

Sanctification and Final Salvation

by Harald Lindström

Wesley's view of sanctification and final salvation emphasizes the importance of continuance in faith, obedience, and works in achieving perfect sanctification and final salvation.

Scripture: Romans 3:28, Galatians 5:6, Ephesians 2:8, Philippians 2:12, Hebrews 12:14, James 2:17

Topics: "Sanctification", "Salvation"

Description

Harald Lindström preaches on the concept of Final Salvation as a Work of God, emphasizing the importance of sanctification as a prerequisite for both present and final salvation. He delves into the necessity of faith and works in the Christian journey, highlighting the continuous growth in sanctification and the pursuit of perfection as essential elements. Lindström explores the convergence of present and final salvation in saving faith, stressing the significance of faith active in love and obedience. He addresses the balance between grace and human effort in salvation, emphasizing the synergistic relationship between God's grace and man's response.

Transcript

Final Salvation as a Work of God.

We have seen that in Wesley sanctification is not a necessary condition for present justification or present salvation. "Justification (or salvation) by faith alone" is a major theme in his teaching. This Reformed doctrine is nevertheless based on an Arminian view of election, with the inevitable consequences. After justification the Christian will grow in sanctification and seek perfection. During his life on earth he is to be made worthy of eternal life. Sanctification constitutes the prerequisite for final justification at the last judgment and for final salvation. Thus another major theme constantly recurs in Wesley: "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." We must now examine this condition of final salvation more closely, and try to see how it affects the relation between present and final salvation.

We shall find that the ideas of present and final salvation converge in that of saving faith. In this both present and final salvation have their source. The man who through faith is justified and receives present salvation, achieves final salvation through continuing in faith. It follows that Wesley can call this continuance in faith the condition of final salvation. It means abiding in faith to the very end. "By 'the righteousness which is of faith' is meant, that condition of justification (and, in consequence, of present and final salvation, if we endure therein unto the end) which was given by God to fallen man, through the merits and mediation of His only-begotten Son."¹ We are also told, when the effect of justifying faith is

under consideration: "And if thou endure to the end, believing in Jesus, thou shalt never taste the second death; but, having suffered with thy Lord, shalt also live and reign with Him for ever and ever."² Because of the atonement of Christ, all that now truly believe in Him are saved from their sins, and "if they endure to the end, shall be saved everlastingly."³ Through the merits of Christ, all those who to the very end remain in the faith that is active in love, will be saved.⁴ "He that through the power of faith," Wesley maintains with special emphasis on the faith active in love, "endureth to the end in humble, gentle, patient love; he, and he alone, shall, through the merits of Christ, 'inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world'."⁵

The faith that constitutes the condition for forgiveness and new birth is not as such, in loco justificationis, associated with love, but the faith which must be retained to preserve the Christian life and to attain final salvation, is so associated. Opposed as always to outward, formalistic religion, Wesley insists that this faith must be accompanied by love. He describes it as a living, saving principle.⁶ True faith must be accompanied by love to God and all men.⁷ Faith is only possible so long as man loves God.⁸

Thus the condition necessary to final salvation coincides fairly closely with that necessary to the maintenance of the Christian life in general. In both cases it is a matter of the faith active in love. This is because Wesley regards the Christian life as a process of salvation leading to perfection. If the Christian continues in faith he will also develop in faith. So the Christian life is seen as a ripening process and by passing through it man is qualified for glorification and final salvation. A gradual development begins after new birth. "From that time (unless he make shipwreck of the faith) salvation gradually increases in his soul. For 'so is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and it springeth up, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear'."⁹ When man begins to believe, sanctification begins too. "And as faith increases, holiness increases, till we are created anew."¹⁰

In Wesley's opinion, then, the Christian need feel no anxiety over his final salvation, if he remains in faith. At the same time, however, the Christian life is directed towards perfection in a way typical of Wesley's teleological outlook. The Christian must leave the first milestones of his path well behind him and seek perfect sanctification.¹¹ This is essential if we are to "see the Lord" in glory, but "none who seeks it sincerely shall or can die without it; though possibly he may not attain it, till the very article of death."¹²

The concentration on final sanctification should not lead to forgetfulness of the magnificent gift already possessed in justification. The justified are already the children of God, no longer in a state of condemnation.¹³ Perfect sanctification should be regarded as a promise to be fulfilled by God in his own good time. In sermons, therefore, it must be referred to "always by way of promise; always drawing, rather than driving."¹⁴ To prevent this doctrine from reducing believers to a condition of slavish fear "we should always place it in the most amiable light, so that it may excite only hope, joy, and desire."¹⁵ Nor should their Christian joyfulness be damped by it.¹⁶ They must not be troubled by the fear of dying before they have been fully sanctified.¹⁷ Nor must they allow themselves to be depressed by their awareness of the sin which is still in them. On the contrary, the deep consciousness of their sinful nature should only induce them to turn the more eagerly to Christ and with his help to continue on the path of sanctification and victory. The knowledge of his love should always grow still greater when the sense of sin is more profound. Our joy in God grows with our love to Him. The believer must not dwell so much on innate, inherent sin that he forgets or depreciates the change already bestowed on him.¹⁸

This problem, of such great importance in the Christian life, is most fully treated in a sermon published in 1750 and entitled Satan's Devices.¹⁹ Here Wesley begins by describing the situation in which the

Christian finds himself when he is already justified but looking ahead to full sanctification as a goal not yet reached. Already as a "babe in Christ" he has been granted forgiveness and the first fruits of God's spirit, but the harvest is not yet ripe. Although what he already possesses is of immense value, "yet we trust to see greater than these." The Christian, that is, also expects to be accorded perfect love in his heart. Here Wesley emphasizes the danger of allowing this expectation of a greater work of God to destroy or stunt the growth of His first work. Our joy in God can be weakened if we are too preoccupied with our worthlessness and sinfulness and think too much of the greater change which must take place before we can see God in glory. Our peace is disturbed by the consciousness of our distance from the final goal. Confronted by God's holiness and our own sinfulness we begin to doubt our fellowship with God. We may even begin to doubt the reality of our acceptance and the basic truth on which we build our Christian life. And thus we may find ourselves back again at the point where we started and seek justification by works or through our own merits. Such thoughts as these, however, must be regarded as the devices of the devil, who tries to exploit the necessity of perfect sanctification in order to disturb the peace and happiness of the Christian. The devil also does his best to destroy the sanctity already acquired by the Christian. Happiness and peace contribute essentially to its furtherance. In so far as doubt and fear take their place, growth in sanctification is impeded. But this growth is most easily and effectively arrested when the devil attacks the Christian's faith, his belief in a loving and forgiving God. For this faith is the foundation of Christian life and the root of all holiness. The Christian will long earnestly for the perfection which even in this life will be bestowed upon him, but in doing so his attention must not be distracted from the imperishable inheritance of eternal life. Uninterrupted concentration on this eternal goal is a source of strength on which we must necessarily draw if we are to complete the course prescribed for us here on earth. By keeping our attention fixed on the joy in store for us above we are able to endure all the trials which God in his wisdom inflicts upon us, and so through holiness arrive at glory.

The Christian, Wesley continues, must not be depressed by these temptations. He must not let his happiness be undermined when he considers his situation. The deeper his awareness, by God's grace, of his own vileness, the greater should be his happiness in the confident hope that it will all be lifted from him. The more violently his peace of mind is upset by the thought that his righteousness is but imagined, the more earnestly must he cling to the true knowledge that he has been justified through faith in Christ and not because of his own merits. Nor must he succumb to the temptation to abandon his shield, his confidence in God's love; instead he must hold more firmly to what has already been given to him. He must never forget that he has an advocate in the Father and that he now lives in the faith of His love. In the peace and joy of faith the Christian must strive on towards the perfection necessary for final salvation. He must regard this sanctification, however, not as something which must be realized if he is not to go to Hell, but as something which will take him to Heaven. He must regard it as the most desirable gift that God can bestow, and if he looks at it in this light he will hunger and thirst all the more intensely for conformity with the image of God.

Wesley tries in this way to bind the idea of present to that of final salvation. The latter he regards as a promise that God when He thinks fit will implement for those who have continued in faith. The spiritual life, which through faith is bestowed on every Christian, is itself an earnest of eternal life.²⁰ What God has already done for him is a pledge of what he will do later through perfect sanctification.²¹ He who has justified the Christian and begun his sanctification will carry on this work "till it issue in Glory."²² The Christian who lives in faith can look forward in confidence to the glory which will be revealed.²³ Wesley, we see, is careful to present evangelically, and not with oppressive legalism, the perfection which is a necessary condition for entry into eternal life. At the same time, as we have seen, he contends that he

who is not yet fully sanctified nevertheless enjoys the divine favour as a child of God. "By 'perfection'," we are told in a most illuminating passage, "I mean 'perfect love', or the loving God with all our heart, so as to rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in everything to give thanks. I am convinced every believer may attain this; yet I do not say he is in a state of damnation or under the curse of God till he does attain. No, he is in a state of grace and in favour with God as long as he believes. Neither would I say, 'If you die without it, you will perish'; but rather, Till you are saved from unholy tempers, you are not ripe for glory. There will, therefore, more promises be fulfilled in your soul before God takes you to Himself."²⁴

In Wesley, then, continuing in faith stands out as the fundamental and ultimate condition of final salvation. It results sooner or later in perfect sanctification, the immediate requirement. Further, we have seen how both the development of the Christian life on earth and its sequel in glorification are regarded in evangelical perspective; the whole can be seen as a work of God and as a promise that God will keep.

II

Final Salvation and the Works of Man.

Continuance in faith, however, is not regarded only as a work of God. It is at the same time dependent on the Christian himself. It is true that for a time immediately after 1738 this latter consideration is hardly discernible; it was swept aside by the new and overwhelming conviction of salvation by faith alone.²⁵ But it is not long before the idea of the importance of works in the preservation and development of the Christian life is explicitly expressed. As early as the conference of 1744, for instance, it is put thus: "Q. 11.

Are works necessary to the continuance of faith? A. Without doubt; for a man may forfeit the free gift of God, either by sins of omission or commission."²⁶ The importance attributed to obedience is also seen in the view that faith is only lost through some form of disobedience on the part of man. The question "Can faith be lost but for want of works?" is answered: "It cannot but through disobedience."²⁷ The latter begins in an inward disobedience.²⁸ Wesley sees it as the beginning of a process of degeneration ending in total loss of faith and love.²⁹ Thus obedience is also necessary to the fulfilment of God's promise of entire sanctification.

In obedience to His commandments and employment of the means of grace, the Christian must await this full change. "How should we wait for the fulfilling of this promise?" was one of the questions at the doctrinal conference of 1745. The answer ran: "In universal obedience; in keeping all the commandments; in denying ourselves, and taking up our cross daily. These are the general means which God hath ordained for our receiving his sanctifying grace. The particular are, -- prayer, searching the Scripture, communicating, and fasting."³⁰ Accordingly the Christian life will be marked by human activity.

If it is to be upheld and developed, God's faithful care for those he has called must be accompanied by their obedience. The faith active in love and obedience is taken to be a condition for God's fulfilment of His promise. This line of thought is found as an expression of Wesley's Arminian view of election in *Serious Thoughts upon the Perseverance of the Saints*, published in 1751: "But how then is God faithful?' I answer, In fulfilling, every promise which he hath made, to all to whom it is made, all who fulfil the condition of that promise.

More particularly, (1.) 'God is faithful' in that 'he will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able to bear'. (1 Cor. x. 13.) (2.) 'The Lord is faithful, to establish and keep you from evil'; (if you put your trust in him;) from all the evil which you might otherwise suffer, through 'unreasonable and wicked men'. (2 Thess.

iii, 2, 3.) (3.) 'Quench not the Spirit; hold fast that which is good; abstain from all appearance of evil; and your whole spirit, soul, and body shall be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.' (1 Thess. v. 19, &c.) (4.) Be not disobedient unto the heavenly calling; and 'God is faithful, by whom ye were called, to confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ'. (1 Cor. i. 8, 9.) Yet, notwithstanding all this, unless you fulfil the condition, you cannot attain the promise." "Nay, but are not 'all the promises, yea and amen'?" Wesley asks further, and replies: "They are firm as the pillars of heaven.

Perform the condition, and the promise is sure. Believe, and thou shalt be saved."³¹ The main point is that man should make use of the grace given to him, while awaiting the consummation of God's promises.³² Grace accrues to man more and more abundantly, and faith grows in proportion as man makes use of the grace and faith allotted to him. Love and obedience may be explicitly called a pre-requisite for man's abiding in God's favour. In a statement made at the London conference in 1770, in which otherwise works are most strongly emphasized, we read as follows: " (1.) Who of us is now accepted of God? He that now believes in Christ with a loving, obedient heart."³³

The importance of works is still more clearly shown when they are explicitly called a condition for final justification or when perfect sanctification is regarded as necessary to final salvation. In 1738, however, the idea of final salvation is pushed into the background. Instead, present salvation now becomes the object of his central, if not exclusive, interest. In principle the idea of such two-fold justification and salvation is present immediately after 1738³⁴, but his view of salvation is dominated, particularly at first, wholly by present justification and present salvation³⁵. This is a result of the supremacy now attained by the Reformed doctrine of justification through faith alone. As in the Article on justification in the Thirty-nine Articles³⁶, and as in the Homily of Salvation³⁷, in Wesley 'justification' in this connection means only present justification. The word is also virtually confined to this sense in his abridgement of the Thirty-nine Articles³⁸, although the idea of the last judgement is also present³⁹, just as there is a preoccupation with final salvation, seen as a result of predestination, in the original Articles⁴⁰. This does not mean that the ethical consequences of salvation are now overlooked; on the contrary, they are strongly emphasized. But in this sense the works issuing from faith are not regarded as pre-requisites of a second and final salvation; they are only the necessary fruits of true faith. Thus a purely causal attitude is operative here. But when the idea of final salvation looms larger, works, i. e. works deriving from faith -- while at the same time being seen increasingly from the point of view of the law⁴¹ --, take on further significance. Final justification is considered dependent upon them. This is already evident in the Minutes of 1744⁴² and in A Farther Appeal, published the following year. In speaking of final salvation in the latter work Wesley calls "holiness or universal obedience" the "ordinary condition." For present salvation faith is the only condition, but for final salvation works are also necessary.⁴³ St. Paul's statement that faith made perfect by love, or Jacob 's [James] that faith made perfect by works, constitutes the condition of salvation, refer, in Wesley's view, to "final salvation."⁴⁴

Thus man's relation to God is seen by Wesley in terms of works as well as grace. Works, particularly in their bearing on the last judgement, are treated as a definite pre-requisite of final justification. "Q. 24. But do you consider, that we are under the covenant of grace, and that the covenant of works is now abolished? A. All mankind were under the covenant of grace, from the very hour that the original promise was made. If by the covenant of works you mean, that of unsinning obedience made with Adam before the fall, no man but Adam was ever under that covenant; for it was abolished before Cain was born. Yet it is not so abolished, but that it will stand, in a measure, even to the end of the world; that is, if we 'do this', we

shall live; if not, we shall die eternally: If we do well, we shall live with God in glory; if evil, we shall die the second death. For every man shall be judged in that day, and rewarded 'according to his works'."45 At the last judgement the good steward will be rewarded according to his works.46

In the Minutes for 1770, in which the arguments against Antinomianism are particularly stressed, works are said to constitute a necessary condition for final salvation as well as an important factor in maintaining the Christian life. "We said in 1744," Wesley writes, "'We have leaned too much toward Calvinism'. Wherein? A. (1.) With regard to man's faithfulness. Our Lord himself taught us to use the expression: Therefore we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert upon his authority, that if a man is not 'faithful in the unrighteous mammon, God will not give him the true riches'. (2.) With regard to 'working for life', which our Lord expressly commands us to do. 'Labour', , literally, 'work, for the meat that endureth to everlasting life'. And in fact, every believer, till he comes to glory, works for as well as from life."47 Final salvation presupposes "works as a condition."48 "And who can deny," Wesley writes of this salvation in a letter explaining the tenets of the same London conference, "that both inward good works (loving God and our neighbour) and outward good works (keeping His commandments) are a condition of this? What is this more or less than 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord' ?"49

We have seen, then, that the obedience and works issuing from faith can be directly or indirectly called necessary conditions of final justification. Earlier we saw how final salvation was dependent upon perfect sanctity. A closer examination of this dependence will now show that Wesley makes a distinction between 'condition' and 'merit'. Here sanctity is regarded as a condition of final salvation, but not as a merit on the strength of which final salvation or justification is accorded to man. This idea of merit is totally rejected with regard to present justification, nor is it allowed to obtrude upon the conception of final justification. In the latter as in the former case, Christ is declared the only meritorious cause of human salvation. A Christocentric view of salvation corresponds here to a Reformed view of man. Thus any notion of merit in man is repudiated. This applies even to the works done by the Christian through the grace of God.50 Similarly, any notion of works of supererogation is ruled out. Man can never do more than his duty. All he has he has received from God, and thus everything is owed to Him.51

Wesley never wavered in his support of this Evangelical tenet. It is true that later on some of his statements in the Antinomian controversy might suggest that he did.52 But when he pauses to amplify and explain, this Reformed line is always clearly reaffirmed. In his 1771 declaration on the controversy over the rulings of the conference of the year before, for instance, we find him writing: "Whereas the Doctrinal points in the Minutes of a Conference, held in London, August the 7th 1770, have been understood to favour Justification by Works: Now the Revd John Wesley & others assembled in Conference, do declare, That we had no such meaning; & that we abhor the Doctrine of Justification by Works, as a most perilous & abominable Doctrine. And as the said Minutes are not sufficiently guarded in the way they are expressed, we hereby solemnly declare, in the sight of God, that we have no trust or Confidence but in the alone Merits of our Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ, for Justification or Salvation, either in Life, Death or the day of Judgement. And though no one is a real Christian Believer (and consequently cannot be saved) who doth not good works, where there is time & opportunity, yet our Works have no part in meriting or purchasing our Justification from first to last, either in whole or in part ."53 In a letter of the same year to his friend and collaborator, Fletcher, Wesley again insists that salvation is a work of God and that the works of Christ are its only meritorious cause. He contends here that on this point his views have not changed. "I always did (for between these thirty and forty years)," he writes, "clearly assert the total fall of man, and his utter inability to do any good of himself: the absolute necessity of the grace and Spirit of God

to raise even a good thought or desire in our hearts: the Lord's rewarding no work, and accepting of none, but so far as they proceed from his preventing, convincing and converting grace thro' the Beloved. The blood and righteousness of Christ being the sole meritorious cause of our salvation. And who is there in England that has asserted these things more strongly and steadily than I have done?"⁵⁴

We find this repudiation of the idea of merit in Fletcher's interpretation of Wesley's attitude. Wesley's general distinction between "condition" and "merit" is made more precise by Fletcher, who distinguishes between "evidence of works" and "merit of works." When we are told that at the last judgement man will be justified because of his works, no merit is involved in the concept of 'works'. Justification is exclusively occasioned by the merits of the life and death of Christ, but "thy justification which is purchased by my alone merits, will entirely turn upon the evidence of thy works, according to the time and opportunity thou hast to do them!"⁵⁵ Wesley is extremely careful, Fletcher says, to defend himself against any idea of merit in man. It is the witness, not the merit, of works that Wesley has in mind when he makes final justification dependent upon them. It is a question of "justification by the evidence of works."⁵⁶

Obedience and holiness are considered necessary to final salvation, but they have no meritorious significance. In final as in present salvation everything is dependent upon Christ's work of atonement. The idea of grace is also seen in the fact that the works necessary to final salvation are regarded as having been made possible by God. The grace of salvation is in Wesley the common foundation of all the phases in the process of salvation. Of everything that man undertakes on the path of salvation it is true to say that without God he can do nothing.

The relation between present and final justification can also be determined in another way, which brings out the organic connection between them. The former relates to faith, the latter to the fruits of faith. Accordingly, Fletcher defines the difference between first and second justification as follows: "My dear child, would I say, though hitherto this tree has produced nothing but crabs, yet by the skill of the gardener, who has just fixed in it that good little branch, it is now made an apple-tree, I justify and warrant it such. (Here is an emblem of our first justification by faith!) In three or four years, if we live, we will come again and see it: If it thrives and bears fruit, well; we shall then by that mark justify it a second time, we shall declare that it is a good apple-tree indeed, and fit to be transplanted from this wild nursery into a delightful orchard. But if we find that the old crabstock, instead of nourishing the graft, spends all its sap in producing wild shoots and sour crabs; or if it is a tree whose fruit withereth without fruit, twice dead (dead in the graft and in the stock) plucked up by the root, or quite cankered, far from declaring it a good tree, we shall pass sentence of condemnation upon it, and say, Cut it down: Why cumbereth it the ground? For every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.' Here is an emblem of our second justification by works, or of the condemnation that will infallibly overtake those Laodicean professors and wretched apostates, whose faith is not shewn by works, where there is time and opportunity."⁵⁷ Special emphasis is laid on the fruits of the Christian life, since they are of such fundamental importance for final justification.

Wesley's simultaneous insistence on final salvation as a work of God and on works as the pre-requisite of final justification, must be understood in the light of his formulation of the issue; here it is not primarily a question of whether final salvation is attained through grace or through human merits. These alternatives are only dealt with when he is on the defensive. When this happens he repudiates the idea of human merit and defends the argument of grace. The real issue, however, is different, and in it his attitude to salvation is determined by his rejection of Antinomianism, the emphasis being laid on works and the law man must fulfil. His opposition to Antinomianism is motivated by the view of atonement according to which the work

of Christ does not exempt us from the necessity of fulfilling the moral law. On the contrary the Christian is still under an obligation to fulfil this law; indeed, as we have already seen, the aim of atonement can be said to be man's real change and his fulfilment of the law.

The importance Wesley attributes to works is chiefly grounded on his objection to the Calvinist doctrine of election. Thus his opposition to Antinomianism is a necessary outcome of his Arminian outlook and the doctrine of prevenient grace, the latter a consequence of the former. Accordingly God's will to salvation is declared universal. No one can be utterly lost except as a result of his own actions. Faith is the condition of salvation just as absence of faith is the condition of damnation. Thus faith is a personal act on the part of man and of independent importance for salvation. This view of salvation as something also dependent on human decisions is emphasized by the idea of repentance before faith as a condition of justification and repentance after faith as a condition of perfect sanctification. In accordance with his Arminian view of election Wesley thus rejects the idea of a *gratia irresistibilis*.⁵⁸ Grace, that is, does not operate irresistibly; its effectiveness is dependent on human cooperation. In consonance with this basic idea he dismissed the doctrine of an unconditional perseverance. Thus those who believe in Christ are not regarded as incapable of apostasy.⁵⁹ A believer whose faith is wrecked, is *ipso facto* no longer a child of God. He is now in danger of Hell and will go there if he continues without faith.⁶⁰ Wesley thus rejects the idea of a state of grace from which apostasy is impossible; instead he accentuates the necessity of man's own contribution to salvation.⁶¹ So the Christian life is seen in imperative as well as indicative terms: the Christian is already saved in faith but at the same time he is ceaselessly exhorted to continue in faith by means of obedience and to seek the sanctity which constitutes the pre-requisite of final salvation.

Although works are thus strongly emphasized, man's contribution is not assessed as highly as grace in the attainment of salvation. The former is always subordinate to the latter. The initiative always rests with God; and this is not all, for at every stage of the order of salvation the effective cause is always God's grace. On the other hand faith and the works issuing from it are means necessary to the realization of the divine redemptional intention. The efficacy of grace is therefore dependent upon them as means. In this sense man is an independent agent, although grace is the ground. He must make good use of the grace accorded to him. If he does, he can cooperate with grace. Here a certain synergism is inevitable, the result of Wesley's attempt to fuse two trains of thought: on the one hand the doctrine of original sin, in the light of which salvation must be entirely a work of God, and on the other, the Arminian view of election and the doctrine of prevenient grace, according to which man himself contributes to the attainment of salvation.⁶²

III

Sanctification and Twofold Salvation.

The causal and teleological trains of thought in Wesley's theology are also manifested in his twofold view of salvation. The idea of present salvation can be said to correspond to the former. This is seen when the stress is laid on the state of grace already reached by the Christian and which will lead to final salvation if he remains in faith. But when final salvation is seen as the goal and sanctification as the means of attaining it, the teleological view emerges, and the Christian life becomes a striving towards its own consummation. Desire and effort are now focussed on final salvation and glorification. In the former case it is faith that comes to the fore, in the latter, the works issuing from it. In the former case the stress is on the work of God, in the latter, on the works of man.

The idea of a twofold justification involves a distinct tension in the Christian life: the tension between the experienced judgement of grace and the coming judgement of works. The Christian who has already been saved through faith, still awaits the final salvation for which the maturing power of sanctification will qualify him. The tension between present and final salvation can also be related to another tension contained in the idea of present salvation: the tension between the ideas of forgiveness and sanctification. According to the approach employed fellowship with God may be total or only partial. It is total from the angle of forgiveness: every believer, that is, is totally free from guilt. He is in a state of grace, no longer in a state of condemnation. He is accepted by God as one of His children. From the point of view of sanctification, however, salvation is divided up into the successive stages of a process. New birth involves only partial fellowship with God, a fellowship developing towards perfect sanctification. The latter is certainly perfect, but only by earthly standards. It is relative, not absolute. Wesley envisages a continued development in sanctification after the entire change in perfection. Therefore salvation from the point of view of real change is not considered fully consummated, not total. Whereas in the former case we have an objective event altering the relation between God and man, in the latter we have a subjective, empirical process. In the former case salvation is described as an instantaneous work, in the latter, partly as instantaneous -- with regard to new birth, which takes place simultaneously with forgiveness, and perfect sanctification -- and partly as gradual. Seen as a whole, then, salvation takes the form of a gradual process incorporating instantaneous events.

Wesley clearly took great pains to unify the diverse factors in salvation. Forgiveness and new birth are obviously very closely related: the one cannot occur without the other. After new birth sanctification develops towards the perfect real change that constitutes the pre-requisite of final salvation and glorification. There is thus a certain organic inter-relationship between the separate phases of the process of salvation. Present and final salvation are also connected. Each factor is treated as a link in the same chain⁶³ or as integral parts, each with its proper function, of a whole⁶⁴. Yet this idea of an organic unity does not prevent him from regarding forgiveness and new birth, or present and final salvation, as separate and distinct one from the other. He distinguishes between new birth and forgiveness in a logical, though not in a temporal, sense. The difference between forgiveness and sanctification increases in so far as subsequent sanctification is regarded as an empirical process. As this process precedes final salvation, present and final salvation must denote events distinct in time and accorded to man under different circumstances.

Forgiveness and sanctification are the two cardinal factors in the idea of salvation, with the main stress on sanctification. Forgiveness, based on atonement, is the ground of the Christian life and in principle is never overstepped, yet nevertheless it is the idea of sanctification that dominates his whole theology. The conception of salvation is determined by the idea of sanctification, because salvation is seen as a process directed to the perfect, real change of the individual. And this process is the necessary condition for final salvation, which is the ultimate goal of the Christian life. The emphasis is then laid on sanctification: the Christian must prepare himself for the last judgement and for entry into Heaven. The Christian, as in William Law and the mystics, is above all a pilgrim, his life on earth a journey, the destination Heaven. And the path he must travel to reach his goal is the path of sanctification, of real, empirical change in man.

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