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you may be failures. When you reach the journey's end, there will be no obituary in the *New York Times*. (Cheer up! I don't expect a *Times* obituary either!) In the sweep and onrush of global events, your passing, like my own, will undoubtedly be as unnoticed as the falling of a maple leaf on the slopes of the Rocky Mountains. Your name is unlikely to be so much as incidentally mentioned in the history some future scholar is going to write. Neither will mine. Yet I pray that your life and your service as disciples of Jesus Christ will be as happy and joyful as my own has been. I pray that no matter what your vocation, you will be grateful for the tremendous privilege and exciting assignment of being our God's co-laborer in the working out of His cosmic purposes. I urge, though, that you go back repeatedly to I Corinthians 4:2-5, especially when you pass through times of dark discouragement.

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God.

Do you have faith to face failure? Do you believe that success as the world judges it is wood, hay, stubble? Do you believe this, even while recognizing how often the church judges success from the world's perspective? Do you believe that spiritual success, often written off by both world and church as failure, is gold, silver, and precious stones? Have you honestly considered that God may be calling you to a career of tedious mediocrity? Do you believe that, even if He is, nothing will really matter in eternity but God's approval of your service regardless of how tedious and mediocre it may have seemed? Do you believe it is infinitely more important to follow God's unique blueprint for your life than it is to be a lengthy entry in *Who's Who*? Do you have the faith to hang on to biblical principles of success despite worldly failure? Do you have the faith to keep doing God's will even if you are unappreciated, unsung, and unapplauded? Do you have faith to face failure?

My meditation, then, is summed up in a probably apocryphal story, a story which nevertheless rings true and which

grips my own soul every time I repeat it. Whatever may be one's taste in music, one will agree, I am sure, that Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is a spine-tingling masterpiece. As a musical illiterate, I judge what I hear sung or played by my visceral reaction, and when I hear the Ninth Symphony, something electrifying happens to my viscera! One night Arturo Toscanini, perhaps the most dynamic of modern maestros, led a simply spine-tingling rendition of Beethoven's immortal masterpiece. The audience went mad. People clapped, whistled, and stomped their feet. Toscanini bowed and bowed and bowed. He signaled to the orchestra, and its members stood to acknowledge the wild applause. Eventually, of course, the pandemonium began to subside, and with the ebbing applause as background, Toscanini turned and looked intently at his musicians. With almost uncontrollable emotion he exclaimed, "Gentlemen! Gentlemen!" The gentlemen in the orchestra leaned forward to listen. Why was the maestro so disturbed? Was he angry? Had somebody missed a cue? Had the orchestra flawed the performance? No. Toscanini was not angry. Toscanini was stirred to the very depths of his being by the sheer magnificence of the Beethoven music. Scarcely able to talk, he said in a fierce whisper, "Gentlemen, I am nothing." (That was an extraordinary admission since Toscanini was blessed with enormous conceit!) "Gentlemen," he said, "You are nothing." (That was not exactly news. The members of the orchestra had often heard the same message in rehearsal!) "But Beethoven," said Toscanini in a tone of adoration, "is everything, everything, everything!"

Looking back across the years of my life, I can with no false modesty admit that I am nothing. Oh, I am grateful for whatever gifts God has entrusted to my care. I am grateful for anything I may have been able to do for my Lord and for people. Yet with no trauma whatever I realize that from the world's perspective I am nothing. After a few short years I will be gone, and except as here and there the Holy Spirit has allowed me to touch some life for Jesus Christ, my influence will speedily be erased.

You—please understand me—are also nothing. Regardless of your talents, regardless of your achievements, from the perspective of eternity you are, as I am, nothing. But Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Savior, is everything, everything, everything! Enabled by the Holy Spirit, following the principles of love, service and faithfulness, be steadfast disciples of Jesus Christ. Then regardless of how the world may judge your service, you will be an eternal success.

Whitefield and Wesley on Righteousness by Grace

by Timothy L. Smith

Renewed concern in all Christian traditions for a life of personal holiness seems to most of us a biblical response to the moral confusion of modern culture. Despite the spreading revival of the past fifty years, we evangelicals have often neglected to stress ethical discipleship. Our long-standing rejection of the idea of salvation by works led many of us to so emphasize grace as to forget that the fruits of the Spirit are an indispensable mark of the new birth. The tendency grew to celebrate the emotions of peace and joy and to mute the

call to the righteousness that is their root. Some evangelical communities laid increasing stress on physical and external miracles and on spiritual gifts that were manifest primarily in audible or visible signs. Others cultivated emotional or mental satisfaction in the drama of Christ's incarnation, whether through a high liturgy of Holy Communion or in mystic awe before the doctrines of Christ's atonement and resurrection. Still others allowed their particular vision of the end times to divert their attention from the duty of taking up the cross of Christian discipleship. In these circumstances, the ethical renewal that Moses and the prophets foresaw and John the Baptist and Jesus proclaimed became a secondary concern.

Timothy L. Smith is Professor of History at Johns Hopkins University.

The awakening to a more biblical view has stemmed from many influences. Among these were the persisting witness of peace church Christians, especially evangelical Friends and Mennonites, to the idea of discipleship; the faithfulness of radical Wesleyans in proclaiming deliverance from the dominion of sin and cleansing from its inward corruption; the rediscovery of the stress John Calvin and the English Puritans placed on holy living; and the scriptural devotion to obedience that earnest Christians always exhibit. Recently, Richard Lovelace's important book, *The American Pietism of Cotton Mather: The Origins of American Evangelicalism*, underlined the ecumenical character of the "spiritual theology" of sanctification that flowered in the eighteenth-century revivals. And his *Dynamics of Spiritual Life* made that theology relevant to all evangelicals, especially those in one or another of the Reformed traditions. Meanwhile, various leaders in the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements rediscovered Charles G. Finney's doctrine of sanctification through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And historians of Fundamentalism like George Marsden and Joel Carpenter have drawn attention to the importance of the idea of holiness in the Keswick and early Fundamentalist movements in England and America.

Many of us now believe that the supreme test of whether the worldwide spiritual awakening of the last few decades is genuine may indeed be a moral one. Are today's born-again Christians enabled by the power of God's Spirit to keep the law that St. Paul called "holy, just, and good"? Do they embrace the two "great commandments" that Jesus and Moses summarized as loving God with all our hearts and loving our neighbors as ourselves?

Whitefield and Wesley on Holiness

The intertwined stories of George Whitefield and John Wesley and of their early associations with Moravian pietists may help evangelicals everywhere to renew our commitment to individual and social holiness. Whitefield testified that he experienced the new birth in 1736 while a poor student at Oxford University, after Charles Wesley had guided him to Scottish Presbyterian Henry Scougal's *Life of God in the Soul of Man* and Pietist August Francke's book, *Against the Fear of Man*. Young Whitefield shared the disciplines of the "Holy Club" and was ordained an Anglican deacon after John and Charles had left for Georgia. Before their return, while yet only twenty-one years old, Whitefield preached to large audiences in Anglican churches. His earliest sermon on regeneration, published in July 1737 as he was leaving for America, proclaimed a view of it that John and Charles Wesley did not begin preaching effectively until the following spring, after their return from Georgia and after they had come under the instruction of the Moravian missionary Peter Böhler.

Early in 1738, Böhler convinced the Wesleys that the Scriptures promised that sinners might be "made just" by faith, in an instant of grace, and enjoy the direct witness of the Holy Spirit to that fact. Since the members of the "Holy Club" had long been devoted to the pursuit of the "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord," as the Epistle to the Hebrews puts it, they gladly embraced Böhler's testimony that the experience of regeneration began God's mighty work of sanctification in the human heart. Wesley first published this doctrine in his sermon entitled "Salvation by Faith," preached before Oxford University two weeks after he had experienced the new birth at a prayer meeting on Aldersgate Street, London, May 24, 1738.

John Wesley spent the months between then and December 1738 (when Whitefield returned from Georgia for the final step in his ordination) working out his biblical theology of

regeneration. He passed some weeks in Germany with the Moravians, then studied closely the Anglican Book of Common Prayer and the treasury of short sermons called "homilies" that Archbishop Thomas Cranmer had prepared nearly two centuries before for unlearned English clergymen. Comparing all these closely with the calls to righteousness that pervade the Old and New Testaments, Wesley concluded that the doctrine of the new birth—in which spiritual life bestowed instantaneously by the Holy Spirit delivers believers from both the guilt and the power of sin—was indeed the historic teaching of the Bible and the Christian Church. Like Whitefield, he preached that this experience, and the holiness of heart and life they both thought would eventually follow it, were the work of grace alone, through faith in Christ's atonement.

During the winter of 1739, Whitefield's preaching drew great crowds in London and the west-country port of Bristol. Being anxious to get back to Georgia, he persuaded John Wesley to come to Bristol at the end of March to take over leadership of the growing revival there.

By this time, however, the terms of their friendship required careful respect of their single difference of opinion—on the doctrine of predestination. Whitefield, drawing steadily closer to Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and other Calvinists in England and America, affirmed God's "predestining grace." Though John Wesley always stood "at the very edge of Calvinism," as he put it, and thought "not a hair's-breadth" separated his views of justification by faith from those of John Calvin, he had learned from his parents and matured in scriptural study the conviction that all men and women are predestined to be saved if they will allow the Holy Spirit to help them repent of their sins and trust fully in Jesus Christ. Thus it happened that toward the end of the first month of his labors at Bristol, Wesley found himself one day spontaneously preaching on "free grace." A few days later he devoted a famous sermon to the subject, but decided not to publish it, at least until after Whitefield left for America.

Historians of the evangelical revival often date the estrangement between Whitefield and Wesley to that sermon. In fact, however, the two men worked in close harmony for four months thereafter while Whitefield's return to Georgia was delayed. During those months, the young Whitefield spread the Methodist awakening through Wales and the Cotswold towns and spent many days in close teamwork with John and Charles Wesley in London and Bristol. The revival that stirred England under their joint leadership that spring and summer became the fountainhead of the modern evangelical movement.

During this period Whitefield and the two Wesleys spoke as one on the promise that the new birth would bring "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." Those who experience forgiveness of sins, Whitefield had declared in his earlier sermon on regeneration, "have their natures changed, and made holy." All three made a distinction in fact, and to some extent in time, between the believer's experience of forgiveness and the "full assurance of faith" or "the witness of the Spirit," which made the peace and joy of that experience complete. Whitefield usually, and John Wesley perhaps twice during these months, spoke of this witness in Pentecostal terms, calling it being "baptized with the Holy Ghost."

Whitefield's two sermons published that spring and summer of 1739 are an illuminating record of their hearty agreement. The one called "Marks of Having Received the Holy Ghost" (first published under the title "Marks of the New Birth") was based on St. Paul's question to the converts at Ephesus, "Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?" Its climactic assertion was that before "we can be

stiled *True Believers*“ it is “absolutely necessary that we should receive the Holy Ghost in his sanctifying graces.” The Anglican clergy cried “enthusiasm.” So in early July, at the end of a week of campaigning with John Wesley in Bristol, Whitefield wrote and Wesley helped him edit for immediate publication another sermon, titled “The Indwelling Spirit, the Common Privilege of All Believers,” based on the text in John

Holy Spirit to do His proper and perfect work. Opposing this, John Wesley began preaching in November a sermon on “Christian perfection,” which I believe is the one he published fifteen months later and which remained for the rest of his life the hallmark of Wesleyan faith.

In the spring of 1740, Wesley wrote the preface to the second volume of his and his brother’s *Hymns and Sacred Poems*.

The issue over which these two friends divided . . . was the Methodist founder’s teaching that the experience of being “filled with the Holy Ghost” and so being “cleansed from all unrighteousness” is available “now and by simple faith” to all true believers, and will be to the end of time.

7:37-39. This “common privilege,” Whitefield declared, has nothing to do with the “outward signs and wonders” displayed at Pentecost, but consists in being made “partaker” of the Spirit’s “sanctifying graces.” The evangelist linked the promise of the text to Jesus’ prayer in John 17 and to the “great commission,” precisely as John Wesley did that fall and throughout his life. And he argued for its reasonableness, as Wesley thereafter did, on the grounds that human sinfulness must be done away if the purpose of Christ’s incarnation and atonement is to be fulfilled and the “works of the devil” destroyed.

During those early months of the revival, both Whitefield and the Wesleys assumed that the experience of regeneration, with its attendant (though often separate) witness of the Spirit, was the only “moment” of grace Christians should expect. The salvation thus begun was to be worked out progressively, “in fear and trembling,” under the continuous inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Although the inward corruption of nature that stemmed from the Fall remained in believers, it no longer reigned. In deepest thankfulness new converts must “press forward” toward their “high calling” to be “perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect.” These views of regeneration, that we readily ascribe to the Wesleys, pervaded Whitefield’s preaching not only throughout this summer of 1739 but during the first months of his return that fall to America, where he fanned the flames of the spiritual awakenings then taking place in New England and the middle colonies.

Wesley and The Second Work of Grace

By the time Whitefield left England in mid-August, however, John Wesley was moving decisively toward the conviction that some of the biblical passages he had been citing to describe the new birth referred also to a second and deeper moment of hallowing grace. Wesley’s close study and repeated exposition of the opening lines of the Sermon on the Mount, not published until seven years later, likely settled his conviction that hungering and thirsting for righteousness led believers toward that second moment of grace when they would be made “pure in heart.” Such seeking was the proper task of those who, in poverty of spirit, meekness, and mourning, had already been brought by faith into the kingdom of God.

Growing controversy with the Moravians, as well as his own spiritual quest, pushed Wesley forward. A leader of the London Moravians denied that seekers were actually born again until their hearts were free of all doubt and fear and their lives all holiness and love. He counselled persons whom Wesley and Whitefield had believed were truly converted (as evident by their seeking after holiness of heart and life) to cease testifying to salvation, suspend all moral effort of any sort, refuse Holy Communion, and wait in “stillness” for the

It made crystal clear their belief that believers should seek and expect to experience by faith a “second change,” in which the “hidden abominations” in their hearts are cleansed away and they experience “full renewal” in the image of God. The following summer, the London Methodists withdrew from the Moravians in the Fetter Lane society. At one of their first meetings, hastily arranged in an old foundry that became their permanent meeting place, Wesley’s sermon was from the text of Hebrews 4:9, “there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.” It was a pointed reminder of the doctrine he had taught since Aldersgate, that sanctification follows justification; now, however, he was proclaiming a “second moment” of sanctifying grace.

Whitefield could have scarcely anticipated any of this before he boarded ship for America in August 1739. Though his mail from England missed him at several of the ports through which he passed, he received a letter from John Wesley at Philadelphia in March, and found Wesley’s sermon on free grace had been republished there in a pirated edition. Meanwhile, Whitefield was reveling in the public response to his preaching and in the fellowship of the Calvinist ministers—Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and Baptist—who welcomed him to their pulpits against the fierce opposition of Anglican clergymen in the colonies. The subtle alterations in his theological sentiments during those months thus stemmed from influences opposite to those affecting the Wesleys.

Whitefield was surprised, therefore, by the contents of a packet of letters from Britain, written many months earlier, that awaited him when he arrived in Boston in September 1740. They contained the dismaying news that the Moravians had led many converts off into “stillness” and that the Wesleys had embraced what the writers called, and what thereafter Whitefield insisted on calling, “sinless perfection.” This ambiguous phrase has ever since bedeviled the relationships between Calvinist, Wesleyan, and Pietist evangelicals.

Whitefield and “Entire Sanctification”

The young evangelist’s letters written from Boston during the eight days following make it clear that the Wesleys’ doctrine of entire sanctification was the occasion of Whitefield’s alienation from them. “*Sinless perfection*, I think,” Whitefield wrote to one correspondent, “is unattainable in this life” because “*indwelling sin* remains till death, even in the regenerate.” Then followed what seems a partial retreat from his earlier doctrine of the new birth: “There is no man that liveth and sinneth not in thought, word, and deed.” To John Wesley he wrote, “I have for some time known what it is to have righteousness, peace, and joy in in the Holy Ghost. These, I believe, are the privileges of the sons of God.” But he did not expect “*indwelling sin*” to be “finished and destroyed” until

death. He added, then, in words that must have seemed ominous to Wesley, "I know no sin except the sin against the Holy Ghost of which a child of God may not be guilty, if God should withdraw his grace. . . . What a fond conceit it is to cry up *perfection*, and yet cry down the doctrine of *final perseverance*."¹ At his orphanage in Georgia three months later, Whitefield wrote on Christmas Eve, 1740, the famous letter to John Wesley that signaled their parting of the ways. His professed purpose was to answer Wesley's sermon on "Free Grace." But he seems to have been equally intent upon denying heart purity—so much so as to appear to contradict some of his earlier descriptions of regeneration. Although he had enjoyed the "full assurance of faith" for "five or six years," Whitefield now acknowledged "with grief and humble shame" that he had "fallen into sin often since that." He had not been "able to live one day perfectly free from all defects and sin" and did not expect to be able to do so "in this present world."

Wesley had long since declared that lumping "defects" (such as weakness, poor judgment, emotional strain or subjection to temptation) with "sin" was quite unscriptural. The confusion of the two kept many Christians from believing they could be delivered from either habitual wrongdoing or the inward impulse to evil that St. Paul had called "enmity against God." The first part of Wesley's earliest published sermon on Christian perfection contained in fact a lengthy description of what "entire" sanctification did not accomplish: it did not bring deliverance from temptation, ignorance, infirmity, or mistake.

Once committed in public print, however, Whitefield never yielded the point, even after he had every reason to understand precisely what Wesley was saying. Arriving in Bristol in early spring, 1741, he wrote a friend (possibly Howell Harris) that he believed "we shall never have such a dominion over indwelling sin, as entirely to be delivered from the stirring of it; and the greatest saint cannot be assured, but sometime or another for his humiliation or punishment for unfaithfulness, God may permit him to break out into some actual breach of his law, and in a gross way too." In December 1742 he urged a woman convert to pray God "to show you more and more of your evil heart, that you may ever remain a poor sinner at the feet of the crucified but now exalted lamb of God. There you will be happy." This was a far cry from the exhortations to happiness through holiness that had characterized his earlier advice to new believers.

Shortly afterwards, however, William Cudworth and others led a group of radical Calvinists, including some of Whitefield's converts, in renouncing as prideful self-deception all claims by Christians actually to keep the Ten Commandments.

This made it possible for Whitefield and the Wesleys to renew their fellowship in a common stand against antinomianism. They did not modify their contrary views on either predestination or cleansing from the sinful nature; but Whitefield revived his earlier emphasis upon the victory over sinning that the Holy Spirit brought in the experience of regeneration. In a tract published in 1764 he drew as close to Wesley's doctrine as he could. Whitefield declared that the mighty work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration could extinguish the "innate fiery passions of envy, selfishness, or malice" and "form the soul into any of those divine tempers" that St. Paul describes in I Corinthians 13 as "genuine effects and fruits of the love of God."

Wesley and Whitefield: Similarities and Differences

In the sermon John Wesley preached in Whitefield's London pulpit when the news arrived that the latter had died in America, he declared that the two men had never disagreed in their conviction that the experience of regeneration, or the new birth, brings the presence and power of the Holy Spirit that enables Christians to triumph over temptation and live a holy life. For at least twenty-seven years before Whitefield's death, however, Wesley had proclaimed that being *filled* with the Holy Spirit (as the Apostles were at Pentecost), as distinct from receiving His presence and power in the new birth, brought "full salvation," Christian holiness. And that experience was manifested in loving God and humankind with all one's heart and soul and strength.

In retrospect, what George Whitefield preached in his earliest years about Christian perfection—that the inward and outward holiness begun in regeneration would increase through a daily walk of faith and obedience, sustained by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit—is remarkably close to what, in recent years, some have asked us to believe was Wesley's doctrine.

In fact, however, the issue over which these two friends divided, as Whitefield's statements to and about John Wesley at the time make clear, was the Methodist founder's teaching that the experience of being "filled with the Holy Ghost" and so being "cleansed from all unrighteousness" is available "now and by simple faith" to all true believers, and will be to the end of time. And that teaching, reinforced by the writings of John Fletcher, particularly his *Last Check to Antinomianism*, was precisely what the leaders of the holiness movement of the nineteenth century and the founders of the Wesleyan denominations of the twentieth steadfastly proclaimed.

Reflections on *The Scripture Principle*

by Clark H. Pinnock

In this article I wish to reflect on and to extend the main ideas I attempted to put forward in *The Scripture Principle* (1984).

My chief concern in the book is to think about biblical authority in a way which transcends the present polarization between an unnecessarily low view on the one hand and an inflated view on the other. I see this as part of the broader struggle to avoid what Hendrikus Berkhof calls a "rudderless modernism" on the left and a "rigid traditionalism" on the

right, a situation which came about as a result of the impact of secular modernity upon Christian theology. One group, in response to the cultural crisis, opts for cognitive bargaining and a position of accommodation, while another group digs in its heels and gathers all the wagons in a circle. My goal is to recapture a certain equilibrium, a proper dialectic of fidelity and creativity, which is characteristic of great theologians of the past. As regards the Bible, the question is whether it is possible to affirm the scriptures as God's Word written, as Christians have always done, and to do so in such a way as to be honest and straightforward in the face of severe contemporary challenges.

Clark H. Pinnock is Professor of Theology at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.