

say that every believer is assured of it. . . . A man may be a true child of God and certainly saved, though he have not assurance. . . . ; he may be in a safe though in a sad condition. 'Tis required to the bene esse, not to the esse of a believer (p. 103).

Wesley could never have agreed, after 1738, that assurance 'consists only in the mind'; when he published his extract from Culverwell in the Christian Library (1752), Vol. XVII, he omitted the passage just quoted.

He would also have known of William Allen's threefold distinction in The Glass of Justification (1658): 'Faith, as it justifies, hath three acts: credence, adherence, confidence' (p. 43); this is very close to his own idea. And he also knew the famous summary of the question in Arthur Bedford's The Doctrine of Assurance (1738), Appendix, p. 36:

To put this controversy into as clear a light as I can, I shall only add that there is a 'faith of adherence' and a 'faith of assurance'. The 'faith of adherence' is a saving faith, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and Word of God, whereby he is convinced of his sin and misery and of his disability in himself and all other creatures, to recover him out of his lost condition—[he] not only assenteth to the truth of the promise of the Gospel, but receives and rests on the death and righteousness of Christ Jesus, therein held for pardon of sin and for the accepting and accounting of his person as righteous in the sight of God. And thus he hopes, though he hath no certainty. The 'faith of assurance' is that whereby a man absolutely knows all this to be true in his own particular case. So that the faith of adherence is general but the faith of assurance is particular. Now this 'faith of adherence' alone is sufficient to bring a man to heaven, because the promises are given in general to every one who believes. And, therefore, to limit salvation to a particular degree of faith is to destroy all those promises on which thousands of Christians have hitherto depended for their eternal comfort. From which 'unchristianlieness, false doctrine and heresy, Good Lord, deliver us!'

Given, however, the still unsettled state of mind among the Methodists in 1765, Wesley decided to sum up the matter yet once more: to correlate the faith that saves with the faith that sanctifies. This was the task he set himself in The Scripture Way of Salvation. In it, he gathered up the best residues of earlier sermons—Salvation by Faith, Justification by Faith, and 'The Circumcision of the Heart'. Here he could reemphasize the point that in the Christian life all is of grace—'preventing', 'justifying', 'accompanying', and 'sanctifying'. He could have made Henry Smith's point yet again, that 'good works are the way to come to heaven, though they be not the cause why we shall come to heaven.' The result is the most successful summary of the Wesleyan vision of the *ordo salutis* in the entire sermon corpus.

When, therefore, he was reordering and republishing his Sermons

<sup>1</sup> See *Sermons*, ed. by Thomas Fuller (1675), p. 562.

in 1771, he could see the logic of adding The Scripture Way of Salvation to the sequence of Christian Perfection, Wandering Thoughts, and 'Satan's Devices'. Later, in 1787, he would revert to the order of 1760 and, in effect, discard The Scripture Way of Salvation. Clearly, whatever the gain here in terms of the legal function of SOSO, its effect was an obvious loss in terms of doctrinal substance.

Of all the written sermons, this one had the most extensive history of oral preaching behind it: forty instances of his using Eph. 2:8 before 1765, nine in 1738, including the first written sermon on it (No. 1, Salvation by Faith). The text continued to be a favourite: twenty recorded instances in the quarter century following 1765. The Scripture Way of Salvation went through five further editions in Wesley's lifetime. For its publishing history and a list of variant readings, see Appendix, Vol. 4; see also Bibliog, No. 265.

## The Scripture Way of Salvation

Ephesians 2:8

*Ye are saved through faith.*

1. Nothing can be more intricate, complex, and hard to be understood, than religion as it has been often described. And this is not only true concerning the religion of the heathens, even many of the wisest of them, but concerning the religion of those also who were in some sense Christians; yea, and men of great name in the Christian world, men 'who seemed to be pillars' thereof. Yet how easy to be understood, how plain and simple a thing, is the genuine religion of Jesus Christ! Provided only that

<sup>1</sup> Gal. 2:9, οὐ δοκούμεν ὀρθῶς εἶναι. . . . Later, in No. 82, 'On Temptation', §2, Wesley will argue for a different translation: 'by a careful consideration of every text in the New Testament wherein this word [δοκεῖν] occurs, I am fully convinced that it nowhere lessens, but everywhere strengthens, the sense of the word to which it is annexed. Accordingly, ὁ δοκεῖ εἶναι does not mean "what he seems to have," but on the contrary, "who he assuredly hath".' Cf. his translation to this same effect in the *Notes*; and see also Nos. 85, 'On Working Out Our Own Salvation', III.7; 90, 'An Israelite Indeed', I.5; 128, 'The Deceitfulness of the Human Heart', III.3. He nowhere notices the irony of Paul's use of δοκούμεν in Gal. 2:9.



we take it in its native form, just as it is described in the oracles of God. It is exactly suited by the wise Creator and Governor of the world to the weak understanding and narrow capacity of man in his present state. How observable is this both with regard to the end it proposes and the means to attain that end! The end is, in one word, salvation: the means to attain it, faith.

2. It is easily discerned that these two little words—I mean faith and salvation—include the substance of all the Bible, the marrow, as it were, of the whole Scripture. So much the more should we take all possible care to avoid all mistake concerning them, and to form a true and accurate judgment concerning both the one and the other.

Let us then seriously inquire,

- I. What is salvation?
- II. What is that faith whereby we are saved? And
- III. How we are saved by it.

I. 1. And first let us inquire, What is *salvation*? The salvation which is here spoken of is not what is frequently understood by that word, the going to heaven, eternal happiness. It is not the soul's going to paradise, termed by our Lord 'Abraham's bosom'.<sup>2</sup> It is not a blessing which lies on the other side death, or (as we usually speak) in the other world. The very words of the text itself put this beyond all question. 'Ye *are* saved.' It is not something at a distance: it is a present thing, a blessing which, through the free mercy of God, ye are now in possession of. Nay, the words may be rendered, and that with equal propriety, 'Ye *have been* saved.' So that the salvation which is here spoken of might be extended to the entire work of God, from the first dawning of grace in the soul till it is consummated in glory.

2. If we take this in its utmost extent it will include all that is wrought in the soul by what is frequently termed 'natural conscience', but more properly, 'preventing grace';<sup>3</sup> all the

<sup>2</sup> Luke 16:22. Cf. the Talmudic tractate *Kiddushin*, 72b, and the comment of Kaufmann Kohler in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, 'Abraham's Bosom'. Bengel, *Gnomon*, loc. cit., comments that 'the Jews used to call the state of the righteous dead "the bosom of Abraham" and "the Garden of Eden"'. See No. 115, 'Dives and Lazarus', I.3 and n.

<sup>3</sup> A special gracious activity of the Holy Spirit in the heart and will, always in anticipation (*praeventivus*) of any human initiative or act of choice. 'Pre-venting' grace (distantly kin to what the Calvinists called 'common grace', save that it is uniquely the work of the Holy Spirit) 'goes before' conscious awareness of one's condition, to 'turn', to 'draw', to stir up 'the desires after God . . . all the convictions which the Holy Spirit . . . works in every child of man.' Thus, it displaces 'natural conscience' (the notion of which presupposes

'drawings' of 'the Father', the desires after God, which, if we yield to them, increase more and more; all that 'light' wherewith the Son of God 'enlighteneth everyone that cometh into the world'; *showing* every man 'to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God';<sup>4</sup> all the *convictions* which his Spirit from time to time works in every child of man. Although it is true the generality of men stifle them as soon as possible, and after a while forget, or at least deny, that ever they had them at all.

3. But we are at present concerned only with that salvation which the Apostle is directly speaking of. And this consists of two general parts, justification and sanctification.

Justification is another word for pardon.<sup>5</sup> It is the forgiveness of all our sins, and (what is necessarily implied therein) our acceptance with God. The price whereby this hath been procured for us (commonly termed the 'meritorious cause' of our justification)<sup>6</sup> is the blood and righteousness of Christ, or (to

human autonomy and free will): it signifies the divine initiative in all human 're-actions' that aspire to faith. Thus, 'preventing' (praeventivus) grace is the theological principle that assigns an absolute priority to the indwelling Spirit and yet allows for actual and valid human involvement, since the actions of the Holy Spirit are 'resistible', as the decrees of the Father are not (cf. the canons of the Second Council of Orange, A.D. 529).

Wesley's teaching here reaches back to Jerome, at least (cf. *Epistles*, 31, 33, 34, 62), and thence through the Middle Ages to Martin Bucer, Johann Gropper, and *The King's Book* (4 Necessary Doctrine and Exhortation for Any Christian Man, 'The Article of Free Will') to Fénelon (*Christian Counsel*, ch. XXII). But it assumes an even more crucial role in Wesley's thought, especially in his stress upon the Holy Spirit as its agent and on its transformation of 'natural conscience' (e.g., the analogue between its role in Wesley's ethics to the role of 'conscience' in Joseph Butler's *Fifteen Sermons*, II and III). It was in this sense that John Fletcher could rightly 'deny that Mr. Wesley is an Arminian', since 'Arminius held that man hath a will to turn to God *before* grace prevents him' (*Works*, 1825, I.229), whereas, for Wesley, it is the Spirit's preventing motion by which 'we ever are moved and inspired to any good thing'. The early Wesley tended to ground 'preventing grace' in baptism; the mature Wesley linked it more closely to repentance; the late Wesley correlates it with the order of salvation as a whole; cf. No. 85, 'On Working Out Our Own Salvation', I.21 ('God breathes into us every good desire, and brings every good desire to good effect'), and III.3-4, Wesley's most compact and complete statement of the doctrine and its import. But see also *Notes on Rom.* 2:14, together with the comment in *Predestination Calmly Considered* (1752), §45; and yet another comment in *Some Remarks on Mr. Hill's Review* (1772), 12.xvi. Cf. Charles Rogers's Duke University dissertation, *The Doctrine of Preventive Grace in John Wesley*. For other references to will and liberty, cf. No. 60, 'The General Deliverance', I.4 and n.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. John 6:44; and below, No. 47, 'Heaviness through manifold Temptations', III.9 and n.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. John 1:9.

<sup>6</sup> See No. 5, 'Justification by Faith', II.5 and n.

<sup>7</sup> An echo of the bitter controversy about the 'causes' of justification between the Roman Catholics, the Calvinists, and the Anglicans; cf. Nos. 5, 'Justification by Faith', II.5, and 20, *The Lord Our Righteousness*, intro.; see also C. F. Allison, *The Rise of Moralism*, ch. 1.



express it a little more clearly) all that Christ hath done and suffered for us till 'he poured out his soul for the transgressors.'<sup>9</sup> The immediate effects of justification are, the peace of God, a 'peace that passeth all understanding',<sup>10</sup> and a 'rejoicing in hope of the glory of God',<sup>11</sup> 'with joy unspeakable and full of glory'.<sup>12</sup>

4. And at the same time that we are justified, yea, in that very moment, *sanctification* begins. In that instant we are 'born again', 'born from above',<sup>13</sup> 'born of the Spirit'.<sup>14</sup> There is a *real* as well as a *relative* change.<sup>15</sup> We are inwardly renewed by the power of God.

10 We feel the 'love of God shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us',<sup>16</sup> producing love to all mankind, and more especially to the children of God; expelling the love of the world, the love of pleasure, of ease, of honour, of money; together with pride, anger, self-will, and every other evil temper—in a word, changing the 'earthly, sensual, devilish'<sup>17</sup> mind into 'the mind which was in Christ Jesus'.<sup>18</sup>

5. How naturally do those who experience such a change imagine that all sin is gone! That it is utterly rooted out of their heart, and has no more any place therein! How easily do they draw that inference, 'I feel no sin; therefore I have none.' It does not *stir*; therefore it does not *exist*: it has no *motion*; therefore it has no *being*.

Session VI of Trent (ch. VII) had listed five distinguishable 'causes' of justification and had specified "'the meritorious cause" as the atoning Passion and death of Jesus Christ who "merited our justification . . . unto God the Father".<sup>19</sup> The Calvinists had countered this by insisting on the atonement as the *formal* cause of the justification of the *elect* (as in Davenant, Downham, and others). This had focused the issue: the idea of 'formal cause' entailed a doctrine of predestination on the one hand and irresistible grace on the other; the notion of 'meritorious cause' did not. Wesley had tried to hold to the good intentions of both views but finally was forced to come down on the side of 'meritorious cause' (as in No. 20, *The Lord Our Righteousness*). No other single point (which embraces the correlative issue of 'good works after faith') so excited the Calvinist polemic against him from 1765, both until and after his death.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Isa. 53:12.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Phil. 4:7.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Rom. 5:2.

<sup>12</sup> John 3:3, 7. Cf. No. 3, *'Awake, Thou That Sleepest'*, 1.2 and n.

<sup>13</sup> John 3:6, 8.

<sup>14</sup> John 3:6, 8.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. No. 19, 'The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God', 1.1 and n. The 'relative change' denotes the new relationship between God and his pardoned child; the 'real change' is in the actual heart and will of the justified one, which is the equivalent of regeneration, 'the new birth'—which in turn is the beginning of a new lifelong process of sanctification or holy living; cf. Nos. 18, 'The Marks of the New Birth'; and 45, 'The New Birth'.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Rom. 5:5. Cf. No. 3, *'Awake, Thou That Sleepest'*, II.10 and n.

<sup>17</sup> Jas. 3:15.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Phil. 2:5.

6. But it is seldom long before they are undeceived, finding sin was only suspended, not destroyed. Temptations return and sin revives, showing it was but stunned before, not dead. They now feel two principles in themselves, plainly contrary to each other: 'the flesh lusting against the spirit',<sup>19</sup> nature opposing the grace of God. They cannot deny that although they still feel power to believe in Christ and to love God, and although his 'Spirit' still 'witnesses with' their 'spirits' that 'they are the children of God',<sup>20</sup> yet they feel in themselves, sometimes pride or self-will, sometimes anger or unbelief. They find one or more of these frequently *stirring* in their heart, though not *conquering*; yea, perhaps 'thrusting sore at them, that they may 'fall; but the Lord is' their 'help'.<sup>21</sup>

7. How exactly did Macarius, fourteen hundred years ago, describe the present experience of the children of God! 'The unskilful (or unexperienced), when grace operates, presently imagine they have no more sin. Whereas they that have discretion cannot deny that even we who have the grace of God may be molested again. . . . For we have often had instances of some among the brethren who have experienced such grace as to affirm that they had no sin in them. And yet after all, when they thought themselves entirely freed from it, the corruption that lurked within was stirred up anew, and they were wellnigh burnt up.'<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Gal. 5:17.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Rom. 8:16.  
<sup>21</sup> Cf. Ps. 118:13 (BCP). See Nos. 13, *On Sin in Believers*; 14, *The Repentance of Believers*; and 41, *Wandering Thoughts*.

<sup>22</sup> There was a fourth-century Egyptian hermit with this name who was renowned for his miracles and spiritual counsel. He was, however, probably not the author of the homilies and other pieces attributed to him in, Migne, *PG*, XXXIV; neither Palladius nor Rufinus makes any mention of them. Cf. Werner Jaeger, *Two Rediscovered Works of Ancient Christian Literature: Gregory of Nyssa and Macarius* (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1954). Still, Wesley knew and loved the 'Macarian homilies'; he extracted and published twenty-two of them in Vol. I of the *Christian Lib.* (1749); for the passage cited here, cf. Homily IX, pp. 95-97. But cf. Migne, *PG*, XXXIV, 623-34, and the Eng. tr. (which Wesley knew), 'By a Presbyter of the Church of England', *The Spiritual Homilies of Macarius the Egyptian* (1721). Homily XVII, 'Concerning the Spiritual Union and Glory of Christians. And that without Christ it is impossible to be Saved, or to be made Partaker of Eternal Life', p. 267: 'But the unsteady and unskilful, whenever grace operates, tho' but in part, imagine presently they have no more sin. Whereas they that have discretion and are prudent, never have the confidence to deny that we who even have the grace of God, are molested with obscene and filthy thoughts. For we have often had instances of some among the brethren, that have experienced such a degree of joy and grace, as to affirm that for five or six years running, concupiscence had withered quite away; and yet after all, when they thought themselves freed entirely from it, the corruption that lurked within, was stirred up anew, and they were even burnt up.' See also No. 112, *On Laying the Foundation of the New Chapel*, II.3.



8. From the time of our being 'born again' the gradual work of sanctification takes place. We are enabled 'by the Spirit' to 'mortify the deeds of the body';<sup>23</sup> of our evil nature. And as we are more and more dead to sin, we are more and more alive to God. 5 We go on from grace to grace, while we are careful to 'abstain from all appearance of evil';<sup>24</sup> and are 'zealous of good works';<sup>25</sup> as we have opportunity doing good to all men;<sup>26</sup> while we walk in all his ordinances blameless;<sup>27</sup> therein worshipping him in spirit and in truth;<sup>28</sup> while we take up our cross and deny ourselves every pleasure that does not lead us to God.

9. It is thus that we wait for entire sanctification, for a full salvation from all our sins, from pride, sell-will, anger, unbelief, or, as the Apostle expresses it, 'Go on to perfection.'<sup>29</sup> But what is perfection? The word has various senses: here it means perfect love. It is love excluding sin; love filling the heart, taking up the whole capacity of the soul. It is love 'rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, in everything giving thanks'.<sup>30</sup>

II. But what is that 'faith through which we are saved'?<sup>31</sup> This is the second point to be considered.

1. Faith in general is defined by the Apostle, *ἐλεγχος πραγμάτων οὐ βλεπομένων*—'an evidence', a divine 'evidence and conviction' (the word means both), 'of things not seen'<sup>32</sup>—not visible, not perceivable either by sight or by any other of the external senses. It implies both a supernatural *evidence* of God and of the things of God, a kind of spiritual *light* exhibited to the soul, and a supernatural *sight* or perception thereof. Accordingly the Scripture speaks sometimes of God's giving light, sometimes a power of discerning it. So St. Paul: 'God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus

Christ.'<sup>33</sup> And elsewhere the same Apostle speaks 'of the eyes of our 'understanding being opened'.<sup>34</sup> By this twofold operation of the Holy Spirit—having the eyes of our soul both *opened* and *enlightened*—we see the things which the natural 'eye hath not seen, neither the ear heard'.<sup>35</sup> We have a prospect of the invisible things of God. We see the *spiritual world*, which is all round about us, and yet no more discerned by our natural faculties than if it had no being; and we see the *eternal world*, piercing through the veil which hangs between time and eternity. Clouds and darkness then rest upon it no more,<sup>36</sup> but we already see the glory which shall be revealed.<sup>37</sup>

2. Taking the word in a more particular sense, faith is a divine evidence and conviction, not only that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself',<sup>38</sup> but also that Christ 'loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*'.<sup>39</sup> It is by this faith (whether we term it the *essence*, or rather a *property* thereof) that we 'receive Christ';<sup>40</sup> that we receive him in all his offices, as our Prophet, Priest, and King.<sup>41</sup> It is by this that he 'is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption'.<sup>42</sup>

3. But is this the "faith of assurance" or "faith of adherence"? 20 The Scripture mentions no such distinction. The Apostle says: 'There is one faith, and one hope of our calling,' one Christian, saving faith, as 'there is one Lord' in whom we believe, and 'one God and Father of us all'.<sup>43</sup> And it is certain this faith necessarily implies an *assurance* (which is here only another word for *evidence*, it being hard to tell the difference between them) that 'Christ loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*.' For 'he that believeth with the true, living faith, 'hath the witness in himself.'<sup>44</sup> 'The Spirit witnesseth with his spirit that he is a child of God.'<sup>45</sup> 'Because he

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Rom. 8:13.

<sup>24</sup> 1 Thess. 5:22.

<sup>25</sup> Titus 2:14.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Gal. 6:10.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Luke 1:6.

<sup>28</sup> See John 4:23, 24.

<sup>29</sup> Heb. 6:1.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. 1 Thess. 5:16-18.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Eph. 2:8.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Heb. 11:1; this, obviously, is a quotation from memory, since even *JR* here reads *πραγμάτων ἐλεγχος*. See No. 3, '*Awake, Thou That Sleepest*', I.1 and n.; also, *An Earnest Appeal*, §§6-7 (11:46-47 in this edn.).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. 2 Cor. 4:6.

<sup>34</sup> Eph. 1:18.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. 2:9.

<sup>36</sup> An echo of Addison's *Cato*, cf. No. 117, 'On the Discoveries of Faith', §8 and n.

<sup>37</sup> Rom. 8:18. Yet another instance of the theory that our knowledge 'of God and the things of God' is a sort of *sight*, a direct intuition of 'the eternal world'. See No. 10, 'The Witness of the Spirit', I, 1.12 and n.

<sup>38</sup> 2 Cor. 5:19.

<sup>39</sup> Gal. 2:20.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Col. 2:6.

<sup>41</sup> For this Reformed concept of 'offices' and its import for Wesley's Christology, see Desselner, *Wesley's Christology*, chs. III-VI.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. 1:30.

<sup>43</sup> 1 John 5:10.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Eph. 4:4-6.

<sup>45</sup> Rom. 8:16.



is a son, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into his heart, crying, Abba, Father;<sup>46</sup> giving him an assurance that he is so, and a childlike confidence in him. But let it be observed that, in the very nature of the thing, the assurance goes before the confidence. For a man cannot have a childlike confidence in God till he knows he is a child of God. Therefore confidence, trust, reliance, adherence, or whatever else it be called, is not the first, as some have supposed, but the second branch or act of faith.

4. It is by this faith we 'are saved', justified and sanctified, taking that word in its highest sense. But how are we justified and sanctified by faith? This is our third head of inquiry. And this being the main point in question, and a point of no ordinary importance, it will not be improper to give it a more distinct and particular consideration.

15 III. 1. And first, how are we justified by faith? In what sense is this to be understood? I answer, faith is the condition, and the only condition, of justification. It is the condition: none is justified but he that believes; without faith no man is justified. And it is the only condition: this alone is sufficient for justification. Everyone  
20 that believes is justified, whatever else he has or has not. In other words: no man is justified till he believes; every man when he believes is justified.

2. 'But does not God command us to *repent* also? Yea, and to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance"?<sup>47</sup> To "cease", for instance, "from doing evil", and "learn to do well"?<sup>48</sup> And is not  
25 both the one and the other of the utmost necessity? Inasmuch that if we willingly neglect either we cannot reasonably expect to be justified at all? But if this be so, how can it be said that faith is the only condition of justification?

30 God does undoubtedly command us both to repent and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance; which if we willingly neglect we cannot reasonably expect to be justified at all. Therefore both repentance and fruits meet for repentance are in some sense necessary to justification.<sup>49</sup> But they are not necessary

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Gal. 4:6.

<sup>47</sup> Matt. 3:8.

<sup>48</sup> Elsewhere, Wesley stresses repentance as the normal preparatory state for the reception of justifying faith and, in that sense, 'necessary'; cf. No. 14, *The Repentance of Believers*, II.6 and n. See also Law's insistence in *A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection* (1726), in *Works* (1762), III. 84-86, that 'Repentance and sorrow for sin are [strictly] necessary to salvation.'

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Isa. 1:16-17.

in the *same sense* with faith, nor in the *same degree*. Not in the *same degree*, for those fruits are only necessary *conditionally*, if there be time and opportunity for them. Otherwise a man may be justified without them, as was the 'thief' upon the cross (if we may call him so; for a late writer has discovered that he was no thief, but a very honest and respectable person!)<sup>50</sup> But he cannot be justified without faith: this is impossible. Likewise let a man have ever so much repentance, or ever so many of the fruits meet for repentance, yet all this does not at all avail: he is not justified till he believes. But the moment he believes, with or without those  
10 fruits, yea, with more or less repentance, he is justified. Not in the *same sense*: for repentance and its fruits are only *remotely* necessary, necessary in order to faith; whereas faith is *immediately* and *directly* necessary to justification. It remains that faith is the only condition which is *immediately* and *proximately* necessary to justification.

3. 'But do you believe we are sanctified by faith? We know you believe that we are justified by faith; but do not you believe, and accordingly teach, that we are sanctified by our works?'

So it has been roundly and vehemently affirmed for these five  
20 and twenty years.<sup>51</sup> But I have constantly declared just the contrary, and that in all manner of ways. I have continually testified in private and in public that we are sanctified, as well as justified, by faith. And indeed the one of these great truths does exceedingly illustrate the other. Exactly as we are justified by  
25 faith, so are we sanctified by faith. Faith is the condition, and the only condition of sanctification, exactly as it is of justification. It is the condition: none is sanctified but he that believes; without faith no man is sanctified. And it is the only condition: this alone is sufficient for sanctification. Everyone that believes is sanctified,  
30

<sup>50</sup> See Matt. 27:38 and Mark 15:27. The 'late writer' was not Bengel, Burkitt, Heylyn, Henry, or Poole—and Wesley makes nothing of the idea that one of the ἄπορταί was 'very honest and respectable.' This interpretation goes back, of course, to Josephus's account of the Zealots in his *Jewish War*, II. Josephus's first English translator, William Whiston (1737), may have been Wesley's 'late writer'; cf. his *Six Dissertations* (1734), No. 1. See also Karl Rengstorff's article on Ἀπορταί in Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, IV.262: 'When Jesus was crucified and was thus punished as a political rebel against Rome, two others condemned as Ἀπορταί suffered with him. The title on the cross marked him as one of them.' Cf. also Haim Cohn, *The Trial and Death of Jesus* (New York, Harper and Row, 1967), p. 208.

<sup>51</sup> I.e., approximately from 1739, with Wesley's insistence in his preface to *Hymns and Sacred Poems* on good works following upon faith (see *Bibliog.* No. 13; and Vol. 12 of this edn.).



whatever else he has or has not. In other words: no man is sanctified till he believes; every man when he believes is sanctified.<sup>52</sup>

4. 'But is there not a repentance consequent upon, as well as a repentance previous to, justification? And is it not incumbent on all that are justified to be "zealous of good works"?<sup>53</sup> Yea, are not these so necessary that if a man willingly neglect them he cannot reasonably expect that he shall ever be sanctified in the full sense, that is, "perfected in love"?<sup>54</sup> Nay, can he "grow" at all "in grace, in the" loving "knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ"?<sup>55</sup> Yea, can he retain the grace which God has already given him? Can he continue in the faith which he has received, or in the favour of God? Do not you yourself allow all this, and continually assert it? But if this be so, how can it be said that faith is the only condition of sanctification?'<sup>56</sup>

5. I do allow all this, and continually maintain it as the truth of God. I allow there is a repentance consequent upon, as well as a repentance previous to, justification.<sup>56</sup> It is incumbent on all that are justified to be zealous of good works. And these are so necessary that if a man willingly neglect them, he cannot reasonably expect that he shall ever be sanctified. He cannot 'grow in grace', in the image of God, the mind which was in Christ Jesus;<sup>57</sup> nay, he cannot retain the grace he has received, he cannot continue in faith, or in the favour of God.

25 What is the inference we must draw herefrom? Why, that both repentance, rightly understood, and the practice of all good works, works of piety, as well as works of mercy (now properly so called, since they spring from faith) are in some sense necessary to sanctification.

30 6. I say 'repentance rightly understood'; for this must not be confounded with the former repentance. The repentance consequent upon justification is widely different from that which is antecedent to it. This implies no guilt, no sense of condemnation, no consciousness of the wrath of God. It does not

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Wesley's repetition of this emphasis on the close correlation between justification and sanctification in No. 107, 'On God's Vineyard', I.5-6.

<sup>53</sup> Titus 2:14.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. 1 John 2:5; 4:12, 18.

<sup>55</sup> 2 Pet. 3:18.

<sup>56</sup> See Nos. 14, *The Repentance of Believers*, proem, §2, and n.; 13, *On Sin in Believers*; and 8, 'The First-fruits of the Spirit', for other versions of this notion of 'repentance consequent upon justification'. The idea goes back to the *poenitentia secunda* of Tertullian (at least) and is a correlate of the doctrine of double justification.

<sup>57</sup> See Phil. 2:5.

suppose any doubt of the favour of God, or any 'fear that hath torment'.<sup>58</sup> It is properly a conviction wrought by the Holy Ghost of the 'sin' which still 'remains'<sup>59</sup> in our heart, of the *ὑπομνημα σαρκός*,<sup>60</sup> 'the carnal mind', which 'does still remain', as our Church speaks, 'even in them that are regenerate'<sup>62</sup>—although it does no longer *reign*,<sup>63</sup> it has not now dominion over them. It is a conviction of our proneness to evil, of an heart 'bent to backsliding',<sup>64</sup> of the still continuing tendency of the 'flesh' to 'lust against the Spirit'.<sup>65</sup> Sometimes, unless we continually watch and pray, it lusteth to pride, sometimes to anger, sometimes to love of the world, love of ease, love of honour, or love of pleasure more than of God. It is a conviction of the tendency of our heart to self-will, to atheism, or idolatry; and above all to unbelief, whereby in a thousand ways, and under a thousand pretences, we are ever 'departing' more or less 'from the living God'.<sup>66</sup>

7. With this conviction of the sin *remaining* in our hearts there is joined a clear conviction of the sin remaining in our lives, still *cleaving* to all our words and actions. In the best of these we now discern a mixture of evil, either in the spirit, the matter, or the manner of them; something that could not endure the righteous judgment of God, were he 'extreme to mark what is done amiss'.<sup>67</sup> Where we least suspected it we find a taint of pride of self-will, of unbelief or idolatry; so that we are now more ashamed of our best duties than formerly of our worst sins. And hence we cannot but feel that these are so far from having anything meritorious in them, yea, so far from being able to stand in sight of the divine justice, that for those also we should be guilty before God were it not for the blood of the covenant.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Cf. 1 John 4:18.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. John 9:41.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. No. 13, *On Sin in Believers*, intro, I.3, III.1-9, and IV.1.

<sup>61</sup> Rom. 8:7.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Art. IX, 'Of Original or Birth Sin'.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. No. 13, *On Sin in Believers*, intro, I.6, and n. This distinction between 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' sins is crucial. Voluntary sins ('sins properly so called') generate guilt and alienation; their 'reign' must be broken by God's pardoning mercy. The *ὑπομνημα σαρκός* remains, but has lost its dominion in the believer's heart; it does not, therefore, annul his assurance that God will pardon subsequent sins on the basis of 'consequent repentance'.

<sup>64</sup> Hos. 11:7.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Gal. 5:17.

<sup>66</sup> Heb. 3:12.

<sup>67</sup> Ps. 130:3 (BCP).

<sup>68</sup> Exod. 24:8; Heb. 10:29.



8. Experience shows that together with this conviction of sin *remaining* in our hearts and *cleaving* to all our words and actions, as well as the guilt which on account thereof we should incur were we not continually sprinkled with the atoning blood, one thing more is implied in this repentance, namely, a conviction of our helplessness, of our utter inability to think one good thought, or to form one good desire; and much more to speak one word aright, or to perform one good action but through his free, almighty grace, first preventing us, and then accompanying us every moment.<sup>69</sup>

9. 'But what good works are those, the practice of which you affirm to be necessary to sanctification?' First, all works of piety,<sup>70</sup> such as public prayer, family prayer, and praying in our closet; receiving the Supper of the Lord; searching the Scriptures by hearing, reading, meditating; and using such a measure of fasting or abstinence as our bodily health allows.

10. Secondly, all works of mercy, whether they relate to the bodies or souls of men; such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, entertaining the stranger, visiting those that are in prison, or sick, or variously afflicted; such as the endeavouring to instruct the ignorant, to awaken the stupid sinner, to quicken the lukewarm, to confirm the wavering, to comfort the feeble-minded,<sup>71</sup> to succour the tempted,<sup>72</sup> or contribute in any manner to the saving of souls from death. This is the repentance, and these the fruits meet for repentance, which are necessary to full sanctification. This is the way wherein God hath appointed his children to wait for complete salvation.

11. Hence may appear the extreme mischievousness of that seemingly innocent opinion that there is no sin in a believer; that all sin is destroyed, root and branch, the moment a man is justified.<sup>73</sup> By totally preventing that repentance<sup>74</sup> it quite blocks up the way to sanctification. There is no place for repentance in him who believes there is no sin either in his life or heart. Consequently there is no place for his being 'perfected in love',<sup>75</sup> to which that repentance is indispensably necessary.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. above, I.2 and n. <sup>70</sup> Cf. No. 14, *The Repentance of Believers*, I.13 and n.

<sup>71</sup> I Thess. 5:14.

<sup>72</sup> See Heb. 2:18.

<sup>73</sup> I.e., the view of men like Philip Molther (and, thereafter, of William Cudworth and James Rely); cf. No. 40, *Christian Perfection*, II.10 and n. And, since it denied the necessity of a 'second repentance', Wesley regarded it as a premise for antinomianism.

<sup>74</sup> I.e., 'second repentance', cf. No. 14, *The Repentance of Believers*, proem, §§1-3, *et seq.*

<sup>75</sup> Cf. I John 4:18.

12. Hence it may likewise appear that there is no possible danger in *thus* expecting full salvation. For suppose we were mistaken, suppose no such blessing ever was or can be attained, yet we lose nothing. Nay, that very expectation quickens us in using all the talents which God has given us; yea, in improving them all, so that when our Lord cometh he will 'receive his own with increase'.<sup>76</sup>

13. But to return. Though it be allowed that both this repentance and its fruits are necessary to full salvation, yet they are not necessary either in the *same sense* with faith or in the *same degree*. Not in the same degree; for these fruits are only necessary *conditionally*, if there be time and opportunity for them. Otherwise a man may be sanctified without them. But he cannot be sanctified without faith. Likewise let a man have ever so much of this repentance, or ever so many good works, yet all this does not at all avail: he is not sanctified till he believes. But the moment he believes, with or without those fruits, yea, with more or less of this repentance, he is sanctified. Not in the *same sense*; for this repentance and these fruits are only *remotely* necessary, necessary in order to the continuance of his faith, as well as the increase of it; whereas faith is *immediately* and *directly* necessary to sanctification. It remains that faith is the only condition which is *immediately* and *proximately* necessary to sanctification.<sup>77</sup>

14. 'But what is that faith whereby we are sanctified, saved from sin and perfected in love?' It is a divine evidence and conviction, first, that God hath promised it in the Holy Scripture. Till we are thoroughly satisfied of this there is no moving one step farther. And one would imagine there needed not one word more to satisfy a reasonable man of this than the ancient promise, 'Then will I circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul.'<sup>78</sup> How clearly does this express the being perfected in love! How strongly imply the being saved from all sin! For as long as love takes up the whole heart, what room is there for sin therein?

15. It is a divine evidence and conviction, secondly, that what

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Matt. 25:27.

<sup>77</sup> The parallel here between faith and repentance in relation to both justification and sanctification is important for Wesley's solution to his problem of 'the remains of sin'; it is his alternative to the Lutheran *simul justus et peccator*. Faith is the only and equally necessary condition in both cases.

<sup>78</sup> Deut. 30:6. An echo of No. 17, 'The Circumcision of the Heart'.



God hath promised he is *able* to perform. Admitting therefore that 'with men it is impossible' to bring a clean thing out of an unclean, to purify the heart from all sin, and to fill it with all holiness, yet this creates no difficulty in the case, seeing 'with God all things are possible.'<sup>79</sup> And surely no one ever imagined it was possible to any power less than that of the Almighty! But if God speaks, it shall be done. God saith, 'Let there be light: and there is light.'<sup>80</sup>

16. It is, thirdly, a divine evidence and conviction that he is able and willing to do it *now*. And why not? Is not a moment to him the same as a thousand years?<sup>81</sup> He cannot want more time to accomplish whatever is his will. And he cannot want or stay for any more *worthiness* of *fitness* in the persons he is pleased to honour. We may therefore boldly say, at any point of time, 'Now is the day of salvation.'<sup>82</sup> 'Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.'<sup>83</sup> Behold! all things are now ready! Come unto the marriage!<sup>84</sup>

17. To this confidence, that God is both able and willing to sanctify us *now*, there needs to be added one thing more, a divine evidence and conviction that *he doth it*. In that hour it is done. God says to the inmost soul, 'According to thy faith be it unto thee!'<sup>85</sup> Then the soul is pure from every spot of sin; 'it is clean from all unrighteousness.'<sup>86</sup> The believer then experiences the deep meaning of those solemn words, 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'<sup>87</sup>

18. 'But does God work this great work in the soul *gradually* or *instantaneously*?' Perhaps it may be gradually wrought in some. I mean in this sense—they do not advert to the particular moment wherein sin ceases to be. But it is infinitely desirable, were it the will of God, that it should be done *instantaneously*; that the Lord should destroy sin 'by the breath of his mouth'<sup>88</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.<sup>89</sup> And so he generally does, a plain fact of

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Matt. 19:26, etc.

<sup>81</sup> See 2 Pet. 3:8; Ps. 90:4.

<sup>83</sup> Heb. 4:7.

<sup>84</sup> Matt. 22:4.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Matt. 9:29.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. 1 John 1:9.

<sup>87</sup> 1 John 1:7.

<sup>88</sup> Job 15:30; Ps. 33:6.

<sup>89</sup> 1 Cor. 15:52.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Gen. 1:3.  
<sup>82</sup> 2 Cor. 6:2.

which there is evidence enough to satisfy any unprejudiced person. *Thou* therefore look for it every moment. Look for it in the way above described; in all those 'good works' whereunto thou art 'created anew in Christ Jesus'.<sup>90</sup> There is then no danger. You can be no worse, if you are no better for that expectation. For were you to be disappointed of your hope, still you lose nothing. But you shall not be disappointed of your hope: it will come, and will not tarry.<sup>91</sup> Look for it then every day, every hour, every moment. Why not this hour, this moment? Certainly you may look for it *now*, if you believe it is by faith. And by this token may you surely know whether you seek it by faith or by works. If by works, you want something to be done *first*, *before* you are sanctified. You think, 'I must first *be* or *do* thus or thus.' Then you are seeking it by works unto this day. If you seek it by faith, you may expect it *as you are*; and if as you are, then expect it *now*. It is of importance to observe that there is an inseparable connection between these three points—expect it *by faith*, expect it *as you are*, and expect it *now*! To deny one of them is to deny them all: to allow one is to allow them all. Do *you* believe we are sanctified by faith? Be true then to your principle, and look for this blessing just as you are, neither better, nor worse; as a poor sinner that has still nothing to pay, nothing to plead but 'Christ died.'<sup>92</sup> And if you look for it as you are, then expect it *now*. Stay for nothing. Why should you? Christ is ready. And he is all you want. He is waiting for you. He is at the door!<sup>93</sup> Let your inmost soul cry out,

Come in, come in, thou heavenly Guest!

Nor hence again remove:

But sup with me, and let the feast

Be everlasting love.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Eph. 2:10.

<sup>91</sup> See Heb. 10:37.

<sup>92</sup> Rom. 5:6, 8, etc.

<sup>93</sup> See Rev. 3:20.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Wesley, *Hymns on God's Everlasting Love* (II), London, Strahan, 1742 (*Bibliog.* No. 47), Hymn 8, p. 25 (*Poet. Wks.*, III.66), the orig. has been slightly retouched.