

**A PLAIN ACCOUNT
OF
CHRISTIAN PERFECTION
(PARAPHRASE)**

BY JOHN WESLEY

1872 ED. BY THOMAS JACKSON

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2016

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The Works of John Wesley (1872 ed. by Thomas Jackson), vol. 11, pp. 366-446.

A Plain Account of Christian Perfection

as believed and taught by the Reverend Mr. John Wesley, from the year 1725, to the year 1777

[It is not to be understood, that Mr. Wesley's sentiments concerning Christian Perfection were in any measure changed after the year 1777. This tract underwent several revisions and enlargements during his life-time; and in every successive edition the date of the most recent revision was specified. The last revision appears to have been made in the year 1777; and since that period, this date has been generally continued on the title-page of the several editions of the pamphlet. -- EDIT.]

1. What I want to do in the following pages is, to give a plain and distinct account of the steps by which I was led, over many years, to embrace the doctrine of Christian perfection. I owe this account to people who are serious in their desire to know all "the truth as it is in Jesus." These are the only people really concerned with questions of this kind. I want to tell the story plainly to those interested, attempting to give a clear chronological order to what I thought, and why I thought it.

2. In 1725, when I was twenty three years old, I read Bishop Taylor's "Rule and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying." While reading several parts of this book, I was greatly impacted by the part in particular which relates to purity of intention. Instantly I decided to dedicate all my life to God, all my thoughts, and words, and actions; being thoroughly convinced, there was no half way dedication; but that every part of my life (not some only) must either be a sacrifice to God, or to myself, which really means, to the devil.

Can any serious person doubt this, or find a half way point between serving God and serving the devil?

3. In 1726, I read Kempis's "Christian's Pattern." After reading this it was clearer to me than ever before what the nature and extent of inward faith, the religion of the heart really was. I saw, that even giving all my life to God (with the idea that it possible to do this, and then stop at that point) would not gain me anything, unless I gave my heart, yes, all my heart, to him.

I saw, that "simplicity of intention, and purity of affection," that is, one purpose in everything we speak or do, and one desire ruling all our emotional and mental states, are indeed "the wings of the soul," without which she can never ascend to the mount of God.

4. I thought about, Mr. Law's "Christian Perfection" and "Serious Call" for more than a year after reading them. These convinced me, more than ever, that it is absolutely impossible to be half a Christian. I determined, through His grace, (which I was deeply aware was absolutely needed) to be completely devoted to God, to give him all my soul, my body, and my wealth.

Will any intelligent person say, that this is taking the matter too far? Can we say we owe Him less, who has given himself for us, than to give ourselves to Him, all we have, and all we are?

5. In the year 1729, I began not only to read, but to study, the Bible, as the one, the only standard of truth, and the only model of a pure faith. As a result, I saw more and more clearly that having "*the mind which was in Christ*" was an absolute necessity and that we must "*walk as Christ also walked.*" I was convinced that we must have the whole mind of Christ not just a part of it and that we must walk as He walked in all things, not just in some things or even many things. It was in this light, at the time, that I thought of faith, as following Christ uniformly, being Christlike on both the inside and outside. My greatest fear was that I would shape the image of Christ likeness according to my own Christian experience or of other men's experience rather than of Jesus Himself. I was afraid to allow myself even the smallest departure from our wonderful example in Jesus.

6. On January 1, 1733, I preached before the University in St. Mary's church, on "*the Circumcision of the Heart;*" Saying: "It is the practiced attitude of the heart, called holiness in scripture, which points directly to being cleansed from sin '*from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit;*' and, as a result, having all of Christ

Jesus' virtues. This means that we are so '*renewed in the image of our mind,*' as to be '*perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.*'" (Vol. V., p. 203.)

6.2 In the same sermon I said, "*Love is the fulfilling of the law, the end of the commandment.*" Not only is this '*the first and great,*' but it is all the commandments combined in one. '*Whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise,*' they are all contained in this one word, love. In this is perfection, and glory, and happiness: The highest law of heaven and earth is this, '*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.*' This is the one perfect good, you need to aim for the love you were designed for. You should desire one thing for its own sake, -- **the realization of him who is all in all.** Let your heart know of this one happiness which includes the joining of your life with the one who made you. This design is the '*fellowship with the Father and the Son,*' and being '*joined to the Lord in one spirit.*' this one design to the end of time, -- the enjoyment of God in time and in eternity. Desire other things only as much as they direct you to this; love all created things, as it leads to the Creator. So in every step you take this should be the glorious point that finally determines your view. Let every attitude, desire, thought, word, and action, be ruled by this. Whatever you desire or fear, whatever you seek or avoid, whatever you think, speak, or do, make sure it is in agreement with your happiness in God, This is what you were designed for and it is the source of your being." (Ibid., pp. 207, 208.)

6.3 I concluded with these words: "Here is the full meaning of the perfect law, the circumcision of the heart. Let us return to the God who gave it with all of its attitudes and desires. -- God has not chosen any sacrifice other than the living sacrifice of the heart. On a regular basis offer up your heart, which is overflowing with holy love, to God through Christ. Do not let any created thing share your heart because God is a jealous God. He will not share the place of his power and authority with anyone or any other thing. God will rule over all without competition. Only those who know him as the ultimate object of love can enter into his place of power and authority. No other design or desire can enter in. This is the way that those children of God once walked. Even though they are dead, they still speak to us: '*Desire not to live but to praise his name; let all your thoughts, words, and works tend to his glory.*' '*Let your heart be so fully filled with love for Him that you can only love for his sake.*' Have a heart with pure intention, and faithful attention to his glory in all your actions. 'That '*mind in us, which was also in Christ Jesus*' comes to us when in every movement of our heart and in every word of our mouth and in every work our our hands we pursue nothing but what relates to Him. That mind is found in us only when our heart, mouth and hands are under the authority of his pleasure. We have the mind of Christ when we don't think, speak, or act to fulfill 'our own will, but the will of Him that sent us.' We have the mind of Christ when "*whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we do it all to the glory of God.*" (Ibid., p. 211.)

6.4 You might see that this sermon was the first of all my published writings. This was the religious view I held then. Even then I used caution with the word perfection. This is my view now, without taking or adding to the material. And what is there here, that any person with understanding, who believes the Bible, can argue against? What can any person deny, without completely contradicting the Scripture? How can one leave it out without taking from the word of God?

7. With the same attitude my brother and I stay stayed (with all those young gentlemen jokingly called Methodists) till we left for America, at the end of 1735. It was the next year, while I was at Savannah, that I wrote the following lines: --

Is there a thing beneath the sun,
That strives with thee my heart to share?

Ah! tear it out, and reign alone,
The Lord of every motion there!

In the beginning of the year 1738, as I was returning from there, the cry of my heart was,

O grant that nothing in my soul

May dwell, but your pure love alone!

O may your love possess me whole,
My joy, my treasure, and my crown!

Strange fires far from my heart remove;
My every act, word, thought, be love!

I never heard that any one was against this. And really, who can disagree? Is not this the language, not only of every believer, but of every one that is truly awakened? Is there anything to date that I have written which is either stronger or plainer?

8. The next August, I had a long conversation with Arvid Gradin, in Germany. After he told me about his experience, I wanted him to give me a definition of "the full assurance of faith." This is what he wrote: --

Requies in sanguine Christi; firma fiducia in Deum, et persuasio de gratia divina; tranquillitas mentis summa, atque serenitas et pax; cum absentia omnis desiderii carnalis, et cessatione peccatorum etiam internorum.

"Rest in the blood of Christ. Have a strong confidence in God. Live in a way that God favors. Live with a stillness, calmness and peace of mind. Live with a freedom from every fleshly desire and the end to even inward sins."

I had heard this from scripture but this was the first time I heard this from anyone else. I had been praying for this and expecting this (with my small group of friends) for several years.

9. In 1739, my brother and I published a volume of "Hymns and Sacred Poems." In many of these we made known our feelings strongly and clearly. So, page 24, --

Turn the fall stream of nature's tide;
Let all our actions tend
To you, their source; your love the guide,
Your glory be the end.

Earth then a ladder to heaven shall be;
Sense shall point out the road;
The creatures all shall lead to you,
And all we taste be God.

Again, --
Lord, arm me with your Spirit's might,
Since I am call'd by your great name:
In you my wandering thoughts unite,
Of all my works you be the aim:
Your love attend me all my days,
And my sole business be your praise. (Page 122.)

Again, --
Eager for you I ask and pant,
So strong the principle divine,
Carries me out with sweet constraint,
Till all my hallow'd soul be yours;
Plunged in the Godhead's deepest sea,
And lost in your immensity! (Page 125.)

Once more, --

Heavenly Adam, life divine,
Change my nature into yours;
Move and spread throughout my soul,
Actuate and fill the whole. (Page 153.)

It would be easy to show many more passages with the same idea. But these are definitely enough to show what our feelings were then.

10.1 The first tract I ever wrote specifically on this subject was published at the end of this year. So that no one would be against it before they read it, I gave it a neutral title of "The Character of a Methodist." In this I described a perfect Christian, placing in the front, "It isn't like I had already reached it." Part of it I included without making a change: --

10.2 "A Methodist is one who loves the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his body, with all his mind, and with all his strength. God is the joy of his heart, and the desire of his body, which is continually crying, *'Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is none upon earth whom I desire besides thee.'* God and my all! *'You are the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.'* Therefore he is happy in God; yeah, always happy. It is like he has in himself a well of water springing up unto everlasting life, and over-flowing his heart with peace and joy. Perfect love living now throws out fear, he rejoices evermore. Certainly, his joy is full, and all his bones cry out, *'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten me again unto a living hope of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven for me.'*

10.3 "Therefore one who has this hope is full of everlasting life. He gives thanks in everything (no matter what it is) because he knows this is the will of God in Christ Jesus. He receives everything from God cheerfully, and says, *'The Lord's will is Good.'* God gives or takes away, he blesses the name of the Lord just the same. He gives thanks to God with all of his heart no matter if he has comfort or pain, no matter if he has sickness or health, and no matter if he is living or dying. He has committed his body and heart into God's hands, *'as into the hands of a faithful Creator.'* As a result, He is not anxious or full of care about anything since he has *'cast all his care on Him that cares for him;'* and *'in all things'* rests on Him, after *'making'* his *'request known to him with thanksgiving.'*

10.4 "For indeed she *'prays without ceasing;'* and the language of her heart is always, *'My mouth is yours, even without a voice; and my silence speaks to you.'* Her heart is focused on God at all times, and in all places. In this she is never stopped and even more she is never interrupted, by any person or thing. No matter if she is alone or with people, playing, working or talking to someone, her heart is always with the Lord. If she lies down, or rises up, *'God is in all her thoughts.'* She walks with God all the time; keeping the attention of her love filled heart towards God and everywhere *'seeing Him that is invisible.'*

10.5 "And loving God, he *'loves his neighbor as himself;'* he loves every person as he loves his own heart. He loves his enemies for sure as well as the enemies of God. And if it is not in his power to *'do good to them that hate'* him, yet he doesn't stop *'praying for them,'* even though they refuse his love, and still *'show contempt for him, and persecute him.'*

10.6 "For she is *'pure in heart.'* Love has made her heart clean from envy, malice, wrath, and every unkind attitude. It has cleansed her from pride, which *'only brings fights'* and she now has *'put on inward mercy, kindness, humility of mind, meekness, long-suffering.'* And indeed all possible reason for conflict, on her part, is cut off. For one can take her from what she wants, seeing she *'loves not the world, nor any of the things of the world;'* but *'all her desire is unto God, and to the remembrance of his name.'*

10.7 "This one design of his life agrees with one desire; namely, *'to do, not his own will, but the will of Him that sent him.'* one constant intention at all times and everywhere is, not to please himself, but to please Him whom his heart loves. He has a single eye; and because his *'eye is single, his whole body is full of light. The whole is light, as when the bright shining of a candle enlightens the house.'* rules alone; all that is in the heart is *'holiness to the Lord.'* His heart doesn't act in any way but according to His will. Every thought that comes up points to Him, and is in *'obedience to the law of Christ.'*

10.8 “And the tree is known by its fruits. For, as she loves God, so she *'keeps His commandments;'* not only some, or most of them, but all, from the least to the greatest. She is not content to *'keep the whole law and offend in one point,'* but has in all points *'a conscience without offense towards God, and towards man.'* Whatever God has forbidden, she avoids; whatever God has commanded, she does. *'She runs the way of God's commandments,'* now He sets her heart free. It is her glory and joy to do this; it is her greatest enjoyment everyday, to *'do the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven.'*

10.9 “He keeps all the commandments of God, and he keeps them with all his ability; for his obedience is in proportion to his love. Love is the spring from which obedience flows. Since he loves God with all his heart, he serves him with all his strength. He constantly presents his heart and *'body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.'* devotes himself entirely and without caution, all he has, all he is, to His glory. He constantly applies all the talents he has according to his Master's will; every power and function of his heart, every member of his body.

10.10 “By consequence, *'whatever she does, it is all to the glory of God.'* Whatever work she does, she not only aims at glorifying God, which is implied in having a single eye, but she actually attains it. Her business and her rest and play, as well as her prayers, all serve this great purpose. Whether she *'sit in the house, or walk by the way,'* whether she lies down, or rises up, she is witnessing to, in all she speaks or does, the one business of her life. Whether she put on her clothing, or work, or eat and drink, or keeps herself from wasting time, it all tends to advance the glory of God, by peace and good-will among people. Her one constant rule is this: *'Whatever you do, in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, even the Father, through him.'*

10.11 “The customs of the world do not stop his *'running the race which is set before him.'* Therefore He cannot *'lay up treasures upon earth,'* no more than he can take fire into heaven. He cannot speak evil of his neighbor, any more than he can lie for God or man. He cannot speak unkindly about anyone; for love keeps the door of his lips closed. He cannot *'speak idle words. No corrupt conversation'* *'comes out of his mouth.'* that isn't *'good to the use of edifying'* *'unfit for minister[ing] grace to the hearers'* out of his mouth. *'whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are'* justly *'of good report,'* he thinks, speaks, and acts, *'adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.'*

10.12 These are the very words that I used in my first statement, concerning my thoughts on Christian perfection. And isn't it easy to see, (1.) This is the point I was aiming at all along since 1725? I aimed with even more determination after 1730, when I began to be homo unius libri, “a man of one book.” Is there any other book better than the Bible? Isn't it also easy to see, (2.) That this is the very same doctrine which I believe and teach today; not adding one point, either to that inward or outward holiness I believed eight-and-thirty years ago? And it is the same which, by the grace of God, I have continued to teach from that time till now. Every impartial person will see from the selections added below.

11. I do not know if any writer has made an objection against that tract to this day; and for some time, I did not find much opposition to the ideas there, at least, not from serious persons. But after some time, to my surprise, trained clergy complained. They concluded not that I stated perfection wrong, but that “there is no perfection on earth;” They were angry at my brother and I for arriving at the opposite conclusion. We hardly expected them to attack us this roughly; especially since we were clear on justification by faith, and careful to attribute the whole of salvation to only the grace of God. But what surprised us most, was, that we were said to “dishonor Christ,” by clearly stating the truth that He “saves to the greatest degree possible;” by saying consistently that He will reign in our hearts alone, and direct all things to Himself.

12.1 I think it was near the end of the year 1740, when I had a conversation with Dr. Gibson, then Bishop of London, at Whitehall. He asked me what I meant by perfection. I told him plainly without keeping anything back. When I stopped speaking, he said, “Mr. Wesley, if this is all you mean, publish it to all the world. If any one can contradict what you say, lie may have free leave.” I answered, “My Lord, I will;” and so I wrote and published the sermon on Christian perfection.

(note: The Bishop is saying that what Wesley has said cannot be contradicted, he is personifying LIE as

though what Wesley has said is so clearly true that a person contradicting it would be allowing Lie - like a person walking around - to have the freedom to go anywhere). wdp

In this I endeavored to show, (1.) In what way Christians are not perfect, (2.) In what way they are perfect.

12.2 “(1.) In what ways Christians are not perfect. They are not perfect in knowledge. They are not free from ignorance or from mistake. We cannot expect any living person to be totally free from error, any more than to have total knowledge of all things (omniscient). They are not free from defects, such as weakness or slowness of understanding, occasional flights of imagination or an almost total lack of it. They might have rough language or poor pronunciation. To those one might add a thousand nameless shortcomings, either in conversation or behavior. Christians are not perfectly freed from these infirmities until their spirits return to God. We cannot expect until then to be wholly freed from temptation; for *'the servant is not above his master.'* In this way there isn't any absolute perfection on earth. There is no perfection of degrees, none which does not allow a continual increase.

(note: Wesley is referring to the idea that there are human virtues and divine virtues, and virtues in between these two. So a person is perfected – by – degrees, moving from one degree to the next. He disagrees with this saying that we will always (until death) improve both on our defects and weaknesses as well as our capacity to love. So the expectation of perfection i.e., having arrived at a place that cannot be improved, is not possible in this life in this sense. He goes on below to explain what perfection is possible for a Christian). wdp

12.3 “(2.) So, in what sense are they perfect? Notice that we are not talking about baby Christians, but adult Christians. But even baby Christians are perfect as far as to not commit sin. This St. John particularly affirms; and it cannot be contradicted by the examples of the Old Testament. For what, if the holiest of the ancient Jews committed sin sometimes? We cannot conclude from their example, that *'all Christians do and must commit sin as long as they live.'*

12.4 “But doesn't the Scripture say, *'A just man sins seven times a day?'* It does not. Indeed it says, *'A just man falls seven times.'* this is quite another thing. First, the words, a day, are not in the text. Secondly, there is no mention of falling into sin at all. What is mentioned here, is, falling down because of tests, trials and temptations.

12.5 “But elsewhere Solomon says, *'There is no one that does not sin.'* No doubt it was that way when Solomon was living, and from the time of Solomon to Christ you could not find a person that did not sin. But no matter what the spiritual condition was of those who lived under the law, we may safely agree, with St. John, that, since the gospel was given, *'He that is born of God does not sin.'*

12.6 “We cannot measure the spiritual privileges of Christians by what the Old Testament tells us about the experience of people living under the Jewish dispensation. We see now that the fullness of time is come. The Holy Ghost is given now. The great salvation of God is now brought to humanity by the revelation of Jesus Christ. The kingdom of heaven is now set up on earth. The Spirit of God said a long time ago about this kingdom, *'He that is feeble among them, at that day, shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as the angel of the Lord before them.'* (Zech. 12:8.). As you can see even King David is far from being the pattern or standard of Christian perfection.

12.7 “But the Apostles themselves committed sin; Peter by acting more holy than the gentiles, Paul by his sharp argument with Barnabas.” What if they did? Will you make this point: “If two of the Apostles once committed sin, then all other Christians, in all ages, do and must commit sin as long as they live?” No! God forbid that we should speak that way. They were not forced to sin; the grace of God was surely sufficient for them to avoid sin and it is enough for us at this day.

12.8 You may reply, “But, St. James says, 'In many things we offend all.'” True; but who is James talking about? He is talking about those 'many masters' or teachers who God had not sent. He was not talking about the Apostle himself, nor any real Christian. We can see that the Apostle does not use the word “we” to refer to himself or any genuine believer because he is using a figure of speech that is commonly used in writing

as well as in the inspired writings. We see this first, from the ninth verse, 'Therewith bless we God, and therewith curse we men.' Surely the Apostle James is not saying "we" Apostles! not "we" believers! Second, we can see this from the words just before this text: 'My brethren, be not many masters,' or teachers, 'knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all.' We! Who? Not the Apostles nor true believers, but the ones who were to 'receive the greater condemnation,' because of those many offenses. Finally as a third point, the verse itself proves, that 'we offend all,' cannot be spoken either of all people or all Christians. For the verse follows with the mention of a person who did not offend ('offends not'), in the way that the first "we" did; so that this one is clearly distinguished from the first and called a 'perfect man.'

12.9 You reply again, "But St. John himself says, 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves;' and, 'If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.'

"I answer, (1.) The tenth verse gives us the meaning of the eighth: 'If we say we have no sin,' in verse eight, being explained by, 'If we say we have not sinned,' in verse ten. (2.) We are not discussing whether we have or have not sinned before; and neither of these verses says that we do sin, or are sinning now. (3.) The ninth verse explains both the eighth and tenth: 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' As if he had said, 'I have before told you that, The blood of Christ cleanses from all sin.' And no one can say, 'I don't need it. I have no sin to be cleansed, from.' 'If we say, we have no sin, or that 'we have not sinned, we deceive ourselves,' and make God a liar: But 'if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just,' not only 'to forgive us our sins,' but also 'to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,' that we may 'go and sin no more.' We agree then to the teaching of St. John, and the whole teaching of the New Testament and we make this conclusion: A Christian is perfect enough, so that they do not sin.

12.10 "This is the glorious privilege of every Christian, yes, even though he is but a child in Christ. But only mature Christians can be said to be perfect in the sense that they are Secondly, free from both evil thoughts and evil attitudes. First, they are free from evil or sinful thoughts. Where do these evil thoughts come from? 'Out of the heart of man,' if they come, 'proceed evil thoughts.' If, then, the heart is not evil any longer, then evil thoughts no longer proceed out of it: For 'a good tree cannot bear evil fruit.'

12.11 In the same way that these mature Christians are free from evil thoughts they are also free from evil moods and attitudes. Every mature Christian can say, with St. Paul, 'I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;' -- words that clearly describe a deliverance from inward as well as from outward sin. This is expressed both negatively, 'I live not,' my evil nature, the body of sin, is destroyed; and positively, 'Christ lives in me,' and therefore all that is holy, and just, and good is in me. Indeed, both of these phrases, 'Christ lives in me,' and, 'I live not,' are joined in an unbreakable bond, because how can light have fellowship with darkness or Christ with the Devil?

12.12 "Thus it follows that He - who lives in these Christians - has 'purified their hearts by faith,' because every one that has Christ in him, 'the hope of glory, purifies himself even as He is pure.' The Christian is purified from pride; for Christ was lowly in heart. He is pure from selfish desire and self-direction; for Christ only wanted to do the will of his Father. And he is pure from anger, in the ordinary meaning of the word; for Christ was meek and gentle. I say, in the ordinary meaning of the word; for the Christian is angry at sin, while he is grieved for the sinner. He is disturbed at every offense against God, but feels only tender compassion for the offender.

12.13 "Thus does Jesus save his people from their sins, not only from outward sins, but from the sins of their hearts. 'True,' say some, 'but not until death, not in this world.' This is not right because St. John says, 'In this is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because, as he is, so are we in this world.' The Apostle says clearly and plainly, without anyone being able to say "the passage doesn't mean that," that both he and other living Christians are "as their Master," 'in this world' not only at death or after they die, but now.

12.14 "He says exactly the same thing in the first chapter: 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 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 cleanses us from all sin.' And again: 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Clearly the evidence is that the Apostle is talking about a deliverance accomplished in this world: He doesn't say, 'The blood of Christ will cleanse, (at the hour of death, or in the day of judgment,)' but it 'cleanses,' right now, we living Christians 'from all sin.' At the same time the evidence is clear, that if any sin remains, we are not cleansed from all sin. If any unrighteousness remains in the soul, it is not cleansed from 'all, unrighteousness.'

Don't argue that this only refers to justification, or our cleansing from the guilt of sin: First, because that argument puts together what the Apostle clearly separates when he mentions, first, 'to forgive us our sins,' and then 'to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Secondly, because this idea teaches in the strongest possible way that we are declared not guilty before God by our good works. This would make all inward and outward holiness necessarily before a person can be declared not guilty before God. For if the cleansing talked about here is the cleansing we receive from the guilt of sin, then we are not cleansed from guilt, that is, not justified, unless we meet the condition of walking 'in the light, as he is in the light.' So then we have demonstrated that Christians are saved in this world from all sin, from all unrighteousness. We have shown that they are now in such a sense perfect, as not to commit sin, and to be freed from evil thoughts and evil attitudes.”

12.15 I was sure that by speaking and writing this way some people would be offended. Especially those who are looked up to by many as the best of Christians and who teach the opposite of my doctrine but who would not be considered a Christian at all if what I said were true. I was expecting many replies and arguments but I was pleasantly surprised to see that there were none. So I minded my own business and went on my way quietly.

13. Not long after, I think in the spring of 1741, we published a second volume of Hymns. Since our teaching was still misunderstood, and as a result misrepresented, I judged it necessary to explain even more clearly; placing this explanation in the preface of the Hymnal as you can read below.

The salvation of our souls, (a great gift of God), is nothing else than the image of God freshly stamped on our hearts. This salvation renews a believer's spiritual mind making it like mind of the one who created them. Now God has laid 'the axe unto the root of the tree,' 'purifying their hearts by faith,' and 'cleansing all the thoughts of their hearts by breathing his Holy Spirit into their lives.' Since they have the 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 every aspect of living.' Not that they have already reached all that they will attain, they are not yet perfect in that way. Rather, each day they increase or as it says in scripture, they 'go on from strength to strength' as they see the glory of the Lord Jesus as though seeing themselves in a mirror and the Spirit of the Lord is changing them into that glorious image they see reflected.

“And 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;' such a wonderful liberty 'from the law of sin and death,' that the children of this world will not believe it, even if someone tells them. 'The Son has freed everyone 'born of God,' from pride that great source of sin and bitterness. They feel that everything they need comes from God. He alone 'is in all their thoughts,' and 'works in them both the desire and the action of his good pleasure.' They feel like they are not speaking personally but that the Spirit of their Father is speaking through them and whatever they do is done by the Father who lives in them. In this way, God is everything to them, and they feel like nothing in his eyes. They are free from self-will, and want nothing other than the holy and perfect will of God; they don't want their needs met or to be relieved of pain, [This is too strong. Our Lord himself wanted relief from pain. He asked for it, but with a submissive attitude: “Not as I will, but as you will.”] not even life, or death, or any created thing; rather they are constantly calling out in their heart, 'Father, your will be done.' They are free from evil thoughts, so that they cannot enter into them, no, not for a moment. Before, when an evil thought came in, they looked up, and it vanished away. But now the evil thought does not come in, there being no room for this, in a soul which is full of God. They are free from distractions in prayer. Whenever they pour out their hearts directly to God, they have no thought of anything in the past, [This is far too strong. See the sermon “On Wandering Thoughts.”] or present, or even in the future, but they only think of God. Before, they had thoughts which suddenly came in and then passed away like smoke; but now that smoke does not rise at all. They are not fearful or doubtful about their general spiritual condition or any particular action they do. [This is often the

case; but only for a short time.] The 'anointing from the Holy One' teaches them every hour what they should do and say; [For a time it may be so; but not always.] because of that they don't even need to think about where God is directing them. [Sometimes they don't have to but at other times they do have to.] They are in one sense freed from temptations; even though numberless temptations are flying around them they are not bothered by them. [Sometimes they are not; at other times they are very disturbed by them.] At all times their souls are even and calm, their hearts are steady and unmovable. Their peace, flowing like a river, 'passes all understanding,' and they 'rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' For they 'are sealed by the Spirit until the day of redemption,' they have the internal witness, that 'there is laid up for' them a 'crown of righteousness~ which the Lord will give' them 'in that day.' [Not all who are saved from sin experience this; many of them have not acquired that strong an assurance.]

“We don't mean that every one is a child of the devil, until he is renewed in love in this way. No! Rather we know that anyone who has confidence in God that his sins are forgiven through Christ, what He has done and who He is, is a child of God, and, if that person stays in Him, he inherits all the promises. He should not throw away his confidence or say that he has not received real faith just because it is weak or because it is under strong trial so that he feels weighed down with a large number of temptations.

“We don't say like some others that all this salvation is given at once. For certain there is an instantaneous, as well as a gradual, work of God in his children; and we know a cloud of witnesses, who have received, in one moment, either a clear sense of the forgiveness of their sins, or the abiding witness of the Holy Spirit. But we do not know a single instance, in any place, of a person's receiving, in one and the same moment, the release of the guilt of sins, the continuing witness of the Spirit, and a new, clean heart.

“We cannot tell how God may choose to work in the future but generally he works like this: Those who at one time had confidence in themselves that they were living all right with God, in fact spiritually abundant and lacking nothing they needed to get to heaven, are convinced by the Spirit of God applying his word, that they are spiritually poor and naked. Everything wrong they have done in their lives is brought back to their memory and set clearly before them. Because of all their sin they really feel they deserve to go to hell and that God's anger is hanging right over their heads. In their anxiety they call out to the Lord and he shows them that he has taken away their sins, and opens the kingdom of heaven in their hearts, righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Sorrow for sin and pain at having hurt others runs away, and sin no longer rules over them. Now that they know they are justified freely through faith in Jesus' blood, they have peace with God through Jesus Christ and 'they rejoice in hope of the glory of God,' because 'God has poured out his love in their hearts.'

“They stay in this peace for days, or weeks, or months. They usually think they will not know spiritual war any more; until some of their old enemies, their favorite sins, or the sin which most easily harassed them, (perhaps anger or lust,) assaults them again, and pushes at them so painfully that they might sin. Then they begin to fear that they might not make it all the way to the end. They begin to have many doubts, thinking that God has forgotten them and wondering if they just deceived themselves into thinking that their sins were really forgiven. It is like they are walking around under a cloud, crying all day long, especially if they are trying to argue with the devil about these things. But usually it is not long before their Lord speaks up and uses the Holy Spirit to comfort them and to show them constantly that they really are “Children of God.” Then they become meek, gentle and teachable just like a small child. Now, for the first time they see clear to the bottom of their heart; **[Is it not astonishing, that while this book is extant, which was published twenty four years ago, any one should confront me, that this is a new doctrine which I never taught before?] -- [This note was first published in the year 1765 -- EDIT.]** God refused to show them before because the soul of the person might fail and the spirit He created might be overcome. Now they see all the hidden abominations there, the depths of pride, self-will, and hell; while at the same time they still have an internal witness that, 'You are a heir of God, a joint heir with Christ, even in the midst of this fiery trial.' This trial constantly strengthens both the strong sense they that they are not able to help themselves, and their unspeakable hunger to be fully renewed in His image, in 'righteousness and true holiness.' At this point God responds to their longings and gives them a single eye, and a pure heart. He stamps his own image on them and writes His name on their hearts. He creates them new in Christ Jesus; he comes to them with his Son and blessed Spirit, and, making his home in their souls, brings them into the 'rest which remains for the people of God.’”

I can't help but say here, that (1.) this is the strongest account we ever gave of Christian perfection; in fact it is too strong in more than one part, as I commented in the notes I placed there. That (2.) everything which we have taught afterwards about the subject, either in verse or prose, is either directly or indirectly taught in this preface. So even if our present doctrine is right or wrong, it is the same one we taught from the start.

14. I really don't need to prove this by quoting many parts of the book. It may be enough to quote just part of one hymn, the last one in that book. --

Lord, I believe a rest remains,
To all your people known;
A rest where pure enjoyment reigns,
And you are loved alone;
A rest where all our soul's desire
Is placed on things above;
Where doubt and pain and fear expire,
Cast out by perfect love.

From every evil motion freed,
(The Son has made us free,)
On all the powers of hell we tread,
In glorious liberty.

Safe in the way of life, above
Death, earth, and hell we rise;
We find, when perfected in love,
Our long-sought paradise.

O that I now the rest might know,
Believe, and enter in!
Now, Savior, now the power bestow,
And let me cease from sin!

Remove this hardness from my heart,
This unbelief remove:
To me the rest of faith impart,
The sabbath of your love.

Come, O my Savior, come away
Into my soul descend!
No longer from your creature stay,
My author and my end.

The bliss you have for me prepared,
No longer be delayed:
Come, my exceeding great reward,
For whom I first was made.

Come, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
And seal me your abode!
Let all I am in you be lost:
Let all be lost in God!

The song above clearly shows, (1.) that we are talking about here is just as full and high a salvation as anything we have ever talked about, and that (2.) we state here this Salvation can only be received by faith and that it is only blocked by unbelief, and also, (3.) that this faith is given in a moment and so clearly the

salvation which comes from that faith is also given in an instant. Again, (4.) that the “instant” we are talking about may be right now, and we do not need to wait another moment but the the now of that moment is right away and today is the “day of” full Salvation we don't have to wait until tomorrow. And, Last, that if someone teaches something else than above, he is the one bringing a new doctrine to us.

15. About a year later in 1742, we published another volume of Hymns. Since the debate about our doctrine was as high as it could go we addressed the issue more widely than before. As a result most of the hymns in this Volume deal specifically with the subject. The opening preface also is clear about our teaching, which, because it is short, I included the whole thing here: --

“(1.) It may be that the common opposition against “Christian Perfection” comes from misunderstanding it's true nature. We are willing to admit and are always saying that there is no perfection in this life that suggests we are able to stop doing good and following all the commandments of God. There is no perfection in this life that frees us from ignorance, mistakes, temptations and thousands of physical and mental shortcomings that are just a part of being flesh and blood humans.

“(2.) So to emphasize what I have just said, First, we are not just admitting but are strongly defending the point that there is no perfection in this life which suggests any freedom from following all of God's commandments and doing good to everyone especially fellow Christians. We believe, that not only the babies in Christ, who have recently found their redemption in His blood, but those also who are 'grown up to become perfect men,' are required 'to eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of Him,' as much as they can and to 'search the Scriptures;' by fasting, as well as self control, to keep their bodies under control, and make them their subject; and, most of all, to pour out their souls in prayer, while they are alone and together with all Christians in worship.

“(3.) Second, we believe, that no kind of perfection is available in this life that completely delivers us from ignorance, or making mistakes about things that are not necessary to salvation, or from many temptations, or from numberless sicknesses and weaknesses which in our failing bodies cause problems and weaknesses to our soul. We do not find any support in Scripture for the idea that any person living in a “house of clay” is going to get away from sickness in their bodies or from ignorance or making mistakes about many things or from falling into all kinds of temptations.

(4.) “Who are you talking about then, when you talk about a 'perfect Christian?’” We mean someone who has 'the mind which was in Christ,' and who 'walks as Christ also walked;' a man 'that has clean hands and a pure heart,' and is 'clean from all filthiness of flesh and spirit;' someone who does not have any reason within them to stumble and as a result 'does not commit sin.' To say this in a more exact way: We understand that scriptural expression, 'a perfect man,' to refer to a person that God has worked in completely according to His promise, 'From all your filthiness and from all your idols I will cleanse you: I will also save you from all your uncleannesses.' We understand this to mean someone who God has 'sanctified throughout in body, soul, and spirit;' one who 'walks in the light as He is in the light, in whom is no darkness at all; the blood of Jesus Christ his Son having cleansed him from all sin.'

“(5.) Now this person can testify to everyone, 'I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me;' He is 'holy as God who called him is holy,' both in heart and in every way he lives. He 'loves the Lord his God with all his heart,' and serves him 'with all his strength.' He 'loves his neighbor,' which means everyone, 'as himself;' that is, 'as Christ loves us.' He especially loves the people who use him to satisfy their evil hatred and persecute him, because they don't know the Son or the Father. In fact, his soul is all love, filled with 'compassion, kindness, meekness, gentleness, and patience in the face of pain.' And his character agrees with his soul, full of 'the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labor of love.' 'And whatever' he 'does either in word or deed,' he 'does it all in the name,' in the love and power, 'of the Lord Jesus.' Briefly, he does 'the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven.'

“(6.) This is what it means to be a perfect man, to be 'sanctified throughout;' 'to have a heart so all-flaming with the love of God,' (to quote Archbishop Usher,) 'as to constantly offer up every thought, word, and work, as a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God through Christ.' In every thought we think, in every word we say, in every work we do, to 'make clear his praise, who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous

light.' I pray that we together with everyone who seeks after the Lord Jesus from a sincere heart will be made perfect in unity!"

"This is the doctrine which we preached from the beginning until now. Indeed, by looking at it from every point of view, and comparing it over and over with the word of God on the one hand, and the experience of the children of God on the other, we saw deeper into the nature and characteristics of Christian perfection. But there is still no contradiction between our first and last teachings. Our first understanding was, to have "the mind which was in Christ," (all the mind) and to "walk as He walked;" (always): In other words, to be inwardly and outwardly devoted to God; completely devoted in heart and life. And we have the same conception of Christian perfection now, without adding to it or taking away from it.

16. The hymns concerning it in this volume are too numerous to transcribe. I shall only cite a part of three :
--

Savior from sin, I wait to prove
That Jesus is your healing name;
To lose, when perfected in love,
Whatever I have, or can, or am;
I rest me on your faithful word,
"The servant shall be as his Lord."

Fulfill that gracious end in me
For which your precious life was given;
Redeem from all iniquity,
Restore, and make me fit for heaven.
Unless you purge my every stain,
Your suffering and my faith is vain.

Did You not die, that I might live,
No longer to myself but thee?
Might body, soul, and spirit give
To Him who gave himself for me?
Come then, my Master and my God,
Take the dear purchase of your blood.

Your own peculiar servant claim,
For your own truth and mercy's sake;
Hallow in me your glorious name;
Me for your own this moment take;
And change and throughly purify;
Yours only may I live and die. (Page 80.)

Chose from the world, if now I stand,
Adorned with righteousness divine;
If, brought into the promised land,
I justly call the Savior mine;

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

Purge me from every sinful blot:
My idols all be cast aside:
Cleanse me from every evil thought,
From all the filth of self and pride.

The hatred of the carnal mind
Out of my flesh at once remove:
Give me a tender heart, resigned,
And pure, and full of faith and love.

O that I now, from sin released,
Your word might to the utmost prove,
Enter into your promised rest;
The Canaan of your perfect love!

Now let me gain perfection's height!
Now let me into nothing fall;
Be less than nothing in my sight,
And feel that Christ is all in all. (Page 258.)

Lord, I believe, your work of grace
Is perfect in the soul;
His heart is pure who sees your face,
His spirit is made whole.

From every sickness, by your word,
From every foul disease,
Saved, and to perfect health restored,
To perfect holiness:

He walks in glorious liberty,
To sin entirely dead:
The Truth, the Son has made him free,
And he is free indeed.

Throughout his soul your glories shine,
His soul is all renewed,
And decked in righteousness divine,
And clothed and filled with God.

This is the rest, the life, the peace,
Which all your people prove;
Love is the bond of perfectness,
And all their soul is love.

O joyful sound of gospel grace!
Christ shall in me appear;
I, even I, shall see his face,
I shall be holy here!

He visits now the house of clay,
He shakes his future home; --
O would you, Lord, on this glad day,
Into your temple come!

Come, O my God, yourself reveal,
Fill all this mighty void;
You only can my spirit fill:
Come, O my God, my God!

Fulfill, fulfill my large desires,
Large as infinity!
Give, give me all my soul requires,
All, all that is in thee! (Page 298.)

P 17. On Monday, June 25, 1744, our First Conference began with six Ordained Clergy and all our Preachers were present. The next morning we seriously considered the doctrine of sanctification, or perfection. The questions asked about it, and the main part of the answers given, follow below: --

“QUESTION. What does it mean to be sanctified?

“ANSWER. To be renewed in the image of God, 'in righteousness and true holiness.'

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

“A. Loving God with all our heart, and mind, and soul. (Deut. 6:5.)

“Q. Does this mean, that all inward sin is taken away?

“A. Without a doubt; or how can we be said to be saved from all 'our uncleannesses?' (Ezek. 36:29.)”

Our Second Conference began August 1, 1745. The next morning we described sanctification in this way : -
-

“Q. When does inward sanctification begin?

“A. In the moment a man is justified. (But sin still remains in him, that is, the seed of all sin, until he is sanctified completely throughout.) From the time of justification a believer gradually dies to sin, and grows in grace.

“Q. Are most people given this complete or through sanctification just before they die?

“A. For people who do not expect to receive it sooner that is correct.

“Q. But may we expect it sooner?

“A. Why not? Even if we freely acknowledge, (1.) That most believers, whom we have known up to now, were not sanctified like this till near death; and (2.) that few of the people St. Paul wrote to in his letters were sanctified like this at the time he wrote; and (3.) Not even St. Paul himself was sanctified like this when he wrote his early Epistles; yet all this does not prove, that we cannot be completely sanctified today.

“Q. In what way should we preach sanctification?

“A. Rarely if at all to people who are not pressing forward spiritually: To those who are moving forward, always by way of promise; always drawing, rather than driving.”

Our Third Conference began Tuesday, May 13, 1746.

This time we carefully read over the Minutes of the two preceding Conferences, to see if they contained anything that might be removed or altered after having thought about this for a long time. But we did not see any reason to alter in any way our previous thinking.

Our Fourth Conference began on Tuesday, June the 16th, 1747. Since several people were there, who did not believe the doctrine of perfection, we agreed to examine it from the bottom up.

In order to do this, we asked,

“Where do our brothers agree with us who disagree with us about entire sanctification?”

“A. They agree, (1.) That every one must be entirely sanctified at the time of death. (2.) That until then a believer grows in grace each day coming nearer and nearer to perfection. (3.) That we ought to continually press after it, and to exhort all others so to do.

“Q. Where do we admit they have a good point?”

“A. We admit, (1.) That many of those who have died in the faith, yes, even the majority of those we have known, were not perfected in love until a little before their death. (2.) That the term sanctified is normally used by St. Paul for all that were justified, that is forgiven for their sin. (3.) That he rarely, if ever, means 'saved from all sin' when he uses 'sanctified.' (4.) So, because of that it is not right to use sanctified to mean saved from all sin unless the word 'wholly', 'entirely', or the like is added to it. (5.) The inspired Biblical writers are normally speaking to or about people who were justified. At the same time they rarely speak to or about those who were wholly sanctified. [That is, to those only, separate from others but they speak to them together with others, most of the time.] (6.) The result of this is that to follow the example of the Biblical writers we should speak constantly about the state of justification; but more rarely, at least in full and explicit terms, concerning entire sanctification. [More rarely, I agree; but yet in some places we should speak very frequently, strongly, and explicitly.],

“Q. What point do we disagree on then?”

“A. It centers around the question: Should we expect to be saved from all sin before death arrives?”

“Q. Is there any clear Scripture promise of this, -- that God will save us from all sin?”

“A. There is: 'He shall redeem Israel from all his sins.' (Psalm 130:8.)

“Ezekiel's prophecy expands on this point: 'Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols I will cleanse you: I will also save you from all your uncleannesses.' (Ezek. 36:25, 29.) No promise can be more clear. This is obviously what the Apostle refers to when he appeals: 'Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' (2 Cor. 7:1.) The ancient promise is just as clear and well said: 'The Lord your God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your children, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.' (Deut. 30:6.)

“Q. But is there any statement like this in the New Testament?”

“A. There is, and in very plain language. 1 John 3:8: 'For this purpose the Son of God was revealed in the flesh, that he might destroy the works of the devil;' This covers all the works of the devil, without any limitation or restriction; and all sin is the work of the devil. St Paul makes a Parallel statement: 'Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it might be holy and without blemish.' (Eph. 5:25-27.) He has the same idea in mind when He says in Romans 8:3-4 'God sent his Son, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.'

“Q. Does the New Testament offer any more basis for expecting to be saved from all sin?”

“A. Without a doubt it does through both prayers and commands which are the same as the strongest claims one can make.

“Q. What prayers do you mean?”

“A. Prayers for entire sanctification, for example, would mock God if it were not possible to be entirely sanctified. Some specific examples are, (1.) 'Deliver us from evil.' Now, when this is finished, when we are

delivered from all evil, no sin can remain. (2.) And I do not pray for these alone, but for those also who shall believe on Me through their word, that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, ... that they may be made perfect in one; (John 17:20-23.) (3.) 'I bow my knees unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would grant you, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.' (Eph. 3:14, &c.) (4.) 'The very God of peace sanctify you wholly. And I pray God, your whole spirit, soul, and body, may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' (1 Thess. 5:23.)

“Q. What commands reflect the same idea?

“A. (1.) 'be perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.' (Matt. 5:48.) (2.) 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind' (Matt. 22:37.) So then, if God's love fills all the heart, no sin can be there.

“Q. What evidence is there that this will happen before death?

“A. (1.) Clearly commands are meant for the living not the dead, which is why “You shall love God with all your heart,' cannot mean, “You will love God with all your heart when you die,” but “you must love God with all your heart while you live.”

“(2.) From various passages: (i.) 'For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that having denied ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live discreetly, righteously and godly, in this present world, looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify to Himself a special people, zealous of good works.' (Titus 2:11-14.) (ii.) 'and has raised up a horn of salvation for us, ... to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, ... the oath which He swore to our father Abraham, that He would grant to us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.' (Luke 1:69, &c.)

“Q. Can we see examples in Scripture of people who reached this grace?

“A. Yes; St. John, and everyone he is talking about when he says, 'In this is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, that as He is, so also we are in this world.' (1 John 4:17.)

“Q. Can you show one example today? Where is the person who is perfect like this?

“Some of the people asking this question deserve the following answer; If I knew someone here, I would not tell you, because you are not asking from love but like Herod you are only seeking to kill the baby.”

“But we can give an even more direct answer: There are many reasons why few, if any, unquestioned examples would exist. First, the person would be troubled by setting himself up as a target for everyone to shoot at! At the same time this would not persuade the people who deny the whole idea! 'For if they refuse to listen to Moses and the Prophets,' Christ and his Apostles, 'someone rising from the dead won't change their mind.'

“Q. Isn't likely that we will secretly dislike anyone who says they are saved from all sin?

“A. It is very likely and for several reasons; a little from a concern for the spiritual good of the people who may be hurt if those who claim to be saved from all sin are not what they say they are; A little from a kind of spiritual envy for people who claim to be more spiritual than we are; and some from being naturally slow and unprepared to believe what God is doing.

“Q. Can we continue to live with Joy in our faith until we are perfected in love?

“A. Yes! Even holy grief does not put out our joy because even while we are carrying the cross, while we

deeply share the sufferings of Christ, we can still rejoice with joy unspeakable.”

These sections show, without question, both my and my brother's judgement as well as the judgement of all the Preachers connect with us during the years of 1744, 45, 46, and 47. In the same way, I do not remember that in any of these Conferences we had even one person who disagreed while at the same time the doubts anyone had when we started were completely removed before we finished.

18. In the year 1749, my brother printed two volumes of “Hymns and Sacred Poems.” Since I did not see these before they were published, there were some things in them I did not approve of. But I quite approved of the majority of the hymns on this subject; a few verses of which are added here: --

Come, Lord, be manifested here,
And all the devil's works destroy;
Now, without sin, in me appear,
And fill with everlasting joy:
Your joyful face display;
Your presence is the perfect day. (Vol. I., p. 203.)

Swift to my rescue come,
Your own this moment seize;
Gather my wandering spirit home,
And keep in perfect peace.

Suffered no more to rove
Over all the earth abroad,
Arrest the prisoner of your love,
And shut me up in God! (Page 247.)

Your prisoners release, give us your peace;
And our sorrows and sins in a moment shall cease.

That moment be now! Our petition allow,
Our present Redeemer and Comforter thou! (Vol. II., p. 124.)

From this inbred sin deliver;
Let the yoke Now be broken;
Make me thine for ever.

Partner of your perfect nature,
Let me be Now in you
A new, sinless creature. (Page 156.)

Turn me, Lord, and turn me now,
To your yoke my spirit bow;
Grant me now the pearl to find
Of a meek and quiet mind.

Calm, O calm my troubled breast;
Let me gain that second rest:
From my works forever cease,
Perfected in holiness. (Page 162.)

Come in this accepted hour,
Bring Your heavenly kingdom in!
Fill us with the glorious power;
Rooting out the seeds of sin. (Page 168.)

Come, dear Lamb, for sinners slain,
Bring in the cleansing flood;
Apply, to wash out every stain,
Your efficacious blood.

O let it sink into our soul
Deep as the inbred sin:
Make every wounded spirit whole,
And every leper clean! (Page 171.)

Prisoners of hope arise,
And see your Lord appear:
Lo! on the wings of love he flies,
And brings redemption near.

Redemption in his blood
He calls you to receive:
“Come unto me, the pardoning God:
Believe,” he cries, “believe!”

Jesus, to you we look,
Till saved from sin's remains,
Reject the inbred tyrant's yoke,
And cast away his chains.

Our nature shall no more
Over us dominion have:
By faith we apprehend the power,
Which shall forever save. (Page 188.)

Jesus, our life, in us appear,
Who daily die your death:
Reveal yourself the finisher;
Your quickening Spirit breathe!

Unfold the hidden mystery,
The second gift impart;
Reveal Your glorious self in me,
In every waiting heart. (Page 195.)

In Him we have peace, In Him we have power!
Preserved by his grace Throughout the dark hour,
In all our temptation He keeps us, to prove
His utmost salvation, His fulness of love.

Pronounce the glad word, And bid us be free!
Ah, have you not, Lord, A blessing for me?
The peace you have given, This moment impart,
And open your heaven, O Love, in my heart! (Page 324.)

A second edition of these hymns was published in 1752 without any changes other than a few corrections to some mistakes.

I have quoted these portions extensively, because in them it is clear beyond denial, that right up to now my brother and I maintain, (1.) That Christian perfection is the kind of love for God and our neighbor, which

implies deliverance from all sin. (2.) That this is received simply by faith. (3.) That it is given instantaneously, in one moment. (4.) That we are to expect it, not at death, but every instant; that now is the accepted time, now is the day of this salvation.

19. At the Conference in 1759, becoming aware that a variety of concepts might creep in to our thinking and teaching, we reviewed this teaching and later, as a result, I published "Thoughts on Christian Perfection," with the following statement as the preface. --

"The tract below is not designed to satisfy anyone's curiosity. It is not intended as a comprehensive defense of the doctrine against those who refute and mock it. It is not even intended to answer the many objections against it, some of which are raised by serious scholars. All I intend to do is to simply state my thoughts on this matter; that is, what Christian perfection does, as I understand it, include and what it does not include; and finally to add some practical observations and directions about the subject.

"Since these ideas were first tossed together in question / answer form, I let them stay that way. These are the same ideas I have worked with for over twenty years.

"QUESTION. What is Christian perfection?

"ANSWER. Loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. This implies, that no wrong attitude, none contrary to love, remains in the soul; and that all the thoughts, words, and actions, are governed by pure love.

"Q. Are you saying, that this perfection removes all weaknesses, ignorance, and mistake?

"A. I am always saying just the opposite and I have always done so.

"Q. But how can every thought, word, and work, be governed by pure love, and at the same time the person is subject to ignorance and making mistakes?

"A. I see no contradiction here: 'A person may be filled with pure love, and still be open to making mistakes.' In reality, I do not expect to be freed from actual mistakes, until this mortal puts on immortality. I believe this is a natural consequence of the soul's dwelling in flesh and blood. For we can only think using parts of our body that have suffered from the fall just like our whole body has. As a result, we cannot avoid thinking wrong some times until this corruptible shall have put on incorruption.

"We can expand on this a bit more. A mistake in judgment may possibly lead to a mistake in practice. For instance: Mr. De Renty's mistake touching the nature of the death process, as a result of his study and education, led to a practical mistake, he wore iron underwear. And there may be a thousand examples like this, even in those who are in the highest state of grace. At the same time, where every word and action springs from love, such a mistake is not properly a sin. However, it cannot bear the strict examination of God's justice, but needs the atoning blood.

"Q. What did our brothers who met in Bristol in August of 1758 say about this?

"A. They said it this way: (1.) Every one may make a mistake as long as he lives. (2.) A mistake in opinion may lead to a mistake in practice. (3.) Every mistake in practice is a transgression of the perfect law. Therefore, (4.) Every mistake in practice would expose a person to eternal damnation apart from the blood of atonement. (5.) So then, even the most perfect Christians always need the merits of Christ, even for their actual transgressions, and may pray for themselves, as well as for their brethren, 'Forgive us our trespasses.'

(note: this concept gives the reason behind Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 13 that we shall know even as we know. If in the resurrection we lack knowledge we will be subject to mistake and will harm others, for love to be complete it must be free of error. This also lays the basis for rebuke without judgment. We rebuke the wrong but leave a judgment about the motive behind the wrong, (love or selfishness) to God).

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Now we can easily understand what would be completely impossible to understand in any other way, that is why some people are not offended when we talk about a Christian living in the highest possible love, while these same people cannot tolerate the idea of living without sin. They know that everyone will make mistakes, in what they do as well as in their opinions. But they do not know or see that these mistakes are not sin if the person who makes them does so only out of love.

“Q. So then, if they are living without sin does this mean that they do not need a person to stand between them and judgment? Surely we can say that they don't need Christ as their priest before God anymore, right?”

“A. Not at all. No one feels that they need Christ as much as these do. No one else completely depends on him like these do. For it is only in and with Christ that life is given to the soul, not apart from or separate from him. As a result what he says is equally true for all people no matter what degree of grace they have received, “As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it stays attached to the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me: without me you can do nothing.”

“No matter what level of grace are in we need Christ in the following ways. (1.) Whatever grace we receive is a totally free gift from him. (2.) We receive it as his purchase, only because of the price he paid. (3.) We have this grace, not only - from Christ, but - in him. We are not perfect like a tree drawing up from its own roots the water necessary to produce the life giving sap, but like a branch of a vine that can only bear fruit when attached to the vine and which withers, dries up and dies when cut off. (4.) All of our blessings material, spiritual and eternal depend on his praying for us as a part of his work as our priest. So we will always need his prayer. (5.) The very best people still need Christ in his priestly office, to atone for their failures, their short-comings, (as some people properly call them), their mistakes in judgment and practice, and their defects of various kinds. All of these move away from the perfect law and as a result need an atonement. At the same time they are not really sins as we can see from what St. Paul says, “He that loves has fulfilled the law; for love is the fulfilling of the law.” (Rom. 13:10) Since mistakes and all weaknesses that come from our damaged and dying bodies are not against love, then they are not really sin in the way that Scripture uses the word.

“To explain myself a little more about this subject: (1.) All sin needs the atoning blood, not just sin that is rightly defined as sin, (that is, a deliberate violation of a known law,) but also sin that is not really rightly defined as sin, (that is, an involuntary violation of a divine law, known or unknown). (2.) I believe no kind of perfection in this life prevents these involuntary violations which I understand to be the natural result of the ignorance and mistakes that cannot be separated from our mortal condition. (3.) Because of that I never use the phrase “sinless perfection” to keep from contradicting myself. (4.) I believe, a person filled with the love of God is still subject to these involuntary transgressions. (5.) You can call these kind of transgressions sins if you like; I do not for the reasons mentioned above.

“Q. What advice would you give to people who call involuntary transgressions “sin,” and those that do not?”

“A. The people who do not call these sins need to be very careful not to think that they or anyone else is able to stand before God as infinite justice without having a Mediator. To think that would mean they are either totally ignorant or arrogant and presumptuous to the highest degree.

“The people who do call them sins should be cautious about the danger of confusing defects with sins, properly defined.

“But how can they avoid the confusion? How will defects be distinguished from sins, if they are all carelessly, without judgment, called sins? I am very concerned that if we allow sins of any kind to be thought consistent with perfection, very few people would limit the idea only to those defects or mistakes about which the statement could be true.

“Q. How can a tendency to make mistakes be consistent with perfect love? When a person is perfected in love they are always under its influence and can any mistake flow from pure love?”

“A. I answer, (1.) Many mistakes are consistent with pure love; (2.) Some may even accidentally flow from it: I mean, love itself may tilt us toward a mistake. The pure love of our neighbor, springing from the love of God, thinks no evil, believes and hopes all things. Now, this very attitude - unsuspecting, ready to believe and hope the best of all people, may cause us to think that some people are better than they really are. This then is clearly a mistake, accidentally flowing from pure love.

“Q. How shall we avoid setting perfection too high or too low?

“A. By keeping to the Bible, and setting it just as high as the Scripture does. It is nothing higher and nothing lower than this,--the pure love of God and man; the loving God with all our heart and soul, and our neighbor as ourselves. It is love controlling the heart and life, running through all our attitudes, words, and actions.

“Q. Suppose someone had arrived at this, would you advise him to talk about it?

“A. Perhaps at first he would barely be able to keep from talking about it, the fire would be so hot within him; his desire to talk about the loving-kindness of the Lord carrying him away like a flooding river. When he can finally keep from talking about his experience he should be careful not to talk to unbelievers (it might irritate them to argue or blaspheme God), or to other Christians unless he has a specific reason for sharing what he sees will help another. When he does share he must be very careful to not even seem to be bragging, but to speak with the deepest humility and reverence, giving all the glory to God.

“Q. But would it not be better to be entirely silent, not to speak of it at all?

“A. Silence could keep him out of a lot of trouble that will definitely come if he simply talks about what God has done for him, even to other believers. So if a person like this asks for advice from ordinary people he will just keep quiet. But this would hurt his conscience making him feel guilty because he really should share what God is doing. People do not light a candle to hide it under a basket; how much less does the all-wise God. He does not raise such a monument of his power and love, to hide it from all mankind. Instead, he means to give spiritual prosperity to those who are simple of heart. He aims by this, not just the happiness of that one person, but to invigorate and encourage others to follow after the same blessing. God's will is, 'that many will see it' and rejoice, 'and put their trust in the Lord.' The point is that nothing else under heaven excites the spiritual hunger of those who are justified than to talk with others they believe have experienced a still higher salvation. Talking about this experience puts that level of salvation clearly before their eyes and increases their hunger and thirst after it. This advantage would be completely lost if the person saved in this way buried himself in silence.

“Q. Is there any way to avoid the pain or cross normally coming to those who talk about being saved this way?

“A. It cannot be entirely prevented when so much of the natural remains even in believers. But something might be done, if every pastor would, (1.) Talk openly to everyone who testifies this way; and, (2.) Work to prevent the unjust or unkind treatment of those who reasonably prove that they are saved from all sin.

“Q. What is reasonable proof? How can we know for sure that a person is saved from all sin?

“A. We cannot be one hundred percent sure that someone is saved this way, (or even that someone is justified), unless God is willing to give us a miraculous insight into the spiritual. However, we believe reasonable people would be persuaded, with little room to doubt either the truth or depth of the work: (1.) If for a long time before this presumed change we had clear evidence of this person's blameless behavior. We would be sure he would not 'lie for God,' but say exactly what he was feeling; (2.) If he gave a specific description of the time and content of the change, using clear plain speech; and, (3.) If later we could see everything he did and said was holy and unblamable.

“To summarize: (1.) I have many reasons to believe this person will not lie; (2.) He testifies before God, 'I

don't feel any sin, but I do feel completely full of love; I pray, rejoice, and give thanks without ceasing; and I have as clear an inward witness, that I am fully renewed, as that I am justified. 'So then, if I don't have proof he is wrong, simple logic says I should believe him.

“You can't get around the testimony by objecting, 'But I know many mistakes he is making.' We pointed out before, that all who are in the body are open to making mistakes; and that a mistake in judgment may sometimes lead to a mistake in practice; but we need to be careful not to abuse this truth. For instance: Even a person perfected in love can judge a person's actions incorrectly and may talk to him with either more or less strictly that the real circumstances would call for. And, in this way, (though that is not what St James is really trying to say) “in many things we offend everyone.” So, mistakes in speaking are not proof that a person falls short of perfection.

“Q. Can we say a person is not perfect if they are surprised or startled by a noise, or by tripping, or by some danger leaping out at them?”

“A. We cannot say that. A person might be startled, tremble, change color or their body be greatly affected while their soul is calmly focused on God and stays in perfect peace. Even the mind itself might be deeply suffering, full of sorrow, confused, or even weighed down with depression and misery to the point of agony while the heart still clings to God in perfect love and is totally submissive to him. The Son of God himself was just like this. Does any child of Adam suffer the same distress, anguish and agony He did? But while suffering this He did not sin.

“Q. But can anyone who has a pure heart like nice food rather than plain, or enjoy any kind of pleasure that is not really necessary? If they can, how are they different from anyone else?”

“A. The difference between these and others eating pleasant food or taking any kind of pleasure is, (1.) They need none of these pleasures to make them happy; for they have a spring of happiness within. They see and love God which makes them rejoice evermore, and give thanks in everything. (2.) They may use various pleasures, but they do not go looking for them. (3.) They are careful to use just enough because they are not really after that pleasure for its own sake. Keeping this in mind, we want to clearly say that – A person with a pure heart may use pleasing food, without the danger present for those who are not saved from all sin. He may choose it over unpleasing, though equally healthy food, as a means of increasing thankfulness, while he keeps a single focus on God, who richly gives us all things to enjoy. On the same principle, he may smell a flower, or eat a bunch of grapes, or take any other pleasure which does not lessen but increase his delight in God. So we would be wrong to say that one perfected in love would not be able to marry or conduct any ordinary business. If he were called to those, he would be more capable than ever; with the capacity to do anything without rush, worry and without any distraction to his spirit.

“Q. But if two perfect Christians had children, how could they be born in sin, since there was none in the parents?”

“A. While it is possible for that to happen it is not likely and I doubt that it ever has happened or that it ever will. But, putting my doubts to the side I can answer it this way. Sin is forced on me, not by my immediate parents, but by my first parent. “In Adam all died; by the disobedience of one, all people were made sinners;” everyone without exception because they were all in his body when he ate the forbidden fruit.

“We have a remarkable illustration of this in gardening: Grafts on a fruit tree produce excellent fruit; but plant the seeds of this fruit and what happens? They produce the worst fruit ever eaten.

“Q. So then what does a perfect Christian do better than other Christians? More than ordinary believers?”

“A. Maybe nothing; God may have providentially limited his opportunities for service. Maybe only a little; despite the fact he longs to spend his life and be used up for God, it may not be obvious to an observer that he speaks well or does many things. Our Lord himself is an example of this because he did not say or do as much as some of his Apostles did, (John 14:13). So what do we conclude? Visible service is not a proof of inward grace and God measures visible service this way, “Truly, I say to you this poor widow put in more

than all of them.” Truly this poor man with his few broken words has spoken more than all of them, truly this poor woman who offered a cup of cold water has given more than all of them. O Stop “judging according to appearance” and learn to “judge [with] righteous judgment!”

“Q. But is not this a proof against him, -- I feel no power either in his words or prayer?

“A. No, because it may be your own fault. If any of the following obstacles are in your way you are not likely to feel any power from him, 1. Your own dead spiritual life. The spiritually dead Pharisees could not feel the power of the one who “spoke as no man ever spoke before.” 2. Your conscience is guilty from some sin you have not turned from. 3. You may be prejudiced against him. 4. You don't believe that it is possible to reach the kind of relationship with God that he is claiming to have. 5. You are not ready or willing to consider or believe that he has reached it. 6. You may think too highly of him or even idolize him. 7. You may think too highly of yourself or your own judgment. If you have any of these problems it is no wonder that you do not feel any power in what he says. Do other people feel the power of God from him? If they do your argument is worthless. If they do not they might have some of the same problems listed before. You have to eliminate all these possibilities before you can build a real case on the idea that you do not feel power from him. Even then, all you really prove is that grace and spiritual gifts do not always go together.

“But he does not come up to my idea of a perfect Christian.' And perhaps no one ever did, or ever will. For your idea may go beyond, or at least add to, the scriptural account. It may include more than the Bible includes as a part of the definition, or perhaps something which the Bible does not include. Scripturally, perfection is, pure love filling the heart and governing all one's words and actions. If your idea includes anything more or anything else, it is not scriptural; and then it is no wonder, that a scripturally perfect Christian does not come up to it.

“I fear many stumble on this stumbling-block. They include as many ingredients as they please, not according to Scripture, but their own imagination, in their idea of one that is perfect; and then quickly deny any one to be such, who does not measure up to that imaginary idea.

“We should take great care to keep the simple, scriptural account continually in our sight. Pure love alone governing in the heart and life, -- this is the whole of scriptural perfection.

“Q. When can we be sure we have arrived at this?

“A. We will be sure when, first, we are convinced of the inherited sin in ourselves with a deeper and clearer understanding than we experienced before justification. Next, after we experience a gradual dying to this sin, we then experience a total death to sin and a complete renewal in the love and image of God so that we are able to rejoice always, to pray always, and to give thanks in everything. This is not to say that when we “feel all love and no sin” we have enough evidence. Several people have experienced this for some time before their souls were fully renewed in the image of Christ. As a result, no one should believe the work is finished until they also have the testimony of the Spirit, witnessing to their entire sanctification as clearly as the Spirit witnesses to their justification.

“Q. But why is it, that some think they are sanctified in this way, when in reality they are not?

“A. Because they do not use all the measures mentioned above, instead they use some of them, or different ones that are ambiguous. However, I do not know of anyone who payed attention to all of them and was still deceived about this. I believe, no one in the whole world could be deceived about this. Look, if after a person is justified they are deeply and fully convinced of inherited sin and if they experience gradually dying to that sin, then later an entire renewal in the image of God, then finally, in addition to this change, (immensely greater than the change done when he was justified), there is a clear, direct witness of the renewal; I believe it as impossible for this person to be deceived about this, as it is for God to lie. When I know a person who is always truthful and they tell me they have experienced these things I should not rejected what they are saying unless there is a substantial reason to do so.

“Q. Is this death to sin, and renewal in love, gradual or instantaneous?”

“A. A person may be dying for a long time but they are not really dead until the moment that the soul is separated from the body. In that instant they live the life of eternity. In the same way, they may be dying to sin for some time but they are not dead to sin until sin is separated from their soul and in that instant they live the full life of love. When the body dies we experience a greater and different kind of change so far beyond anything we had know before so that it is impossible to really grasp until we experience it. In the same way, the change that is done, when the soul dies to sin, is of a different kind, and infinitely greater than any before. No one can really understand it until they experience it. After the change we still grow in grace, in the knowledge of Christ, in the love and image of God; and will do so, not only until death, but forever.

“Q. How are we to wait for this change?”

“A. Certainly not with a “I couldn't care less” attitude or by always being too lazy to make any real effort, instead we must exercise an energetic and complete obedience, give careful loving attention to keeping all the commandments, be watchful and endure suffering, deny ourselves and take up our cross daily, pray and fast earnestly and finally, we must worship God properly at every opportunity. If anyone even dreams that they will attain this in any other way (or even has a hope to keep it once they have it, even if they have received it in the greatest possible degree) they are lying to themselves. It is true that we receive it by simple faith but God does not, and will not, give that kind of faith unless we seek it with all our strength and intelligence using the pattern He has provided for us.

“This set of requirements may satisfy those who are asking why so few people have received the blessing. If you ask how many people really seek it as outlined above and you will have enough of an answer to your question.

“Prayer is especially lacking. Who keeps up a minute by minute urgent prayer? Who wrestles with God for this very thing? So then, “You have not because you ask not,” or because “you ask with a wrong motive” that is that you might be renewed before you die. Before you die! Is that enough for you? No, but ask that God would do this now, “today while it is called today.” Do not call this urgency “telling God when to work.” It is clear that today is His planned time as well as tomorrow might be. Hurry up! Be Quick about it!! Let

Your soul break out in strong desire
The perfect bliss to prove;
Your longing heart be all on fire
To be dissolved in love!

“Q. It is possible for us to continue being peaceful and joyful until we are perfected in love?”

“A. We can! Because the kingdom of God is not divided against itself believers should not be discouraged from 'rejoicing in the Lord always.' At the same time we are rightly disturbed at the sinful nature still remaining in us. It is good for us to be keenly aware of this and to have a strong desire to be delivered from it. This awareness should prod us even more to fly each moment to our strong Helper and even more to “press on to the mark, the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus.” So that when the sense of our sin is clearest to us, the sense of His life is even clearer.

“Q How should we react to those who believe they have reached this state”

“A. Examine them honestly and carefully, and urge them to pray intensely that God would show them everything that is in their hearts. The New Testament gives the strongest cautions to avoid evil and the strongest encouragements to excel in every grace to the those who are in the highest state of grace. But this should be done with great tenderness and without any hint of a harsh, stern or sour attitude. We should carefully avoid even the appearance of anger, unkindness or contempt. Leave it to Satan to test in that way and to his children to cry out “Let us examine him with spite and torture so we can see if he is really meek

and prove if he is really patient.” If the Christian is faithful to the grace given to them, they are in no danger of dying from the trial, not even if they are mistaken about their state of grace up to the time that their spirit returns to God.

“Q. But what can it hurt to deal harshly with them?

“A. They are either mistaken or not. If they are mistaken, the attack may destroy their souls. This is not impossible or even unlikely. It may so anger or discourage them that they will sink into unbelief and never rise again to faith. If, on the other hand, they are not mistaken, it may hurt those God is not wanting to hurt and do a great deal of damage to our own souls. Without a doubt whoever touches them touches, as it were, the apple of God's eye. If they are indeed full of His Spirit and we are unkind or disrespectful to them we are being more than a little disrespectful to the Spirit of grace. Also, by doing this we feed and increase our capacity to believe the worst of others and we develop many kinds of wrong attitudes in ourselves. To give one example; Look how self-sufficient we are! We can set ourselves up as general spiritual inspectors, as the settled judges in these deep things of God! So, are we qualified for the office? Can we say, in all cases, how far a person's weakness and scars reach? Can we say what may and may not be a part of those and what may or may not exist with perfect love? Can we exactly determine how perfect love will affect the way a person looks at someone else, the gesture, and the tone of voice they will use? If we can, without a doubt, “we are the men, and wisdom will die with us.”

“Q. But if they are upset because we don't believe them, is this not conclusive evidence against their testimony?

“A. This depends on why they are upset. If their attitude flows from prideful anger, it is a proof that their testimony is not true. However, if they are grieved it is not proof at all. They should be grieved if we do not believe a real work of God since by our unbelief we deprive ourselves of any benefit we may have received from that work. At the same time, we may easily mistake this grief for anger since they way they are both expressed is very similar.

“Q. But is it not good to unmask those who falsely believe they have this grace when they really do not?

“A. It is best to examine them with mild words and a loving attitude. It is no victory to discover a person is deceived. It is very wrong, if we happen to find someone is deceived, to be glad like we have found some great treasure. Shouldn't we deeply mourn, be deeply concerned, let tears fill our eyes? Here is a person who seemed to be a living proof of God's power to save to the uttermost; but, regretfully, it is not like we hoped. He has been placed in the balance and found to be short of what is needed! Is this a joyful thing? Shouldn't we rejoice a thousand times more if we can find nothing but pure love?

“‘But we can see he is deceived.’ What action should we take? It is a harmless mistake, while he feels nothing but love in his heart. It is the kind of mistake which normally shows the person has a great deal of grace and a high degree of both holiness and happiness. This should be something that everyone who is simple in heart rejoices over, not the mistake itself, but the wonderful level of grace that for a while leads to that mistake. I am pleased that this person is always happy in Christ, always full of prayer and thanksgiving. I rejoice that he feels no unholy attitudes but always feels the pure love of God. I will really rejoice if sin is suspended until it is totally destroyed.

“Q. Then, is there no danger in a man's being deceived this way?

P “A. Not at the moment he does not feel sin. There was a danger before then and there will be again later when he comes into fresh trials. But as long as he feels nothing but love producing all his thoughts, and words, and actions, he is in no danger; he is not only happy, but safe, 'under the shadow of the Almighty;' and, for God's sake, let him continue in that love as long as he can. In the mean time you can do a good thing by warning him of the danger of letting his love grow cold and letting sin come back to life. Also warn him of the danger of throwing away his hope of total freedom by thinking that since he has not yet attained that freedom he never will.

“Q. But what if no one has really attained it yet? What if everyone who thinks they have are really deceived?”

“A. If you can convince me of this I will never preach it again. But, let me be clear; I am not building any doctrine on this or that individual. This person, or any other person may be deceived and I am not affected. But, if there really is no one who has been made perfect yet, God has not really sent me to preach perfection.

“Let me give a parallel example: For many years I have preached that 'There is a peace of God which passes all understanding.' Convince me that this message has not given any fruit and that in all these years no one has attained this peace; and as well that there is no one living today who can testify to that peace and I will never preach it again.

“O, but many people have died with that peace,' you reply. Maybe yes, but I want to see living witnesses. I cannot be totally sure that this or that person is a real witness. If I thought there was no one to witness to this peace I must stop preaching this doctrine.

“Q. 'You misunderstand me. I believe some who died in this love, enjoyed it long before their death. But I was not certain that their previous testimony was true until a few hours before they died.'

“Then you did not have an infallible certainty. You could have had a reasonable certainty before that time. That kind of certainty may have given life and comfort to your own soul as well as strengthening every other part of your Christian life and witness. Any, honest person can have that kind of certainty, if we can assume there are living witnesses, by simply talking to that person in the love and fear of God.

“Q. So what difference does it make if anyone has reached this love or not since so many scriptures testify to it?”

“A. If I were convinced that no one in England had reached that state of grace that has been preached so clearly, strongly, in so many places by such a large number of preachers for such a long time then I would be clearly convinced that we all misunderstood the meaning of those scriptures and as a result I must also teach that 'sin will remain in the believer until death.'”

20. In 1762 the work of God in London increased greatly. Many people, who up to this time had been totally unconcerned about these things, were deeply convinced of their lost condition and many found redemption in the blood of Christ. Several backsliders were healed, and a large number of people believed that God had saved them from all sin. Since I could easily see that Satan would attempt to sow tares among the wheat, I worked hard to warn them of that danger, especially the danger of pride and an over sensitive imagination that the Spirit of God was working in a special way through them. While I was in town I was sure that they continued to be both humble and sober minded. But almost as soon as I left deception broke in. Two or three began to mistake their own imaginations for impressions from God, and this led them to think that they would never die. These same people worked to bring others to that same opinion and brought about a great deal of noise and confusion. Very soon after that the same people, plus a few more, found other extremes, thinking they could not be tempted with sin, that they would no longer feel any pain, and that that they had the gift of prophecy and discerning of spirits. When I returned to London in the fall some of them were open to correction but others were no longer teachable. At the same time a flood of criticism came on me from almost every side. From the mistaken believers because I was constantly correcting them no matter where they were and from others because, they said, I did not correct those mistaken people. But, the hand of the Lord was not stopped and more and more sinners were convinced. Almost every day saw some converted to God and others enabled to love him with all their heart.

21. About this time, a friend who lived far from London wrote to me this way: --

“Do not be too concerned that Satan sows tares among the wheat of Christ. He has always done this, especially when there is a remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and it will always be this way until he is chained up for a thousand years. Until then he will always imitate and try to defeat the work of the Spirit

of Christ.

“One of the sad results of Satan's work is that the world, who is always sleeping in the arms of the evil one, has mocked every work of the Holy Spirit.

“But what can real Christians do? Why, if they would act worthy of themselves, they should, (1.) Pray that every deceived soul will be delivered; (2.) Attempt to reclaim them in the spirit of meekness; and, last, take extreme care, both through prayer and careful attention, that the deception of others does not lessen their own zeal in seeking after that universal holiness of soul, body, and spirit, 'without which no man shall see the Lord.'

P “In fact this totally new creature seems to be insanity to an insane world. But in spite of this, it is the will and wisdom of God. May we all seek after it!

“But some people who support this doctrine fully are too often guilty of limiting the power of the Almighty. He gives his gifts just as he wants to. So it is not wise or modest to say that a person must be a believer for any specific length of time before they are able to receive a high degree of the Spirit of holiness.

“God's usual way of working is one thing, but his sovereign pleasure is another. He has wise reasons to both speed up and slow down his work. Sometimes he comes suddenly and unexpectedly and other times not until we have looked for him for a long time.

“I have held the opinion for years that one of the great causes for people making so little progress in the divine life is their own coldness, negligence and unbelief, (I am talking about believers).

P “May the Spirit of Christ give us correct judgment in everything, and 'fill us with all the fullness of God'; so that we may be 'perfect and entire, wanting nothing.'”

22. About this same time, five or six honestly mistaken believers foretold that the world would end on the 28th of February. I immediately corrected them, in every possible way, both in public and private. I preached on this subject specifically, both at West-Street and Spitalfields. I warned the society over and over and spoke on many occasions to as many people as I could and I saw the results of my labor. These mistaken believers made very few converts, I believe less than thirty in our whole society. But at the same time they created several problems. They made a great deal of noise. They created a huge target for people who were quick to take offense and who would use any possible means to discredit me. Finally, they greatly increased the number of people who opposed Christian Perfection and gave them more courage to speak against it.

23. Some questions, now being published by one of these opposed to Christian Perfection, compelled a plain man to write the following --

“QUESTIONS, humbly presented to those who deny perfection is attainable in this life.

“(1.) Has the Holy Spirit been given in a larger measure under the Gospel dispensation than under the Jewish dispensation or not? If not, what does John mean in John 7:39 when he says that the Holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified? In what sense then was the Spirit not given before Christ was glorified?

“(2.) Was the 'glory which followed the sufferings of Christ,' (1 Peter 1:11,) referring to an external glory that someone could see, or to an internal glory, that is, the glory of holiness?

“(3.) Has God ever commanded us in Scripture to do more than he has promised to give us the ability to do?

“(4.) Are the promises of God concerning holiness intended to be fulfilled in this life or only in the next?

“(5.) Is a Christian under any other laws than those which God promises to 'write in our hearts?' (Jer. 31:31, &c.; Heb. 8:10.)

“(6.) In what way is 'the righteousness of the law fulfilled in those who do not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit?' (Rom. 8:4.)

“(7.) Is it impossible for any one in this life to 'love God with all his heart, and mind, and soul, and strength?' And is the Christian under any law which is not fulfilled in this love?

“(8.) Is the soul purified from indwelling sin by going out from the body?

“(9.) If the above is correct, is there something other than the blood of Christ that cleanses the soul 'from all sin'?

“(10.) If his blood does cleanse us from all sin, while the soul and body are still together, then that is this life, isn't it?

“(11.) When the union of body and soul stops, are we already in the next life? At that point aren't we too late?

“(12.) If we look at the exact time of death; what spiritual condition is the soul in at that point, when it is not in the body or out of it?

“(13.) Has Christ ever taught us to pray for something that he does not intend to give us?

“(14.) He has taught us to pray, 'Your will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.' Is God's will done perfectly in heaven or not?

“(15.) Then has he taught us to pray for perfection of obedience on earth? Does he intend to give us this obedience?

“(16.) Was St Paul praying according to the will of God, when he prayed that the Thessalonians would be 'sanctified wholly, ... and preserved ... ' (in this world, not after death, unless he was praying for the dead Thessalonians) '...blameless in body, soul and spirit, unto the coming of Jesus Christ'?

“(17.) Do you truly want to be freed from indwelling sin in this life?

“(18.) If you do, did not God give you that desire?

“(19.) If God did give you this desire was he mocking you, since you say it is impossible that that it would ever be satisfied in this life?

“(20.) If you are not serious enough about God and holiness to even want to be free from sin in this life then are you arguing about issues that are beyond you?

“(21.) Do you ever ask God to 'cleanse the thoughts of your heart, that' you 'may love him perfectly'?

“(22.) If you do not want what you are asking for in the above prayer and you do not believe it can be given - are you praying a fools prayer?

“God help you to consider these questions calmly and impartially!”

24. Near the end of this year, God called Jane Cooper, (a burning and shining light), home to himself. Since she was both a living and dying witness of Christian perfection, it will not move us away from the main topic to add a short account of her death We will also add one of her own letters which contains a

plain and simple account of the way it pleased God to work that great change in her soul: --

“May 2, 1761.

“I believe I will be thankful as long as my memory lasts. From the time you preached on Gal. 5:5 I clearly saw the true condition of my soul. That sermon described my heart and what it wanted to be; that is, truly happy. You read Mr. M--'s letter and it described the kind of religion I wanted. From that time on the prize could be clearly seen, and I was enabled to seek it diligently. I was kept in constant prayer, sometimes greatly distressed, while at other times waiting patiently while expecting the blessing. For several days before you left London, my soul was resting on a promise I had applied to myself while praying: 'The Lord who you seek, shall suddenly come to his temple.' I believed he would come suddenly and that he would stay there as a refiners fire. On the Tuesday after you left, I thought I would not be able to sleep unless God fulfilled his word that night. I never before knew, as I did right then, the commanding force of the words: 'Be still and know that I am God.' I became as nothing before Him and enjoyed perfect calmness in my soul. I did not know if he had already destroyed my sin, but I wanted to know if He had so that I could praise Him. However, in a short time I found that unbelief had returned and I groaned with the burden of it. On Wednesday I went to London and prayed continually to the Lord. I promised the Lord that if he would save me from sin I would praise him. I could give up anything in order to win Christ. But I found that all this prayer was worth nothing and that if He saved me from sin, it must be freely given on His part, for the sake of His name. On Thursday I was so strongly tempted I thought of killing myself or perhaps, of never speaking to the people of God again: but at the same time, I had no doubt of His pardoning love but...

'It was worse than death to love my God
And not my God alone.'

On Friday my distress became deeper. I tried to pray but could not. I went to Mrs. D., who prayed for me and told me that this was the death of the sinful nature. I opened the Bible where it says, 'The fearful and unbelieving shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.' I could not stand this. I opened it again to Mark 16:6-7: 'Do not be afraid, you seek Jesus of Nazareth. Go your way, tell his disciples he goes ahead of you into Galilee and you will see him there.' I was encouraged and able to pray, believing that I should see Jesus at my home. I returned home that night and found Mrs. G. She prayed for me; the lady, a Predestinarian, could only pray, 'Lord, you are no respecter of persons.' He proved he was not, by blessing me. I was made able in a moment to lay hold of Jesus Christ, and found salvation by simple faith. He assured me that the Lord, the King lived in me and that I should see no more evil (in myself). I now blessed Him who had visited and redeemed me, and was become my 'wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.' I saw Jesus altogether lovely; and knew he was mine in all his offices. And, glory be to Him, He now reigns in my heart with no competitor. I find no will but his. I feel no pride; nor affection for anything but Him. I know it is by faith I stand; and that watching unto prayer must be the guard of faith. I am happy in God this moment, and I believe for the next. I have often read the chapter you mention, (1 Cor. 13.,) and compared my heart and life with it. In so doing, I feel my shortcomings, and the need I have of the atoning blood. I would be wrong to say that I do not feel some degree of the love described in 1 Cor. 13, but I am still not everything I will become. I desire to be lost in that 'love which passes knowledge.' I see 'the just shall live by faith;' and this grace is given to me, who am less than the least of all saints. If I were an archangel, I would veil my face before him, and let silence speak his praise!”

The following account is given by one who was an eye and ear witness of what she relates: --

“(1.) At the first of November she seemed to have some idea of what would happen to her and often would sing these words: --

'When pain o'er this weak flesh prevails,
With lamb-like patience arm my breast.'

And when she sent to me, to let me know she was ill, she wrote in her note, 'I accept the will of Jesus. All he sends is sweetened by His love. I am as happy as if I heard a voice say, --

'For me my elder brethren stay,
And angels beckon me away,
And Jesus bids me come!'

(note: I believe she is saying in the poem above, that those in heaven are waiting for her, and angeles are signaling for her to come to heaven and even Jesus himself is calling her. So that the whole host of heaven is asking her to come to them)! wdp

And

“(2.) Upon my telling her, 'I cannot choose life or death for you,' she said, 'I asked the Lord, that, if it was His will I might die first. And he told me, you should survive me, and that you should close my eyes.' When we understood the disease was small-pox, I said to her, 'My dear, will you be frightened if we tell you what kind of disease you have?' She said, 'I cannot be frightened at His will.'

“(3.) The sickness greatly affected her; but her faith was strengthened as much as the pain increased. Tuesday, November 16, she said to me, 'I have been worshipping before the throne in a glorious manner; my soul was allowed into the presence of God!' I said, 'Did the Lord give you any particular promise?' 'No,' replied she; 'it was all

That sacred awe that dares not move,
And all the silent heaven of love.'

“(4.) On Thursday, when I asked, 'Do you have anything to say to me?' She said, 'No, nothing but what you know already: God is love.' I asked, 'Do you have any particular promise?' She replied, 'I do not seem to need any; I can live without one. I will die a deformed lump, but I will meet you all-glorious: And, for now, I will still have fellowship with your spirit.'

“(5.) Mr M. asked her what she thought was the best way to live a Christian life and what were the major obstacles to living that way. She answered, 'The greatest obstacle is mostly from the personality we have. My personality is to be reserved, very quiet and to suffer a great deal and to say very little about it. Some people may think that one personality type is better than another but the main thing is to live in the will of God. For the past few months, when I have been particularly attentive to this, I have felt such a guidance of his Spirit, and the anointing I have received from the Holy One has so well taught me everything, that I do not need anyone to teach me, because this anointing is teaching me.'

“(6.) On Friday morning she said, 'I believe I will die.' She then sat up in her bed and said, 'Lord, I bless you because you are always with me and all you have is mine. Your love is greater than my weakness, greater than my helplessness and greater than my unworthiness. Lord, you say to this dying woman, You are my sister! And glory be to you, O Jesus, you are my Brother. Let me know together with all the saints, the length, breadth, depth, and height of your love! Bless these;' (referring to some who were present with her), 'let them be active at every moment in everything you want them to be.'

“(7.) Some hours later, it seemed like her final death pains were taking over her; but her face was full of smiles of victory, and she clapped her hands for joy. Mrs C. said to her, 'My dear, you are more than a conqueror through the blood of the Lamb.' She answered: 'Yes, O yes sweet Jesus! O death, where is your sting?' Then she lay still for a while like she had passed out. After a while she tried to speak but was not able to: but she testified to her love, by shaking hands with everyone in the room.

“(8.) Mr. W. then came in and she said, 'Sir, I did not know that I would live to see you. But I am glad the Lord has given me this opportunity, and likewise strength to speak to you. I love you. You have always preached the strictest doctrine; and I loved to follow it. Keep preaching this way no matter who is pleased or displeased.' He asked, 'Do you now believe you are saved from sin?' She said, 'Yes; I have had no doubt of it for many months. That I ever had doubts, was because I did not abide in the faith. I now feel I have kept the faith; and perfect love casteth out all fear. As for you, the Lord promised me that your later works

will exceed your first, though I will not live to see it. I have been a great enthusiast [strict follower of Christ], as they term it, these six months; but never lived so near the heart of Christ in my life. You, Sir, strive to strengthen the hearts of hundreds by following that simplicity your soul loves.'

“(9.) To one who had received the love of God as a result her prayer, she said, 'I am sure I have not followed a slickly constructed fable; for I am as happy as I can live. Keep pressing on, and do not stop short of the mark.' To Miss M---s she said, 'Love Christ; he loves you. I believe I shall see you at the right hand of God: But as one star differs from another star in glory, so shall it be in the resurrection. I charge you, in the presence of God, meet me in that day all-glorious within. Avoid all conformity to the world. You are robbed of many of your privileges. I know I shall be found blameless. You also labour to be found by him in peace, without spot.'

“(10.) On Saturday morning, she prayed in just about these words: 'I know, my Lord, my life is lengthened only to do your will. And even if I will never eat or drink again,' (she had not swallowed anything for nearly twenty eight hours,) 'your will be done. I am willing to be kept in this way for a year: Man does not live by bread alone. I praise you that there is no hint of complaining in our community. In that way, we do not know what sicknesses really means. Indeed, Lord, neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, no, nor any creature, shall separate us from your love for one moment. Bless these, that there may be no lack in their souls. I believe there shall not. I pray in faith.'

“On Sunday and Monday she was light-headed, but understandable at times. It then plainly appeared, her heart was still in heaven. One said to her, 'Jesus is our mark.' She replied: 'I have but one mark; I am all spiritual.' Miss M. said to her, 'You dwell in God.' She answered: 'Altogether.' A person asked her: 'Do you love me?' She said, 'O, I love Christ; I love my Christ.' To another she said, 'I shall not long be here; Jesus is precious, very precious indeed.' She said to Miss M., 'The Lord is very good; he keeps my soul above all.' For fifteen hours before she died, she was in strong convulsions: Her sufferings were extreme. One said, 'You are made perfect through sufferings.' She said, 'More and more so.' After lying quiet some time, she said, 'Lord, thou art strong!' Then pausing a considerable space, she uttered her last words, 'My Jesus is all in all to me: Glory be to him through time and eternity.' After this, she lay still for about half an hour, and then died without a sigh or groan.”

25. Since the number of those who believed they were saved from sin was still growing the year after this I decided it was necessary, mainly for their use, to publish “Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection:” --

QUESTION 1. How is 'Christ the end of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes?' (Rom. 10:4)

“ANSWER. In order to understand this phrase you need to understand what 'law' Paul is talking about. I understand that Paul refers to two ideas, (1.) The Mosaic law – which refers to the dispensation (time of God's working) from Moses to the coming of Jesus, which Paul constantly speaks of as a single unit when in fact it has three parts, the political, moral, and ceremonial. (2.) The Adamic law, which was given to Adam while still innocent before he sinned, properly called 'the law of works.' This is really the same as the angelic law, the same law for angels and men. It required that man should use, to the glory of God, all the abilities he was created with. So then, he was created without any defect in his understanding or his desires. His body was not a block to his mind and it did not prevent him understanding everything clearly, judging them correctly, and reasoning accurately, if he reasoned at all. I say, if he reasoned for possibly he did not really reason. Perhaps he had not need of reasoning, until after his corrupted body interfered with the mind and deteriorated its natural abilities. Perhaps until then, the mind saw every truth that was presented to it as directly as the eye now sees the light.

As a result, this law, exactly in line with his original abilities, required that he should always think, always speak and always act precisely right in every point no matter the circumstances. He was completely able to do this and God could not require anything less than what he was able to do.

“But Adam fell; and his incorruptible body became corruptible; and ever since then, it is a clog to the soul and hinders its working. As a result currently, no one can always understand clearly or judge correctly. And where the judgement or understanding is wrong, it is impossible to reason correctly. Therefore, it is as

natural for a man to be mistaken as it is to breathe; and he cannot live without one or the other: therefore no one is able to perform the duties that the Adamic law requires.

“And no one is required to do this; God does not require that level of performance from anyone: for Christ is the end of the Adamic, as well as the Mosaic law. By his death, he has ended both; he has abolished of them, as they apply to humanity; and the requirement to obey either one is totally vanished. In the same way, no one living is required to observe the Adamic more than the Mosaic law. [I mean, it is not required for either present or future salvation.]

“In place of this law, Christ has made another one, that is, the law of faith. So now it is not everyone who does something but everyone who believes that now receives righteousness, in the full sense of the word; that is, he is justified, sanctified, and glorified.

“Q. 2. Are we then dead to the law?

“A. We are 'dead to the law, through Christ's body' that was given for us; (Rom. 7:4;) to the Adamic as well as the Mosaic law. We are totally set free from them by Christ's death; since the law died with him.

“Q. 3. How, then, are we 'not without law to God, but under the law to Christ?' (1 Cor. 9:21.)

“A. We are without the Adamic and Mosaic laws; but that does not mean that we are without any law: For God has made another law to take their place, even the law of faith. All of us are under this law subject to God and Christ; both our Creator and our Redeemer require us to observe it.

“Q. 4. Is love the fulfilling of this law?

“A. Yes, without question it is. The whole law which we are now under is fulfilled by love. (Rom. 13:9, 10.) Faith working or animated by love is all that God now requires from us. He has substituted love rather than sincerity in place of angelic perfection.

“Q. 5. How is 'love the end of the commandment?' (1 Tim. 1:5.)

“A. It is the purpose of every commandment of God. It is the point aimed at by the whole as well as each individual part of the Christian institution. The foundation of that institution is faith, purifying the heart; the end is love, maintaining a good conscience.

“Q. 6. What love is this?

“A. Loving the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength; and Loving our neighbor, everyone, as ourselves, as our own souls.

“Q. 7. What are the fruits or properties of this love?

“A. St. Paul writes in many places that love is long-suffering. It suffers all the weaknesses of the children of God and all the wickedness of the children of the world - not just for a short time, but as long as God pleases. It sees the hand of God in everything and willingly submits to it. Kindness rules this submission. In everything and after all it suffers, it is soft, mild, tender, and gentle. 'Love does not envy;' it excludes every kind and degree of envy out of the heart: 'love does not act rashly,' in a violent, headstrong manner, nor makes any rash or severe judgment: It 'does not behave itself indecently;' is not rude, does not act out of character: 'Seeks not her own' ease, pleasure, honor, or profit: 'Is not provoked;' expels all anger from the heart: 'Thinks no evil;' throws out all jealousy, suspiciousness, and readiness to believe evil: 'Rejoices not in sin;' but instead, weeps at the sin or folly of its bitterest enemies: 'But rejoices in the truth;' in the holiness and happiness of every single person. 'Love covers all things,' speaks evil of no one; 'believes all things' that tend to the advantage of another's character. It 'hopes all things,' whatever may explain and lessen the faults which cannot be denied; and it 'endures all things' which God can permit, or men and devils inflict. This is 'the law of Christ, the perfect law, the law of liberty.'

“And this distinction between the 'law of faith' (or love) and 'the law of works,' is neither a subtle nor an unnecessary distinction. It is plain, easy, and intelligible to any common understanding. And it is absolutely necessary, to prevent a thousand doubts and fears, even in those who do 'walk in love.'

“Q.8. But do we often “in many things offend everyone,” even the best of us against this very law?

“A. In one sense we do not, while all our attitudes, thoughts, words and works spring from love. But in another way we do, and will continue to do, more or less, as long as we remain in the body. For we are not made infallible by love or the 'anointing of the Holy One.' Therefore, because of the unavoidable errors in our understanding we are bound to make mistakes in many things. And these mistakes will often lead us to something wrong, even in attitude, words and actions. For example, from misjudging his character, we may love a person less than they really deserve. And by the same mistake we are not able to avoid speaking about or acting toward that person in a way that violates the law of love in some of the ways we described above.

“Q.9. So then, we need Christ even for this kind of violation?

“A. The most holy of people still need Christ as their Prophet, (that is as the 'light of the world'). For He only gives them light moment by moment; the instant he moves away everything becomes dark. They still need Christ as their King; because God does not give them a “supply” of holiness. So unless they receive that supply each moment unholiness is all that remains. They still need Christ as their Priest to be the bridge to God for their holy actions because even perfect holiness is only acceptable to God when it comes through Jesus Christ.

“Q. 10. So can we say that even the best of people would be able to adopt the confession of the dying Martyr: “By myself I am nothing but sin, darkness, and hell; but you are my light, my holiness, and my heaven?”

“A. Not exactly. But the best of people might say, “You are my light, my holiness, my heaven. Through my union with you I am full of light, holiness and happiness. But if you left me alone I would be nothing but sin, darkness and hell.”

“To explain myself a bit more: The best of people need Christ as their Priest, their Atonement, and their Advocate with the Father because every blessing that keeps coming to them depends on Jesus death and constant prayer for them and because they fall short of the law of love. Every living person falls short. You who feel your hearts filled with all love, take time to compare yourselves with the previous description and weight yourselves by this scale and see if you don't fall short in many specific ways.

“Q. 11. But if all of this is consistent with Christian perfection, that kind of perfection is not true freedom from all sin since sin is the transgression of the law and the “perfect” violate the very law they are under. In addition to this, they still need the atonement of Christ; and sin is the only thing He is the atonement of. So, is it proper to use the term sinless perfection?

“A. It is not worth a debate, but lets look at they way that the people we are talking about still need the atonement of Christ. They do not need him to reconcile them to God over again; because they are already reconciled. They do not need him to restore the favor of God but to keep it applied. He does not need to purchase a new pardon for them, but 'ever lives to make intercession for them;' and 'by one offering he has perfected forever them that are sanctified.' (Heb. 10:14)

“By not considering this carefully, some have denied that they even need the atonement of Christ. This is a very small number of people, I do not remember finding more than five of them in England. Between the two ideas , I would rather give up the idea of perfection than the atonement; but we don't need to give up either one or the other because the concept of perfection I hold to, 'Love rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks,' is very consistent with the atonement. If anyone has a concept of perfection that is not consistent with the atonement, they are responsible for it.

“Q. 12. Does Christian perfection, as a result, imply anything more than sincerity?”

“A. Not if you mean by 'sincerity,' love filling the heart, removing pride, anger, lust, self-will; love rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks. But I doubt you mean this by the word 'sincerity' since few use it that way. Therefore I think the old word (perfection) is best.

“A person might be sincere who has all of their natural attitudes, pride, anger, lust, self-will but he is not perfect until his heart is cleansed from these and all its other corruptions.

“To make this even clearer: I know many people who love God with all their heart. He is their one desire, their one delight, and they are always happy in him. They love their neighbor as themselves which is to say, they feel as sincere, fervent, constant a desire for the happiness of every person, good or bad, friend or enemy, as for themselves. They rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks. Their souls are always lifting up to God in holy joy, prayer and praise. This is a point of fact; and is plain, sound, scriptural experience.

“But even these souls live in a broken body, and are so affected by it that they cannot always do the things they want to – that is by thinking, speaking and acting precisely right. Because they lack a better functioning body, they must at times think, speak or act wrong; not because of a fault in their love, but because of a lack in their knowledge or ability. At the same time, despite these problems and the results that come from them, they still fulfill the law of love.

“However, since even in the situation above, the most perfect still do not exactly measure up to the perfect law, they still need the blood of the atonement and may properly say, both for themselves and their brethren, 'Forgive us our trespasses.'

“Q. 13. But why is an atonement still needed for their transgressing it if Christ has put an end to that law?”

“A. If you look at the way in which he has put an end to it, the difficulty goes away. If the ongoing benefit of his death and his constant prayer for us were to ever stop, that law would still condemn us. So, we still need both of these for every transgression of the law.

“Q. 14. But can a person who is saved from sin still be tempted?”

“A. Yes; for Christ was tempted.

“Q. 15. However, what you call temptation, I call the corruption of my heart, so how can you tell the difference between the two?”

“A. In some cases it is impossible to tell the difference without the direct witness of the Spirit, but in general one can use the following guidelines: --

P “Someone complements me presenting me with a temptation to pride, but instantly my soul is humbled before God and I don't feel any pride; and I am as sure that I am not proud as I am sure that pride is not humility.

“Someone strikes me and I am tempted to anger but my heart overflows with love and I don't feel any anger at all; and I am as sure that I am not angry as I am sure that love and anger are not the same.

“A woman solicits me to a sexual sin and here is a temptation to lust, but in the moment of temptation I pull back and I feel no desire or lust at all; and I am as sure of this as I am that my hand is hot or cold.

“This is the same process if I am tempted by something right in front of me or by a memory of a complement, an injury, or a woman brought to my mind by the devil. In the moment of temptation, the soul repels the temptation and remains filled with pure love.

“And the difference between temptation and sin is even clearer when I compare my present spiritual state with my condition before coming to Christ, when I felt both the temptation to sin and the corruption of my heart as well.

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

“A. I can only know it in the same way that I know that I am justified. 'Here is how we know that we are of God,' either justified or sanctified, 'by the Spirit that he has given us.'

“We know it by both the witness and the fruit of the Spirit. First, by the witness. The Spirit bore witness with our spirit that our sins were forgiven when we were justified, so in the same way he testifies that they were taken away. We have seen that the witness of sanctification is not always clear at first; (neither is the witness of justification;) and later on it is not always the same strength, but like the witness of justification is sometimes stronger and sometimes weaker and sometimes it even fades away. But in general, the testimony of the Spirit in sanctification is as clear and steady as in justification.

“Q. 17. But why is a witness needed, since sanctification is a real change, not just a change in our status relative to God, like justification?

“A. But is the new birth just a relative change? Is it not a real change? So then, if we don't need a witness to our sanctification because it is a real change, then for the same reason, we would not need a witness that we are born of or are the children of God.

“Q. 18. But does not sanctification shine by its own light?

(note: this means that the change in a person is so clear that it is like a light shining and obvious to those who simply look to see, so there is no need of some kind of internal witness. Wesley's point below is that the new birth also shows a very clear change that is easy to see). wdp

“A. And does the new birth also shine by its own light? Sometimes it does and so does sanctification but at other times it does not. For example, when we are suffering temptation Satan clouds the work of God in our lives and tosses in many kinds of doubts and reasonings, especially for people who have either a very weak or a very strong understanding of the gospel. During these kind of temptations people desperately need a witness coming from the Spirit of God because without this we cannot recognize the work of sanctification in our lives and it would cease to exist. Without this witness the soul could not remain in the love of God and even less be able to rejoice evermore, or in everything give thanks. In these circumstances, therefore, a direct testimony that we are sanctified is necessary in the highest degree. Some might say, “But I have no witness that I am saved from sin. And yet I have no doubt of it.” Very well: As long as you have no doubt, it is enough; when you do have doubts, you will need that witness.

“Q. 19. But what portion of Scripture makes any mention of a witness by the Spirit or gives us any reason to expect to receive it?

“A. In the scripture, 'But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might know the things that were freely given to us by God.' (1 Cor. 2:12).

“It seems reasonable to consider sanctification as one of 'the things that were freely given to us by God.' And we cannot find any reason to exclude sanctification when the Apostle says, 'we received the Spirit' for this very purpose, 'that we might know the things' which are 'freely given to us.'

“This is the same thing that is implied in a well-know scripture, 'The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God?' (Romans 8:16). Does He testify only to those who are children of God in the lowest sense? No, but also to those who are children in the highest sense. And would he tell them they are children in the highest sense? What reason would we give to doubt this?

“What if, for example, a person were to say (as indeed many do), that this witness belongs only to the highest class of Christians? Would you hesitate to answer, 'The Apostle does not restrict the witness to any group, so then it must belong to all the children of God?' And can we not give the same answer to anyone who says that the witness only belongs to the lowest class of children?”

“Look also at 1 John 5:19: 'We know that we are of God.' How do we know this? 'By the Spirit which he gave us.' (1 John 3:24). So then, this is how we know that He lives in us. Besides this, what basis can we give from Scripture or reason to exclude the witness any more than the fruit of the Spirit from what the Apostle intends to include here? This is the means by which 'we know that we are of God' and in what conditions we are; whether we are babes, young men or fathers, we know in this same way.

(note: Wesley uses the terms babes, young men and fathers here to indicate the growth of a Christian as they walk with God. These are not gender specific terms but since he uses them in a special sense I have retained his words). wdp

“I am not saying that all young men, or even fathers, have this testimony every moment. There may be breaks in the direct testimony that they are born of God; but those breaks are fewer and shorter as they grow up in Christ; and some children of God have a continuous and constant testimony of both their justification and sanctification, which I believe more might have if they walked humbly and closely with God.

“Q.20. Will some of these have a testimony from the Spirit that they will not be separated from God in the end?”

“A. It is possible some have this testimony. If they are convinced of this, that life or death will not separate them from Him, not only will they not be hurt by this conviction, it may in some circumstances be extremely useful. So then, we should not do anything to discourage someone claiming this, but sincerely encourage them to “hold the beginning of their confidence steadfast to the end.”

“Q. 21. But does anyone actually have a testimony from the Spirit that they will never sin again?”

“A. We don't know what revelation God will give to some people in a special way; but we do not find any general spiritual state described in Scripture that would make it impossible for a person to sin. If there was a spiritual state where sin was impossible, it would be the people who are sanctified, who are 'fathers in Christ, who rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks;' but really it is not impossible for even these to draw back. Even those who are sanctified may still fall into sin and perish. (Heb. 10:29). Even fathers in Christ need the warning: 'Love not the world.' (1 John 2:15). These same people who 'rejoice, pray' and 'give thanks without ceasing,' may still 'quench the Spirit.' (1 Thess. 5:16 and following). So then even those who are 'sealed until the day of redemption,' might still 'grieve the Holy Spirit of God.' (Ephesians 4:30).

“So, although God might give that kind of a witness to some specific people, it still cannot be expected by Christians generally; there is no Scripture to base that expectation on.

“Q. 22. What 'fruit of the Spirit' will tell us 'that we are of God,' even in the highest sense?”

“A. When Love, joy and peace are always present; through unchanging long-suffering, patience and submission to suffering; by gentleness gaining victory over all that provokes us; by goodness, mildness, sweetness, tenderness of spirit; by trustworthiness, simplicity, godly sincerity; by meekness, calmness, evenness of spirit; by self restraint, not only in food and sleep, but in all things both natural and spiritual.

“Q. 23. So why is this so important? Don't we have all of this when we are justified?”

“A. What do they have? Total submission to the will of God, without any mixture of self-will? Do they have gentleness, without any touch of anger, even right at the time we are provoked by someone? Do they have a love for God without even a little love for any created thing, but a love that is in God and for God

and excludes all pride? Do they have a love for others that excludes all envy, jealousy, and rash judgements? Do they have the kind of meekness that keeps the whole soul in unbroken calm and self control in all things? You can deny that anyone ever has come up to this measure if you like but please do not say that all who are justified do come up to it.

“Q. 24. But some who are newly justified do come up to this standard. What will you say to them?”

“A. If they really meet the standard, I will say they are sanctified; saved from sin in that moment; and further that they never need to loose what God has given to them or ever experience sin any more.

“But no doubt they are the exception to the ordinary experience. Normally, most of those who are justified are not like that, but they feel in themselves more or less pride, anger, self-will and an heart that is bent toward backsliding and until, through a gradual process, they have put all of these to death, they are not fully renewed in love.

“Q. 25. But isn't this the situation with all those who are justified? Do they not gradually die to sin and grow in grace, till at, or perhaps a little before, death God perfects them in love?”

“A. I believe this is the situation with most but not all people. God usually gives a long time for people to receive light, to grow in grace and to do and suffer His will before they are either justified or sanctified. But He does not always work this way, sometimes he 'cuts short his work,' that is, he does the work of many years in a few weeks; perhaps in just week, a day or an hour. He is willing to justify or to sanctify even people who have done or suffered nothing and who have not had time for gradual growth either in light or grace. Does this make you envious or jealous of them because God is good? Isn't it His right to do what he wants with His own?”

“It is not necessary to state again and again and to prove by forty different passages from Scripture that most people are finally perfected in love, that there is a gradual work of God in the soul, or that, generally speaking, it is a long time, perhaps many years before sin is destroyed. We know all of this; but we also know that God can (to our joy), 'cut short His work,' in whatever measure he wants to and accomplish the work of many years in a moment; and still there is a gradual work, both before and after that moment. Because of this one person can claim the work is gradual and another that it is instantaneous without in the least contradicting each other.

“Q. 26. Does St. Paul mean any more by being 'sealed with the Spirit,' than being 'renewed in love?’”

“A. It may be that in 2 Corinthians 1:22 he does not mean as much as being 'renewed in love;' but in Ephesians 1:13, he seems to mean more because he includes both the fruit and the witness of the Spirit and that to a higher degree than even our first experience of being 'renewed in love.' In that passage, God 'seals us with the Spirit of promise,' by giving us the 'full assurance of hope;' which in this case means that we receive a such a deep confidence we really will finally receive all the promises of God that even the possibility of doubting this is removed. A believer can be this confident because the Holy Spirit uses his universal holiness to stamp the whole image of God on our hearts.

“Q. 27. But how is it possible for people are are sealed in this way to 'grieve the Holy Spirit of God?’”

“A. St. Paul gives us very specific examples of how, (1.) By talking about things that are not profitable, not able to build others up, and not likely to communicate grace to those listening. (2.) By falling back into bitterness, or a lack of kindness. (3.) By wrath, or long lasting displeasure, or a lack of sensitivity. (4.) By anger, no matter how quickly it is over; and failing to instantly forgive one another. (5.) By a loud insistence on one's rights, or noisy, loud, harsh, rough speaking. (6.) By evil speaking, whispering about the wrong motives of others, getting them into trouble, or needlessly mentioning the fault of an absent person, even when done in a quiet and seemingly gentle way.

“Q. 28. What do you think of those in London who, not long ago, seem to have been 'renewed in love?’”

“A. The way that most of them experienced this is very strange. Normally one would expect that a believer would be filled with love first, and by that filling be emptied of sin; but in this case they were emptied of sin first and then filled with love. Perhaps God wanted to work this way to make his actions very clear and undeniable and to show clearly the difference between it and the overflowing love that many feel even in a justified state.

“It also seems to agree closely with the promise: 'From all your filthiness I will cleanse you; I will also give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you.' (Ezek. 36:25, 26.)

“But I do not think they are all identical in their experience as there is a great difference between the experience of some compared to the experience of others. I think that most of them who I have spoken to have a great deal of faith, love, joy and peace. Some of these are renewed in love, and have the direct witness of the Spirit; and they show the fruit just mentioned in all their words and actions. Now, let any person call this what they want; it is what I call perfection.

“But some of those who have a great deal of love, peace and joy still do not have the direct witness of the Spirit; and others who think they have that witness are at the same time clearly lacking in the fruit. How many are like this I will not say; perhaps just one in ten or more or less. But some of the group are clearly lacking in longsuffering, that is, Christian resignation. They do not see the hand of God in whatever occurs, and cheerfully embrace it. They do not in everything give thanks, and rejoice evermore. They are not happy; at least not always happy because you can hear them complaining saying this or that is hard!

“Some lack gentleness, they resist evil instead of turning the other cheek. They do not receive correction with gentleness; no, not even of the mildest type. Nor are they able to bear being contradicted without at least appearing resentful. If they are corrected or shown wrong, even though it is done gently they do not take it well; they put some distance and become more reserved toward that person than before. If they are corrected or their fault is shown harshly, they answer it with harshness; that is with a loud voice, or an angry tone or in a sharp and sullen manner. They themselves speak sharply or roughly when they correct others and they lord it over their subordinates.

“Some are lacking goodness. They are not kind, mild, sweet, amiable, soft and loving at all times in their spirit and their words, in their appearance and in the whole pattern of their behavior. They are not this way consistently to everyone around them, that is to all, high and low, rich and poor, without respect of persons; particularly to non Christians and those who oppose the faith and especially to those of their own household. They do not through careful attention and effort strive by every means to make everyone around them happy. They can see them uneasy, and not be concerned; perhaps they even make them uncomfortable; and then wipe their mouths and say, 'Why, they deserve it; it is their own fault.'

“Some lack integrity, a careful regard for truth, simplicity and godly sincerity. They have a flattering love and what they say seems almost sly. To avoid seeming rough they lean to the other extreme. They are such smooth talkers they fawn over people, or say things in a way that makes them seem to mean something other than what they are really saying.

“Some lack meekness, quietness of spirit, calmness in the face of difficulty and an even attitude. They are up and down, sometimes high, sometimes low; their mind is not well balanced. Their desires are not well proportioned as they have too much of one type and not enough of another; or what they do like is not blended together so as to form a pleasant balance. Because of this they are jerky. Their soul is out of tune and cannot make the true harmony.

“Some are lacking self control. They do not consistently use the type or amount of food which they know, or should know, would be best suited to the health strength and energy of the body. They are not careful in their sleep; that is they do not carefully stick to what is best for both body and mind or else they would go to bed and rise early, and at the same time each day. They eat late at night, which is not good for the body or the soul. They do not fast or abstain from pleasant foods. They prefer (which is the basis for so many types of the lack of self control) the kind of preaching, reading, or conversation which brings temporary joy and comfort over the type that brings godly sorrow or instruction in righteousness. This type of joy is not

sanctified and does not help toward or end in the crucifixion of the heart. This type of faith is not God centered but self centered.

“So far all I have said is clear. I believe you have faith, love, joy and peace. Yet you who are living in that area know each of you within yourselves that you are lacking in the areas mentioned above. You lack either long-suffering, gentleness, or goodness; either in integrity, meekness or self control. So we do not need to fight over the terms, you agree with my observations.

“You do not have what I call perfection; if others will call what you have perfection, that is up to them. However, hold tightly to what you do have and earnestly pray for what you still lack.

“Q. 29. Can those who are perfect grow in grace?

“A. Without a doubt they can and not only while alive now but on into all eternity.

“Q. 30. Can they fall from it?

“A. I am sure they can since the evidence shows this clearly. We used to think that a person saved from sin could not fall but now we know they can. We are surrounded by examples of those who a short time ago experienced all that I mean by perfection. They had both the fruit of the Spirit and the witness but now they have lost both. There is nothing in the nature of Christian Perfection that allows a person to be held up automatically. There is no height or strength of holiness that is impossible to fall from. If there happens to be a person who cannot fall away this would be because of a special promise of God to them.

“Q. 31. Can those who fall from this state return to it?

“A. Why not? We also have many examples of this. It is a very common thing for people to lose it more than once before they are established in it.

“So, in order to protect those who are saved from sin from the various possibilities of stumbling I give the following advice. But before that I want to say something very clearly about the recent event itself.

“I consider this event to be the work of God; likely the greatest currently on the earth. Yet, like other similar events this is mixed with a great deal of human frailty. But these weaknesses, which are far smaller than we expected, should have been joyfully endured by all that love and follow after righteousness. The existence of a few weak, over-enthusiastic people does not actually discredit the event but does seem on the other hand to give grounds for some to falsely accuse a large number of sober-minded people, who are wonderful examples of accurate holiness. Sadly, (opposite of what should have been) those in opposition to this event are numerous while the encouragers are few. By this means many are prevented from seeking faith and holiness by the false zeal of others; and some who started running the race well are turned from the track.

“Q.32. What is the first advice that you would give them?

[The advice which follows was published in a separate tract in 1762, with the title of “Cautions and Directions given to the Greatest Professors in the Methodist Societies,” with the following motto: -- “Set the false witnesses aside, Yet hold the truth forever fast.” It was evidently intended to protect the people against the troublesome excesses of George Bell and his friends, who are written about specifically in Mr. Wesley's Journal about that time. -- EDIT.]

“A. Always watch for and pray that you do not fall into pride. If God has removed this from you, make sure it does not come back. It is just as dangerous as lust, and you may slide back into it without noticing; especially if you think you are out of the danger of sliding back. 'I am not worried since I give God all the glory for everything I have.' Even if you give God the Glory you may still be proud. For pride is not exclusively found in thinking that everything we have comes from our own skill and effort, but also in thinking we have abilities we really do not. Mr. L---, for example, attributed all the light he had to God and

he was humble in that he did this, but then he thought that he had more light than any other living person; and this was unmistakable pride. So you attribute all the knowledge you have to God; and in this respect you are humble. But if you think you have more knowledge than you really have, or if you think God teaches you so specially that you no longer need the teaching of any other person, pride lies at the door. You really still need to be taught, not only by Mr. Morgan, or by one another, by Mr. Maxfield, or by me, but by the weakest Preacher in London; yes and by all people. For God sends wisdom by whoever he wants to send it by.

“Do not reject a person who would give you advice or rebuke you by saying to them, 'You are blind, you cannot teach me.' Do not say to them, 'This just comes out of your own head, from your own sinful thinking;' instead calmly think about what they are saying in prayer before God.

“Always remember, much grace does not imply that there is much of the light of understanding. These do not always go together. In the same way that there might be much light when there is only a little love, so there might be a great deal of love with only a little light. The heart has more heat than the eye, but it cannot see. And God has wisely joined the parts of the body together so none of them can say to the other, 'I don't need you.'

“One great and dangerous mistake is to think that no one can teach you except those who are themselves saved from sin. Don't yield to this idea for even a moment; it will lead you into a thousand other mistakes you cannot recover from. No, grace does not give us the ability to rule over everything, as the madmen of the last age said. Obey and respect 'those who are over you in the Lord,' and do not think you know better than they do. Be aware of your place and theirs; always remembering that much love does not mean much light.

“Not paying attention to this has led some people into many mistakes, and made them at least look proud. O be careful of looking proud and being proud! Instead have 'that lowly mind which was in Christ Jesus' and in the same way 'be clothed with humility.' Humility should not only fill, but cover you all over. Make sure that modesty, and self-effacement show clearly in all your words and actions. Let everything you say and do show that you are small, lowly, and of little consequence, and even of little reputation in your own eyes.

“For a practical application of this, always be ready to own any fault you have been a part of. If you have at any time thought, spoken, or acted wrongly, do not be shy to say so. Never dream that this will hurt the cause of God; no it will advance it. So openly and frankly confess whenever you fail at some point, do not try to avoid or disguise it, but let your fault show just as it really is and when you do that you will not hinder but beautify the gospel.

“Q. 33. What is the Second advice which you would give them?

“A. Be very careful of the daughter of pride, believing you are full of the wisdom of God. O keep far away from this! Do not give in to an overactive imagination. Do not quickly attribute things to God. Do not be easily led to think that dreams, voices, impressions, visions, or even revelations to be from God. They may be from him. They may be from nature. They may be from the devil. So then, do not 'believe every spirit, but test the spirits if they are from God.' Test everything by the written word, and let everything bow down before it. You are in danger of false wisdom every moment if you move away from Scripture by even a small amount, that is from the plain, literal meaning of any text, taken together with the context. And you are also in this danger, if you despise or take lightly reason, knowledge, or human learning; every one of which is an excellent gift of God, and can serve the highest purposes.

“I advise you not to use the terms “wisdom, reason, or knowledge” as though they were something to be avoided or as though you are rebuking someone for using too much of them. On the other hand, pray that you personally will grow in these more and more. If what you mean by saying “wisdom” in a reproachful way is worldly wisdom, useless knowledge, false reasoning, then say so and throw away the chaff but not the wheat.

“One common path to spiritual pride (enthusiasm) is expecting the end without the means which is to say for example, expecting knowledge without searching the Scriptures or talking to the children of God, or for example, expecting spiritual strength without constant prayer, and steady watchfulness, or expecting any blessing without hearing the word of God at every opportunity.

“Some people are not aware that Satan uses this method. They have stopped searching the Scriptures. They say, 'God writes all the Scriptures on my heart so I don't need to read it.' Others thought they did not need to hear so much and became lax in attending the morning preaching. O take warning if you see you are guilty of this! You have listened to a stranger's voice. Return quickly to Christ and keep in the good old way, which was 'once delivered to the saints;' the way that even the Heathen testified to; 'That the Christians rose early every day to sing hymns to Christ as God.'

“Even the desire to 'grow in grace' can be a path to spiritual pride (enthusiasm). Since that desire constantly leads us to seek new grace, it may begin to lead us to seek something else new other than new degrees of love for God and people. So this desire has led some to seek after and believe they have received gifts of a new and special kind of heart such as, (1.) Loving God with all our mind; (2.) With all our soul; (3.) With all our strength; (4.) Oneness with God; (5.) Oneness with Christ; (6.) Having our life hid with Christ in God; (7.) Being dead with Christ; (8.) Rising with him; (9.) The sitting with him in heavenly places; (10.) Being taken up into his throne; (11.) Being in the New Jerusalem; (12.) Seeing the tabernacle of God come down among men; (13.) Being dead to all works; (14.) Not being subject to death, pain, or grief, or temptation.

(note: Wesley is concerned that a person will believe that they have reached a point which cannot be improved, or where growth is not needed any longer. So that “Love God with ALL your mind” is a scriptural command, and we can reach this, but we can only reach it by grace, that is through the Holy Spirit's work in our lives, and even when we do “love God with all our mind” we are still able to love Him more and more in the future). wdp

“One starting point for many of these mistakes is taking every fresh encounter with any of these scriptures that suggests a strong application to the heart, as a new type of gift. This shows that the person does not know that several of these scriptures are not yet fulfilled; that most of the rest of them are fulfilled when we are justified and the rest the moment we are entirely sanctified. The only thing left is to experience them in higher degrees. This is all we can expect.

“Another starting point for this and a thousand other mistakes is not deeply considering that love is the highest gift of God; humble, gentle, patient love. All visions, revelations, manifestations, and whatever else we may encounter are little things compared to love; and that all the gifts mentioned above are either the same thing as love or infinitely inferior to it.

“It is best that you are totally aware that, - 'the heaven of heavens is love.' There is nothing higher in religion; and there is, really, nothing else. If you look for anything but more love, you are looking away from the target, you are getting off the royal road. When you ask others, “Have you received this or that blessing?” if you mean anything but more love, you are wrong, you are leading them out of the way and putting them on a false scent. So, settle the issue now in your heart that from the moment God has saved you from all sin, you are to aim at nothing more, but the type of love described in the thirteenth chapter of Corinthians. [1 Cor. 13]. This is the limit of how high you can go until you are carried into Abraham's bosom.

“I will say it again, beware of Spiritual Pride [enthusiasm]. For example, imagining you have the gift of prophesy, or of discerning of spirits, which I do not believe one of you has now or at any time before this. Beware of judging people to be either right or wrong according to how you feel about them. This is not a scriptural way of judging. Please! Keep close to 'the law and to the testimony!’”

“Q. 34. What is the Third?

“A. Beware of Antinomianism; that is nullifying the law, or any part of the law 'through faith.' Spiritual

Pride leads naturally to this, and it is actually hard to separate pride and antinomianism. It can creep up on you in a thousand different ways! You cannot be too careful or watchful against it. Pay close attention to everything that could tend in that direction, including principals you follow and any habits you adopt. Even the great truth, that 'Christ is the end of the law,' may betray us into thinking as antinomians unless we consider that Christ adopted every point of the moral law and grafted it into the law of love. Beware of the type of thinking that says, "Because I am filled with love I do not need so much holiness. Because I pray always I do not need a private time for prayer. Because I am always careful about falling into sin, I do not need any special self-examination." Rather, let us 'magnify the law' which is the whole written word, 'and make it honorable.' Let this be our cry: "I prize your commandments more than gold or precious stones. Oh what love I have for your law! All day long I study it." Beware of Antinomian books; especially the works of Dr. Crisp, and Mr Saltmarsh. They have many excellent things to say and this makes them even more dangerous. Take the timely warning and do not play with fire! Do not put your head into the den of the deadly serpent! I also urge you to beware of bigotry. Do not let your love or generosity be only limited to Methodists, (so called), or even less, to the very small number of them who seem to be renewed in love, or those those who agree with your (or their) teaching. Oh do not make this the measure of your love! At the same time, beware of stillness. That is stopping from your own good works in a wrong sense. As one example out of many, "You have received a great blessing" says someone, but they go on to say, "But you began to talk about it to others and to do this and that kind of good works; so you lost it. You should have been 'still.'"

"Beware of self-indulgence and making it some type of virtue. Be careful not to laugh at self-denial, at taking up your cross daily, or at fasting or abstinence. Beware of critical and judgmental thinking - such as believing that or actually calling people who always seem to be set against you, (in their opinions or in their actions), "blind, dead, fallen," or "enemies to the work." Again, be cautious of Solifidianism (*the doctrine that faith insures our salvation no matter what good works we do or do not do {edit}*) which just cries out "Believe, believe!" and condemns as ignorant or legalistic everyone who speaks more closely in line with the actual emphasis of Scripture. At times the right thing will be to do a whole sermon on repentance, or perhaps only on faith or maybe totally focused on holiness, but normally our call is to declare the whole 'counsel of God' and to preach in a way that shows the relationship of faith and good works. The written word deals with every aspect of righteousness both broadly and down to the smallest details, even to being level headed, courteous, diligent, patient, and giving honor to all people. In the same way the Holy Spirit works in our hearts not only giving us a desire for holiness in general but tilting us in the direction of every specific grace, leading us to each individual part of "whatever is lovely," and in such a way as to carefully conform to the best moral excellence. So that in the same way that faith is made perfect by works, so the process of either completing the work of faith, or destroying it, depends greatly on every single act of obedience or disobedience, so a person can enjoy the favor or displeasure of God.

"Q. 35. What is the Fourth?"

"A. Beware of sins of omission. Do not miss any opportunity to do any type of good. Zealously do good works and do not neglect any good work dealing with either piety or mercy. Do all the good you can possibly do for people's bodies and souls. Specifically, (leviticus 19:17) 'You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.' Work constantly, do not allow idleness or laziness to infect you, and do not give anyone reason to say, "you are lazy, you are lazy." Many people will still say so, but let your whole attitude and behavior prove the slander wrong. Always do something productive, don't let a moment go to waste, gather up the fragments so nothing is lost. And whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your strength. Be 'slow to speak,' and careful in your conversation because 'in a multitude of words there is no lack of disobedience.' Do not talk very much; or very long at a time. Few people can hold a profitable conversation for more than a hour. Stay far away from pious chit-chat, that is from religious gossiping.

"Q. 36. What is the Fifth?"

"A. Be cautious of wanting anything other than God. At this moment you do not want anything else: every other desire is driven out; make sure that none come back again. 'Keep yourself pure;' let your 'eye' remain focused on this single desire and your whole body shall be full of light.' Do not allow in the desire for

pleasing food, or any other pleasure of the senses; nor the desire to please the eye or the imagination, by anything grand, new or beautiful; no desire for money, or praise, or esteem; or of happiness regardless of the type. You may bring these desires back; but it is not necessary, you do not need to be controlled by them any longer. O stand firm in the liberty by which Christ has made you free.

“Be an example to everyone of self denial and taking up your cross daily. Let them see that you are not drawn by any pleasure that does not bring you nearer to God, or pay attention to any pain which does bring you to Him. Let them see that you simply aim at pleasing Him, whether through your actions or by your suffering. Let them see that you are always saying in your heart as you are presented with pleasure or pain, honor or dishonor, riches or poverty, “All is just the same for me so I can live or die for my Lord.”

“Q. 37. What is the Sixth?

“A. Beware of division, of making a tear in the Church of Christ. I mean the disunion of the heart when the members withhold their mutual love “one for another.” (1 Cor. 12:25) which is the very root of all harsh debate and every outward separation. Beware of everything that tends in that direction. Beware of a dividing spirit and avoid anything that has the least tendency in that direction. Therefore do not say 'I am for Paul or for Apollos' which was the exact cause of the division at Corinth. Do not say 'This is my preacher; the best Preacher in England; I'll take him and you have keep all the rest.' All this tends to breed or stir up division, to separate those who God has joined. Do not despise or talk badly about any preacher and do not raise one up above the rest or you may hurt him and the cause of God. On the other hand, do not speak critically and harshly to any of them because they said something that was difficult to understand or was inaccurate in some way, or for any other kind of mistake, even if they are really mistakes.

“In the same way, if you want to avoid division, be careful to obey every rule of the Society, and of the Bands for the sake of both your's and other's conscience. Never neglect meeting with your Class or Band and never be absent from any of the public meetings. These are the very tendons of our Society and whatever weakens or tends to weaken our regard for these, or our carefulness in attending them, strikes at the very root of our community. As one says, “That part of our system, the private weekly meetings for prayer, examination, and individual exhortation, has been the greatest means of deepening and confirming every blessing given by preaching the word, as well as spreading the message to others who could not attend the public meeting. At the same time without this religious connection and discussion, the most strenuous attempt to deepen the spiritual life through preaching only has proved not to have a lasting effect.”

“Do not allow even a thought of separating from your brothers, whether they agree with your opinions or not. Do not dream that anyone sins when they do not believe you, or don't take your word for something. Do not dream that this or that opinion is essential to the work, and both must stand or fall together. Beware of becoming impatient with someone who contradicts you. Do you condemn or think badly of those who cannot see things just as you see them, or who judge it their duty to contradict you in an important opinion or a small one. I fear some of us have thought badly of others only because they contradicted what we taught. All this tends to division, and by these kinds of actions we are teaching others that we are really evil to our shame.

“Oh beware of oversensitivity, of being grouchy, not wanting to be spoken to; of jumping up at the smallest word of contradiction, or running away from those who do not automatically agree with what you or another person says or implies.

“Expect to be contradicted and opposed, along with many types of crosses. Think about the words of St. Paul: “To you it is given, in the behalf of Christ,” -- for his sake, as a result of his death and constant prayer for you, -- “not only to believe, but also to suffer for his sake.” (Phil. 1:29.) It is given! God gives you the opposition or insults as fresh evidence of His love for you. Will you push away the one who is giving this, or throw away the gift and consider it as an annoyance? Or will you say, “Father the time has come for you to be glorified; now you are giving your child something to suffer for you; work with me according to your will?” Please understand that these things are far from slowing down or blocking the work of God or the growth of your own soul, (unless you try to avoid the lessons in them). They are unavoidable in the course

of Providence and profitable as well as necessary for you. Therefore, receive them from God (not from chance) with willingness and thankfulness. Receive them from men with humility, meekness, submission, gentleness, and sweetness. Shouldn't even your outward appearance and manner be soft? Remember the character of Lady Cutts: "It was said of the Roman Emperor Titus, No one ever came away displeased from him. But it might be said of her, No one ever went displeased to her: because everyone was so sure of the kind and favorable reception she would meet them with."

"Avoid giving anyone the temptation to stay away from you. Avoid giving any type of offense which is possible to avoid. Make sure that your actions are in every way lined up with your spiritual profession, and give a sense of the beauty in teachings of God our Savior. Be especially careful when talking about yourself. You cannot, of course, deny what God has done for you; but when you are called to talk about it do so in the most inoffensive manner possible. Carefully avoid all high sounding or impressive terms; you don't even need to give it a name, not perfection, sanctification, the second blessing, or the "having attained." Instead, talk about the specific things God has done for you. You might say, "At such a time I felt a change which I am not able to fully describe, and since that time I have not felt pride, or self-will, or anger, or unbelief; nor anything but a fulness of love to God and to all humanity." Use modesty and simplicity to answer any other plain question that someone asks you about this.

"And if any of you at any time happen to fall from what you are now, that is if you find that you are again feeling pride, or unbelief, or any evil attitude from which you are now delivered, do not deny it, or hide it, or cover it over at all (which will imperil your soul). As soon as possible go to someone you have confidence in and tell them exactly what you are feeling. God will help them to say just the right word, which will be healing to your soul. Then God will lift up your head and make the broken bones rejoice.

"Q. 38. What is the last advice that you would give them?"

"A. Be an example in everything, especially in things that others can see, like clothing, and in little things like how you spend your money, (avoiding every needless expense), your attitude, (steady, peaceful), and how you talk, (serious, useful, and significant conversation). In this way you will be "a light shining in a dark place." In the same way you should "grow in grace" daily until you are fully prepared to enter the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Most of the advice I gave above are strongly reinforced by the following meditations, which I recommend that you reflect on deeply and often, after your meditations on the holy Scriptures ---

"(1.) The sea is an excellent representation of the fulness of God and of the blessed Spirit. For in the same way that all rivers return to the sea; so the bodies, the souls and the good works of the righteous return to God to live with Him in His eternal rest.

"Even though all the gifts of God only depend on his wonderful generosity, He is normally pleased to connect them to the prayers, instructions, and holiness of the people we associate with. Using strong and invisible attractions, He draws some people through their interactions with others.

"The friendships formed by grace are far stronger than those formed by nature.

"The truly Godly demonstrate that deep friendships flow just as naturally from true as from false love, since they are deeply aware of both the good and evil characteristics of the people they love for God's sake. But this is really only comprehended by those who understand the language of love.

"The bottom of the heart may be at rest, even while we are suffering from many outward troubles; just like the bottom of the sea is calm, while the surface is tossed by the waves.

"The very best assistance we have to grow in grace comes from the abuse, insults and losses which happen to us. We should be thankful to receive them as better than all other means to grow in grace if only for the reason that we had no choice in the matter.

“The quickest way to escape from our sufferings is to be willing that they should continue as long as God wants them to.

“If we endure persecution and troubles in the right way, we are made like Christ to a much larger degree (through the improvement that comes from even just one painful incident like this), than we could have done if we only imitated His love through a large number of good works.

“One of the greatest evidence of God's love for those who love him is to send them trials and at the same time the grace to bear up under them.

“Even in the deepest trials we should testify to God - while we receive them from His hand - that we feel a pleasure in the midst of the pain from being given trials by Him who loves us and who we love.

“The best method God uses to draw a person to Himself is to give him trouble in the very area that he loves the most from a pure motive, and to make the root of that trouble come from some good deed done with the very best of intentions; because nothing else can show him more clearly the emptiness of even what is most lovely and desirable in the world.

“(2.) True submission comes from being totally conformed to the whole will of God; who decides and then acts in everything (except sin) that happens in the world. In order to accomplish this we only need to accept all events, good and bad, as His will.

“In the greatest trials which can come to the just, either from heaven or from earth, they stay unshakeable in their peace and perfectly submissive to God through a deep loving attention to Him which gives a single point of focus for every capacity in their hearts.

“We should quietly suffer whatever happens to us and endure the faults of others as well as our own, then to confess these faults to God in secret prayer, or with groans which cannot be spoken. We should never say a sharp or irritated word, or complain or fret, but be totally willing to allow God to treat you in whatever way pleases him. We are his lambs and should be ready to suffer, even to death, without complaining.

“We must put up with the people we cannot change and be satisfied with turning them over to God. This is true submission. Since He has borne our weaknesses, we gladly bear each other's weaknesses for His sake.

“The desire to Abandon everything, striping one's self of everything with the goal of seeking after and following Jesus Christ naked to Bethlehem, where he was born; naked to the hall where he was beaten; and naked to Calvary, where he died on the cross, is such a great mercy that only through faith in Christ is this experience, or even a genuine understanding of it, given to anyone.

“(3.) There is no love of God that does not include patience, and no patience without humility and a sweet attitude.

“Humility and patience are the best evidence of increasing love.

“Only Humility joins patience to love; and apart from that it is impossible to gain anything from suffering; or even to avoid complaining; especially when we think we have done nothing to deserve the suffering that people inflict on us.

“True humility is a type of self-annihilation from which flows all virtues.

“A person who has returned to God should pay attention to every word spoken to him on the subject of salvation, looking to gain from it.

“Do not allow anything to remain of the sins that God has forgiven. Rather taken on a deeper humility in the heart, and a more careful attention to what we say, what we do and to our attitude in suffering.

“(4.) Toleration of others and suffering various evils with meekness and silence is the totality of a Christian life. God is the first object of our love: Its next office is, to bear the defects of others. And we should begin the practice of this amidst our own household.

“God has the first claim to our love. The next work love does is to bear the weaknesses of others, which should start first among the people in our own home.

“We should mainly exercise our love toward those people who give the greatest shock to our way of thinking, or our attitudes, or to our knowledge, or that wish we have that other people should live up to the standards we have set for ourselves.

“(5.) God rarely gives his Spirit, even to the ones He has matured in grace, if they do not pray for it at every opportunity, not just once but many times over.

“God does nothing except in answer to prayer; and even the people who have been brought to God without praying for it personally, (which is very rare,) were being prayed for by others. Every new victory gained by someone is the effect of a new prayer.

“When we feel uneasy, we should retreat into prayer, so we can give space for the grace and light of God, and then make our decisions, without worrying about what success they may have.

“In the greatest of temptations, a single look at Christ, and lightly whispering his name, is enough to overcome the wicked one, as long as it is done with a confident and calm spirit.

“God's command to 'pray without ceasing' is based on the need we have for His grace to maintain the life of God in our soul, (which cannot last for even a moment without grace, just as the body needs air to survive).

“If we think about, or speak to God, or if we act for or suffer for Him, all of this is prayer - when we have nothing else in mind but His love and the desire to please Him.

“Everything a Christian does, even eating and sleeping, is prayer when it is done in simplicity according to the commandment of God, as long as the Christian does not add to or take away from that command through his own choice.

“Prayer continues as the desire of the heart, even though someone's thinking is focused on outward things.

“For people filled with love, the desire to please God becomes a continuous prayer.

“Just like the terrible hate the devil has for us is called the roaring of a lion, our intense love may be called 'crying after God.'

“God just requires His mature children to have their hearts truly purified. They will then constantly talk to him about the things they want and that they are willing to do, that naturally spring from perfect love. Since those desires are the genuine fruit of love, they are the most perfect prayers that can flow from it.

“(6.) It is hard to understand how straight is the way which God leads those who follow him; and how dependent on him we must be, unless our faithfulness to him is lacking in some way.

“It is difficult to measure how important to God the smallest things are, and what enormous consequences sometimes follow what can seem to be light or small faults.

“Just as a little bit of dust will damage a clock, and the smallest grain of sand will block our sight, in the same way the smallest grain of sin in the heart will stop its right movement towards God.

“We should be in the church just like the saints are in heaven, and in our house as the holiest people in the

church, doing our work in the house in the same way we pray in the church; worshipping God from the depths of our heart.

“We should always be working to remove all the useless things around us; and God normally removes the unnecessary tendencies of our souls to the same degree that we remove them from our bodies.

“The best method for resisting the devil is to destroy whatever remains of the world in us in order to raise up a building, dedicated to God, made all from love, on top of that destruction. Then we will begin, in this short life, to love God as we will love him for all eternity.

“We hardly understand how easy it is to rob God of his rightful love, when we become close friends with the most exemplary people, until they are torn away from us in death. But if their death gives us a long lasting grief, that is a clear proof that we really had two treasures which we divided our heart between.

“(7.) After we have turned our back on the whole world, if we do not keep a constant careful watch, and beg God to join our watchfulness with his own, we will again, be entangled and overcome.

“The most dangerous winds can enter through little openings, even so, the most dangerous way the devil enters is by small unnoticed incidents, which seem to be nothing, yet they quietly open the heart to great temptations.

“It is good to occasionally renew ourselves, by closely examining the condition of our souls like it was the first time we had ever done this. Nothing gives us a full assurance of faith like keeping ourselves, through this kind of examination, in humility, and the exercise of all good works.

“Along with constant watching and prayer should be added constant work. For grace empties out in a vacuum, just like nature, and the devil fills whatever God does not fill.

“There is no higher level of faithfulness than that which ought to exist between a guide of souls and the person who is being directed by them. They should always view each other as though God was standing between them. They should examine themselves closely to make sure all their thoughts are pure and all their words spoken with Christian carefulness. Other activities are only the ordinary concerns of people but this type of relationship is God's special concern.

“(8.) The statement of St. Paul, “No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' but by the Holy Spirit,” shows us the necessity of focusing on God in our good works, and even in our slightest thoughts, because we know that none of these are pleasing to Him, except the ones He forms in us and along with us. From this we learn that we cannot serve Him, unless he uses our tongue, hand, and heart, to do by Himself and His Spirit whatever he wants us to do.

“If we were not totally powerless, our good works would be ours to own and claim; as it is now they belong totally to God because they come from Him and His grace. When God exalts our good works and makes them really of divine origin, He honors Himself in us through them.

“One of the most basic rules of religion is to not lose any opportunity to serve God. Since He is invisible to us, we must serve Him in the person of our neighbor; which He receives as though done to Himself, in person, standing visibly before us.

“God does not love people who are inconsistent, or good works that are occasional. Nothing else really pleases Him but actions that resemble His own unchanging nature.

“Constant attention to the work that God entrusts to us is a mark of solid piety.

“Love fasts when it can, and as much as it can. Love leads to all the commands of God and occupies itself in all the outward works that is it able to do. Love flies, so to speak, like Elijah over the plain, to find God on His holy mountain.

“God is so great, that He imparts His greatness to the smallest thing that is done for His service.

“Those who are sick or even lose their life for having done a good work are happy.

“God often hides the part that His children have in the conversion of other people. Yet one may confidently state that when a person groans in prayer before Him for a long time on behalf of the conversion of someone else, and that soul does come to God, their prayer is one of the major causes behind it.

“Charity (gift giving) cannot be done correctly unless; First of all, we exercise it the moment God gives the opportunity; and, Second, we leave immediately after in order to offer it to God through humble thanksgiving. There are three reasons for leaving; First, to give back to Him what we have received from Him. Second, in order to avoid the dangerous temptation which springs from the very goodness of these works. And Third to unite ourselves with God, whom the soul in prayer expands into, along with all the various graces we have received from Him, and the good works we have done for Him, so we can draw from Him new strength against the bad effects which these very works might produce in us, unless we make use of the antidotes which God has given to cure these poisons. Thus the true mechanism for being filled again with the riches of grace is to strip ourselves of it; and unless we do so, it is extremely difficult not to become exhausted in the practice of good works.

“Good works only receive their final perfection when they lose themselves in God. This is a kind of death for them, resembling the death of our bodies, which will not reach their highest life, their immortality, until they lose themselves in the final glory of our souls, or rather of God himself, with whom they will be filled. Good works only lose that part of them that was earthly or mortal by this spiritual death.

“Fire is the symbol of love; and the love of God is the source of, and final goal for, all our good works. But what really happens goes beyond the symbol and the fire of divine love can do what a normal fire cannot. Love can return to its source and raise to there all the good works which it produces. In this way it prevents their corruption through pride, vanity, or any other evil attitude mixing with them. But the only way in which this can be done is to make these good works, in a spiritual sense, die in God, through a deep gratitude to Him. This gratefulness casts the soul into God as in an deep abyss, bringing along all that makes up the soul, and all the grace and works for which it is in debt to Him. This kind of gratitude allows the soul to empty itself of the good works so they can return to their source, as rivers seem willing to empty themselves when they pour all their waters into the sea.

“When we receive any favor from God we should go quietly, if not into our closets, into our hearts and say, “I come, Lord, to give back to you what you have given. I freely give it up so I can return to my own nothingness. For what is the most perfect creature in heaven or on earth in your presence, but an emptiness that can be filled with you and by you, just as the air at night is empty and dark and can be filled in the morning with the light of the sun, who draws it back each day only to restore it the next, since there is nothing in the air that either produces this light or resists it? O give me the same ability to receive and give back your grace and good works! I say yours, for I know the root they spring from is in you and not in me.”

26. In the year 1764, I did review of the whole subject and I wrote down the whole of what I observed in the following short phrases: ----

“(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.' (Heb. 6:1.)

“(3.) It is not so late as death; for St. Paul speaks of living people that were perfect. (Phil. 3:15.)

“(4.) It is not absolute. Absolute perfection belongs not to humans, nor to angels, but to God alone.

“(5.) It does not make a person faultless: No one is faultless, while they remain in the body.

“(6.) Is it sinless? It is not worth while to argue about a word. It is 'salvation from sin.'

“(7.) It is essentially perfect love' (1 John 4:18.) The inseparable qualities of the fruits are, rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks. (1 Thess. 5:16, &c.)

“(8.) It can be improved. In fact, it is so far from a point that can't be divided or from being unable to be increased that someone perfected in love may grow in grace far swifter than before.

“(9.) It can be lost; and we have many examples of this, but we were not completely convinced this was possible until five or six years ago.

“(10.) It is constantly both preceded and followed by a gradual work.

“(11.) But is it in itself instantaneous or not? In examining this, let us go on step by step.

“An instantaneous change has been wrought in some believers: None can deny this.

“Since that change, they enjoy perfect love; they feel this love, and this love alone; they 'rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks.' Now, this is all that I mean by perfection; therefore, these people are witnesses of the perfection which I preach.

“But in some people this change was not instantaneous.' They did not know the moment when it was done. It is often difficult to perceive the instant when a person dies; yet there is an instant in which life ceases. And if ever sin ceases, there must be a last moment of its existence, and a first moment of our deliverance from it.

“But if they have this love now, they will lose it.' They may lose it; but they need not. And whether they lose it or not, they have it now; they now experience what we teach. They now are all love; they now rejoice, pray, and praise without ceasing.

“However, sin is only suspended in them; it is not destroyed.' Call it which you please. They are all love to-day; and they take no thought for the morrow.

“But this doctrine has been much abused.' So has that of justification by faith. But that is no reason for giving up either this or any other scriptural doctrine. 'When you wash your child,' as one says, 'throw away the water; but do not throw away the child.'

“But those who think they are saved from sin say they have no need of the merits of Christ.' They say just the contrary. Their language is, --

'Every moment, Lord, I want
The merit of thy death!'

They never before had so deep, so unspeakable, a conviction of the need of Christ in all his offices as they have now.

“Therefore, all our Preachers should make a point of preaching perfection to believers constantly, strongly, and explicitly; and all believers should mind this one thing, and continually agonize for it.”

27. I finished what I said I would do. I have given a plain and simple account of the process through which I first understood and accepted the doctrine of perfection, and the meaning of the doctrine I fully believed, and which I still believe, and teach to this day. I have publicized the complete meaning of that scriptural expression carefully showing all the aspects and implications. I have drawn a full length picture of it, without either disguising some aspects or covering over others. And now, I would ask any impartial person,

what is there in this doctrine that is so scary? Where does all this outcry come from, which for more than the last twenty years has been made throughout the kingdom; as if all Christianity were destroyed, and all religion torn up by the roots? Why is it, that the very word perfection has been cast out of the mouths of Christians, yes, it has been exploded from them and hated, as if it contained the most destructive heresy? Why have the Preachers of Christian Perfection been hooted at like mad dogs, even by men that fear God; or even worse by some of their own spiritual children, whom they, under God, had brought to faith through the gospel? What logical reasons are there for this, or perhaps what deceptive pretense? Reason; that is, sound logical reasons, there are none. It is impossible there could be. but pretenses, that is hidden motives, there are, and those in great abundance. Indeed, there is ground to fear that, with some who treat us thus, it is mere pretense; simply a copy of their attitude about this doctrine, from the start of this controversy up to now. They wanted to find and they sought a reason to find fault with me; and here they found what they sought. "This is Mr. Wesley's doctrine! He preaches perfection!" Yes, he does; yet this is not his doctrine any more than it is yours, or anyone else who is a Minister of Christ. For it is Christ's doctrine, peculiarly, emphatically His. It is the doctrine of Jesus Christ. These are His words, not mine: *Esesthe oun teleioi, ho sper ho PatEr HymOn ho en tois ouranois teleios esti*, -- "You shall therefore be perfect, as your Father who is in heaven is perfect." And who is the person who tells you that you cannot be perfect; or at least not until your soul is separated from your body? Christian Perfection is the doctrine of St. Paul, the doctrine of St. James, of St. Peter, and St. John; and not more Mr. Wesley's alone, than it is the doctrine of every one who preaches the pure and the whole gospel. I tell you, as plainly as I can speak, where and when I found this doctrine. I found it in the oracles of God, in the Old and New Testament; when I read them with no other view or desire but to save my own soul. But whoever this doctrine belongs to, I ask you, what harm is there in it? Look at it again; survey it on every side, and that with the closest attention. In one view, it is purity of intention, dedicating all the life to God. It is the giving God all our heart; it is one desire and design ruling all our attitudes and actions. It is giving, not a part, but all our soul, body, and material goods 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. Now, take it in which of these views you please, (for there is no material difference,) and this is the complete and only perfection, which a whole long list of writings prove to demonstrate, that I have believed and taught this for these forty years, from the year 1725 to the year 1765.

28. Now let this doctrine of perfection appear in its Biblical form, and who can speak one word against it? Will any dare to speak against loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves? Will any speak against a renewal of heart, not only in part, but in the whole image of God? Who is he that will open his mouth against being cleansed from all pollution both of flesh and spirit; or against having all the mind that was in Christ, and walking in all things as Christ walked? What man, who calls himself a Christian, has the daring to object to giving, not a part, but all our soul, body, and material goods to God? What serious man would oppose the giving God all our heart, and the having one design ruling all our attitudes and actions? I say, again, let this perfection appear in its own shape, and who will fight against it? It must be disguised before it can be opposed. It must be covered with a bear-skin first, or even the wild beasts of the people will hardly be convinced to tear at it. But whatever these "wild beasts" do, let not the children of God any longer fight against the image of God. Let not the members of Christ say anything against having the whole mind that was in Christ. Let not those who are alive to God oppose the dedicating all our life to Him. Why should you who have his love shed abroad in your heart resist giving him all your heart? Does not all that is within you cry out, "O who that loves can love enough?" What pity that those who desire and design to please him should have any other design or desire! It is much much more a pity, that they should dread, as a fatal delusion, yes, even hate as an abomination to God, having this one desire and design ruling every attitude and action! Why should devout men be afraid of giving all their soul, body, and substance to God? Why should those who love Christ count it a damnable error, to think we may have all the mind that was in him? We agree and we even contend, that we are justified freely through the righteousness and the blood of Christ. And why are you so hot against us, because we expect likewise to be sanctified wholly through his Spirit? We look for no favor either from the open servants of sin, or from those who have only the form of religion. But how long will you, who worship God in spirit, who are "circumcised with the circumcision not made with hands," set our battle in array against those who seek a entire circumcision of heart, who thirst to be cleansed "from all filthiness of flesh and spirit," and to

“perfect holiness in the fear of God?” Are we your enemies, because we look for a full deliverance from that “carnal mind which is enmity against God?” No, we are your brethren, your fellow-laborers in the vineyard of our Lord, your companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus. Although this we confess, (if we are fools in this, yet as fools bear with us,) we do expect to love God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves. Yes, we do believe, that he will in this world so “cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, that we shall perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name.”

BRIEF THOUGHTS ON CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

SOME thoughts occurred to my mind this morning concerning Christian perfection, and the manner and time of receiving it, which I believe may be useful to set down.

1. By perfection I mean the humble, gentle, patient love of God, and our neighbor, ruling our attitudes, actions, and words.

I am not saying it is impossible to fall from this, either in part or in whole. Therefore, I retract several expressions in our Hymns, which partly express, partly imply, such an impossibility. And I do not contend for the term “sinless,” though I do not object against it.

2. As to the manner of receiving this. I believe this perfection is always wrought in the soul by a simple act of faith; consequently, in an instant. But I believe a gradual work, both preceding and following that instant.

3. As to the time it is received. I believe this instant generally is the instant of death, the moment before the soul leaves the body. But I believe it may be ten, twenty, or forty years before. I believe it is usually many years after justification; but that it may be within five years or five months after it, I know no conclusive argument to the contrary. If it must be many years after justification, I would be glad to know how many. *Pretium quotus arroget annus?* [This quotation from Horace is thus translated by Boscauwen: -- "How many years give sanction to our lines?" -- EDIT.] And how many days or months, or even years, can any one allow to be between perfection and death? How far from justification must it be; and how near to death?

LONDON, Jan. 27, 1767.

This edition is paraphrased by William David Phillips with the intention to help translators and those who have a difficult time reading and understanding 18th century English. I have rewritten whole paragraphs trying to express the same thoughts using a modern flow of English. If there are any weaknesses, faults or short-comings in this paraphrase they are completely my responsibility. I have a few notes scattered through the text to help expand some phrases that cannot be easily paraphrased. This is offered to the church as a tool and freely to the world with only the requirement for attribution. It has been a blessing and a challenge to my own soul, and I pray that others might also benefit.

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