

“Promise of Sanctification” (1741)¹

[cf. Baker list, #53]

Editorial Introduction:

One of the characteristic emphases of both John and Charles Wesley was that God offers all who seek it not only assurance of the forgiveness of their sins but also transformation of their dispositions and desires, enabling them to take on the “mind of Christ” and the “fruit of the Spirit.” In technical terms, the gift of salvation includes not only justification, or imputed holiness, but also sanctification, or imparted holiness.

While this general affirmation stands in the mainstream of Christian tradition, in the early years of the revival the brothers affirmed it in such absolute terms that it became a point of much controversy, both within the movement and beyond. In 1741 John Wesley preached a sermon titled “Christian Perfection” at Oxford University to explain and defend his emphasis on entire sanctification. When the sermon was published shortly after, Charles appended a poem on “The Promise of Sanctification” in support of his brother.

After appearing in the first edition of his brother’s sermon, this poem was placed in *HSP* (1742), 261–64. It did not appear in a 1743 reprint of the sermon pamphlet. However, it reappeared in the various editions of John’s collected sermons.

Editions:

Charles Wesley. “The Promise of Sanctification.” In John Wesley’s *Christian Perfection, a Sermon*, 44–48. London: Strahan, 1741.

printed with sermon in JW’s *Sermons* (London: Strahan, 1750), 3:233–39.

printed with sermon in JW’s *Sermons* (2nd edn. Bristol: Pine, 1762), 3:233–39.

printed with sermon in JW’s *Works* (Bristol: Pine, 1771), 3:210–14.

printed with sermon in JW’s *Sermons* (4th edn., London: Paramore, 1787), 3:235–41.

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The Promise of Sanctification.
Ezekiel XXXVI. 25, &c.

By the Rev. Mr. Charles Wesley

- 1 God of all power, and truth, and grace,
Which shall from age to age endure;
Whose word, when heaven and earth shall pass,
Remains, and stands for ever sure:
- 2 Calmly to thee my soul looks up,
And waits thy promises to prove;
The object of my stedfast hope,
The seal of thine eternal love.
- 3 That I thy mercy may proclaim,
That all mankind thy truth may see,
Hallow thy great and glorious name,
And perfect holiness in me.

- 4 Chose from the world if now I stand
Adorn'd in righteousness divine;
If brought into the promis'd land
I justly call the Saviour mine:
- 5 Perform the work thou hast begun,
My inmost soul to thee convert;
Love me, for ever, love thine own,
And sprinkle with thy blood my heart.
- 6 Thy sanctifying Spirit pour
To quench my thirst, and wash me clean;
Now, Father, let the gracious shower
Descend, and make me pure from sin.
- 7 Purge me from every sinful blot;
My idols all be cast aside.
Cleanse me from every evil thought,
From all the filth of self and pride.
- 8 Give me a new, a perfect heart,
From doubt, and fear, and sorrow free,
The mind which was in Christ impart,
And let my spirit cleave to thee.
- 9 O take this heart of stone away,
(Thy rule² it doth not, cannot own)
In me no longer let it stay;
O take away this heart of stone.
- 10 The hatred of my³ carnal mind
Out of my flesh at once remove;
Give me a tender heart, resign'd
And pure, and fill'd with⁴ faith and love.

²“Rule” changed to “sway” in *HSP* (1742), but not in later reprints with sermon.

³“My” changed to “the” in *HSP* (1742), but not in later reprints with sermon.

⁴“Fill'd with” changed to “full of” in *HSP* (1742), but not in later reprints with sermon.

- 11 Within me thy good Spirit place,
Spirit of health, and love, and power,
Plant in me thy victorious grace,
And sin shall never enter more.
- 12 Cause me to walk in Christ my way,
And I thy statutes shall fulfil;
In every point thy law obey,
And perfectly perform thy will.
- 13 Hast thou not said, who canst not lie,
That I thy law shall keep and do?
Lord, I believe, tho' men deny.
They all are false, but thou art true.
- 14 O that I now from sin releas'd
Thy word might to the utmost prove!
Enter into the promis'd rest,
The Canaan of thy perfect love!
- 15 There let me ever, ever dwell;
Be thou my God, and I will be
Thy servant: O set to thy seal;
Give me eternal life in thee.
- 16 From all remaining filth within,
Let me in thee salvation have,
From actual, and from inbred sin
My ransom'd soul persist to save.
- 17 Wash out my old⁵ orig'nal stain;
Tell me no more, It cannot be,
Demons, or men! The Lamb was slain,
His blood was all pour'd out for me.

⁵“Old” changed to “deep” in *HSP* (1742), but not in later reprints with sermon.

- 18 Sprinkle it, Jesu, on my heart!
One drop of thy all-cleansing blood
Shall make my sinfulness depart,
And fill me with the life of God.
- 19 Father, supply my every need;
Sustain the life thyself hast given.
Call for the corn, the living bread,⁶
The manna that comes down from heav'n.
- 20 The gracious fruits of righteousness,
Thy blessings unexhausted store
In me abundantly increase,
Nor let me ever hunger more.⁷
- 21 Let me no more in deep complaint
"My leanness, O my leanness," cry,
Alone consum'd with pining want
Of all my Father's children I!
- 22 The painful thirst, the fond desire,
Thy joyous presence shall remove,
While my full soul doth still require
Thy whole eternity of love.
- 23 Holy, and true, and righteous Lord,
I wait to prove thy perfect will,
Be mindful of thy gracious word,
And stamp me with thy Spirit's seal.
- 24 Thy faithful mercies let me find,
In which thou causest me to trust;
Give me the⁸ meek and lowly mind,
And lay my spirit in the dust.

⁶Revised to read "Call for the never-failing bread" in *HSP* (1742), but remains as above in later reprints with sermon.

⁷Line revised in *Works* (1771) to "Nor never let me hunger more."

⁸"The" changed to "thy" in *Sermons* (2nd edn., 1762) and following.

- 25 Shew me how foul my heart hath been,
When all renew'd by grace I am,
When thou hast emptied me of sin,
Shew me the fulness of my shame.
- 26 Open my faith's interior eye:
Display thy glory from above,
And all I am shall sink, and die,
Lost in astonishment and love.
- 27 Confound, o'erpower me with thy grace!
I would be by myself abhor'd,
(All might, all majesty, all praise,
All glory be to Christ my Lord!)
- 28 Now let me gain perfection's height!
Now let me into nothing fall!
Be less than nothing in thy⁹ sight,
And feel that Christ is all in all.

⁹The errata to *Works* (1771) suggest changing “thy” to “my.”