forms of Prayer for Every Day in the Week*, first printed in 1733, John Wesley pens his personal prayer and affirmation:

O My Father, my God, I am in your hand . . . I magnify you for granting me to be born in your Church, and of religious parents; for washing me in your baptism, and instructing me in your doctrine of truth and holiness.<sup>1</sup>

While the truth of the doctrine of holiness, of “perfect love” as Wesley preferred to describe the experience, is evidenced in Scripture and throughout the history of Christendom, it was John Wesley and his followers who, through the providence of God, proclaimed to the world that the Gospel of Jesus Christ offers free salvation to all people and full salvation from all sin.

This eighteenth-century Pentecost launched what has become known as the “Holiness Movement,” which today is still proclaiming the dual truth of free and full salvation. This was the same message the Reverend William Booth preached a century and a half later to a country and a world that had largely forgotten, through the anesthesia of spiritual neglect, the freedom and power available to the believer through the work of the Holy Spirit.

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This inquiry into the doctrine of holiness as found in Wesleyanism begins with an historical background of John Wesley and his followers called the Methodists and concludes with a discussion of Wesley's concept of Christian perfection.

### **An Historical Perspective**

On June 28, 1703, John Wesley was born the fifteenth child of Samuel and Susannah Wesley. John Wesley (1703–1791) came into this world the son of a poor Anglican clergyman, the pastor of an even poorer rectory in Epworth, England.

While his early life was marked by poverty and hunger, John inherited a wealth of spiritual strength and scholarly aptitude. Both of his grandfathers were educated, Puritan, nonconformist leaders in the Church of England. They had both been among the ejected clergy of 1662. Dr. Samuel Annesley, Susannah's father, was known as "the St. Paul of the Nonconformists." John's paternal grandfather, John Westley [sic], an Oxford graduate, was described by his professors as a student of exceptional ability.

It was Susannah, however, who directly influenced John's spiritual and academic growth. Susannah was a brilliant woman who, while yet in her teens, knew Greek, Latin and French and saturated her mind with theology. While other young women her age were playing with dolls, she was reading the Patristics and wrestling with theological problems.

From five years of age on, John was carefully taught spelling, grammar, mathematics and the Bible under his mother's strict but loving tutelage. On this solid foundation was built a knowledge of the Bible, theology, English, French, Greek and Hebrew, all of which he later mastered.

### **Oxford**

On June 24, 1720, Wesley entered Christ Church, Oxford, to begin his undergraduate studies. Little is known of his life during this period except that due to his lack of money he lived almost a recluse. It was also during this period he began to struggle with his spiritual well-being. While improving his scholarship, Oxford did little to help him spiritually. "I still said my prayers," he later recalls, "both in public and in private; and read, with the Scriptures, several other books of religion . . . Yet I had not all this while so much as a notion of inward holiness."<sup>2</sup>

With the constant encouragement of his mother's letters, John began reading Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* and Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying*

(1650). "The providence of God," writes Wesley, "directing me to à Kempis's Christian Pattern, I began to see that true religion was seated in the heart and that God's law extended to all our thought as well as words and actions . . . I began to aim and pray for inward holiness."<sup>3</sup>

After reading Taylor's book, Wesley began the writing of his famed Journals, which stand today as one of the most intimate, heart-revealing memoirs of the ages. His Journals begin with a set of rules and resolutions. They are reminiscent of a pledge penned by William Booth during a similar period of spiritual struggles. Wesley's Journal commences:

A General Rule in All Actions of Life: Whenever you are to do an action, consider how God did or would do the like, and do you imitate his example.

General Rules for Employing Time:

1. Begin and end every day with God; sleep not immoderately.
2. Be diligent in your calling.
3. Employ all spare hours in religion, as able.
4. All holidays (holy-days).
5. Avoid drunkards and busybodies.
6. Avoid curiosity and all useless employments and knowledge.
7. Examine yourself every night.
8. Never on any account pass a day without setting aside at least an hour for devotion.
9. Avoid all manner of passion.

General Rules as to Intention:

1. In every act reflect on the end.
2. Begin every action in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.
3. Begin every important work with prayer.
4. Do not leave off a duty because you are tempted to do it.<sup>4</sup>

The source of the Methodist revival is at the heart of these resolutions. Basil Miller notes that “though the hand (of these resolutions) is John’s, the voice is Susannah’s.”<sup>5</sup> Her influence upon his life can hardly be overstated. She trained him to see the beauty of the Gospel, the glory and excitement of Christian service, the need for a deep commitment to Christ.

It was during this time that Wesley trained himself in the disciplines that would carry him throughout his life. He forced himself out of bed by four o’clock every morning and seldom slept later than five. By slavishly keeping his daily diary he bound himself to a careful accounting of his time so that he would not waste a moment.

Following his ordination as a deacon at Oxford in Christ Church Cathedral on October 19, 1725, Wesley was elected a Fellow of Lincoln College. He settled down to his academic duties with characteristic sobriety and fervor. The following year, however, he returned to his ailing father, now sixty-five and in critically ill health, to help him with the double parishes of Epworth and Wroote.

In 1729 John Wesley returned to the university where he continued teaching until he set sail for Georgia in 1735. These years found Wesley reading, among other works, William Law’s *Christian Perfection*, from which was sown the seeds of his own doctrine of sanctification.

### **The Holy Club**

John’s younger brother Charles had come to Oxford in 1726. Some described him as having “more genius than grace.” However, through the patient guidance and prayers of John and his mother, Charles increasingly turned his attention toward the Gospel. In fact, his zeal for holy living soon marked him as a fanatic by some of his peers.

A small group of John’s companions formed with Charles what became known as the “Holy Club.” John promptly became leader of the fellowship and was nicknamed “curator of the Holy Club.”

The Oxford community ridiculed the very idea of these “Bible Moths” who made it a rule to read the Bible daily and attend Communion weekly. The word “Methodist” was first used by the mockers in derision of the club’s strict conformity to their simple, disciplined method of Bible study and daily life. John Wesley himself describes the term in his *English Dictionary* as “one that lives according to the method laid down in the Bible.”

While John was the preacher and leader of the "Holy Club," Charles became its poet. Charles would write more than six thousand hymns in his lifetime, many of which Christians of all denominations sing today. Isaac Watts, perhaps the greatest of all hymn writers, once said that he would have given all the hymns he had written to have been the author of the group of Charles Wesley's hymns known as "Wrestling Jacob."<sup>6</sup>

George Whitefield was the third member of the group who profoundly affected the movement. Whitefield joined the "Holy Club" through reading a book Charles lent him. He became an impassioned preacher and did much to reach ordinary people with the Gospel. It was Whitefield who introduced the Wesleys to the value of preaching in the open air.

These three charter members of the Holy Club—John Wesley, Charles Wesley and George Whitefield—together sowed the seeds of the great evangelical awakening that was to sweep England and the Continent, leap across the ocean to America and in the end blossom into the Methodist Church.

During 1733 John Wesley wrote two sermons that together mark a milestone in his theological thinking. The first sermon, preached in St. Mary's Church Oxford on January 1, 1733, was based upon the text for the day ("Circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter" Romans 2:29).<sup>7</sup> The sermon centered on the need of the influences of the Holy Spirit to convert the soul. Wesley writes that the circumcision of the heart

is that habitual disposition of soul, which in the Sacred Writings is termed holiness, and which directly implies the being cleansed from sin, 'from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit,' and by consequence the being endued with those virtues which were also in Christ Jesus, the being so 'renewed in the image of our mind' as to be 'perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.'<sup>8</sup>

In simplest terms, this was Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection, seeds of which had been planted through the writings of his friend William Law. Reflecting on this sermon in a letter to John Newton in 1765, Wesley maintains that this sermon contains "all that I now teach concerning salvation from all sin, and loving God with an undivided heart."<sup>9</sup>

The second sermon concerned the import the Holy Spirit has in the individual's life. Wesley proclaims, "From Him flow all grace and virtue, by which the stains of guilt are cleansed, and we are renewed in all holy disposition, and again bear the image of our Creator."<sup>10</sup>

**Missionary to Georgia**

In 1735 John and Charles Wesley joined General James Oglethorpe's second expedition to Georgia, the New World colony he had founded and settled in 1732. John became the General's chaplain and Charles, his secretary.

In a letter penned to the Reverend John Burton on October 10, 1735, four days before embarking for America, John recorded the reasons for his venture. "My chief motive," he confessed, "to which all the rest are subordinate, is the hope of saving my soul. I hope to learn the true sense of the Gospel of Christ by preaching it to the heathen."<sup>11</sup> This transparent statement reveals a man who understands the high standard of holiness God would have him reach, but who has not yet taken the leap of faith needed to attain it. It would take the humiliation and spiritual defeat of two years spent in Georgia before John Wesley would be brought to the place where he could take that leap of faith.

He did not have to wait long for his first lesson in faith and inward holiness. God used a whale to speak to Jonah; He employed a storm and a devout group of Moravian disciples to direct John Wesley's course.

In the midst of the voyage to America, an unusually vicious storm at sea had sent John scurrying for physical and spiritual cover. For the first time in his life he felt the powerful fear of death. As he shriveled into a corner of the ship, his eye caught sight of a group of Moravians who were calmly singing a hymn. The harder the storm lashed the ship, the calmer the German disciples sang. The contentment and peace the Moravians displayed profoundly impressed him and was to affect his life-long ministry.

When the ship finally arrived in the New World on February 6, 1736, Wesley went directly to meet August G. Spangenberg, leader of the Moravian colony in Georgia. From then on, he was seldom long separated from the Moravians. They had something that he knew he lacked and desperately wanted.

His missionary endeavor in Georgia proved increasingly discouraging each day. On January 24, 1738, the entry in his Journal tragically reads:

I went to America to convert the Indians; but O! who shall convert me? Who, what is he that shall deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief? 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. Nor can I say, 'To die is gain!' ... O who will deliver me from this fear of death! What shall I do? Where shall I fly from it?<sup>12</sup>

### **Aldersgate**

Returning to London in the spring of 1738, Wesley again encountered spiritual encouragement from a Moravian, Peter Böhler (a Lutheran minister, subsequently ordained in the Moravian ministry by the sect's founder, Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf). His Journal entry for March 4 records, "I found my brother (Charles) at Oxford, recovering from his pleurisy; and with him Peter Böhler. By whom . . . I was on Sunday the 5th clearly convinced of unbelief, of the want of 'that faith whereby alone we are saved,' with the full, Christian salvation."<sup>13</sup>

Wesley's quest for genuine faith and inward holiness ended in the early evening of May 24, 1738, in a meeting house on Aldersgate Street not far from St. Paul's Cathedral. Wesley himself describes the experience in his Journal entry for that day:

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.<sup>14</sup>

Earlier that same day, John Wesley had been reading in his devotions from II Peter 1:4: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world." That evening the "great and precious Promise" became a reality in his life.

The experience so overwhelmed Wesley that he ran to his brother, Charles, who at the time was ill and resting in bed. Together they sang Charles' hymn:

Where shall my wondering soul begin?  
How shall I all to heaven aspire?  
A slave redeemed from death and sin,  
A brand plucked from eternal fire.  
How shall I equal triumphs raise,  
Or sing my great Deliverer's praise?

The importance of this event is noted even by historians such as William Lecky in his work entitled *A History of England in the Eighteenth Century*. Lecky sees this event as an epoch in the history of England.

### **The Holiness Movement**

Following the Aldersgate experience, the flames of Pentecost burned in Wesley's soul. With his brother Charles, George Whitefield and others who soon joined the revival movement, Wesley launched the great evangelical revival that boldly proclaimed Christ's offer of free salvation to all people and full salvation from all sin.

In the decades and centuries that followed the birth of Methodism, God raised other groups to revive and emphasize the doctrine of holiness. These schisms include the Methodist New Connexion (1797); the Wesleyan Methodist Church (1843); the Free Methodist Church (1860), which presaged a post-Civil war dispute over the doctrine of sanctification; and The Salvation Army (1865), a split from the Methodist New Connexion. The Salvation Army became one of Methodism's many "grandchildren." Disputes over the doctrines of sanctification cost the Methodists several other defections to the holiness movement later in the century—the Church of the Nazarene (1907) being one of the more well-known twentieth century offshoots.

### **Theological Prospective**

In his theology, as in his daily life, John Wesley was a pragmatist. As easily as he changed liturgical practices to conform to human need, he rearranged his theology to coincide with his own experience. Whenever a theory conflicted with his experience of the nature of God, he dismissed the theory without reservation.

John Wesley's understanding of Christian perfection is therefore rooted in his personal experience with the Holy Spirit. This personal quest for holiness supplied the focus for Wesley's theology. His concept, however, is not a perfectionism that substitutes external demonstrations for inward grace, but is an evangelical perfection of the heart obtained only through God's grace. Wesley contends:

We not only allow, but earnestly contend ... that there is no perfection in this life which implies any dispensation from attending all the ordinances of God, or from doing good unto all men ... There is no such perfection in this life that implies an entire deliverance, either from ignorance or mistake, in things not essential to salvation, or from manifold temptations ... We cannot find any ground in Scripture to suppose that any inhabitant of a house of clay is wholly exempt, either from bodily infirmities, or from ignorance of many things; or to imagine any is incapable of mistake, or falling into divers temptations.<sup>15</sup>

Wesley further explains the definition of Christian perfection in a letter to a Miss March dated April 7, 1763:

Thus much is certain: they that love God with all their heart and all men as themselves are scripturally perfect. And surely such there are; otherwise the promise of God would be a mere mockery of human weakness. Hold fast this. But then remember, on the other hand, you have this treasure in an earthen vessel; you dwell in a poor, shattered house of clay, which presses down the immortal spirit. Hence all your thoughts, words and actions are so imperfect, so far from coming up to the standard (that law of love which, but for the corruptible body, your soul would answer in all instances), that you may well say till you go to Him you love: 'Every moment, Lord, / I need The Merit of Thy death.'<sup>16</sup>

While outward perfection is an unattainable goal, inward perfection—perfection of the heart—is available to every believer. This heart perfection Wesley preferred to describe as Perfect Love, but was often forced to use other terms because his opponents distorted his meaning.

In his defining work, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, John Wesley succinctly outlines his theology of Christian perfection:

In the year 1764, upon a review of the whole subject, I wrote down the sum of what I had observed in the following short propositions:

1. There is such a thing as perfection; for it is again and again mentioned in Scripture.
2. It is not so early as justification; for justified persons are to 'go on unto perfection' (Hebrews 6:1).
3. It is not so late as death; for St. Paul speaks of living men that were perfect (Philippians 3:15).
4. It is not absolute. Absolute perfection belongs not to man, nor to angels, but to God alone.
5. It does not make a man infallible: None is infallible, while he remains in the body.
6. Is it sinless? It is not worth while to contend for a term. It is 'salvation from sin.'
7. It is 'perfect love' (I John 4:18). This is the essence of it; its properties, or inseparable fruits, are, rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks (I Thessalonians 5:16 ff).
8. It is improvable. 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.

9. It is amissible, capable of being lost; of which we have numerous instances. But we were not thoroughly convinced of this till five or six years ago.

10. It is constantly both proceeded and followed by a gradual work.<sup>17</sup>

### **Christian Perfection—Its Essence**

For Wesley, as for the disciples at Pentecost, salvation was the initial, all-important experience of God's Spirit. He further taught the possibility of sanctification, an experience of perfect love. This second work of grace occurs when the Holy Spirit so fills the believer that he or she loses a desire to sin, though still subject to human failings. Wesley believed in the possibility of entire sanctification or Christian perfection in this life. Indeed, near the end of his life he claimed that the propagation of this very teaching was the chief reason for which God had raised up the Methodists.<sup>18</sup>

An emphasis upon Christ's universal atonement marks his theology. All who accepted Christ would be saved, and those who sought diligently after holiness of life would experience deliverance from the propensity to sin. For Wesley, this was an attainable promise. In his noted essay on Christian perfection, Wesley explains:

It (Christian perfection) is the giving God all our heart; it is one desire and design ruling all our tempers. It is the devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body, and substance to God. In another view, it is all the mind which was in Christ, enabling us to walk as Christ walked. It is the circumcision of the heart from all filthiness, all inward as well as outward pollution. It is a renewal of the heart in the whole image of God, the full likeness of Him that created it. In yet another, it is the loving God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves ... this is the whole and sole perfection, as a train of writings prove to a demonstration, which I have believed and taught for these forty years, from the year 1725 to the year 1765.<sup>19</sup>

Wesley believed that this perfection was initiated at the point of salvation. He taught that when a person truly believed, he or she was justified, regenerated and initially sanctified. That is, at the same moment there is a deliverance from sinning, a breaking of the power of sin and a beginning of holiness or perfection.

A careful study of Wesley's theology will show that he believed in both gradual and instantaneous sanctification. On this point, some of Wesley's disciples have

“out-Wesleyed Wesley” by overemphasizing the instantaneous experience of his teaching. Wesley clearly taught both gradual and instantaneous sanctification and strove continually to keep the two aspects of the holy life in proper balance.

The result of this process/crisis is holiness of heart—perfect love. Love was the unmistakable mark of a sanctified person. In a letter to Mr. Lawrence Coughlan in 1768, Wesley remarks:

You never learned, either from my conversation, or preaching, or writings, that ‘holiness consisted in a glow of joy.’ I constantly told you quite the contrary; I told you it was love; the love of God and our neighbor; the image of God stamped on the heart; the life of God in the soul of man; the mind that was in Christ, enabling us to walk as Christ also walked. . . . This perfection cannot be a delusion, unless the Bible be a delusion too; I mean, ‘loving God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves.’<sup>20</sup>

Perfect love is therefore the essence and result of Christian perfection. Holiness of heart is neither an act nor a goal—it is an inward quality given a believer through faith and by God’s grace. The outward actions will be imperfect and the goal unattainable, but at the heart will be perfect love.

### **Christian Perfection—Its Goal**

While the experience is not synonymous with the goal, the sanctified believer has perfection as his or her ultimate goal. Wesley, however, always insisted that the goal of entire sanctification be placed on the proper level—that is, not too high. The goal is a perfection consistent with human existence and kept within biblical bounds. Those who oppose or misunderstand Wesley’s teaching have usually placed the goal too high. This high goal is what we referred to earlier as “perfectionism.”

Though Wesley placed spiritual “perfection” in the reach of all, he believed that only a few attained it. Many, he felt, who attained the experience, later lost it, but could regain it. It was a privilege for all, and all Christians should strive for it. He did not, however, teach that its attainment in this life was necessary for salvation. Christian perfection, the higher way, is however, within the reach of every Christian.

Methodist preachers are still asked when taken into conference membership “Are you going on to perfection? Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?” In these two questions we see the goals of perfection Wesley taught. In Wesley’s theology there are two perfections. One is attainable in this life and is reached when the heart is made pure and love alone reigns. The second perfection is the goal ahead of the Christian and is never attained in this life, but only when God makes a believer

perfect in eternity. The first relates to the moral corruption that remains in the heart of the believer; the second with the outward conduct of the Christian's life that is continually improving—striving for the perfection that will only be attained in heaven.

### **Christian Perfection—Its Fruit**

No man was ever more positive than John Wesley that holiness evidenced itself in a life of active, strenuous obedience to the will of God. As Albert Outler accurately phrased it, Wesley's characteristic emphasis was that we are pardoned "in order to participate."<sup>21</sup> The holy life is not an accomplished act, but is a continual walk of faith. If a person does not constantly abide in Christ and grow in holiness of life, he or she is cut off from the Vine. Wesley viewed the "if" recorded in John's Gospel as the most dangerous pitfall to holy living: "If a man abide not in me, Jesus said, he is cast forth as a branch that is thrown away and withers . . ." (John 15:6). For Wesley, believing must be both a moral act and a continuing moral commitment.

We say that the Ss on Salvation Army uniform stand for "Saved to Serve." This is the proclamation of holiness teaching whenever and wherever it has been faithfully expounded. The most dangerous deterrent we face as sanctified individuals or as a holy people are that we might become, as some have suggested, "Saved to Sit." The Christian's call is to "go—teach—preach—disciple." Wesley and his spiritual children followed the Great Commission as if their life depended on it—and truly the life of "perfect love" or "holiness" depends fully upon it.

John Wesley's emphasis on faith in action is best seen in considering his favorite text for preaching on faith and good works: "... The thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love" (Galatians 5:6). For Wesley, faith both "is worked" by love and "works" by love.<sup>22</sup>

Wesley believed that the fruit of Christian perfection was not only an active strenuous walk of Christian service, but a pure exemplary life. In the preface to the second volume of hymns published in the spring of 1741, Wesley vividly illustrates the life of holiness:

This great gift of God, the salvation of our souls, is no other than the image of God fresh stamped on our hearts. It is a renewal in the spirit of our minds, after the likeness of him that created them. God has now laid the axe unto the root of the tree, purifying their hearts by faith, and 'cleansing all the thoughts of their hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit.' Having this hope, that they shall see God as he is, they purify themselves even as he is pure; and are holy, as he that has called them is holy, in all manner of conversation. Not

that they have already attained all that they shall attain, either are already (in this sense) perfect. But they daily go on from strength to strength; beholding now, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same image, from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord.<sup>23</sup>

Wesley viewed Christian perfection as a vigorous calling to life, not an escape from the realities of this world's sin. The holy life is a life of compassion and action. While the preaching of holiness had many champions across the centuries between the apostles and Wesley, it was John Wesley and his movement that proclaimed the experience with fervor and zeal. Much of pre-Wesleyan preaching of holiness was theoretical and abstract. There was little evangelical urgency to the doctrine. This was due to the understanding of the experience itself. Those in the Reformed tradition held that holiness was either entirely the one-sided work of God, or it was the logical outcome of any earnest Christian who strove to be holy. Sanctification would then occur imperceptibly.

It was at this point where Wesley introduced a radical shift in emphasis. Wesley taught that holiness was not acquired by a lifelong struggle, but could be received by simply seeking the experience and claiming the blessing by faith. John Wesley preached holiness as a present privilege that is attainable by all and that calls for immediate and positive action.

John Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection has a clear relevance for today's world. Today, as ever, the world needs people who are perfect—a perfection, that is, of motive and love. It yearns for a holy people—a holiness derived from Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit. The world today cries for a pure people—a purity of desire and loyalty of heart to God alone. The world is pleading with its dying breath for a people empowered by the Holy Spirit.

## Notes

1. Frank Whaling, ed., *John and Charles Wesley—Selected Writings and Hymns*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), p. 80.
2. Basil Miller, *John Wesley*, (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1949), p.21.
3. John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 18:243–244.
4. Basil Miller, *John Wesley*, (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1949), p.24.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
6. Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), p. 300.
7. John Wesley, *Sermons*, ed. Albert C. Outler, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 1:401–414.
8. *Ibid.* 1:402–403.
9. John Wesley, *Letters*, ed. John Telford, vol. 4, (London: The Epworth Press, 1931), 4:299.
10. Basil Miller, *John Wesley*, (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1949), p. 38.
11. John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley—Letters*, ed. Frank Baker, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 1:439.
12. John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 18:211.
13. *Ibid.*, 18:228.
14. *Ibid.*, 18:249–250.
15. Robert W. Burtner and Robert E. Chiles, eds. *John Wesley's Theology—A Collection of His Works*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982) p. 206.
16. John Wesley, *Letters*, ed. John Telford, (London: The Epworth Press, 1931), 4:208.
17. John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson, (London: Wesley Conference Office, 1872; reprinted Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 9:441–442.
18. *Ibid.*, 8:238.
19. John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson, (London: Wesley Conference Office, 1872; reprinted Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 11:444.
20. *The Works of John Wesley*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1984), 3:341–342.
21. Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace—John Wesley's Practical Theology*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), p.168.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 175.
23. Frank Whaling, ed., *John and Charles Wesley—Selected Writings and Hymns*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), pp. 310–311.

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# FACING HISTORY: OUR WAY AHEAD FOR A SALVATIONIST THEOLOGY

*Roger J. Green*

## **Introduction**

This is, by the grace of God, our theological moment in the history of The Salvation Army. And what a moment it is. We are indeed a privileged people to be alive at this time in our Army's history and to have the opportunity to participate in ways which will prove to be a means of grace to our own people, to the wider Christian Church and to the world which we serve in love.

However, I am convinced that the way forward for us is to look back at our own history, to acknowledge and embrace that history and to move forward with both clarity and certainty of who we are as a people of God and of what God has equipped us and lead us to do. When I speak of that history, I am not speaking of history in general. As colorful and as exciting as the history of our warfare has been—filled with stories of absolutely committed men and women who did great things for God and for His Kingdom—it is not that history in which our primary interest lies. We are concerned first and foremost with our theological history, with our doctrinal history. Our engagement is with the theology which drove us to this moment and

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positioned us within the Body of Christ in this exciting and unique time. Only as we understand that history will we know ourselves and realize that place to which God has led us.

Perhaps no one has understood this better than the person after whom this lectureship is named, General Frederick Couotts. He had a historian's fascination with Army history, but he also had a theologian's eye for what is of critical importance in shaping a movement for Christ and for His Kingdom. His interest, for example, in the doctrine of holiness is a demonstration of that. Any who heard General Couotts preach, whether from the most humble Army pulpit or from the pulpit of Coventry Cathedral or the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, knew immediately that here was a man convicted by the Word of the Lord with an interest for the salvation of the people and the belief that God had raised up and equipped an Army for such a task at such a moment.

As a way of our facing history, I would like to underscore the means available to us whereby we find ourselves theologically. We will then move to what we have discovered as we have come to grips with our theological history. Finally, we can make some suggestions as to what the theological pilgrimage is which lies before us in our theological moment.

### **Six Present Signs**

I am convinced that there are six signs of our facing history in this way, and thus leading us into the future. The first is the publication of a new doctrine book entitled *Salvation Story*. The Army, perhaps unwittingly, has accepted in some measure the Protestant notion of Christian doctrine as never static but always unfolding in every generation. Historical Protestantism, beginning with Luther and Calvin, has understood that the Christian faith is in jeopardy in every generation of being lost or so solidified that it lacks the life of the gospel. Because of this, every generation must reconfess the whole of the Christian faith all over again in ways and in language that bring the gospel to life and bring forth the meaning of the gospel already inherent in that eternal message. That is why Protestantism has given to us such people as Friedrich Schleiermacher, John Wesley, Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. These were people who understood the necessity of redeeming the Christian faith for their day in creative ways. While we do not necessarily agree with all Protestant theological reconstruction, we can at least understand the necessity of the process behind

such restatements of the faith. The new doctrine book is a sign of such doctrinal understanding, and it is the task of the preacher and the teacher to help our people to comprehend the very nature of doctrine as explicated in this Protestant way.

If only we could convince ourselves that there is nothing sacred about eleven doctrines, when we consider that in our own theological history we moved quite easily from seven doctrines to ten doctrines to eleven doctrines. However, to move past eleven might prove to be quite impossible, even if we do not say anything in those eleven doctrines about the resurrection of our Lord, which the New Testament considers to be central to an understanding of the full revelation of God in Christ, and key to a full understanding of atonement!

The second sign is one in which I have been personally involved for many years, and which I commend to you, and that is the publication of a new journal entitled *Word & Deed: A Journal of Salvation Army Theology and Ministry*. Serious discussion about this journal commenced in the 1980s, but the Army was not yet ready for such a journal. Further reflections about the journal came to life again in the early 1990s when Dr. Jonathan Raymond, presently the Provost of Greenville College in Greenville, Illinois and I went to the Army with a renewed vision for this journal. Salvation Army leadership in the United States formed a commission to study this possibility, and although the commission initially turned down the proposal, the concept of a journal was finally accepted.

We trust that this will be a venue, available not only to all Salvationists interested in theological, doctrinal, historical and missional matters, but to our Christian friends who share with us our vision for theological education. When one thinks of the impact of the *Mennonite Quarterly Review* or *Methodist History* not only upon denominational thinking, but upon the Church at large, one realizes that we have been theologically remiss in setting forth our own theological heritage and tradition for the sake of our mission. We believe that the title of the journal has been wisely and well chosen—*Word & Deed*—because the emphases are upon our theology as it gives life and force to our mission and ministry.

Thirdly, as you are aware, the International Spiritual Life Commission, convened by General Paul A. Rader in 1996, has now published its initial report, and the culmination of that report is found in "A Call to Salvationists." Needless to say, there is a wealth of Biblical and theological written material that supports that call as well as the remainder of the report published by the commission. The commission

was convened to look at many areas of the spiritual life of our movement, with priority given to examining the Army's position on the sacraments. My personal involvement in this commission will be perhaps the greatest contribution I will make to the Army.

If I may take a moment of personal reflection here, there were two things that struck me immediately as we commenced our work. First, I was ever grateful for the Biblical and theological awareness and passion of the members of the commission. All came to the table with a wealth of intellectual and spiritual training, with a heart for the work of the Army and with a desire to challenge the Army to faithful witness to the gospel. Second, I was struck with the grace of God that was immediately available to us in our deliberations. Were it not for that constant grace and the ready intercession of the Holy Spirit, we could have become easily overwhelmed by our work and divided in our opinions beyond repair. The problems I thought were unique to the Army in America, I found, were problems in other parts of the Army world as well. And we knew that we would eventually see our way forward, even in the very difficult deliberations on the sacraments. The commission reflected the complexity of the arguments from around the Army world, from various cultures and from different traditions of Biblical interpretation.

Fourth, I am intrigued by the work being done by Major Peter Farthing on *The Officer*. I believe that the new format reflects a renewed vision for what that publication has been in our own history and what it can be for leading the way into the future. What is being done in that publication does not duplicate what is being done in *Word & Deed*, and so there is no intention of overlap in approach. However, there is always the possibility that one will complement the other as both publications have always the potential of enhancing the mission of the Army.

The fifth sign is what is being accomplished here in this place and in which I, as an educator, find a great deal of interest. I am convinced that historically the weakest link in our ministry has been our lack of attention to a clear and consistent theology of education and to a lack of resources for the education of our officers and our soldiers. It is true that we have been an active people, driven initially by a post-millennial vision of winning the world for Jesus. However, it is also true that many of the early officers came to The Salvation Army already with an informed mind and that their training as officers was a professional training, often very brief, which complemented their training previous to coming to the Army. Early leadership of the

Army demonstrates this—Booth—Tucker, Brengle, Railton. Very few officers in the early Army came from Whitechapel Road, and many of them came from Methodist or other Dissenting backgrounds.

The question needs to be asked—why have we been negligent in our educational endeavors at the local, national and international level? I am convinced that are three answers to this perplexing question. First, just as we have not always been careful in our theological life in the past, so we have not always been careful about developing some kind of educational philosophy. However, this is not surprising in that the history of the Church has demonstrated that a seriousness about theological life has always produced reflection about an educational system which will enhance and develop that theology. These two areas of thinking are inextricably joined.

Second, we have not traditionally given the teacher and the preacher (the two offices most responsible for the education of our people) the place of importance they have held in the historic Christian Church. Indeed, our Lord himself fulfilled primarily the office of teacher. Many times in our history, the teacher/preacher/scholar has been marginalized rather than given the place of central importance that the life of the Church demands. It is time now to affirm that the teacher, the theologian, the preacher is the person at the center of our institutional life. It is time now to affirm that the life of the mind demands times of reflection, meditation and study. It is time now to initiate the importance of the sabbatical for some officers so that their teaching and writing can be enhanced, not for their own gratification, but for the sake of the Church and for the glory of God.

Finally, we have not held our people accountable for what their eyes have seen and what their ears have heard. Part of the function of the office of the preacher or teacher lies precisely at this delicate place. However, the people cannot be held accountable if the preaching is not Biblically centered, textually controlled and exegetically sound. And the people cannot be held accountable if our teaching is not supported by the clearest philosophy, the best research, the closest study and the wisest possible enhancement of our ministry.

The final sign is one which should both encourage us and challenge us at the same time. The Army is being discovered not only by Salvationists, but by the broader scholarly world. Many would be familiar with two recent works, the first being Glen K. Horridge's excellent work entitled *The Salvation Army: Origins and Early Days: 1865-1900* (Godalming, Surrey, England: Ammonite Press, 1993), and Norman H.

Murdoch's *Origins of The Salvation Army* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994), a publication which arose primarily from his doctoral dissertation for the University of Cincinnati. Added to this would be R. David Rightmire's recent biography entitled *Salvationist Samurai: Gunpei Yamamuro and the Rise of The Salvation Army in Japan* (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1997).<sup>1</sup> Two recent dissertations on the Army include Pamela Jane Walker's "Pulling the Devil's Kingdom Down: Gender and Popular Culture in The Salvation Army, 1864–1895" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey—New Brunswick, 1992), and Diane Winston's "Boozers, Brass Bands and Hallelujah Lassies: The Salvation Army and American Commercial Culture, 1880–1918" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, and under contract to Harvard University Press). Dr. Winston has also read papers on various aspects of the Army at scholarly conferences.

Several carefully researched articles for journals or books are being written on the Army, too numerous to mention here.<sup>2</sup> Two recent ones include Lynne Marks, "The Hallelujah Lassies: Working-Class Women in The Salvation Army in English Canada, 1882–1892," in Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde, eds., *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), and a very revealing and informative article by Dean Rapp of Wheaton College entitled "The British Salvation Army, the Early Film Industry and Urban Working-Class Adolescents, 1897–1918," (*Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 7, No. 2 1996, pp. 157–188). In that article Rapp reminds the reader that The Salvation Army "was the first British Christian organization to exhibit commercial films and to make some of its own."<sup>3</sup>

This, of course, provides a challenge for those interested in accuracy of historical interpretation as well as a fairly evaluated understanding of the theology that brought the Army into existence and sustains it still. We must be prepared to address the world of scholarship on its own level, coming to that world with an understanding of historical methodologies and theological interpretive methods and procedures. Nothing less will do here as the spotlight of scholarship shines brighter and brighter upon us. Likewise, we state clearly and unequivocally that we are not interested in scholarship for scholarship's sake. We have neither the need nor the desire to prove ourselves to the broader scholarly world. Our interest in history and theology is driven not by scholarship alone, but by scholarship joined with ministry. We are driven by our mission, not by some cultural notion of acceptance and recognition in the academy. The examination of motivation is absolutely critical at this very point.

### **What We Have Discovered**

Because this is our theological moment, and because we are able to see with a clarity that was impossible in the past, we are engaged in a process of self-discovery which is at the same time thrilling and yet sometimes a bit problematic. However, as a basic methodological approach to this self-discovery we affirm at the outset that we believe God to be the author of all truth. There is no truth—historical or theological—to be avoided. Likewise, there is nothing false to be held onto just because we have always believed something to be true which we now find is indeed false.

That self-discovery has commenced with the means I have already mentioned, and I would like to deal now with some areas that demand our attention, the first being an historical analysis of who we have been, and are and will continue to be as a unique people of God. I have long been convinced that the only way to approach a correct historical analysis that leads to a truthful institutional self-understanding is to impose the sect/Church distinctions developed in the discipline of sociology upon ourselves.<sup>4</sup>

I believe that we have to understand ourselves as a sectarian movement with many of the sectarian characteristics that evolved, not surprisingly, into a denomination. While we acknowledge the theological awareness of William and Catherine Booth and others around them in many areas, we recognize too that they had a weak ecclesiology, and we still pay the price for that weakness even today. Had they understood or been willing to admit that their sectarian movement was evolving even during their lifetimes (especially William's who lived until 1912), I believe that we would have inherited a stronger sense of who we are as part of the Body of Christ. William's ecclesiology was weak, I believe, for two reasons.

First, William Booth was a postmillennialist, and we are only now beginning to understand the impact of this postmillennial theology upon the early Salvation Army, which Booth and others were convinced was positioned to win the entire world for Jesus. Postmillennial theology does not comport well with a strong ecclesiology, especially when one's doctrine of the Church is seen primarily through Army lenses. Booth believed that the Army was uniquely equipped by God for the purpose of winning the world, and he would be happy for other Christians to join him, but he would be happier still if they would first see the light and become Salvationists! The fact of the matter is that Booth was very pragmatic; he sometimes spoke of the Army as a movement for salvation purposes and sometimes as a church and even referred to Army officers occasionally as clergymen and clergywomen.<sup>5</sup>

Second, in 1882 the Anglican Church approached the Army about the possibility of merging with that community of faith. The merger did not take place for various reasons, but it did appear after those discussions that Booth wanted to distance himself a bit from the institutional Church, and it is no small wonder that it was after those deliberations that the Army decided to discontinue the practice of the sacraments. This in itself was a sign that the doctrine of holiness put forward especially by Catherine took precedence over any ecclesiology, and we went on our sacramental way, a fact with which the International Spiritual Life Commission had to deal at great length. William Booth's article on this issue in the January 17, 1883 issue of *The War Cry* might even be interpreted by some as a reluctant letting go of sacramental observance, but at a deeper level might have also been an indication of an ecclesiology which was not sufficient to sustain the comprehensiveness of Catherine's holiness theology, by which she reasoned that all of life is a visible sign of God's invisible grace and no particular observance—especially one so ritualized by most existing denominations—was needed to have access to that free grace.<sup>6</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this paper to deal with the many ways in which we have evolved (and are still evolving) from sect to Church. However, this is a historical fact with which we need to come to terms. From both a historical and a theological point of view, the only way to do so is to recognize and embrace the fact, to recognize that God is the God of history as well of creation and therefore see our evolution into a Church as directed by that God of history and finally to accept our historical life now by deciding what sectarian characteristics to embrace and which to let go. Such work, however, cannot be done apart from deliberate intention. The only way to come to terms with this is to call an international conference on sect/Church distinctions and on evolution from sect to Church and finally and fully to embrace who we have been, who we are now and who we intend to be in the future with the help of the grace of God. This, I believe, must be done without apology, but with resoluteness.

While we cannot deal with the scope of this project, I would like to suggest two areas merely as examples and illustrations of this point. The first is our millennial position. In our sectarian life we are postmillennialists. Even our present *Song Book* retains some of the great postmillennial theology that drove us (sometimes frantically) to win the whole world for Jesus. However, not only are we not postmillennialists (and who could possibly be a postmillennialist in the twentieth century?), but we do not have any particular millennial vision or historical goal that drives and motivates

us as William Booth's postmillennialism drove the early Army. We believe that the world is getting worse and that some day the Lord will return. Beyond that we do not say much. Likewise, postmillennialism accounted in large measure, along with the radical commitment of women in ministry, for the tremendous growth both of The Christian Mission and of The Salvation Army, a growth we have not been able to sustain. However, that is not a word meant for discouragement, but a word which comes to grips with the realities of a sectarian movement that evolves into a Church by the time of the second or third generation.

A second area, only by way of illustration, is the wearing of the uniform. While my own historical analysis forces me to reject a postmillennial vision of history while at the same time trying to understand the Army's future participation as the history of the next millennium unfolds, that same sect/Church historical analysis forces me to embrace the wearing of the uniform. Which sectarian characteristics do we let go, which do we retain and why?

In any discussion of the uniform, it is important to understand that the uniform was seen by William and Catherine Booth as sacramental—it was a visible sign of God's invisible grace, a fact lost on many of our people today. It is true that it was also a levelling influence—all were equal before God—and one which Wesley himself had been tempted to introduce into his societies. And it is also true that it was a sign of stepping out of the world. However, at its heart, it was a sacramental sign.

In that I do not see The Salvation Army—or any other denomination for that matter—as some kind of a disembodied spirit, so also I cannot in any way envision an Army apart from the uniform. In a day of rather colorless—not to mention a-theological—community churches (at least in the North American experience), this is not a time to become another community church, but rather it is the time to identify ourselves clearly and without hesitation as an Army for God. I have long been convinced that the Army uniform opens more doors than it closes, and that our people would wear the uniform more proudly if they understood it to be a visible sign of God's invisible grace. I am further convinced that we will be able to come to the table of fellowship and dialogue with our brothers and sisters in Christ only as we are prepared to bring to the Church some distinctives that will contribute to the life of the Church. The uniform is one of those distinctives because it is a desperately needed symbol of service for the sake of the Kingdom in a desperately individualized and fractured world. Here is a part of our sectarian history which I believe it is incumbent upon us to embrace if we intend to keep faith with our own

history while at the same time identifying ourselves in some clear way as a unique people of God for the sake of the Church and in service to the world.

Another aspect of self-discovery deals with what I call a recovery of memory about our theological tradition. Such recovery begins with a rejection and moves to an affirmation. The rejection is that of saying a resounding no to any among us who would try to claim that our movement has not had a proper theological base and even that the founders of the Army were not much concerned with theology. One of my many problems with Begbie's biography of William Booth entitled *The Life of General William Booth* is that Begbie treats William Booth as though he was not really free to do what he had to do until he put theology behind him. Speaking of Booth's early days in Nottingham, Begbie claims that "Years were to pass before he broke free from sectarianism . . ." He reiterated such sentiment when he wrote that "for years he was plagued by theology," and commended William Booth for being such a spirit that "could revolt passionately from orthodoxy."<sup>8</sup>

To read the history of our movement from such an anti-theological bias is to do a serious injustice to who we are and who we have been. Indeed, the opposite of Begbie's analysis is fact—both William and Catherine Booth were people of profound theological insights and convictions. The question to be settled is this—what was the root of those convictions? I hold that these people were first people of the Bible and secondly people whose primary theological influence came largely from a Wesleyan theological tradition. Both were nurtured in Wesleyan theology, and thus the theology of both The Christian Mission and of The Salvation Army reflected primarily a Wesleyan orientation. In spite of variations on Wesleyan themes by people whom William and Catherine admired like Charles Grandison Finney and Phoebe Palmer, the Wesley who was known by the Booths and the early Army came largely through hearing Wesleyan preaching, participating in the Wesleyan class meetings, reading the biographies of Wesley and singing the hymns of Charles and John Wesley. Anyone who studies William Booth may take his claim at the age of twenty at face value and as indicative of the view of William Booth throughout his lifetime:

I worshipped everything that bore the name of Methodist. To me there was one God, and John Wesley was his prophet. I had devoured the story of his life. No human compositions seemed to me to be comparable to his writings, and to the hymns of his brother Charles, and all that was wanted, in my estimation, for the salvation of the world was the faithful carrying into practice of the letter and the spirit of his instructions.<sup>9</sup>

This, then, was the doctrinal tradition which formed and shaped us, which gave birth to our doctrines, which provided a theological vision for the future and which was expressed in sermon, song and testimony. We have too long neglected this birth-right, and the theological moment is making demands upon us now. Foremost among those demands is that we not only comprehend in some rational and historical way our heritage, but that we embrace it and interpret the reality of who we are with that tradition in mind.<sup>10</sup>

This, I might add, is the precise intention of the first two issues of *Word & Deed*. We were deliberate about reclaiming what is rightfully ours and what has been sorely neglected for an often amorphous evangelical theology. We have given the first two issues to the Biblical and Wesleyan doctrine of holiness, realizing that that doctrine provides the central theological motif of our life together and is the doctrine by which we interpret and live out our common life. If, as has been said, sanctification is taking justification seriously, then the doctrine of holiness is the proper interpretive milieu for understanding and comprehending the central Biblical doctrine of justification by faith.

A large part of facing history means being specific at this very point. As we face history and face ourselves, we look directly into a Wesleyan theological framework. A central task before us is that of understanding that Wesleyan history and how precisely it impacted on our own theological history and therefore how it informs us today. To give close attention to Wesley and succeeding history is to look at ourselves. Only within this framework of self-understanding can we come to the table of fellowship and discussion with Christian brothers and sisters, and only with this self-understanding will we have something significant to offer to the conversation.

This leads naturally to a third area of discovery—that of methodology. What are the guiding principles by which we interpret the Scriptures that so inform our lives? What are the means by which we understand our own theological existence today? How shall we continue to approach the question of whether what we believe is true? How can we have a doctrinal assurance by which we will live out our institutional life in significant ways into the future God has planned for us?

I contend that the Wesleyan quadrilateral is an appropriate interpretive way and should be understood and embraced in our life together.<sup>11</sup> This quadrilateral provides not only a theological method by which to live, but also grants a religious authority to our common life beyond mere personal opinion or private experience.

The quadrilateral begins with the priority of Scripture in the life of the believer and the life of the Church. However, in that all people interpret Scripture, Wesley realized from his Anglican background and training that the means by which the Bible should be interpreted must be tradition, reason and experience. As has been noted:

Scripture continued to represent the primary source of religious authority; all others were secondary though complementary sources in the search for religious truth. These secondary sources served to confirm, evaluate and apply what was found in Scripture. Wesley correlated each element into a gestalt-like understanding of religious truths that did justice both to the rational content of Christianity and to the vital, spiritual piety characteristic of a personal relationship with God. Throughout his writings Wesley sought to develop a dynamic biblical theology that focused on a wholistic conception of salvation and issued in a vital Christian philosophy of life.<sup>12</sup>

We Salvationists embrace the primacy of the written Word as a way of revealing the enfleshed Word, even Jesus Christ our Lord. That is settled with our first doctrine. We have followed William Booth in moving too quickly, however, to personal experience as the primary means of interpreting that Word. Here Booth parted from Wesley in theological method, although not intentionally. He did not have the same privilege of his spiritual mentor in theological training and said little if anything about the critical importance of the tradition of the Church and reason as complementary sources to the truths of the Bible and interpretive tools for understanding the text.

It is precisely here where we must affirm our Wesleyan heritage—sometimes in spite of our own religious and theological history. We consider the tradition of the Church to be of vital importance in determining theological truth and religious authority. Indeed, Salvationists have too long considered themselves disconnected from the historical Church and have failed to realize that our roots are in the Church, the body of Christ, brought into existence by Christ and living for the sake of the Kingdom of God until the final consummation of history. We look, therefore, not only to our own history, not only to Wesleyan history and not only to the nineteenth century to determine the truths of Scripture. We look to the tradition and teaching of the historic, orthodox Church and regard that tradition not as separatists or sectarians, but as members of that body by the grace of God.

We also consider reason to be of utmost importance. We explicitly and carefully renounce any in our midst who would pit reason against experience, as though we can serve God with our hearts but not with our minds; we oppose any attitude which

implies that clear thinking is secondary to warm experience as though God were not the creator of our minds, as though God did not grant us by his grace the ability to think and to reason; we take our stand against all denials, explicit or implicit, of the full and gracious creation of God, which we believe is redeemed at the moment of salvation as we begin to conform to the image of God within us. This is not to say that we are rationalists who deny any authority beyond our own personal thinking. That may be one of the tenets of the post-modern world and the post-Christian world, but we fervently deny that. It is to take Wesley's admonition seriously even these many years later: "I advise you never to use the words, wisdom, reason or knowledge by way of reproach. On the contrary, pray that you yourself may abound in them more and more. If you mean worldly wisdom, useless knowledge, false reasoning, say so; and throw away the chaff, but not the wheat."<sup>13</sup>

Finally, we need to say a word about experience. Here is the place which has so often become the touchstone of theology for our movement. Here lies both danger and glory at the same time. The danger of experience, of course, is that our experiences and our feelings come and go. When they are not grounded in Scripture, and further in the teachings of the Church and in reason, our experiences can beget all kinds of strange and wonderful thoughts and expressions. We must always recognize such danger. A second admonition of Wesley's is helpful here:

Beware of that danger of pride, enthusiasm. Oh, keep at the utmost distance from it! Give no place to a heated imagination. Do not hastily ascribe things to God. Do not easily suppose dreams, voices, impressions, visions, or revelations to be from God. They may be from Him. They may be from nature. They may be from the devil. Therefore, 'believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God.' Try all things by the written word, and let all bow down before it. You are in danger of enthusiasm every hour, if you depart ever so little from Scripture; yea, or from the plain, literal meaning of any text, taken in connection with the context. And so you are, if you despise or lightly esteem reason, knowledge, or human learning; every one of which is an excellent gift of God, and may serve the noblest purposes.<sup>14</sup>

The glory, of course, is that God has given us a heart with which to worship, a mouth to praise him, hands to clap, feet to dance and imagination to create in rejoicing in God our Savior. We do not despise our experiences, but rejoice in them freely and without reservation when we recognize their place in our lives. We have no intention of denying the place of experience, but we recognize that there is no sustaining power in experience apart from Scripture, tradition, and reason.

### **The Way Forward**

In conclusion, I would like to make some reference to our common life together for the future. This analysis would be incomplete without an envisioning of what our future may hold, and I would like to make some suggestions as to how we in the Army may embrace that future with the full confidence of the leading of the Lord into that future, just as He has faithfully guided us in the past. Here I make only four suggestions.

First, any envisioning of the future must of necessity embrace a view of history. The postmillennial theology of the Booths simply will not do here. However, instead of some kind of millennial theology (prevalent in some evangelical circles in America), I think it is time once again to understand history in terms of the Kingdom of God, the primary reference of our Lord. It is time for us to be gripped once again by the radical proclamation of Jesus when He went to Galilee and proclaimed "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). To me, this historic reality is as true now as when it was first proclaimed, and is being demonstrated in power every day by the work of the Church.

I think that we should accommodate our language to the language of the Bible, preach about the Kingdom of God, sing about the Kingdom of God and help our people to live out their lives in that Kingdom and for the sake of that Kingdom. The Salvation Army is an intentional Kingdom community. This is our historical reality because it continues to be the historical reality of our risen and ruling Savior.

Second, the Army of the future will, I believe, be different certainly from the early Army because it will increasingly appropriate the gifts and talents of all the people—soldiers and officers alike. The Army of the future will be much more democratic in both structure and administrative tasks simply because the Scripture makes demands upon us that we cannot ignore, and one of those demands is that of the recognition of the gifts of all the people of God given for all the work of God. There is a renewed understanding that we are all compelled by the calling of God in our lives, confirmed by the company of believers and that we all seek to work out that calling for the sake of the Army and thereby for the sake of the Kingdom. In this regard, we are all in full-time Christian service. "So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us" (2 Corinthians 5:20).

The officers in the Army will, I believe, readily admit that one of the finest international programs of The Salvation Army is the International College for Officers. I here confess that I for many years have asked for a similar International

College for Soldiers, and this is a vision I pray will come to reality. We recognize that soldiers could not meet for eight weeks, but could meet for perhaps two weeks during the summer in London to study the Scriptures together, to pray and worship together and to drink in our Wesleyan and Army heritage. I can envision the international fellowship among soldiers engendered by such occasions. I can envision the sense of international ownership this would provide for our people. I can envision the sense of mission engendered by such experiences. And I can envision the potential for leadership development of our laity such a program would afford. Such an International College for Soldiers would send an invaluable message across the Army world about the value of the soldier for the future warfare of this Army of God.

All of us—officers and soldiers alike—must be prepared for this great task of facing history. Such history is our common history, and it leads us into a common future. This is an exciting time for the soldiers of the Army, but we must both encourage and challenge them to take up the tasks which are laid before them, and likewise to submit to the accountability required of any soldier in time of war.

Third, as has already been mentioned, the Army of the future will be pleased once again to place at the center of our institutional life the preacher, the teacher, the scholar—not for the aggrandizement of persons holding those offices—but because the Scripture as well as the tradition of the Church has placed these people at the center of our life together. This is true because we have faced our own history and have seen in the mirror a theological history, initiated by God, redeemed by Christ and sustained by the Holy Spirit. We need people who are called to help sustain this theological awareness and can continue to articulate our theology in an uncertain world and a changing culture.

We confess again that a movement from sect to Church has diminished the place of these offices, but history, including our own history, has taught us how invaluable these people are. One of the lessons learned at the International Spiritual Life Commission, and a lesson which I learn regularly as I travel for the Army, is that our people are hungry and thirsty for the Word of the Lord. They are desperate for Biblical preaching, for the study of Scripture, for meaningful worship and for instruction on how to live their lives in ways that are significant for Christ and His Kingdom even while they do their work in the home, in the shop, in the factory or in the office. They want to be citizens of the Kingdom. But they need help.

A commitment to this task has many ramifications, some of them certainly financial. These include an international commitment to education as well as an inter-

national educational philosophy which guides us and guides our programs; the support of the educators who are in the difficult work of training officers and laity; the constant and vigilant and rigorous training of the preacher in the task of preaching; the recognition that the scholar/teacher has much to contribute to us and to the Kingdom, but that the demands of the task make faculty development plans and sabbaticals not luxuries but necessities in fulfilling the tasks.

Finally, our future together demands that we are committed to worship and ministry, the direction and dynamics of which are measured by Scripture rather than the culture, although we quickly add that our worship will certainly have cultural expression. However, the vitality of our worship and ministry is the only sure foundation for the spiritual vitality of our own people and for the works of mercy which we carry out in the world. When evaluating the viability of the life of our people at the corps level, we must, I think, avoid two extremes. On the one hand we cannot be obsessed by numbers and statistics when measuring effectiveness of ministry. This has become a sole measure of success in some American evangelical circles, and the very fact that a church has a large congregation is measurement enough for some that the church is successful. In reality the success of the church may come simply because it has so appropriated the surrounding culture that it no longer speaks the hard news of the gospel, but has become so much of an easy Christianity that all who come to church feel quite comfortable. David Wells has reminded us of this poignantly in *No Place for Truth* and in *God in the Wasteland: The Reality of Truth in a World of Fading Dreams*. At the same time it is very possible that a small, struggling congregation down the street may reflect the essence of Christianity and the heart of the gospel, and may be a much more vital and genuine witness to the gospel of our Lord.

The other side of the picture is equally problematic, however. There is no virtue in a church where it is business as usual year after year. The small numbers may not reflect faithfulness to the gospel, but simply apathy, a failure to preach the gospel in dynamic and compelling ways, a lack of evangelistic zeal on the part of the congregation, and total loss of creativity in the worship of the God who has instilled in us such creativity for use in glorifying Him. Becoming satisfied with who we are, with the way we do things, with the small congregation, is not a sign of sanctification but a sign of stagnation. It is, in its own way, also a caving in to the culture of complacency and is equally as detrimental to the Kingdom.

What we seek in our ministry is a way forward. We are called to be an Army on

the march, understanding and appropriating from our past what best to use for ministry today, identifying ourselves with clarity and conviction and being who God has called us to be as an intentional community with our unique witness and a sense of the compelling contribution we have been called to make to the Church and to the world. When all is said and done, it is to the God of our Salvation and to His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and to the Holy Spirit that we give thanks and who we trust to lead us forward. Albert Orsbom has so well expressed the words with which I would like to conclude:

Not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy great name;  
Our trumpets are awake, our banners are aflame,  
We boast no battle ever won; The victory is thine alone.

We were that foolish thing, unversed in worldly ways,  
Which thou didst choose and use unto thy greater praise,  
Called and commissioned from afar to bring to naught the things that are.

A hundred anthems rise for every fighting year  
Since thou, as Lord of hosts, our captain did appear  
To sanctify, to take command, and bring us to the promised land.

Not yet we hail the day when all to thee shall yield,  
But we behold thee stand upon our battlefield,  
And this alone shall ever be our sign and seal of victory.

## Notes

1. See also David Rightmire's *Sacraments and The Salvation Army: Pneumatological Foundations* (Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1990).

2. Included in these are the following: Ann R. Higginbotham, "Respectable Sinners: Salvation Army Rescue Work with Unmarried Mothers, 1884-1914 in Gail Malmgreen, ed. *Religion in the Lives of English Women, 1760-1930* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); and Carol Ocheltree, "Wesleyan Methodist Perceptions of William Booth," *Methodist History*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 4 (July 1990), pp. 262-276; and R. David Rightmire, "Samuel Brengle and the Development of Salvation Army Pneumatology," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, Vol. 27, Nos. 1-2 (Spring-Fall 1992), pp. 104-131.

3. Rapp, "The British Salvation Army, the Early Film Industry and Urban Working-Class Adolescents, 1897-1918," p. 161.

4. See for example a thorough analysis of the sectarian character of The Salvation Army in Roland Robertson, "The Salvation Army: The Persistence of Sectarianism," in Brian R. Wilson, ed. *Patterns of Sectarianism* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1967).

5. See, for example, William Booth, "Summary of the Year's History" *The War Cry* (May 12, 1888), p. 10.

6. See William Booth, "The General's New Year Address to Officers," *The War Cry*, January 17, 1883, p. 1 in which William Booth left the matter of the sacraments open for the future, an uncommon thing for this autocratic leader to do, and, I believe, a sign of his reluctance in this matter. He asked, "Is it not wise for us to postpone any settlement of the question, to leave it over to some future day, when we shall have more light, and see more clearly our way before us?"

7. Harold Begbie, *The Life of General William Booth, the Founder of The Salvation Army*, 2 Vols. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1920) 1:69.

8. *Ibid.* 1:70

9. Frederick de Latour Booth-Tucker, *The Life of Catherine Booth*, 2 Vols. (New York: Fleming H. Ravell Company, 1892) 1:74.

10. Here are some suggestions for current Wesleyan studies: *The Works of John Wesley* especially the sermons, Vols. 1-4 edited by Albert C. Outler (Nashville: Abingdon Press), volumes in the series still continuing to be published; Kenneth J. Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997); Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995); Thomas C. Oden and Leicester R. Longden, eds., *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991); and Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989).

11. For two excellent sources in understanding the quadrilateral see Albert C. Outler, "The Wesleyan Quadrilateral in John Wesley," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 20, No. 1 (1985): 7-18; and Donald Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience as a Model of Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990).

12. Thorsen, p. 20.

13. John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1966), p. 97.

14. *Ibid.*

# BROKEN WALLS, LASTING PEACE

*Sharon E. Berry*

This year, 1999, marks the tenth anniversary of one of the most symbolic events of the twentieth century. Where were you when the Berlin Wall came down? Do you remember your thoughts and feelings? For those of us who have lived most of our lives during the cold war, the breaking down of that symbol of division and oppression was a deeply moving and significant event.

At the time I never imagined that as a consequence of that act the iron curtain would be penetrated, nor that I would one day be serving in The Salvation Army in Moscow, Russia. Incredible changes have taken place, and with those changes have come high hopes that, with the cold war ended, a true and lasting peace will be realized. Although we rejoice at all the positive results, the peace we have is very fragile. We approach the millennium with an very uneasy peace process in Northern Ireland, the residue of ethnic cleansing in the Balkans and Indonesia in turmoil. Peace based upon human efforts is tentative at best. In Ephesians, Paul speaks to the gentile Christians at Ephesus of the source of true lasting peace: "For he (Christ) himself is our peace, who ... destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility" (2:14, NIV).

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Paul's vivid analogy of the wall of hostility, the barrier of sin, that separates mankind from God, that has robbed mankind of real peace since the Garden of Eden, speaks to our world today. In this passage he clearly sets out what the work of Christ on the Cross means to us, both as individual Christians and as a corporate fellowship.

First, Paul reminds us of our condition before we came to know Christ. We were excluded: "... remember that at the time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world" (2:12).

Being a foreigner can be very uncomfortable. My first few weeks in Russia were not easy. My smiling attempts at some contact with my fellow travelers was met with dour, suspicious glances. Because I had no knowledge of the language, I often felt isolated, an outsider.

Paul reminds the believers at Ephesus that they once had been the outsiders, not party to the promises of God given through the Jewish heritage. They were separated from God by their sin. They were without hope: "you were dead in your transgressions and sins" (2:1).

Because of their sin they were unresponsive to spiritual things. Like the Roman world of their day, our society is debased and desensitized to the things of the spirit. Sin numbs the spiritual impulses. And in this state we are unaware of spiritual needs.

Those Russian Christians coming from an atheistic background often testify that before they had heard the gospel, they would have vague senses of longing for something they could not define. They realize now that it was that restless longing for God of which Augustine of Hippo wrote. In our own materialistic culture, people are looking everywhere for inner peace and happiness without understanding that theirs is a deep spiritual need.

Thus excluded from fellowship with God and the heritage of His rich promises, and outside His inclusive love and grace, Paul reminds the Ephesians of the desperate situation in which they stood: "without hope and without God" (2:12). We, too, were alienated and hopeless.

Interestingly enough, it is only when we have been rescued from such a situation that we recognize just how desperate it was.

Paul goes on in his letter to speak of the new spiritual status of the Ephesians: "But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy made us alive with Christ" (2:4). Those who were once excluded are now embraced: "But now in Christ

Jesus you who were once far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ" (2:13).

Sin was, and is, the barrier between God and mankind. The "dividing wall of hostility," of which Paul wrote, could not be broken down by human effort. Only God, in His love and mercy, could make a way. The cost of this reconciliation with God is nothing less than the shed blood of Jesus Christ, who "abolished in His flesh the law" (2:15).

Christ's death on the Cross destroyed the barrier of sin, and secured our salvation. Cecil Frances Alexander encapsulates this truth in the lines of her poem, "There is a Green Hill Far Away"

He died that we might be forgiven,  
He died to make us good,  
That we might go at last to Heaven,  
Saved by His precious blood.

There was no other good enough  
To pay the price of sin;  
He only could unlock the gate  
Of heaven, and let us in.

(SASB #133)

The wonderful truth is that the barrier has been destroyed. We must step across, by faith, and claim that salvation. And with salvation come the blessings of being embraced, reconciled. The peace which has eluded the sinner comes to the believer. This *shalom*, peace of heart and mind and spirit, is the peace of which Jesus spoke to His disciples in the Upper Room: "My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives" (John 14:27).

It is not merely the bestowing of this wonderful gift; it is even more than that. The *shalom* is Christ Himself. "For He Himself is our peace" declares Paul (Eph. 2:14). And with that peace comes full acceptance into the community of faith. When the Berlin Wall came down, many watched on television the moving scenes as families, friends, strangers greeted those steaming across from East Berlin embracing them, weeping with them.

When we are embraced, reconciled, we enjoy full citizenship in the Kingdom of God, full membership in the family of God. "Consequently you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's

household” (2:19). And with this status come all the rights and privileges: forgiveness, adoption, the Holy Spirit, life eternal.

Paul’s message to the Ephesians points out that as part of the fellowship of believers we have a new purpose, a mission with obligations and responsibilities. We are not just embraced, because the walls of hostility are broken down; we are engaged with new purpose in work of the Kingdom: “In Him (Christ Jesus) you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit” (2:22).

The euphoria of the days following the tearing down of the Berlin Wall had to give way to the realities of such a dramatic, historic happening. The economic, political and social ramifications are still being worked out in Germany ten years on. It has not been easy. The Salvation Army (Die Heilsarmee) there has had to deal with these ramifications as well. Where before the communist regime took over East Germany there had been a flourishing Salvation Army expression, there are only a few older soldiers and buildings in dreadful states of disrepair. The Salvationists are having to start from scratch.

Germany has had to come to terms with the fact that there has to be a new dynamic to motivate and mobilize the country to complete its mission of reunification. It is not enough for those who lived behind the wall in communist East Germany to accept all that their new freedom has brought. All Germans, too, have to engage in the work of making a new country.

Our new dynamic, as Christians, members of the household of faith, is the Holy Spirit. He becomes the One who guides us and gives us the strength to mobilize, to enable us to be fully engaged in the work of the Kingdom. We make the commitment to be fully engaged, to become, “a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit” (2:22). It demands all we have and are; it declares that we want to be like Christ.

And God by His Holy Spirit sanctifies us—all our thoughts, motivation, purpose infused and directed by Him. We see clearly the mission of the Kingdom and our place in it.

And we proclaim by our witness, our service, our Christ-like living the good news that is for all peoples that the walls of hostility have been destroyed and Christ is our peace.

The Berlin Wall, the iron curtain are destroyed but the world is still looking for a lasting peace. Until the human barriers of hostility and estrangement that are the results of man’s sin are destroyed; until men, women, young people turn to the One who is our peace; until they understand that the barrier of sin has been destroyed and

only their unawareness or rejection of their spiritual needs keeps them from reconciliation with God, there will be no true peace in our world.

Is it possible? Yes, indeed. The Jubilee Congress held in Moscow in May, 1997 gave a glimpse of what God can do through His people who are living out the purposes of the Kingdom. For the first time since the Army returned to the former Soviet Union, we had a congress including delegates from the four independent states in which we work; peoples from four different worlds and traditions, speaking four different languages, but sharing decades of distrust, suspicion, misunderstanding. How would they respond to each other? Instead of focusing on differences or old animosities, there was a wonderful sense of unity, a recognition that the walls of hostility have been broken and that as members of God's family we are one in Christ Jesus. In truth, "the two (had) been made one" (2:14).

Paul's words to the Ephesians challenge us today as the community of believers to demonstrate to a lost and desperate world by the love and respect we show to others within the Christian fellowship, despite our varying backgrounds and distinct personalities, that we are united in Christ who has broken down the walls of hostility and is our peace.



## Book Reviews

Heitzenrater, Richard P. *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995. 338 pp.

Reviewed by Roger J. Green, Gordon College

All theologians can be understood fully only in the context of their life and times. The more we know about the social, political and religious context of a person who is setting forth a comprehensive theology, the more insight we have into that theology. This is no less the case with John Wesley than with other theologians.

Richard P. Heitzenrater, one of the recognized scholars in Wesleyan studies, has provided a great service to Wesleyan studies with this book. He provides the rich contextual background to John Wesley, and although this is not strictly speaking a biography, the reader will nevertheless gain remarkable insights into Wesley's life as it was lived out in eighteenth-century England. The book is particularly helpful also in setting forth the religious context to Wesley's thinking, as well as the struggles which perplexed Wesley as he attempted to be faithful to the Biblical witness and also to the Anglican tradition to which God had called him. Many pictures and illustrations throughout the book well support the written text.

After a helpful introductory chapter to Methodism and the Christian heritage in England, the author reminds the reader of the three great stages in the rise of Methodism—Oxford, Georgia, and London—and the central role John Wesley played in each of those stages. Especially important during these stages were the people who were so influential upon John Wesley as he began to forge a theology, often against unhappy experiences such as his time in Georgia. The theological categories that would become so crucial to Wesley's theology, such as faith and assurance, are

dealt with against the background of an increasing Moravian influence upon John Wesley at this time in his life.

However, Wesley's theology was constantly being forged against such background, and the author deals very well with Wesley's disputes with the Moravians, especially as his theology began to take into account the degrees of faith and assurance and as Wesley began therefore to doubt the Moravian emphasis that associated faith with full assurance. Wesley was beginning to embrace a Christian faith that was progressive and could exist even with degrees of doubt or fear, which the Moravians, especially Peter Böhler and the English Moravians, could not allow.

As the revival began to take on new dimensions in England, Wesley's theological conflicts with the Moravians and with the Calvinists increased. The Moravian stillness doctrine of waiting upon the Lord was, for Wesley, "a serious challenge to vital Christian living" (p. 106). From the other side, however, were the theological challenges of the Calvinists, including Wesley's friend George Whitefield, which included the doctrines of predestination and imputed righteousness. Again, both of those doctrines also detracted from Wesley's increasing notion of the Christian life as vital, living piety. The clearest expression of such piety, Wesley believed, was the doctrine of God's grace, which accompanied the believer in the way of salvation (*via salutis*). This focus, for Wesley, "mirrors the spiritual pilgrimage: prevenient grace, conviction of sin, repentance, justification, assurance, regeneration, sanctification, Christian perfection, and final salvation. Each step along the way is made possible by the gift of God's grace accepted by the believer through faith and evidenced in love of God and neighbor" (p. 178).

The latter emphasis, love of God and neighbor, became very important for Wesley's theology and for the revival movement. The care of the neighbor, even the poorest and most destitute neighbor, became characteristic of the piety of the Methodists. They saw this as a natural expression of their life in Christ.

Heitzenrater well deals with one of the growing problems of the Methodist movement—that of its relationship with the established Church. Wesley was careful to continue to identify himself and his movement with the Anglican Church. Methodism was, after all, intended to be a movement of revival within the Anglican Church. It is ironic that many of the methods employed by Wesley to this end "could be seen as a step towards increased self-conscious identity among the United Societies as a separate organization with a strong if not intended potential for separation from the Church" (p. 180). Such potential for separation was even more repugnant to Charles

Wesley. And there was increasing pressure to separate from the Church as Methodists wanted to worship at the same time as the Anglican worship services, and also wanted to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper from Methodist preachers rather than from Anglican priests.

The author writes about many of the problems attendant to a maturing Methodism and sees the leadership of John Wesley as crucial for keeping the center of Methodism secure. However, even during this maturing process Wesley was still fashioning a theology that was Biblically based but also spoke to his age. He still framed his theology in the context of what he saw as "those fundamental truths, original sin and justification by faith, producing inward and outward holiness" (pp. 214–215). Heitzenrater agrees with Collins in his *Scripture Way of Salvation*. According to Heitzenrater, that sermon, first published in 1765, "signals the maturation of his theology, hammered out during the years of contention and controversy. It stands as perhaps the single best homiletical summary of his soteriology, or doctrine of salvation" (p. 220).

The author concludes with a helpful epilogue, providing some insight into the continuation of Methodism after John Wesley. He also states, as a final reminder, the critical fact that "Wesleyan theology is a thoroughgoing theology of grace" (p. 320) and that justification and sanctification were both necessary to the full explanation of such grace. Such theology was forged, however, in the context of Wesley's own theological pilgrimage lived out and worked out in a particular context, but primarily in the context of the development of his own people called Methodists.

Collins, Kenneth J. *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997. 256 pp.

Reviewed by Roger J. Green, Gordon College

There have been several works recently on the theology of John Wesley, many of them commendable. However, Ken Collins' *The Scripture Way of Salvation* is one of the finest and most lucidly written texts on John Wesley and his theology. The author has chosen for the title of his book the most comprehensively Wesleyan sermon entitled "The Scripture Way of Salvation" and rightly judges this to express the heart of John Wesley's theology.

Collins leads the reader carefully through John Wesley's nuanced theology of grace, beginning, as Wesley did, with grace, creation and the fall of humanity and concluding with the final justification of the believer. It is critical to an understanding of Wesley's theology that the Biblical concept of prevenient grace be set forth, and the first chapter is especially helpful in illuminating the central benefits of prevenient grace, which allowed Wesley the constant opportunity to affirm that he preached the Biblical doctrine of salvation by grace, nothing more and nothing less.

Following the explanation of prevenient grace the author then goes on to help the reader understand other aspects of grace in Wesley's theology, such as convincing grace, justifying grace and sanctifying grace. Related to these various aspects of grace are the doctrines so central to the Christian faith such as repentance, justification, faith, assurance and atonement. Discussions of these Biblical categories are well woven into the text as Wesley's theology unfolds.

The author did not avoid the controversial aspects of Wesleyan theology, but provided lucid explanation of apparent controversies. One example, prevalent among Wesleyans since Wesley's day, is the relationship of process and instantaneousness in salvation. However, the Wesleyan tension of these two aspects of salvation points not to contradiction in Wesley's theology, but to the richness of that theology. Collins notes that "Wesley held not one but two aspects of his doctrine of salvation in tension: both process *and* instantaneousness. The former aspect depicts his 'catholic' emphasis and points to human cooperation with God as men and women are empowered by divine grace and are thereby *prepared* for the decisive gifts of salvation, that is, for justification and for initial and entire sanctification. The latter aspect, however, depicts his Protestant or 'evangelical' emphasis and points not to human cooperation, but to the sovereign activity of God and, therefore, to the sheer gratuity

(favor) of grace. Again, the former aspect displays the ongoing growth and development that is a normal part of any vital spiritual life" (p. 99).

In spite of the fact that many Wesleyans have failed to recognize the importance of sanctification for Wesley's theology, Collins clearly refers to holiness as "the central theme of Wesley's theology" (p. 105), and later states that "This process of cleansing, of purifying human hearts so that the divine glory shines through, is nothing less than the very substance of salvation" (p. 153). Collins well treats the doctrine of sanctification in the context of Wesley's larger theological picture. And to the charge that it was the American holiness movement that manufactured the notion of a "second" work of grace, Collins cites many passages from Wesley himself where he spoke of the "second blessing" and affirms that "Wesley insisted that entire sanctification can take place in this life" (p. 177). However, as a reminder to those who would take only one side of the argument as the true Wesleyan side, Collins reminds his readers that sanctification for Wesley incorporates both themes of process, emphasizing the forward-moving direction of the believer as well as instantaneous elements, which constantly remind the believer of the decisive, transforming acts of God's grace in the life of the believer. Keeping the tension between process and crisis, therefore, is critical if one is to maintain a thoroughly Biblical and Wesleyan view of holiness.

This book is an invaluable guide to the complexities of Wesleyan theology. This is a readable text, but at the same time it carefully sets forth, in Biblical and historical context, the essentials of Wesley's theology. Likewise, the author realizes there are some debates within Wesleyan circles today and deals well and fairly with those debates. The reader is left not only with a clear explanation, but with numerous references to Wesley's sermons as well as to other writings that will help the reader to pursue many aspects of Wesley's theology. This, of course, is especially critical to Salvationists in that both our theology and our ministry have been based on the foundation of the Wesley's theology as he understood the Scriptures. Therefore, the title of the book well captures the contents of this helpful work. This is, indeed, a book about *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology*.

Runyon, Theodore. *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998. 270 pp.

Reviewed by Jonathan S. Raymond, Greenville College

There is recently a cascading flow of scholarship on John Wesley and his contributions to theology. This reflects the prophetic comment by Albert Outler that Wesley studies are entering a third phase characterized by the repositioning of Wesley in as wide a historical and ecumenical context as possible. Theodore Runyon's highly readable book, *The New Creation*, is a strong, representative work, exemplary of Outler's observation. His central theme of "A New Creation" sounds a familiar, positive note of life transformation often heard in John Wesley's sermons, especially in the latter years of his life. Runyon deftly handles this central theme in a fashion that underscores Wesley's significance for ecumenicism today. Again, he helps the reader resonate with Albert Outler's observation that Wesley "was in dialogue with Christians in many different traditions in his own day precisely because he had been in such fruitful dialogue with so much of the Christian tradition before him." Runyon passes on to the reader the Wesley who is a mentor and companion today for those seeking to continue the broad, inclusive ecumenical work of fruitful dialogue and the front line work of ministry.

The author sets the stage for the reader in the central truth that the renewal of creation, and in particular the renewal of humanity in the image of God, is at the very heart of Christianity. This is the great eternal drama and the key to Wesley's understanding of the "great salvation"—the restoration to that original state and purpose for which we were created: to be the image of God in the world today and for eternity. In chapter one, Runyon elaborates on Wesley's tripartite perspective on the natural, political and moral image and clarifies how Wesley conceived of the consequences of sin for the human condition apart from God's grace. Here grace is conceived as God's response to the human condition and the divine means provided to renew humanity. Runyon offers the reader an engaging and lucid discussion of prevenient grace, transforming grace and the means of grace operant in the Christian community.

The author deepens the discussion of God's work of a new creation by illuminating His mercy and love to humanity through the blessing of his pervasive prevenient grace that always comes before us throughout life. God's grace is the first act. It is his gracious initiative to deal with the human condition and therefore a calling for

humankind's co-operant response to His grace ever offered. He raises issues of the subtlety and universality of grace offered to all of humanity leading to and through the offer, provision and response of justifying grace. Justifying grace is likened to a realignment of humanity in its relationship with the Creator based on God's reconciling mercy. Along the way, Runyon nuances Wesley's common ground and distinctive differences with many voices: Calvinists of his day, the Patristics and Eastern Orthodoxy, Moravians, Luther and others. In the discussion of grace in the new creation, Runyon presents Wesley's views on assurance and its close linkage with his understanding of justification. Particular emphases include distinctions between assurance as direct witness, corroborating testimony and indirect witness, namely the evidence of the fruits of the Spirit.

The new creation is further discussed in chapter three in terms of God's transforming grace. Here Runyon clarifies Wesley's thinking about God's work of regeneration, establishing the moral image and "quickening" the spiritual senses by which we come to acquire genuine knowledge of God. The author underscores Wesley's theological empiricism as an adaptation of John Locke's physical empiricism, which preceded Wesley and spoke to the spirit of the time in which Wesley was immersed in the influences of the Enlightenment. This discussion helps the reader to understand Wesley's epistemology and in particular the role of spiritual experience as a reliable source of knowledge alongside the established sources of authority in the discernment of truth—Scripture, tradition and reason.

Building on a foundational understanding of Wesley's views on prevenient and transforming grace, including justification and regeneration, Runyon moves on to discuss sanctifying grace, entire sanctification and Christian perfection. The discussion aids the reader in understanding how Wesley matured and shifted in his thinking over the course of his life, especially in reference to whether sanctification is gradual or instantaneous. Runyon quotes Wesley as saying that it is both one and the other, but the emphasis in Wesley's writings, especially toward the end of life, is increasingly on the reality of God's continuing love and sustaining power. Here, Wesley is seen as seldom speaking of the mechanics of entire sanctification, but rather prefers to speak of the ongoing increase of love following God's ever increasing appropriation of love until there is no more room left for sin. The practical nature of Runyon's work for those in ministry is his handling of the Christian community and the means of grace, orthopathy and religious experience and the relevance of Wesley's theology for today. Wesley's social frameworks of class meetings and bands

are illuminated as social contexts in which the church is at its best in carrying God's transforming grace. Wesley's unique theological contribution of orthopathy (right experience) helps the reader go beyond the conventional understanding of orthodoxy (right thinking) and orthopraxy (right practice) and underscores the "perceptibility of grace." This helps the reader to *grasp* the nature of the spiritual experiencing of God's presence and identity essential to the development of faith. All of that which precedes is also foundational to Wesley's concerns for practical issues which are still with us today: human rights, poverty and economic rights, the rights of women, the environment, ecumenism and religious pluralism. For the Salvationist reader, it is easy to see, with Runyon's help, how Wesley's thinking provided insights and impulses that propelled William and Catherine Booth's thoroughly Wesleyan orthodoxy, orthopraxy and orthopathy in their subsequent ministry.

Runyon, finally, brings the discussion to the point of rethinking sanctification. He highlights Wesley's theological distinctive in holding together two interrelated expressions of relationship between God and humankind in the Christian life that have been too long disconnected: the renewal of the relationship (justification) and the living out of this relation (sanctification). Runyon's work emphasizes Wesley's important corrective to the contemporary, evangelical Protestant impulses to view salvation as merely justification and conversion and to not go on to embrace a salvation which includes the gracious recreation and restoration of individuals and society to the image of God through the divine transforming love of God. In a highly readable style, Runyon helps us recapture Wesley's abiding concern with the "great salvation" and helps us place it at the center of our understanding of the Christian faith, life and proclamations as new creations.

Clifton, Shaw. *Never the Same Again: Encouragement for new and not-so-new Christians*. Alexandria, VA: Crest Books, 1998. 177 pp.

Reviewed by Major Terry Griffin, The Salvation Army Alaska Divisional Headquarters

What does it mean to be a Christian? How does one become a Christian? What does one do after he/she becomes a Christian? These and many more of the essentials of becoming and living as a child of God are addressed in this book, a compilation of topics that are a result of questions that Clifton's son, Matthew, asked his father in his own search for the true meaning of life in Christ. As a result, we are allowed a glimpse into this father/son relationship that personalizes the spiritual journey that they, and each of us, are taking.

I found myself reliving my own spiritual journey as I read each chapter. The chapter headings draw the reader into the content with the questions that are posed: What Have I Done?, Can I Be Sure I'm Saved?, What Are the Ground Rules?, Can I Have a Role Model?, How Much Like Jesus Can I Be?, Will God Equip Me to Serve Him?, What Are the Gifts of the Spirit?, Will I Ever Be a Saint?, What About My Money?, Can I Witness?, What About My Job, My Studies?, Can I Rely on God? You will note the pragmatic and simple approach that Clifton has used to pull the reader into the essential elements of being a Christian.

The simplicity of the book does not mean that the topics or the content are without depth. It reminds each of us what it is to be a believer in Jesus Christ from mustard seed faith to mature discipleship. An excellent distinction is made between the "fruits" and "gifts" of the Spirit.

Clifton gives the reader some very practical advice by reminding us that we will never really "arrive" spiritually. In a section entitled, "Holy Discontent," he addresses an issue that most of us deal with continually, "Why am I not totally satisfied? I know that Christ is my sufficiency, however, I still long for more and a greater likeness to Christ." He quotes Frederick Coultts who tells us this is the discontent of the forgiven soul. We should never be content with where we are, but rather keep moving on to make Christ truly Lord of every facet of our lives. With this the author introduces the reader to holiness teaching and the deeper life in Christ. The clear explanation of the crisis/process of holiness is very helpful to understanding this aspect of the doctrine as well as the broader truth of living the holy life.

I am grateful for this very helpful treatise. It is a book that reminds us of the essentials of our beliefs and can be utilized as a text for discipling the new believer.



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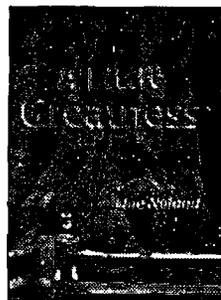
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