



A WESLEYAN CATECHISM

A Wesleyan Catechism:
A Teaching on the 10 Commandments,
the Methodist Articles of Religion,
and the Lord's Prayer Using Wesley's Words.

Compiled and Organized by Ryan Kiblinger

Section 1: The 10 Commandments

Q. 1. How may God's Law best be expressed?

A. Through the 10 Commandments given to Moses on Mt. Sinai

Q. 2. What are these Commandments?

A. God spoke all these Words:

The First Commandment

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. *Exodus 20:2-3*

The Second Commandment

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. *Exodus 20:4-6*

The Third Commandment

You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. *Exodus 20:7*

The Fourth Commandment

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. *Exodus 20:8-11*

The Fifth Commandment

Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. *Exodus 20:12*

The Sixth Commandment

You shall not murder. *Exodus 20:13*

The Seventh Commandment

You shall not commit adultery. *Exodus 20:14*

The Eighth Commandment

You shall not steal. *Exodus 20:15*

The Ninth Commandment

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. *Exodus 20:16*

The Tenth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Exodus 20:17

Q. 3. What is meant that God 'spoke' these words?

A. God spoke all these words - The law of the Ten Commandments is a law of God's making; a law of his own speaking. God has many ways of speaking to the children of men by his spirit, conscience, providences; his voice in all which we ought carefully to attend to: but he never spoke at any time upon any occasion so as he spoke the Ten Commandments, which therefore we ought to hear with the more earnest heed. This law God had given to man before, it was written in his heart by nature; but sin had so defaced that writing, that it was necessary to revive the knowledge of it.

(Wesley Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible Exodus 20)

Q. 4. How many tables have we in the Ten Commandments?

A. We have two tables of Commandments within the Ten Commandments.

(Wesley Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible Exodus 20)

Q. 5. With what do these two tables deal?

A. The four first commandments, concern our duty to God (commonly called the first table.) It was fit those should be put first, because man had a Maker to love before he had a neighbour to love, and justice and charity are then only acceptable to God when they flow from the principles of piety.

The second table, as they are commonly called; the six last commandments which concern our duty to ourselves, and one another, and are a comment upon the second great commandment, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. As religion towards God is, an essential branch of universal righteousness, so righteousness towards men is an essential branch of true religion: godliness and honesty must go together.

(Wesley Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible Exodus 20)

Q. 6. What is meant by the First Commandment?

- A. I am the Lord thy God - Herein, God asserts his own authority to enact this law; and proposeth himself as the sole object of that religious worship which is enjoined in the four first commandments. They are here bound to obedience.
1. Because God is the Lord, Jehovah, self - existent, independent, eternal, and the fountain of all being and power; therefore he has an incontestable right to command us.
 2. He was their God; a God in covenant with them; their God by their own consent.
 3. He had brought them out of the land of Egypt - Therefore they were bound in gratitude to obey him, because he had brought them out of a grievous slavery into a glorious liberty. By redeeming them, he acquired a farther right to rule them; they owed their service to him, to whom they owed their freedom. And thus, Christ, having rescued us out of the bondage of sin, is entitled to the best service we can do him. The first commandment is concerning the object of our worship, Jehovah, and him only, Thou shalt have no other gods before me. This law was pre - fixed because of that transgression; and Jehovah being the God of Israel, they must entirely cleave to him, and no other, either of their own invention, or borrowed from their neighbours. The sin against this commandment, which we are most in danger of, is giving that glory to any creature which is due to God only. Pride makes a God of ourselves, covetousness makes a God of money, sensuality makes a God of the belly. Whatever is loved, feared, delighted in, or depended on, more than God, that we make a god of. This prohibition includes a precept which is the foundation of the whole law, that we take the Lord for our God, accept him for ours, adore him with humble reverence, and set our affections entirely upon him. There is a reason intimated in the last words *before me*. It intimates,
 4. That we cannot have any other god but he will know it.

5. That it is a sin that dares him to his face, which he cannot, will not, overlook.

(Wesley Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible Exodus 20)

Q. 7. What is meant by the Second Commandment?

A. The second commandment is concerning the ordinances of worship, or the way in which God will be worshipped, which it is fit himself should appoint. Here is, [1.] The prohibition; we are forbidden to worship even the true God by images, Exodus 20:4-5. First, The Jews (at least after the captivity) thought themselves forbidden by this to make any image or picture whatsoever. It is certain it forbids making any image of God, for to whom can we liken him? Isaiah 40:18, 25. It also forbids us to make images of God in our fancies, as if he were a man as we are. Our religious worship must be governed by the power of faith, not by the power of imagination. Secondly, They must not bow down to them - Show any sign of honour to them, much less serve them by sacrifice, or any other act of religious worship. When they paid their devotion to the true God, they must not have any image before them for the directing, exciting, or assisting their devotion. Though the worship was designed to terminate in God, it would not please him if it came to him through an image. For I the Lord Jehovah, thy God, am a jealous God, especially in things of this nature. It intimates the care he has of his own institutions, his displeasure against idolaters, and that he resents everything in his worship that looks like, or leads to, idolatry: visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation - Severely punishing. Nor is it an unrighteous thing with God if the parents died in their iniquity, and the children tread in their steps, when God comes, by his judgments, to reckon with them, to bring into the account the idolatries their fathers were guilty of. Keeping mercy for thousands of persons, thousands of generations, of them that love me and keep my commandments - This intimates, that the second commandment, though in the letter of it is only a prohibition of false worship, yet includes a precept of worshipping God in all those ordinances which he hath instituted. As the first commandment requires the inward worship of love, desire, joy, hope, so this the outward worship of prayer and praise, and solemn attendance on his word. This mercy shall extend to thousands, much further than the wrath threatened to those that hate him, for that reaches but to the third or fourth generation.

(Wesley Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible Exodus 20)

Q. 8. What is meant by the Third Commandment?

A. The third commandment is concerning the manner of our worship; Where we have,

1. A strict prohibition. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain - Supposing that, having taken Jehovah for their God, they would make mention of his name, this command gives a caution not to mention it in vain, and it is still as needful as ever. We take God's name in vain, First, By hypocrisy, making profession of God's name, but not living up to that profession. Secondly, By covenant breaking. If we make promises to God, and perform not to the Lord our vows, we take his name in vain. Thirdly, By rash swearing, mentioning the name of God, or any of his attributes, in the form of an oath, without any just occasion for it, but to no purpose, or to no good purpose. Fourthly, By false swearing, which some think is chiefly intended in the letter of the commandment. Fifthly, By using the name of God lightly and carelessly. The profanation of the form of devotion is forbidden, as well as the profanation of the forms of swearing; as also, the profanation of any of those things whereby God makes himself known. For the Lord will not hold him guiltless - Magistrates that punish other offences, may not think themselves concerned to take notice of this; but God, who is jealous for his honour, will not connive at it. The sinner may perhaps hold himself guiltless, and think there is no harm in it; to obviate which suggestion, the threatening is thus expressed, God will not hold him guiltless - But more is implied, that God will himself be the avenger of those that take his name in vain; and they will find it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

(Wesley Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible Exodus 20)

Q. 9. What is meant by the Fourth Commandment?

A. The fourth commandment concerns the time of worship; God is to be served and honoured daily; but one day in seven is to be particularly dedicated to his honour, and spent in his service. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy; in it thou shalt do no manner of work - It is taken for granted that the Sabbath was instituted before. We read of God's blessing and sanctifying a seventh day from the beginning, Genesis 2:3, so that this was not the enacting of a new law, but the reviving of an old law.

First. They are told what is the day, they must observe, a seventh after six days labour, whether this was the seventh by computation from the first seventh, or from the day of their coming out of Egypt, or both, is not certain.

Secondly. How it must be observed;

1. As a day of rest; they were to do no manner of work on this day, in their worldly business.
2. As a holy day, set apart to the honour of the holy God, and to be spent in holy exercises. God, by his blessing it, had made it holy; they, by solemn blessing him, must keep it holy, and not alienate it to any other purpose than that for which the difference between it and other days was instituted.

Thirdly. Who must observe it? Thou and thy son and thy daughter – The wife is not mentioned, because she is supposed to be one with the husband, and present with him, and if he sanctify the Sabbath, it is taken for granted she will join with him; but the rest of the family is instanced in it; children and servants must keep it according to their age and capacity. In this, as in other instances of religion, it is expected that masters of families should take care, not only to serve the Lord themselves, but that their houses also should serve him. Even the proselyted strangers must observe a difference between this day and other days, which, if it laid some restraint upon them then, yet proved a happy indication of God's gracious design, to bring the Gentiles into the church. By the sanctification of the Sabbath, the Jews declared that they worshipped the God that made the world, and so distinguished themselves from all other nations, who worshipped gods which they themselves made. God has given us an example of rest after six days work; he rested the seventh day - Took a complacency in himself, and rejoiced in the work of his hand, to teach us on that day, to take a complacency in him, and to give him the glory of his works. The Sabbath begun in the finishing of the work of creation; so will the everlasting Sabbath in the finishing of the work of providence and redemption; and we observe the weekly Sabbath in expectation of that, as well as in remembrance of the former, in both conforming ourselves to him we worship. He hath himself blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it. He hath put an honour upon it; it is holy to the Lord, and honourable; and he hath put blessings into it which he hath encouraged us to expect from him in the religious observation of that day. Let us not profane, dishonour, and level that with common time, which God's blessing hath thus dignified and distinguished.

(Wesley Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible Exodus 20)

Q. 10. What is meant by the Fifth Commandment?

A. Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. The fifth commandment is concerning the duties we owe to our relations; that of children to their parents is only instanced in, honour thy father and thy mother, which includes,

1. An inward esteem of them, outwardly expressed upon all occasions in our carriage towards them; fear them, Leviticus 19:3, give them reverence, Hebrews 12:9. The contrary to this is mocking at them or despising them.
2. Obedience to their lawful commands; so it is expounded, Ephesians 6:1-3. Children obey your parents; come when they call you, go where they send you, do what they bid you, do not what they forbid you; and this cheerfully, and from a principle of love. Though you have said you will not, yet afterwards repent and obey.
3. Submission to their rebukes, instructions and corrections, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

4. Disposing of themselves with the advice, direction and consent of parents, not alienating their property, but with their approbation.
5. Endeavouring in everything to be the comfort of their parents, and to make their old age easy to them; maintaining them if they stand in need of support. That thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee - This promise, (which is often literally fulfilled) is expounded in a more general sense Ephesians 6:3. That it may be well with thee, and thou mayst live long on the earth - Those that in conscience towards God keep this and other of God's commandments, may be sure it shall be well with them, and they shall live as long on the earth as infinite wisdom sees good for them, and what they may seem to be cut short of on earth, shall be abundantly made up in eternal life, the heavenly Canaan which God will give them.

(Wesley Explanatory Notes On The Whole Bible Exodus 20)

Q. 11. What is meant by the Sixth Commandment?

A. You shall not murder. Thou shalt not do anything hurtful to the health, or life of thy own body, or any other's. This doth not forbid our own necessary defence, or the magistrates putting offenders to death; but it forbids all malice and hatred to any, for he that hateth his brother is a murderer, and all revenge arising there from; likewise anger and hurt said or done, or aimed to be done in a passion; of this our Saviour expounds this commandment, Matthew 5:22.

(Wesley Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible Exodus 20)

Q. 12. What is meant by the Seventh Commandment?

A. Thou shalt not commit adultery. This commandment forbids all acts of uncleanness, with all those desires, which produce those acts and war against the soul.

(Wesley Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible Exodus 20)

Q. 13. What is meant by the Eighth Commandment?

A. Thou shalt not steal. This command forbids us to rob ourselves of what we have, by sinful spending, or of the use and comfort of it by sinful sparing; and to rob others by invading our neighbour's rights, taking his goods, or house, or field, forcibly or clandestinely, overreaching in bargains, not restoring what is borrowed or found, withholding just debts, rents or wages; and,

which is worst of all, to rob the public in the coin or revenue, or that which is dedicated to the service of religion.

(Wesley Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible Exodus 20)

Q. 14. What is meant by the Ninth Commandment?

A. Thou shalt not bear false witness - This forbids,

1. Speaking falsely in any matter, lying, equivocating, and any way devising and designing to deceive our neighbour.
2. Speaking unjustly against our neighbour, to the prejudice of his reputation; And
3. Bearing false witness against him, laying to his charge things that he knows not, either upon oath, by which the third commandment, the sixth or eighth, as well as this, are broken, or in common converse, slandering, backbiting, tale bearing, aggravating what is done amiss, and any way endeavouring to raise our own reputation upon the ruin of our neighbor's (which is the highest offence of both these kinds put together).

(Wesley Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible Exodus 20)

Q. 15. What is meant by the Tenth Commandment?

A. Thou shalt not covet - The foregoing commands implicitly forbid all desire of doing that which will be an injury to our neighbor; this forbids all inordinate desire of having that which will be a gratification to ourselves. O that such a man's house were mine! Such a man's wife mine! Such a man's estate mine! This is certainly the language of discontent at our own lot, and envy at our neighbour's, and these are the sins principally forbidden here. God give us all to see our face in the glass of this law, and to lay our hearts under the government of it!

(Wesley Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible Exodus 20)

Section 2: The Articles of Religion

[Biographical Note: The Articles of Religion are here reprinted from the *Discipline* of 1808 (when the first Restrictive Rule took effect), collated against Wesley's original text in *The Sunday Service of the Methodists* (1784.)

(*The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2008* paragraph 103 Section 3)

Q. 1. What is the First Article of Religion?

A. Article I—Of Faith in the Holy Trinity

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Q. 2. How does Wesley understand the First Article?

A. By affirming the triune teaching of the Athanasian Creed which states:

We worship one God in Trinity, and trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the Persons; nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, is all one: the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son: and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate: and the Holy Ghost uncreate. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible: and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal: and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternals: but one eternal. As also there are not three incomprehensible, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible. So likewise, the Father is Almighty, the Son is Almighty: and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet there are not three Almighties: but one Almighty.

(Wesley affirms the Athanasian Creed in Sermon #7 “The Way to the Kingdom” sec. 6 Vol 1. 220)

Q. 3. What is the Second Article of Religion?

A. Article II—Of the Word, or Son of God, Who Was Made Very Man

The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided; whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.

Q. 4. How does Wesley understand the Second Article?

A. I believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the Saviour of the world, the Messiah so long foretold; that, being anointed with the Holy Ghost, he was a prophet, revealing to us the whole will of God; that he was a priest, who gave himself a sacrifice for sin, and still makes intercession for transgressors; that he is a king, who has all power in heaven and in earth, and will reign till he has subdued all things to himself [cf. 1Cor. 15:27-28].

I believe he is the proper, natural Son of God, God of God, very God of very God; and that he is the Lord of all, having absolute, supreme universal dominion over all things; but more peculiarly our Lord (who believe in him), both by conquest, purchase, and voluntary obligation.

I believe that he was made man, joining the human nature with the divine person, being conceived by the singular operation of the Holy Ghost and born of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

I believe he suffered inexpressible pains both of body and soul and at last death, even the death of the cross [cf. Phil. 2:8], at the time that Pontius Pilate governed Judea under the Roman Emperor. that his body was then laid in the grave and his soul went to the place of separate spirits; that the third day he rose again from the dead; that he ascended into heaven, where he remains in the midst of the throne of God in the highest power and glory as Mediator till the end of the world, as God to all eternity; that, in the end, he will come down from heaven to judge every man according to his works, both those who shall be then alive and all who have died before that day.

(*John Wesley*, ed. A. Outler, *Wesley, A Letter to a Roman Catholic* sec 7 p 495)

Q. 5. What is the Third Article of Religion?

A. Article III—Of the Resurrection of Christ

Christ did truly rise again from the dead, and took again his body, with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last day.

Q. 6. How does Wesley understand the Third Article?

A. That his body was then laid in the grave and his soul went to the place of separate spirits; that the third day he rose again from the dead; that he ascended into heaven, where he remains in the midst of the throne of God in the highest power and glory as Mediator till the end of the world, as God to all eternity; that, in the end, he will come down from heaven to judge every man according to his works, both those who shall be then alive and all who have died before that day.

(John Wesley, ed. A. Outler, Wesley, A Letter to a Roman Catholic sec 7 p 495)

Q. 7. What is the Fourth Article of Religion?

A. Article IV—Of the Holy Ghost

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

Q. 8. How does Wesley understand the Fourth Article?

A. I believe the infinite and eternal Spirit of God, equal with the Father and the Son, to be not only perfectly holy in himself, but the immediate cause of all holiness in us: enlightening our understandings, rectifying our wills and affections, renewing our natures, uniting our person to Christ, assuring us of the adoption of sons, leading us in our actions, purifying and sanctifying our souls and bodies to a full and eternal enjoyment of God.

(John Wesley, ed. A. Outler, Wesley, A Letter to a Roman Catholic sec 8, 495)

Q. 9. What is the Fifth Article of Religion?

A. Article V—Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation

The Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament of whose authority was never any doubt in the church. The names of the canonical books are:

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, The First Book of Samuel, The Second Book of Samuel, The First Book of Kings, The Second Book of Kings, The First Book of Chronicles, The Second Book of Chronicles, The Book of Ezra, The Book of Nehemiah, The Book of Esther, The Book of Job, The Psalms, The Proverbs, Ecclesiastes or the Preacher, Cantica or Songs of Solomon, Four Prophets the Greater, Twelve Prophets the Less.

All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical.

Q. 10. How does Wesley understand the Fifth Article?

A. The Holy Bible, or Book, is so called by way of eminency, as it is the best book that ever was written. The great things of God's law and gospel are here written, that they might be reduced to a greater certainty, might spread farther, remain longer, and be transmitted to distant places and ages, more pure and entire than possibly they could be by tradition

(Wesley Explanatory Notes on the Entire Bible, Introduction to Genesis)

Q. 11. What is the Sixth Article of Religion?

A. Article VI—Of the Old Testament

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and Man. Wherefore they are not to be heard who feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses as touching ceremonies and rites doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity be

received in any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral.

Q. 12. How does Wesley understand the Sixth Article?

A. That part of the Bible which we call the Old Testament, contains the acts and monuments of the church from the creation, almost to the coming of Christ in the flesh, which was about four thousand years: the truths then revealed, the laws enacted, the prophecies given, and the chief events that concerned the church. This is called a testament or covenant, because it was a declaration of the will of God concerning man in a federal way, and had its force from the designed death of the great testator, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, *Rev 13:8* 'Tis called the Old Testament with relation to the New, which doth not cancel, but crown and perfect it, by bringing in that better hope which was typified and foretold in it.

(Wesley Explanatory Notes on the Entire Bible, Introduction to Genesis)

Q. 13. What is the Seventh Article of Religion?

A. Article VII—Of Original or Birth Sin

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.

Q. 14. How does Wesley understand the Seventh Article?

A. 1. How widely different is this from the fair pictures of human nature which men have drawn in all ages! The writings of many of the ancients abound with gay descriptions of the dignity of man; whom some of them paint as having all virtue and happiness in his composition, or, at least, entirely in his power, without being beholden to any other being; yea, as self-sufficient, able to live on his own stock, and little inferior to God himself.

2. Nor have Heathens alone, men who are guided in their researches by little more than the dim light of reason, but many likewise of them that bear the name of Christ, and to whom are entrusted the oracles of God, spoken as magnificently concerning the nature of man, as if it were

all innocence and perfection. Accounts of this kind have particularly abounded in the present century; and perhaps in no part of the world more than in our own country. Here not a few persons of strong understanding, as well as extensive learning, have employed their utmost abilities to show, what they termed, “the fair side of human nature.” And it must be acknowledged, that, if their accounts of him be just, man is still but “a little lower than the angels;” or, as the words may be more literally rendered, “a little less than God.”

3. Is it any wonder, that these accounts are very readily received by the generality of men? For who is not easily persuaded to think favourably of himself? Accordingly, writers of this kind are most universally read, admired, applauded. And innumerable are the converts they have made, not only in the gay, but the learned world. So that it is now quite unfashionable to talk otherwise, to say anything to the disparagement of human nature; which is generally allowed, notwithstanding a few infirmities, to be very innocent, and wise, and virtuous!

4. But, in the mean time, what must we do with our Bibles? — for they will never agree with this. These accounts, however pleasing to flesh and blood, are utterly irreconcilable with the scriptural. The Scripture avers, that “by one man’s disobedience all men were constituted sinners;” that “in Adam all died,” spiritually died, lost the life and the image of God; that fallen, sinful Adam then “begat a son in his own likeness;” — nor was it possible he should beget him in any other; for “who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?” — that consequently we, as well as other men, were by nature “dead in trespasses and sins,” “without hope, without God in the world,” and therefore “children of wrath;” that every man may say, “I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin did my mother conceive me;” that “there is no difference,” in that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” of that glorious image of God wherein man was originally created. And hence, when “the Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, he saw they were all gone out of the way; they were altogether become abominable, there was none righteous, no, not one,” none that truly sought after God: Just agreeable this, to what is declared by the Holy Ghost in the words above recited, “God saw,” when he looked down from heaven before, “that the wickedness of man was great in the earth;” so great, that “every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

(Wesley, John: *Sermons, on Several Occasions, Sermon 44, Original Sin*. Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999)

Q. 15. What is the Eighth Article of Religion?

A. Article VIII—Of Free Will

The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power

to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

Q. 16. How does Wesley understand the Eighth Article of Religion?

A. “God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him!” Mark the emphatical repetition. God did not make him mere matter, a piece of senseless, unintelligent clay; but a spirit, like himself, although clothed with a material vehicle. As such he was endued with understanding; with a will including various affections; and with liberty, a power of using them in a right or wrong manner, of choosing good or evil. Otherwise neither his understanding nor his will would have been to any purpose; for he must have been as incapable of virtue or holiness as the stock of a tree. Adam, in whom all mankind were then contained, freely preferred evil to good. He chose to do his own will, rather than the will of his Creator. He “was not deceived,” but knowingly and deliberately rebelled against his Father and his King. In that moment he lost the moral image of God, and, in part, the natural: He commenced unholy, foolish, and unhappy. And “in Adam all died:” He entitled all his posterity to error, guilt, sorrow, fear, pain, diseases, and death.

7. How exactly does matter of fact, do all things round us, even the face of the whole world, agree with this account! Open your eyes! Look round you! See darkness that may be felt; see ignorance and error; see vice in ten thousand forms; see consciousness of guilt, fear, sorrow, shame, remorse, covering the face of the earth! See misery, the daughter of sin. See, on every side, sickness and pain, inhabitants of every nation under heaven; driving on the poor, helpless sons of men, in every age, to the gates of death! So they have done well nigh from the beginning of the world. So they will do, till the consummation of all things.

(Wesley, John: *Sermons, on Several Occasions, Sermon 57, On the Fall of Man*. Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999,)

And also,

“Natural free-will,” in the present state of mankind, I do not understand. I only assert that there is a measure of free-will *supernaturally* restored to every man, together with that supernatural light which “enlightens every man that cometh into the world” [cf. Jn. 1:9].

(*John Wesley*, ed. Outler, 447)

Q. 17. What is the Ninth Article of Religion?

A. Article IX—Of the Justification of Man

We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith, only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.

Q. 18. How does Wesley understand the Ninth Article of Religion?

A. But that this true doctrine of justification by faith may be truly understood, [observe that] justification is the office of God only and is not a thing which we render unto him, but which we receive of him by his free mercy, through the only merits of his beloved Son. [And the true sense] of this doctrine – *we are justified freely by faith without works, or, we are justified by faith in Christ only* – is not that this our own act, *to believe in Christ*, or that this our faith in Christ, which is within us, doth justify us (for that were to account ourselves to be justified by some act or virtue that is within ourselves), but that although we have faith, hope and charity within us and do never so many works thereunto, yet we must renounce the merit of all, of faith, hope, charity and all other virtues and good works which we either have done, shall do, or can do, as far as too weak to deserve our justification. [For which] therefore we must trust only in God's mercy and the sacrifice which Christ offered for us on the Cross.

(John Wesley, ed. Outler, 127)

Q. 19. What is the Tenth Article of Religion?

A. Article X—Of Good Works

Although good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and spring out of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit.

Q. 20. How does Wesley understand the Tenth Article?

A. [To justify, then, is the office of God to man.] Our office [and duty to God] is not to pass our time [sinfully or unfruitfully, for this were to] serve the devil not God. For that faith which bringeth [not forth repentance but] either evil works or no good works, is not a right, pure and

living faith, but a dead devilish one, as St. Paul and St. James call it. For even the devils believe “that Christ was born of a virgin, that he wrought all kinds of miracles, declaring himself very God, that for our sakes [he] suffered a most painful death to redeem us from death everlasting, that he rose again the third day, that he ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and at the end of the world shall come again [to] judge both the quick and the dead.” These articles of our faith the devils believe, and so they believe all that is written in the Old and New Testamet. And yet for all this faith, *they be but devils*. [They remain] still in their damnable estate, *lacking the very true Christian faith*.

(John Wesley, ed. Outler, 128)

Q. 21 What is the Eleventh Article of Religion?

A. Article XI—Of Works of Supererogation

Voluntary works—besides, over and above God's commandments—which they call works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety. For by them men do declare that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake than of bounden duty is required; whereas Christ saith plainly: When you have done all that is commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

Q. 22. How does Wesley understand the Eleventh Article?

A. We learn from hence, thirdly, that there are no works of supererogation, that we can never do more than our duty; seeing all we have is not our own, but God's, all we can do is due to him. We have not received this or that, or many things only, but everything from him; therefore everything is his due. He that gives us all must needs have a right to all. So that if we pay him anything less than all we cannot be ‘faithful stewards’. And considering ‘every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour, we cannot be ‘wise stewards’ unless we labour to the uttermost of our power; not leaving anything undone which we possibly can do, but putting forth all our strength.

(*The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Outler, vol. 2, *Sermon 51, The Good Steward*, 297)

Q. 23. What is the Twelfth Article of Religion?

A. Article XII—Of Sin After Justification

Not every sin willingly committed after justification is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore, the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after justification. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and, by the grace of God, rise again and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned who say they can no more sin as long as they live here; or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

Q. 24. How does Wesley understand the Twelfth Article?

A. V. 1. The sum of all is this: There are in every person, even after he is justified, two contrary principles, nature and grace, termed by St. Paul the *flesh* and the *Spirit*. Hence, although even babes in Christ are *sanctified*, yet it is only in part. In a degree, according to the measure of their faith, they are spiritual; yet, in a degree they are carnal. Accordingly, believers are continually exhorted to watch against the flesh, as well as the world and the devil. And to this agrees the constant experience of the children of God. While they feel this witness in themselves, they feel a will not wholly resigned to the will of God. They know they are in him; and yet find an heart ready to depart from him, a proneness to evil in many instances, and a backwardness to that which is good.

2. Let us, therefore, hold fast the sound doctrine “once delivered to the saints,” and delivered down by them with the written word to all succeeding generations: That although we are renewed, cleansed, purified, sanctified, the moment we truly believe in Christ, yet we are not then renewed, cleansed, purified altogether; but the flesh, the evil nature, still *remains* (though subdued) and wars against the Spirit. So much the more let us use all diligence in “fighting the good fight of faith.” So much the more earnestly let us “watch and pray” against the enemy within. The more carefully let us take to ourselves, and “put on, the whole armor of God;” that, although “we wrestle” both “with flesh, and blood, and with the principalities, and with powers, and wicked spirits in high places,” we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

(The Works of John Wesley, ed. Outler, vol. 1, Sermon 13, On Sin in Believers, 332-334)

Q. 25. What is the Thirteenth Article of Religion?

A. Article XIII—Of the Church

The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

Q. 26. How does Wesley understand the Thirteenth Article?

A. 1. How much do we almost continually hear about the Church! With many it is matter of daily conversation. And yet how few understand what they talk of! How few know what the term means! A more ambiguous word than this, the Church, is scarce to be found in the English language. It is sometimes taken for a building, set apart for public worship: sometimes for a congregation, or body of people, united together in the service of God. It is only in the latter sense that it is taken in the ensuing discourse.

2. It may be taken indifferently for any number of people, how small or great so ever. As, “where two or three are met together in his name,” there is Christ; so, (to speak with St. Cyprian,) “where two or three believers are met together, there is a Church.” Thus it is that St. Paul, writing to Philemon, mentions “the Church which is in his house;” plainly signifying, that even a Christian family may be termed a Church.

3. Several of those whom God hath *called out* of the world, (so the original word properly signifies,) uniting together in one congregation, formed a larger Church; as the Church at Jerusalem; that is, all those in Jerusalem whom God had so called. But considering how swiftly these were multiplied, after the day of Pentecost, it cannot be supposed that they could continue to assemble in one place; especially as they had not then any large place, neither would they have been permitted to build one. In consequence, they must have divided themselves, even at Jerusalem, into several distinct congregations. In like manner, when St. Paul, several years after, wrote to the Church in Rome, (directing his letter, “To all that are in Rome, called to be saints,”) it cannot be supposed that they had any one building capable of containing them all; but they were divided into several congregations, assembling in several parts of the city.

14. Here, then, is a clear unexceptionable answer to that question, “What is the Church?” The catholic or universal Church is, all the persons in the universe whom God hath so called out of the world as to entitle them to the preceding character; as to be “one body,” united by “one spirit;” having “one faith, one hope, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in them all.”

15. That part of this great body, of the universal Church, which inhabits any one kingdom or nation, we may properly term a National Church; as, the Church of France, the Church of England, the Church of Scotland. A smaller part of the universal Church are the Christians that inhabit one city or town; as the Church of Ephesus, and the rest of the seven Churches mentioned in the Revelation. Two or three Christian believers united together are a Church in the narrowest sense of the word. Such was the Church in the house of Philemon, and that in the house of Nymphas, mentioned Col. 4:15. A particular Church may, therefore, consist of any number of members, whether two or three, or two or three millions. But still, whether they be larger or smaller, the same idea is to be preserved. They are one body, and have one Spirit, one Lord, one hope, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.

28. Does it not clearly appear from this whole account, why, in the ancient Creed, commonly called the Apostles', we term it the universal or catholic Church, — “the holy catholic Church?” How many wonderful reasons have been found out for giving it this appellation! One learned man informs us, “The Church is called holy, because Christ, the Head of it, is holy.” Another eminent author affirms, “It is so called because all its ordinances are designed to promote holiness;” and yet another, — “because our Lord *intended* that all the members of the Church should be holy.” Nay, the shortest and the plainest reason that can be given, and the only true one, is, — The Church is called *holy*, because it *is* holy, because every member thereof is holy, though in different degrees, as He that called them is holy. How clear is this! If the Church, as to the very essence of it, is a body of believers, no man that is not a Christian believer can be a member of it. If this whole body be animated by one spirit, and endued with one faith, and one hope of their calling; then he who has not that spirit, and faith, and hope, is no member of this body. It follows, that not only no common swearer, no Sabbath-breaker, no drunkard, no whoremonger, no thief, no liar, none that lives in any outward sin, but none that is under the power of anger or pride, no lover of the world, in a word, none that is dead to God, can be a member of his Church.

30. In the mean time, let all those who are real members of the Church, see that they walk holy and unblamable in all things. “Ye are the light of the world!” Ye are “a city set upon a hill,” and “cannot be hid.” O “let your light shine before men!” Show them your faith by your works. Let them see, by the whole tenor of your conversation, that your hope is all laid up above! Let all your words and actions evidence the spirit whereby you are animated! Above all things, let your love abound. Let it extend to every child of man: Let it overflow to every child of God. By this let all men know whose disciples ye are, because you “love one another.”

(John Wesley, ed. Outler, *Sermon on the Church*, 308-317)

Q. 27. What is the Fourteenth Article of Religion?

A. Article XIV—Of Purgatory

The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardon, worshiping, and adoration, as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but repugnant to the Word of God.

Q. 28. How does Wesley understand the Fourteenth Article?

A. When Christianity was first preached in the world, it was supported by such miraculous assistance of the divine power, that there was need of little or no human aid to the propagation of it. Not only the apostles, who first preached it, but even the lay-believers were sufficiently instructed in all the articles of faith, and were inspired with the power of working miracles, and the gift of speaking in languages unknown to them before.

But when the gospel spread, and had taken root through the world; when kings and princes became Christians, and when temples were built and magnificently adorned for Christian worship; then the zeal of some well-disposed Christians brought pictures into the churches, not only as ornaments, but as instructors of the ignorant; and from thence were called *libri laicorum*, the books of the people. Thus the walls of the church were best with pictures, representing all the particular transactions mentioned. And they, who did not understand a letter of a book, knew how to give a very good account of the gospel, being taught to understand the particular passages of it in the pictures of the church. Thus, as Hieroglyphics were the first means of propagating knowledge, before writing by letters and words was invented, so the more ignorant people were taught compendiously by pictures, what, by the scarcity of teachers, they had not an opportunity of being otherwise fully instructed in.

But these things, which were at first intended for good, became, by the devil's subtlety, a snare for the souls of Christians. For when Christian princes, and the rich and great, vied with one another who should embellish the temples with greatest magnificence, the pictures upon the walls were turned into gaudy images upon the alters; and the people being deceived by the outward appearance of the priest's bowing and kneeling (before those images) as the different parts of their devotion led them, they imagined those gestures were designed to do honour to the images, before which they were performed, (which they certainly were not;) and so from admiring, the people came to adore them. Thus, what were at first designed as monuments of edification, became the instruments of superstition. This being a fatal oversight in the clergy, at first neglected, or winked at, by degrees, (as all errors have crept into the church,) gathered strength; so that, from being in the beginning, the dotage of the ignorant vulgar, the poison

infected those of better rank, and by their influence and countenance, brought some of the priests over to their opinion, or rather those priests were the occasion of deceiving the rich and powerful, especially the female sex, for ends not very reputable or agreeable to the integrity of their profession. But so it was, that what the priests at first winked at, they afterwards gave countenance to; and what they once countenanced, they thought themselves obliged in honour to defend; till at last, superstition came to be preached from the pulpits, and gross idolatry obtruded upon the people for true devotion.

(The Works of John Wesley vol. 15, by John Wesley, Joseph Benson, The Origin of Image-Worship Among Christians, 233-234)

Q. 29. What is the Fifteenth Article of Religion?

A. Article XV—Of Speaking in the Congregation in Such a Tongue as the People Understand

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the primitive church, to have public prayer in the church, or to minister the Sacraments, in a tongue not understood by the people.

Q. 30. How does Wesley understand the Fifteenth Article?

A. 2. Neither are words or phrases of any sort. We do not place our religion, or any part of it, in being attached to any peculiar mode of speaking, any quaint or uncommon set of expressions. The most obvious, easy, common words wherein our meaning can be conveyed we prefer before others, both on ordinary occasions, and when we speak of the things of God. We never therefore willingly or designedly deviate from the most usual way of speaking, unless we express Scripture truths in Scripture words –which, we presume, no Christian will condemn. Neither do we affect to use any particular expressions of Scripture more frequently than others, unless they are such as are more frequently used by the inspired writer themselves. So that it is as gross an error to place the marks of a Methodist in his words as in opinions of any sort.

(The Works of John Wesley vol. 9, ed. Davies, The Character of a Methodist, pg 34)

Q. 31. What is the Sixteenth Article of Religion?

A. Article XVI—Of the Sacraments

Sacraments ordained of Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God's good will toward us, by which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm, our faith in him.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called sacraments, that is to say, confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel; being such as have partly grown out of the corrupt following of the apostles, and partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not the like nature of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, because they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about; but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation; but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves condemnation, as St. Paul saith.

Q. 32. How does Wesley understand the Sixteenth Article?

A. All who desire an increase of the grace of God are to wait for it in partaking of the Lords Supper: For this also is a direction himself hath given. "The same night in which he was betrayed, he took bread, and brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body;" that is, the sacred sign of my body: "This do in remembrance of me." Likewise, "he took the cup, saying, This cup is the new testament," or covenant, "in my blood;" the sacred sign of that covenant; "this do ye in remembrance of me." "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lords death till he come:" (1 Cor. 11:23) Ye openly exhibit the same by, these visible signs, before God, and angels, and men; ye manifest your solemn remembrance of his death, till he cometh in the clouds of heaven.

Only "let a man" first "examine himself," whether he understand the nature and design of this holy institution, and whether he really desire to be himself made conformable to the death of

Christ; and so, nothing doubting, “let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.” (1 Cor. 11:28.)

Here, then, the direction first given by our Lord is expressly repeated by the Apostle: “Let him eat; let him drink;” *esthieto, pineto*, both in the imperative mood; words not implying a bare permission only, but a clear, explicit command; a command to all those either who already are filled with peace and joy in believing, or who can truly say, “The remembrance of our sins is grievous unto us, the burden of them is intolerable.”

12. And that this is also an ordinary, stated means of receiving the grace of God, is evident from those words of the Apostle, which occur in the preceding chapter: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion,” or *communication*, “of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” (1 Cor. 10:16.) Is not the eating of that bread, and the drinking of that cup, the outward, visible means, whereby God conveys into our souls all that spiritual grace, that righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, which were purchased by the body of Christ once broken and the blood of Christ once shed for us? Let all, therefore, who truly desire the grace of God, eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

(Wesley, John: *Sermons, on Several Occasions, Sermon 16, Means of Grace*. Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999)

And also,

Before I begin to treat of baptism, I would just observe that three things are essential to Christian baptism:

1. An Episcopal administrator;
2. The application of water;
3. That it be administered in the Name of the Trinity.

The two latter need no proof, and our Lord’s commissioning of his apostles only – and those who should derive their authority from them – to baptize, proves the former. I shall therefore immediately proceed to treat of baptism, in doing which I shall inquire:

What it is.

What benefits we receive by it.

Whether our Saviour designed it to remain always in his Church?

And, who are the proper subjects of it?

I. 1. What it is. It is the initiatory sacrament which enters us into covenant with God. It was instituted by Christ, who alone has power to institute a proper sacrament, a sign, seal, pledge and means of grace, perpetually obligatory on all Christians. We know not, indeed, the exact time of its institution, but we know it was long before our Lord's ascension. And it was instituted in the room of circumcision. For, as that what a sign and seal of God's covenant, so is this.

2. The "matter" of this sacrament is water, which, as it has a natural power of cleansing, is the more fit for this symbolical use. Baptism is performed by "washing," "dipping," or "sprinkling" the person, "in the Name of the Father, son and Holy Ghost," who is thereby devoted to the ever-blessed Trinity. I say, by "washing, dipping, or sprinkling," because it is not determined in Scripture in which of these ways it shall be done, neither by any express precept nor by any such example as clearly proves it; nor by the force or meaning of the word "baptize."

(*John Wesley*, ed. Outler p 318-319)

Q. 33. What is the Seventeenth Article of Religion?

A. Article XVII—Of Baptism

Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized; but it is also a sign of regeneration or the new birth. The Baptism of young children is to be retained in the Church.

Q. 34. How does Wesley understand the Seventeenth Article?

A. II. 1. What are the benefits we receive by baptism is the next point to be considered. And the first of these is the washing away the guilt of original sin by the application of the merits of Christ's death. That we are all born under the guilt of Adam's sin and that all sin deserves eternal misery was the unanimous sense of the ancient Church, as it is expressed in the ninth Article of our own. And the Scripture plainly asserts that we were "shapen in iniquity and in sin did our mother conceive us" [cf. Ps. 51:5, B.C.P]; that "we were all by nature children of wrath [cf. Eph 2:3] and dead in trespasses and sins"; that "in Adam all died"; that "by one man's disobedience all were made sinners" [cf. Rom. 5:19]; that "by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, which came upon all men because all had sinned: [cf. Rom. 5:12]. This plainly

includes infants, for they, too, die. Therefore, they have sinned, but not by actual sin, therefore by original – else what need have they of the death of Christ? Yea, “death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had no sinned (actually) according to the similitude of Adam’s transgression” [cf. Rom. 5:14]. This, which can relate to infants only, is a clear proof that the whole race of mankind are obnoxious both to the guilt and punishment of Adam’s transgression. But “as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men, to justification of life” [cf. Rom. 5:18]. And the virtue of this free gift – the merits of Christ’s life and death – are applied to us in baptism. “He gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word” – namely, in baptism, the ordinary instrument of our justification. Agreeable to this, our Church prays in the baptismal office that the person to be baptized may “washed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and, being delivered from God’s wrath, receive remission of sins and enjoy the everlasting benediction of his heavenly washing”; and declares in the rubric at the end of the office, “It is certain, by God’s Word, that children who are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are saved” [B.C.P., 388]. And this is agreeable to the unanimous judgment of all the ancient Fathers.

2. By baptism we enter into covenant with God, into that “everlasting covenant” which “he hath commanded for ever.”: that new covenant which he promised to make with the spiritual Israel, even to “give them a new heart and a new spirit, to sprinkle clean water upon them” [cf. Ez. 36:26,25] (of which the baptismal is only a figure) “and to remember their sins and iniquities no more” – in a word, “to be their God,” as he promised Abraham in the evangelical covenant which he made with him and all his spiritual offspring. And as circumcision was then the way of entering into this covenant, so baptism is now, which is therefore styled by the apostle (so many good interpreters render his words), “the stipulation, contract, or covenant of a good conscience with God” [cf. 1 Pet. 3:21].

3. By baptism we are admitted into the Church and consequently made members of Christ its Head. As the Jews were admitted into the Church by circumcision, so are the Christians by baptism. “for as many as are baptized into Christ,” in his Name, have thereby “put on Christ” – that is, are mystically “united with Christ” and made one with him. For “by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body” -- namely, “the Church, the body of Christ.” From which spiritual, vital union with him proceeds the influence of his grace on those that are baptized; as for our union with the Church, a share in all its privileges and in all the promises Christ has made to it.

4. By baptism, we who were “by nature children of wrath” are made the children of God. And this regeneration with our Church in so many places ascribes to baptism is more than barely being admitted into the Church, though commonly connected therewith. Being “grafted into the body of Christ’s Church, we are made the children of God by adoption and grace” [B.C.P., 389-99]. This is grounded on the plain words of our Lord: “Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” By *water*, then, as a means (the water of

baptism) we are regenerated or born again. Whence it is also called by the apostle, “the washing of regeneration” [cf. Tit. 3:5]. Our Church therefore ascribes no greater virtue to baptism than Christ himself has done. Nor does she ascribe it to the *outward* washing, but to the *inward grace* which, added thereto, makes it a sacrament. Herein a principle of grace is infused which will not be wholly taken away unless we quench the Holy Spirit of God by long-continued wickedness.

5. In consequence of our being made children of God, we are heirs of the kingdom of heaven. “If children” (as the apostle observes), “the heirs, heirs with God and joint-heirs with Christ” [Rom. 8:17]. Herein we receive a title to, and an earnest of, “a kingdom which cannot be moved” [Heb. 12:28]. *Baptism doth now save us* if we live answerable thereto – if we repent, believe, and obey the gospel – supposing this, as it admits us into the Church here, so into glory hereafter.

(John Wesley, ed. Outler p 321-323)

Q. 35. What is the Eighteenth Article of Religion?

A. Article XVIII—Of the Lord's Supper

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death; insomuch that, to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

Q. 36. How does Wesley understand the Eighteenth Article?

A. I. I am to show that it is the duty of every Christian to receive the Lord's Supper as often as he can.

1. The first reason why it is the duty of every Christian so to do is because it is a plain command of Christ. That this is his command appears from the words of the text – “do this in remembrance of me” – by which, as the apostles were obliged to bless, break, and give the bread to all that joined with them in these holy things, so were all Christians obliged to receive those signs of Christ's body and blood. Here, therefore, the bread and wine are commanded to be received in remembrance of his death, to the end of the world. Observe, too, that his command was given by our Lord when he was just laying down his life for our sakes. They are, therefore, as it were, his dying words to all his followers.

2. A second reason why every Christian should do this as often as he can is because the benefits of doing it are so great to all that do it in obedience to him – namely, the forgiveness of our past sins, the present strengthening and refreshing of our souls. In this world we are never free from temptations. Whatever way of life we are in, whatever our condition be, whether we are sick or well, in trouble or at ease, the enemies of our souls are watching to lead us into sin. And too often they prevail over us. Now, when we are convinced of having sinned against God, what surer way have we of procuring pardon from him than the “showing forth the Lord’s death” [cf. 1 Cor. 11:26], and beseeching him, for the sake of his Son’s sufferings, to blot out all our sins?

3. The grace of God given herein confirms to us the pardon of our sins, and enables us to leave them. As our bodies are strengthened by bread and wine, so are our souls by these tokens of the body and the blood of Christ. This is the food of our souls: this gives strength to perform our duty and leads us on to perfection. If, therefore, we have any regard for the plain command of Christ, if we desire the pardon of our sins, if we wish for strength to believe, to love and obey God, then we should neglect no opportunity of receiving the Lord’s Supper. Then we must never turn our backs on the feast which our Lord has prepared for us. We must neglect no occasion which the good providence of God affords us for this purpose. This is the true rule: so often are we to receive as God gives us opportunity. Whoever, therefore, does not receive, but goes from the holy table when all things are prepared, either does not understand his duty or does not care for the dying command of his Saviour, the forgiveness of his sins, the strengthening of his soul, and the refreshing it with the hope of glory.

(John Wesley, ed. Outler p. 335-336)

Q. 37. What is the Nineteenth Article of Religion?

A. Article XIX—Of Both Kinds

The cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay people; for both the parts of the Lord's Supper, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be administered to all Christians alike.

Q. 38. How does Wesley understand the Nineteenth Article?

A. In order to understand the nature of the Lord’s Supper, it would be useful carefully to read over those passages in the Gospel [cf. Mt. 26:26-29, Mk. 14:22-25, Lk. 22:15-20] and in the first epistle to the Corinthians [11:17-34], which speak of the institution of it. Hence we learn that the

design of this sacrament is the continual remembrance of the death of Christ, by eating bread and drinking wine, which are the outward signs of the inward grace – the body and blood of Christ.

(*John Wesley*, ed. Outler p 336)

And also,

6. An evil practice attending this evil doctrine is, the depriving the laity of the cup in the Lord's supper. It is acknowledged by all, that our Lord instituted and delivered this sacrament in both kinds; giving the wine as well as the bread to all that partook of it; and that it continued to be so delivered in the Church of Rome for above a thousand years. And yet, notwithstanding this, the Church of Rome now forbids the people to drink of the cup! A more insolent and barefaced corruption cannot easily be conceived!

(*The Works of John Wesley, Vol. X*, ed. Outler, *Popery Calmly Considered*, 163)

Q. 39. What is the Twentieth Article of Religion?

A. Article XX—Of the One Oblation of Christ, Finished upon the Cross

The offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifice of masses, in the which it is commonly said that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit.

Q. 40. How does Wesley understand the Twentieth Article?

A. 7. In this state we were, even all mankind, when “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end we might not perish, but have everlasting life.” In the fullness of time he was made Man, another common Head of mankind, a second general Parent and Representative of the whole human race. And as such it was that “he bore our griefs,” “the Lord laying upon him the iniquities of us all.” Then was he “wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.” “He made his soul an offering for sin:” He poured out his blood for the transgressors: He “bare our sins in his own body on the tree,” that by his stripes we might be healed: And by that one oblation of himself, once offered, he hath redeemed me and all mankind;

having thereby “made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.”

8. In consideration of this, that the Son of God hath “tasted death for every man,” God hath now “reconciled the world to himself, not imputing to them their” former “trespasses.” And thus, “as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification.” So that, for the sake of his well-beloved Son, of what he hath done and suffered for us, God now vouchsafes, on one only condition, (which himself also enables us to perform,) both to remit the punishment due to our sins, to reinstate us in his favour, and to restore our dead souls to spiritual life, as the earnest of life eternal.

9. This, therefore, is the general ground of the whole doctrine of justification. By the sin of the first Adam, who was not only the father, but likewise the representative, of us all, we all fell short of the favour of God; we all became children of wrath; or, as the Apostle expresses it, “judgment came upon all men to condemnation.” Even so, by the sacrifice for sin made by the Second Adam, as the Representative of us all, God is so far reconciled to all the world, that he hath given them a new covenant; the plain condition whereof being once fulfilled, “there is no more condemnation” for us, but “we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.”

(Wesley, John: *Sermons, on Several Occasions, Sermon 5, Justification by Faith*. Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999,)

Q. 41. What is the Twenty First Article of Religion?

A. Article XXI—Of the Marriage of Ministers

The ministers of Christ are not commanded by God's law either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage; therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christians, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve best to godliness.

Q. 42. How does Wesley understand the Twenty First Article?

A. A more dangerous error in the Church of Rome is, the forbidding the Clergy to marry. “Those that are married may not be admitted into orders: Those that are admitted may not marry: And those that, being admitted, do marry, are to be separated.” The Apostle, on the contrary, says, “Marriage is honorable in all;” (Hebrews 13:4) and accuses those who ‘forbid to

marry,” of teaching “doctrines of devils.” How lawful it was for the Clergy to marry, his directions concerning it show (1 Timothy 4:1, 3). And how convenient, yea, necessary, in many cases it is, clearly appears from the innumerable mischiefs which have in all ages followed the prohibition of it in the Church of Rome; which so many wise and good men, even of her own communion, have lamented.

(The Works of John Wesley Vol. X, ed. Outler, Popery Calmly Considered, 165-166)

Q. 43. What is the Twenty Second Article of Religion?

A. Article XXII—Of the Rites and Ceremonies of Churches

It is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike; for they have been always different, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the Word of God, and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, that others may fear to do the like, as one that offendeth against the common order of the church, and woundeth the consciences of weak brethren.

Every particular church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things may be done to edification.

Q. 44. How does Wesley understand the Twenty Second Article?

A. I. 1. We are, First, to consider the nature of true religion, here termed by our Lord, “the kingdom of God.” The same expression the great Apostle uses in his Epistle to the Romans, where he likewise explains his Lord’s words, saying, “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” (Rom. 14:17.)

2. “The kingdom of God,” or true religion, “is not meat and drink.” It is well known that not only the unconverted Jews, but great numbers of those who had received the faith of Christ, were, notwithstanding “zealous of the law,” (Acts 21:20,) even the ceremonial law of Moses. Whatsoever, therefore, they found written therein, either concerning meat and drink offerings, or the distinction between clean and unclean meats, they not only observed themselves, but

vehemently pressed the same even on those “among the Gentiles” (or heathens) “who were turned to God;” yea, to such a degree, that some of them taught, wheresoever they came among them, “Except ye be circumcised, and keep the law,” (the whole ritual law,) “ye cannot be saved.” (Acts 15:1, 24.)

3. In opposition to these, the Apostle declares, both here and in many other places, that true religion does not consist in *meat* and *drink*, or in any ritual observances; nor, indeed in any outward thing whatever; in anything exterior to the heart; the whole substance thereof lying in “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

4. Not in any *outward thing*; such as *forms*, or *ceremonies*, even of the most excellent kind. Supposing these to be ever so decent and significant, ever so expressive of inward things: supposing them ever so helpful, not only to the vulgar, whose thought reaches little farther than their sight; but even to men of understanding, men of strong capacities, as doubtless they may sometimes be: Yea, supposing them, as in the case of the Jews, to be appointed by God himself; yet even during the period of time wherein that appointment remains in force, true religion does not principally consist therein; nay, strictly speaking, not at all. How much more must this hold concerning such rites and forms as are only of human appointment! The religion of Christ rises infinitely higher, and lies immensely deeper, than all these. These are good in their place; just so far as they are in fact subservient to true religion. And it were superstition to object against them, while they are applied only as occasional helps to human weakness. But let no man carry them farther. Let no man dream that they have any intrinsic worth; or that religion cannot subsist without them. This were to make them an abomination to the Lord.

5. The nature of religion is so far from consisting in these, in forms of worship, or rites and ceremonies, that it does not properly consist in any outward actions, of what kind so ever. It is true, a man cannot have any religion who is guilty of vicious, immoral actions; or who does to others what he would not they should do to him, if he were in the same circumstance. And it is also true, that he can have no real religion who “knows to do good, and doth it not.” Yet may a man both abstain from outward evil, and do good, and still have no religion. Yea, two persons may do the same outward work; suppose, feeding the hungry, or clothing the naked; and, in the meantime, one of these may be truly religious, and the other have no religion at all: For the one may act from the love of God, and the other from the love of praise. So manifest it is, that although true religion naturally leads to every good word and work, yet the real nature thereof lies deeper still, even in “the hidden man of the heart.”

(Wesley, John: *Sermons, on Several Occasions, Sermon 7, The Way to the Kingdom*. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999)

Q. 45. What is the Twenty Third Article of Religion?

A. Article XXIII—Of the Rulers of the United States of America

The President, the Congress, the general assemblies, the governors, and the councils of state, as the delegates of the people, are the rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the Constitution of the United States and by the constitutions of their respective states. And the said states are a sovereign and independent nation, and ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction

Q. 46. How does Wesley pray for the Rulers of the United States?

A. A Prayer for the Supreme Rulers.

O Lord our heavenly Father, high and mighty, King of kings, Lord of lords, the only Ruler of princes, who dost from thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth; Most heartily we beseech thee, with thy favour to behold the Supreme Rulers of these United States; and so replenish them with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that they may incline to thy will, and walk in thy way; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Select Psalms, John Wesley, 269)

Q. 47. What is the Twenty Fourth Article of Religion?

A. Article XXIV—Of Christian Men's Goods

The riches and goods of Christians are not common as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as some do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

Q. 48. How does Wesley understand the Twenty Fourth Article?

A. I. 1. The first of these is (he that heareth, let him understand!) “Gain all you can.” Here we may speak like the children of the world: We meet them on their own ground. And it is our bounden duty to do this: We ought to gain all we can gain, without buying gold too dear, without paying more for it than it is worth. But this it is certain we ought not to do; we ought not to gain

money at the expense of life, nor (which is in effect the same thing) at the expense of our health. Therefore, no gain whatsoever should induce us to enter into, or to continue in, any employ, which is of such a kind, or is attended with so hard or so long labour, as to impair our constitution. Neither should we begin or continue in any business which necessarily deprives us of proper seasons for food and sleep, in such a proportion as our nature requires. Indeed, there is a great difference here. Some employments are absolutely and totally unhealthy; as those which imply the dealing much with arsenic, or other equally hurtful minerals, or the breathing an air tainted with steams of melting lead, which must at length destroy the firmest constitution. Others may not be absolutely unhealthy, but only to persons of a weak constitution. Such are those which require many hours to be spent in writing; especially if a person write sitting, and lean upon his stomach, or remain long in an uneasy posture. But whatever it is which reason or experience shows to be destructive of health or strength, that we may not submit to; seeing “the life is more” valuable “than meat, and the body than raiment.” And if we are already engaged in such an employ, we should exchange it as soon as possible for some which, if it lessen our gain, will, however not lessen our health.

2. We are, Secondly, to gain all we can without hurting our mind any more than our body. For neither may we hurt this. We must preserve, at all events, the spirit of an healthful mind. Therefore we may not engage or continue in any sinful trade, any that is contrary to the law of God, or of our country. Such are all that necessarily imply our robbing or defrauding the king of his lawful customs. For it is at least as sinful to defraud the king of his right, as to rob our fellow subjects. And the king has full as much right, to his customs as we have to our houses and apparel. Other businesses there are, which however innocent in themselves, cannot be followed with innocence now at least, not in England; such, for instance, as will not afford a competent maintenance without cheating or lying, or conformity to some custom which not consistent with a good conscience: These, likewise, are sacredly to be avoided, whatever gain they may be attended with provided we follow the custom of the trade; for to gain money we must not lose our souls. There are yet others which many pursue with perfect innocence, without hurting either their body or mind; And yet perhaps you cannot: Either they may entangle you in that company which would destroy your soul; and by repeated experiments it may appear that you cannot separate the one from the other; or there may be an idiosyncrasy, — a peculiarity in your constitution of soul, (as there is in the bodily constitution of many,) by reason whereof that employment is deadly to you, which another may safely follow. So I am convinced, from many experiments, I could not study, to any degree of perfection, either mathematics, arithmetic, or algebra, without being a Deist, if not an Atheist: And yet others may study them all their lives without sustaining any inconvenience. None therefore can here determine for another; but every man must judge for himself, and abstain from whatever he in particular finds to be hurtful to his soul.

3. We are. Thirdly, to gain all we can without hurting our neighbour. But this we may not, cannot do, if we love our neighbour as ourselves. We cannot, if we love everyone as ourselves, hurt

anyone *in his substance*. We cannot devour the increase of his lands, and perhaps the lands and houses themselves, by gaming, by overgrown bills (whether on account of physic, or law, or anything else,) or by requiring or taking such interest as even the laws of our country forbid. Hereby all pawn-broking is excluded: Seeing, whatever good we might do thereby, all unprejudiced men see with grief to be abundantly overbalanced by the evil. And if it were otherwise, yet we are not allowed to “do evil that good may come.” We cannot, consistent with brotherly love, sell our goods below the market price; we cannot study to ruin our neighbour’s trade, in order to advance our own; much less can we entice away or receive any of his servants or workmen whom he has need of. None can gain by swallowing up his neighbour’s substance, without gaining the damnation of hell!

4. Neither may we gain by hurting our neighbour *in his body*. Therefore we may not sell anything which tends to impair health. Such is, eminently, all that liquid fire, commonly called drams or spirituous liquors. It is true, these may have a place in medicine; they may be of use in some bodily disorders; although there would rarely be occasion for them were it not for the unskillfulness of the practitioner. Therefore, such as prepare and sell them *only for this end* may keep their conscience clear. But who are they? Who prepare and sell them only for this end? Do you know ten such distillers in England? Then excuse these. But all who sell them in the common way, to any that will buy, are poisoners general. They murder His Majesty’s subjects by wholesale, neither does their eye pity or spare. They drive them to hell like sheep. And what is their gain? Is it not the blood of these men? Who then would envy their large estates and sumptuous palaces? A curse is in the midst of them: The curse of God cleaves to the stones, the timber, the furniture of them. The curse of God is in their gardens, their walks, their groves; a fire that burns to the nethermost hell! Blood, blood is there: The foundation, the floor, the walls, the roof are stained with blood! And canst thou hope, O thou man of blood, though thou art “clothed in scarlet and fine linen, and farest sumptuously every day;” canst thou hope to deliver down thy *fields of blood* to the third generation? Not so; for there is a God in heaven: Therefore, thy name shall soon be rooted out. Like as those whom thou hast destroyed, body and soul, “thy memorial shall perish with thee!”

5. And are not they partakers of the same guilt, though in a lower degree, whether Surgeons, Apothecaries, or Physicians, who play with the lives or health of men, to enlarge their own gain? Who purposely lengthen the pain or disease which they are able to remove speedily? who protract the cure of their patient’s body in order to plunder his substance? Can any man be clear before God who does not shorten every disorder “as much as he can,” and remove all sickness and pain “as soon as he can?” He cannot: For nothing can be more clear than that he does not “love his neighbour as himself;” than that he does not “do unto others as he would they should do unto himself.”

6. This is dear-bought gain. And so is whatever is procured by hurting our neighbour *in his soul*; by ministering, suppose, either directly or indirectly, to his unchastity, or intemperance, which

certainly none can do, who has any fear of God, or any real desire of pleasing Him. It nearly concerns all those to consider this, who have anything to do with taverns, victualling-houses, opera-houses, play-houses, or any other places of public, fashionable diversion. If these profit the souls of men, you are clear; your employment is good, and your gain innocent; but if they are either sinful in themselves, or natural inlets to sin of various kinds, then, it is to be feared, you have a sad account to make. O beware, lest God say in that day, "These have perished in their iniquity, but their blood do I require at thy hands!"

7. These cautions and restrictions being observed, it is the bounden duty of all who are engaged in worldly business to observe that first and great rule of Christian wisdom with respect to money, "Gain all you can." Gain all you can by honest industry. Use all possible diligence in your calling. Lose no time. If you understand yourself and your relation to God and man, you know you have none to spare. If you understand your particular calling as you ought, you will have no time that hangs upon your hands. Every business will afford some employment sufficient for every day and every hour. That wherein you are placed, if you follow it in earnest, will leave you no leisure for silly, unprofitable diversions. You have always something better to do, something that will profit you, more or less. And "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Do it as soon as possible: No delay! No putting off from day to day, or from hour to hour! Never leave anything till to-morrow, which you can do to-day. And do it as well as possible. Do not sleep or yawn over it: Put your whole strength to the work. Spare no pains. Let nothing be done by halves, or in a slight and careless manner. Let nothing in your business be left undone if it can be done by labour or patience.

8. Gain all you can, by common sense, by using in your business all the understanding which God has given you. It is amazing to observe, how few do this; how men run on in the same dull track with their forefathers. But whatever they do who know not God, this is no rule for you. It is a shame for a Christian not to improve upon *them*, in whatever he takes in hand. You should be continually learning, from the experience of others, or from your own experience, reading, and reflection, to do everything you have to do better to-day than you did yesterday. And see that you practise whatever you learn, that you may make the best of all that is in your hands.

II. 1. Having gained all you can, by honest wisdom and unwearied diligence, the second rule of Christian prudence is, "Save all you can." Do not throw the precious talent into the sea: Leave that folly to heathen philosophers. Do not throw it away in idle expenses, which is just the same as throwing it into the sea. Expend no part of it merely to gratify the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life.

2. Do not waste any part of so precious a talent merely in gratifying the desires of the flesh; in procuring the pleasures of sense of whatever kind; particularly, in enlarging the pleasure of tasting. I do not mean, avoid gluttony and drunkenness only: An honest heathen would condemn these. But there is a regular, reputable kind of sensuality, an elegant epicurism, which does not

immediately disorder the stomach, nor (sensibly, at least) impair the understanding. And yet (to mention no other effects of it now) it cannot be maintained without considerable expense. Cut off all this expense! Despise delicacy and variety, and be content with what plain nature requires.

3. Do not waste any part of so precious a talent merely in gratifying the desire of the eye by superfluous or expensive apparel, or by needless ornaments. Waste no part of it in curiously adorning your houses; in superfluous or expensive furniture; in costly pictures, painting, gilding, books; in elegant rather than useful gardens. Let your neighbours, who know nothing better, do this: "Let the dead bury their dead." But "what is that to thee?" says our Lord: "Follow thou me." Are you willing? Then you are able so to do.

4. Lay out nothing to gratify the pride of life, to gain the admiration or praise of men. This motive of expense is frequently interwoven with one or both of the former. Men are expensive in diet, or apparel, or furniture, not barely to please their appetite, or to gratify their eye, their imagination, but their vanity too. "So long as thou dost well unto thyself, men will speak good of thee." So long as thou art "clothed in purple and fine linen, and farest sumptuously" every day," no doubt many will applaud thy elegance of taste, thy generosity and hospitality. But do not buy their applause so dear. Rather be content with the honour that cometh from God.

5. Who would expend anything in gratifying these desires if he considered that to gratify them is to increase them? Nothing can be more certain than this: Daily experience shows, the more they are indulged, they increase the more. Whenever, therefore, you expend anything to please your taste or other senses, you pay so much for sensuality. When you lay out money to please your eye, you give so much for an increase of curiosity, — for a stronger attachment to these pleasures which perish in the using. While you are purchasing anything which men use to applaud, you are purchasing more vanity. Had you not then enough of vanity, sensuality, curiosity before? Was there need of any addition? And would you pay for it, too? What manner of wisdom is this? Would not the literally throwing your money into the sea be a less mischievous folly?

6. And why should you throw away money upon your children, any more than upon yourself, in delicate food, in gay or costly apparel, in superfluities of any kind? Why should you purchase for them more pride or lust, more vanity, or foolish and hurtful desires? They do not want any more; they have enough already; nature has made ample provision for them: Why should you be at farther expense to increase their temptations and snares, and to pierce them through with more sorrows?

7. Do not leave it to them to throw away. If you have good reason to believe that they would waste what is now in your possession in gratifying and thereby increasing the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life at the peril of theirs and your own soul, do not set these traps in their way. Do not offer your sons or your daughters unto Belial, any more than unto

Moloch. Have pity upon them, and remove out of their way what you may easily foresee would increase their sins, and consequently plunge them deeper into everlasting perdition! How amazing then is the infatuation of those parents who think they can never leave their children enough! What! cannot you leave them enough of arrows, firebrands, and death? Not enough of foolish and hurtful desires? Not enough of pride, lust, ambition vanity? not enough of everlasting burnings? Poor wretch! thou fearest where no fear is. Surely both thou and they, when ye are lifting up your eyes in hell, will have enough both of the “worm that never dieth,” and of “the fire that never shall be quenched!”

8. “What then would you do, if you was in my case? If you had a considerable fortune to leave?” Whether I *would* do it or no, I know what I *ought* to do: This will admit of no reasonable question. If I had one child, elder or younger, who knew the value of money; one who I believed, would put it to the true use, I should think it my absolute, indispensable duty to leave that child the bulk of my fortune; and to the rest just so much as would enable them to live in the manner they had been accustomed to do. “But what, if all your children were equally ignorant of the true use of money?” I ought then (hard saying! who can hear it?) to give each what would keep him above want, and to bestow all the rest in such a manner as I judged would be most for the glory of God.

III. 1. But let not any man imagine that he has done anything, barely by going thus far, by “gaining and saving all he can,” if he were to stop here. All this is nothing, if a man go not forward, if he does not point all this at a farther end. Nor, indeed, can a man properly be said to save anything, if he only lays it up. You may as well throw your money into the sea, as bury it in the earth. And you may as well bury it in the earth, as in your chest, or in the Bank of England. Not to use, is effectually to throw it away. If, therefore, you would indeed “make yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness,” add the Third rule to the two preceding. Having, First, gained all you can, and, Secondly saved all you can, Then “give all you can.”

2. In order to see the ground and reason of this, consider, when the Possessor of heaven and earth brought you into being, and placed you in this world, he placed you here not as a proprietor, but a steward: As such he entrusted you, for a season, with goods of various kinds; but the sole property of these still rests in him, nor can be alienated from him. As you yourself are not your own, but his, such is, likewise, all that you enjoy. Such is your soul and your body, not your own, but God’s. And so is your substance in particular. And he has told you, in the most clear and express terms, how you are to employ it for him, in such a manner, that it may be all an holy sacrifice, acceptable through Christ Jesus. And this light, easy service, he has promised to reward with an eternal weight of glory.

3. The directions which God has given us, touching the use of our worldly substance, may be comprised in the following particulars. If you desire to be a faithful and a wise steward, out of that portion of your Lord’s goods which he has for the present lodged in your hands, but with the

right of resuming whenever it pleases him, First, provide things needful for yourself; food to eat, raiment to put on, whatever nature moderately requires for preserving the body in health and strength. Secondly, provide these for your wife, your children, your servants, or any others who pertain to your household. If when this is done there be an over plus left, then “do good to them that are of the household of faith.” If there be an over plus still, “as you have opportunity, do good unto all men.” In so doing, you give all you can; nay, in a sound sense, all you have: For all that is laid out in this manner is really given to God. You “render unto God the things that are God’s,” not only by what you give to the poor, but also by that which you expend in providing things needful for yourself and your household.

4. If, then, a doubt should at any time arise in your mind concerning what you are going to expend, either on yourself or any part of your family, you have an easy way to remove it. Calmly and seriously inquire, “(1.) In expending this, am I acting according to my character? Am I acting herein, not as a proprietor, but as a steward of my Lord’s goods? (2.) Am I doing this in obedience to his Word? In what Scripture does he require me so to do? (3.) Can I offer up this action, this expense, as a sacrifice to God through Jesus Christ? (4.) Have I reason to believe that for this very work I shall have a reward at the resurrection of the just?” You will seldom need anything more to remove any doubt which arises on this head; but by this four-fold consideration you will receive clear light as to the way wherein you should go.

5. If any doubt still remain, you may farther examine yourself by prayer according to those heads of inquiry. Try whether you can say to the Searcher of hearts, your conscience not condemning you, “Lord, thou seest I am going to expend this sum on that food, apparel, furniture. And thou knowest, I act herein with a single eye as a steward of thy goods, expending this portion of them thus in pursuance of the design thou hadst in entrusting me with them. Thou knowest I do this in obedience to the Lord, as thou commandest, and because thou commandest it. Let this, I beseech thee, be an holy sacrifice, acceptable through Jesus Christ! And give me a witness in myself that for this labour of love I shall have a recompense when thou rewardest every man according to his works.” Now if your conscience bear you witness in the Holy Ghost that this prayer is well-pleasing to God, then have you no reason to doubt but that expense is right and good, and such as will never make you ashamed.

6. You see then what it is to “make yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness,” and by what means you may procure, “that when ye fail they may receive you into the everlasting habitations.” You see the nature and extent of truly Christian prudence so far as it relates to the use of that great talent, money. Gain all you can, without hurting either yourself or your neighbour, in soul or body, by applying hereto with unintermitted diligence, and with all the understanding which God has given you; — save all you can, by cutting off every expense which serves only to indulge foolish desire; to gratify either the desire of flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life; waste nothing, living or dying, on sin or folly, whether for yourself or your children; — and then, give all you can, or, in other words, give all you have to God. Do not stint

yourself, like a Jew rather than a Christian, to this or that proportion. “Render unto God,” not a tenth, not a third, not half, but all that is God’s, be it more or less; by employing all on yourself, your household, the household of faith, and all mankind, in such a manner, that you may give a good account of your stewardship when ye can be no longer stewards; in such a manner as the oracles of God direct, both by general and particular precepts; in such a manner, that whatever ye do may be “a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour to God,” and that every act may be rewarded in that day when the Lord cometh with all his saints.

7. Brethren, can we be either wise or faithful stewards unless we thus manage our Lord’s goods? We cannot, as not only the oracles of God, but our own conscience beareth witness. Then why should we delay? Why should we confer any longer with flesh and blood, or men of the world? Our kingdom, our wisdom is not of this world: Heathen custom is nothing to us. We follow no men any farther than they are followers of Christ. Hear ye him. Yea, to-day, while it is called to-day, hear and obey his voice! At this hour, and from this hour, do his will: Fulfil his word, in this and in all things! I entreat you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, act up to the dignity of your calling! No more sloth! Whatsoever your hand findeth to do, do it with your might! No more waste! Cut off every expense which fashion, caprice, or flesh and blood demand! No more covetousness! But employ whatever God has entrusted you with, in doing good, all possible good, in every possible kind and degree to the household of faith, to all men! This is no small part of “the wisdom of the just.” Give all ye have, as well as all ye are, a spiritual sacrifice to Him who withheld not from you his Son, his only Son: So “laying up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that ye may attain eternal life!”

(Wesley, John: *Sermons, on Several Occasions, Sermon 50, The Use of Money*. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999)

Q. 49. What is the Twenty Fifth Article of Religion?

A. Article XXV—Of a Christian Man's Oath

As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ and James his apostle, so we judge that the Christian religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth.

Q. 50 How does Wesley understand the Twenty Fifth Article?

A. But our Lord here absolutely forbids all common swearing, as well as all false swearing; and shows the heinousness of both, by the same awful consideration, that every creature is God's, and he is everywhere present, in all, and over all. "I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is Gods throne;" (Matt. 5:34;) and, therefore, this is the same as to swear by Him who sitteth upon the circle of the heavens: "Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool;" (Matt. 5:35) and he is as intimately present in earth as heaven: "Neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King;" and God is well known in her palaces. "Neither shalt thou swear by thy head; because thou canst not make one hair white or black;" (Matt. 5:36;) because even this, it is plain, is not thine, but Gods, the sole disposer of all in heaven and earth. "But let your communication," (Matt. 5:37,) your conversation, your discourse with each other "be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay;" a bare, serious affirming or denying; "for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil:" *ek tou ponerou estin, is of the evil one*; proceedeth from the devil, and is a mark of his children.

(Wesley, John: *Sermons, on Several Occasions, Sermon 23, Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Discourse 3*. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999)

[The following Article from the *Methodist Protestant Discipline* is placed here by the Uniting Conference (1939). It was not one of the Articles of Religion voted upon by the three churches.]

Of Sanctification

Sanctification is that renewal of our fallen nature by the Holy Ghost, received through faith in Jesus Christ, whose blood of atonement cleanseth from all sin; whereby we are not only delivered from the guilt of sin, but are washed from its pollution, saved from its power, and are enabled, through grace, to love God with all our hearts and to walk in his holy commandments blameless.

[The following provision was adopted by the Uniting Conference (1939). This statement seeks to interpret to our churches in foreign lands Article XXIII of the Articles of Religion. It is a legislative enactment but is not a part of the Constitution. (See Judicial Council Decisions 41, 176, and Decision 6, Interim Judicial Council.)]

Of the Duty of Christians to the Civil Authority

It is the duty of all Christians, and especially of all Christian ministers, to observe and obey the laws and commands of the governing or supreme authority of the country of which they are citizens or subjects or in which they reside, and to use all laudable means to encourage and enjoin obedience to the powers that be.

Section 3: The Lord's Prayer

Q. 1. How has Jesus Himself taught us to pray?

A. Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen.

Q. 2. How many parts make up the Lord's Prayer?

A. It consists of three parts — the preface, the petitions, and the doxology or conclusion.

(Wesley, John: Sermons, on Several Occasions. Sermon 26, Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999)

Q. 3. Our Father

A. If he is a Father, then he is good, then he is loving, to his children. And here is the first and great reason for prayer. God is willing to bless; let us ask for a blessing. "Our Father;" — our Creator; the Author of our being; He who raised us from the dust of the earth; who breathed into us the breath of life, and we became living souls. But if he made us, let us ask, and he will not withhold any good thing from the work of his own hands. "our Father;" — our Preserver; who, day by day, sustains the life he has given; of whose continuing love we now and every moment receive life and breath and all things. So much the more boldly let us come to him, and we shall "obtain mercy, and grace to help in time of need." Above all, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of all that believe in him; who justifies us "freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus;" who hath "blotted out all our sins, and healed all our infirmities;" who hath received us for his own children, by adoption and grace; and, "because" we "are sons, hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into" our "hearts, crying, Abba, Father;" who "hath begotten us again of incorruptible seed", and "created us anew in Christ Jesus." Therefore we know that he heareth us always; therefore we pray to him without ceasing. We pray, because we love; and "we love him because he first loved us."

(Wesley, John: Sermons, on Several Occasions. Sermon 26, Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999)

Q. 4. Our Father

A. Not *mine* only who now cry unto him, but *ours* in the most extensive sense. The God and “Father of the spirits of all flesh;” the Father of angels and men: So the very Heathens acknowledged him to be, *Pater te theon te*. The Father of the universe, of all the families both in heaven and earth. Therefore with him there is no respect of persons. He loveth all that he hath made. “He is loving unto every man, and his mercy is over all his works.” And the Lord’s delight is in them that fear him, and put their trust in his mercy; in them that trust in him through the Son of his love, knowing they are “accepted in the Beloved.” But “if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another;” yea, all mankind; seeing “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son”, even to die the death, that they “might not perish, but have everlasting life.”

(Wesley, John: Sermons, on Several Occasions. Sermon 26, Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999)

Q. 5. Which art in heaven

A. High and lifted up; God over all, blessed for ever: Who, sitting on the circle of the heavens, beholdeth all things both in heaven and earth; whose eye pervades the whole sphere of created being; yea, and of uncreated night; unto whom “are known all his works”, and all the works of every creature, not only “from the beginning of the world,” (a poor, low, weak translation,) but *ap aionos*, from all *eternity*, from everlasting to everlasting; who constrains the host of heaven, as well as the children of men, to cry out with wonder and amazement, O the depth! the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! “Which art in heaven”: The Lord and Ruler of all, superintending and disposing all things; who art the King of kings, and Lord of lords, the blessed and only Potentate; who art strong and girded about with power, doing whatsoever pleaseth thee; the Almighty; for whensoever thou willest, to do is present with thee in heaven; eminently there. Heaven is thy throne, “the place where thine honour” particularly “dwelleth.” But not there alone; for thou fillest heaven and earth, the whole expanse of space. “heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord, most high!”

Therefore should we “serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto him with reverence.” Therefore should we think, speak, and act, as continually under the eye, in the immediate presence, of the Lord, the King.

(Wesley, John: *Sermons, on Several Occasions. Sermon 26, Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount*, Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999)

Q. 6. Hallowed be Thy name

A. This is the first of the six petitions, whereof the prayer itself is composed. The name of God is God himself; the nature of God, so far as it can be discovered to man. It means, therefore, together with his existence, all his attributes or perfections; His eternity, particularly signified by his great and incommunicable name, JeHoVAH, as the Apostle John translates it: *To A kai to o, arche kai telos, oon kai ho On kai ho en kai ho erchomenos*, — “the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; He which is, and which was, and which is to come;” — His Fullness of Being, denoted by his other great name, *I AM THAT I AM!* — His omnipresence; — His omnipotence; who is indeed the only Agent in the material world; all matter being essentially dull and inactive, and moving only as it is moved by the finger of God; and he is the spring of action in every creature, visible and invisible, which could neither act nor exist, without the continual influx and agency of his almighty power; — His wisdom, clearly deduced from the things that are seen, from the goodly order of the universe; — His Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, discovered to us in the very first line of his written word; *bara elohim* — literally, *the Gods created*, a plural noun joined with a verb of the singular number; as well as in every part of his subsequent revelations, given by the mouth of all his holy Prophets and Apostles; — His essential purity and holiness; — and, above all, his love, which is the very brightness of his glory.

In praying that God, or his name, may “be hallowed” or glorified, we pray that he may be known, such as he is, by all that are capable thereof, by all intelligent beings, and with affections suitable to that knowledge; that he may be duly honoured, and feared, and loved, by all in heaven above and in the earth beneath; by all angels and men, whom for that end he has made capable of knowing and loving him to eternity.

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Q. 7. Thy kingdom come

A. This has a close connection with the preceding petition. In order that the name of God might be hallowed, we pray that his kingdom, the kingdom of Christ, may come. This kingdom then comes to a particular person, when he “repents and believes the gospel;” when he is taught of God, not only to know himself, but to know Jesus Christ and him crucified. As “this is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent;” so it is the kingdom of God begun below, set up in the believer’s heart; “the Lord God Omnipotent” then “reigneth,”

when he is known through Christ Jesus. He taketh unto himself his mighty power, that he may subdue all things unto himself. He goeth on in the soul conquering and to conquer, till he hath put all things under his feet, till “every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”

When therefore God shall “give his Son the Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession;” when “all kingdoms shall bow before him, and all nations shall do him service;” when “the mountain of the Lords house,” the Church of Christ, “shall be established in the top of the mountains;” when “the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in, and all Israel shall be saved;” then shall it be seen, that “the Lord is King, and hath put on glorious apparel,” appearing to every soul of man as King of kings, and Lord of lords. And it is meet for all those who love his appearing, to pray that he would hasten the time; that this his kingdom, the kingdom of grace, may come quickly, and swallow up all the kingdoms of the earth; that all mankind, receiving him for their King, truly believing in his name, may be filled with righteousness, and peace, and joy, with holiness and happiness, — till they are removed hence into his heavenly kingdom, there to reign with him for ever and ever.

For this also we pray in those words, “Thy kingdom come:” We pray for the coming of his everlasting kingdom, the kingdom of glory in heaven, which is the continuation and perfection of the kingdom of grace on earth. Consequently this, as well as the preceding petition, is offered up for the whole intelligent creation, who are all interested in this grand event, the final renovation of all things, by God’s putting an end to misery and sin, to infirmity and death, taking all things into his own hands, and setting up the kingdom which endureth throughout all ages.

Exactly answerable to this are those awful words in the prayer at the burial of the dead: “Beseeching thee, that it may please thee of thy gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of thine elect, and to hasten thy kingdom: That we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of thy holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in thy everlasting glory.”

(Wesley, John: Sermons, on Several Occasions. Sermon 26, Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999)

Q. 8. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven

A. This is the necessary and immediate consequence wherever the kingdom of God is come; wherever God dwells in the soul by faith, and Christ reigns in the heart by love.

It is probable, many, perhaps the generality of men, at the first view of these words, are apt to imagine they are only an expression of, or petition for, resignation; for a readiness to suffer the will of God, whatsoever it be concerning us. And this is unquestionably a divine and

excellent temper, a most precious gift of God. But this is not what we pray for in this petition; at least, not in the chief and primary sense of it. We pray, not so much for a passive, as for an active, conformity to the will of God, in saying, “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”

How is it done by the angels of God in heaven, — those who now circle his throne rejoicing? They do it *willingly*; they love his commandments, and gladly hearken to his words. It is their meat and drink to do his will; it is their highest glory and joy. They do it *continually*; there is no interruption in their willing service. They rest not day nor night, but employ every hour (speaking after the manner of men; otherwise our measures of duration, days, and nights, and hours, have no place in eternity) in fulfilling his commands, in executing his designs, in performing the counsel of his will. And they do it *perfectly*. No sin, no defect belongs to angelic minds. It is true, “the stars are not pure in his sight,” even the morning-stars that sing together before him. “In his sight,” that is, in comparison of Him, the very angels are not pure. But this does not imply, that they are not pure *in themselves*. Doubtless they are; they are without spot and blameless. They are altogether devoted to his will, and perfectly obedient in all things.

If we view this in another light, we may observe, the angels of God in heaven do *all* the will of God. And they do nothing else, nothing but what they are absolutely assured is his will. Again they do all the will of God *as* he willeth; in the manner which pleases him, and no other. Yea, and they do this, only *because* it is his will; for this end, and no other reason.

When therefore we pray, that the will of God may “be done in earth as it is in heaven,” the meaning is, that all the inhabitants of the earth, even the whole race of mankind, may do the will of their Father which is in heaven, as *willingly* as the holy angels; that these may do it *continually*, even as they, without any interruption of their willing service; yea, and that they may do it *perfectly*, — that “the God of peace, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, may make them perfect in every good work to do his will, and work in them all “which is well-pleasing in his sight.”

In other words, we pray that we and all mankind may do the whole will of God in all things; and nothing else, not the least thing but what is the holy and acceptable will of God. We pray that we may do the whole will of God as he willeth, in the manner that pleases him: And, lastly, that we may do it *because* it is his will; that this may be the sole reason and ground, the whole and only motive, of whatsoever we think, or whatsoever we speak or do.

(Wesley, John: *Sermons, on Several Occasions. Sermon 26, Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount*, Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999)

Q. 9. Give us this day our daily bread.

A. In the three former petitions we have been praying for all mankind. We come now more particularly to desire a supply for our own wants. Not that we are directed, even here, to confine our prayer altogether to ourselves; but this, and each of the following petitions, may be used for the whole Church of Christ upon earth.

By “bread” we may understand all things needful, whether for our souls or bodies; *ta pros zoen kai eusebeian, the things pertaining to life and godliness*: We understand not barely the outward bread, what our Lord terms the meat which perisheth; but much more the spiritual bread, the grace of God, the food which endureth unto everlasting life. It was the judgment of many of the ancient Fathers, that we are here to understand the sacramental bread also; daily received in the beginning by the whole Church of Christ, and highly esteemed, till the love of many waxed cold, as the grand channel whereby the grace of his Spirit was conveyed to the souls of all the children of God.

“Our daily bread:” The word we render *daily* has been differently explained by different commentators. But the most plain and natural sense of it seems to be this, which is retained in almost all translations, as well ancient as modern; what is sufficient for this day; and so for each day as it succeeds.

“Give us:” For we claim nothing of right, but only of free mercy. We deserve not the air we breathe, the earth that bears, or the sun that shines upon, us. All our desert, we own, is hell: But God loves us freely; therefore, we ask him to give, what we can no more procure for ourselves, than we can merit it at his hands.

Not that either the goodness or the power of God is a reason for us to stand idle. It is his will that we should use all diligence in all things, that we should employ our utmost endeavours, as much as if our success were the natural effect of our own wisdom and strength: And then, as though we had done nothing, we are to depend on him, the giver of every good and perfect gift.

“This day:” For we are to take no thought for the morrow. For this very end has our wise Creator divided life into these little portions of time, so clearly separated from each other, that we might look on every day as a fresh gift of God, another life, which we may devote to his glory; and that every evening may be as the close of life, beyond which we are to see nothing but eternity.

(*Wesley, John: Sermons, on Several Occasions. Sermon 26, Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999*)

Q. 10. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us.

A. “And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.” — As nothing but sin can hinder the bounty of God from flowing forth upon every creature, so this petition naturally follows the former; that, all hinderances being removed, we may the more clearly trust in the God of love for every manner of thing which is good.

“Our trespasses” — The word properly signifies *our debts*. Thus our sins are frequently represented in Scripture; every sin laying us under a fresh debt to God, to whom we already owe, as it were, ten thousand talents. What then can we answer when he shall say, “Pay me that thou owest?” We are utterly insolvent; we have nothing to pay; we have wasted all our substance. Therefore, if he deal with us according to the rigour of his law, if he exact what he justly may, he must command us to be “bound hand and foot, and delivered over to the tormentors.”

Indeed we are already bound hand and foot by the chains of our own sins. These, considered with regard to ourselves, are chains of iron and fetters of brass. They are wounds wherewith the world, the flesh, and the devil, have gashed and mangled us all over. They are diseases that drink up our blood and spirits, that bring us down to the chambers of the grave. But considered, as they are here, with regard to God, they are debts, immense and numberless. Well, therefore, seeing we have nothing to pay, may we cry unto him that he would “frankly forgive” us all!

The word translated *forgive* implies either to forgive a debt, or to unloose a chain. And if we attain the former, the latter follows of course: if our debts are forgiven, the chains fall off our hands. As soon as ever, through the free grace of God in Christ, we “receive forgiveness of sins,” we receive likewise “a lot among those which are sanctified, by faith which is in him.” Sin has lost its power; it has no dominion over those who “are under grace,” that is, in favour with God. As “there is now no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus,” so they are freed from sin as well as from guilt. “The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in” them, and they “walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

“As we forgive them that trespass against us.” — In these words our Lord clearly declares both on what condition, and in what degree or manner, we may look to be forgiven of God. All our trespasses and sins are forgiven us, *if* we forgive, and *as* we forgive, others. [First, God forgives us *if* we forgive others.] This is a point of the utmost importance. And our blessed Lord is so jealous lest at any time we should let it slip out of our thoughts, that he not only inserts it in the body of his prayer, but presently after repeats it twice over. “If,” saith he, “ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” (Matt. 6:14, 15.) Secondly, God forgives us *as* we forgive others. So that if any malice or bitterness, if any taint of unkindness or anger remains, if we do not clearly, fully, and from the heart, forgive all men their trespasses, we far cut short the forgiveness of our own: God cannot clearly and fully forgive us: he may show us

some degree of mercy; but we will not suffer him to blot out all our sins, and forgive all our iniquities.

In the mean time, while we do not from our hearts forgive our neighbour his trespasses, what manner of prayer are we offering to God whenever we utter these words? We are indeed setting God at open defiance: we are daring him to do his worst. “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us!” That is, in plain terms, “Do not thou forgive us at all; we desire no favour at thy hands. We pray that thou wilt keep our sins in remembrance, and that thy wrath may abide upon us.” But can you seriously offer such a prayer to God? And hath he not yet cast you quick into hell?’ O tempt him no longer! Now, even now, by his grace, forgive as you would be forgiven! Now have compassion on thy fellow-servant, as God hath had and will have pity on thee!

(Wesley, John: Sermons, on Several Occasions. Sermon 26, Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999)

Q. 11. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

A. The word translated *temptation* means trial of any kind. And so the English word temptation was formerly taken in an indifferent sense, although now it is usually understood of solicitation to sin. St. James uses the word in both these senses; first, in its general, then in its restrained, acceptation. he takes it in the former sense when he saith, “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; For when he is tried,” or approved of God, “he shall receive the crown of life.” (James 1:12, 13.) He immediately adds, taking the word in the latter sense, “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted, when he is *drawn away* of his own lust,” or *desire*, *exelkomenos*, drawn out of God, in whom alone he is safe, “*and enticed*,” *Caught as a fish with a bait*. Then it is, when he is thus drawn away and enticed, that he properly “*enters into temptation*.” Then temptation covers him as a cloud; it overspreads his whole soul. Then how hardly shall he escape out of the snare! Therefore, we beseech God “*not to lead us into temptation*,” that is, (seeing God tempteth no man,) not to suffer us to be led into it. “*But deliver us from evil*.” Rather “*from the evil one*,”; *apo tou ponerou. ho Poneros* is unquestionably *the wicked one*, emphatically so called, the prince and god of this world, who works with mighty power in the children of disobedience. But all those who are the children of God by faith are delivered out of his hands. He may fight against them; and so he will. But he cannot conquer, unless they betray their own souls. He may torment for a time, but he cannot destroy; for God is on their side, who will not fail, in the end, to “*avenge his own elect, that cry unto him day and night*.” Lord, when we are tempted, suffer us not to enter into temptation! Do thou make a way for us to escape, that the wicked one touch us not!

(Wesley, John: Sermons, on Several Occasions. Sermon 26, Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999)

Q. 12. For thine in the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.

A. The conclusion of this divine prayer, commonly called the Doxology, is a solemn thanksgiving, a compendious acknowledgement of the attributes and works of God. "For thine is the kingdom" — the sovereign right of all things that are or ever were created; yea, thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all ages. "The power" — the executive power whereby thou governest all things in thy everlasting kingdom, whereby thou dost whatsoever pleaseth thee, in all places of thy dominion. "And the glory" — the praise due from every creature, for thy power, and the mightiness of thy kingdom, and for all thy wondrous works which thou workest from everlasting, and shalt do, world without end, "for ever and ever!"

(Wesley, John: Sermons, on Several Occasions. Sermon 26, Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999)

Q. 13. Amen.

A. Oh God may it be so!

(Wesley, John: Sermons, on Several Occasions. Sermon 26, Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999)