



Rev. Mr. JOHN WESLEY'S

# *JOHN WESLEY*

*AND THE EARLY METHODIST REVIVAL*



A Kingswood Course



# Wesleyan Teaching on the Doctrine of Salvation



A Kingswood Course

# **An Introduction to the Wesleyan ‘Way of Salvation’ The Porch–Door–House of Religion**

“Our main doctrines, which include all the rest, are three, that of **repentance**, of **faith**, and of **holiness**. The first of these we account, as it were, the **porch** of religion; the next, the **door**; the third is **religion itself**.”

– Wesley, “The Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained” (1746), ¶VI.4

# The Way of Salvation

**The Way to the Kingdom (1746)** – The view that true religion is the “religion of the heart.” Focus is on the understanding, the will, and the affections, and how the love of God will transform all of these for true believers.

**The Scripture Way of Salvation (1765)** – Presentation of the doctrine of salvation, with a focus on preventing grace, justifying grace, and sanctifying grace.

# The Way of Salvation

**The More Excellent Way (1787)** – Recognition that there are “two orders of Christians” in the world. Encouragement for Christians to “choose the narrowest path in the narrowest way, to aspire after the heights and depths of holiness, after the entire image of God” (¶6).

## The Way of Salvation

“Strive to enter in at the strait gate,’ not only by this agony of soul, of conviction, of sorrow, of shame, of desire, of fear, of unceasing prayer, but likewise by ‘ordering thy conversation aright’, by **walking with all thy strength in all the ways of God**, the way of innocence, of piety, and of mercy.”

– Wesley, Sermon on the Mount, Discourse 11, ¶III.6

# The Way of Salvation

*“Ye are saved through faith” – Ephesians 2:8*

“What is *salvation*? The salvation which is here spoken of is not what is frequently understood by that word, the going to heaven, eternal happiness. It is not the soul’s going to paradise, termed by our Lord ‘Abraham’s bosom’. It is not a blessing which lies on the other side of death, or (as we usually speak) in the other world...

## The Way of Salvation

“...The very words of the text itself put this beyond all question. ‘*Ye are saved.*’ It is not something at a distance: it is a present thing, a blessing which, through the free mercy of God, ye are now in possession of. Nay, the words may be rendered, and that with equal propriety, ‘*Ye have been saved.*’ So that the salvation which is here spoken of might be extended to the entire work...



# The Way of Salvation

“... of God, from the first dawning of grace in the soul till it is consummated in glory.”

– Wesley, The Scripture Way of Salvation, ¶1.2

# **The Nature of Grace: Both pardon and power**

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## **Grace as Pardon**

**“For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith” (Rom 3:22b-25; NRSV).**

## **Grace as Power**

**“He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Cor 12:9; ESV).**

# **Wesley's Special Interest in the Notion of Grace as Power**

**“the *grace* of God, the power of his Holy Spirit”**

**John Wesley, “The Good Steward,” ¶1.8**

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**Q. What is Grace?**

**A. The Power of the Holy Ghost, enabling us to  
believe and love and serve God.**

**John Wesley, “Instructions for Children”**

# **The Work of Grace**

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**What does it look like when we move beyond the nature of grace and into the work of grace?**

**How is it that the grace of God actually works in our own lives?**

# The Work of Grace

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Grace is Free: It is free in all (not dependent on our merit) and free for all (not limited to a small elect).

“The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.” (Psalm 145:9)

“Interpret every doubtful Scripture according to the grand truths which run through the whole.” (Wesley, Note on Romans 12:6, Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament)

# The Work of Grace

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Grace is Co-Operant: God's grace empowers and enables us to respond to him freely in faith.

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”  
(Philippians 2:12-13)

“First, God works; therefore you *can* work. Secondly, God works; therefore you *must* work ... Stir up the spark of grace which is now in you, and he will give you more grace.” (Wesley, On Working Out Our Own Salvation, ¶¶III.1,6)

# **The Reformed Tradition: Calvinists and Arminians**

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**T – Total Depravity**

**U – Unconditional Election**

**L – Limited Atonement**

**I – Irresistible Grace**

**P – Perseverance of the Saints**

## Calvinist Position

**Total Depravity – We are completely fallen in our sin and have no hope of salvation on our own.**

**Unconditional Election – God predestines those he chooses for salvation without any respect to anything within them.**

**Limited Atonement – Christ died only for the elect.**



**Irresistible Grace – God’s grace is always effective and cannot be resisted or rejected by those to whom he gives it.**

**Perseverance of the Saints – It is impossible for those whom God elects to fall from grace.**

## Arminian Position

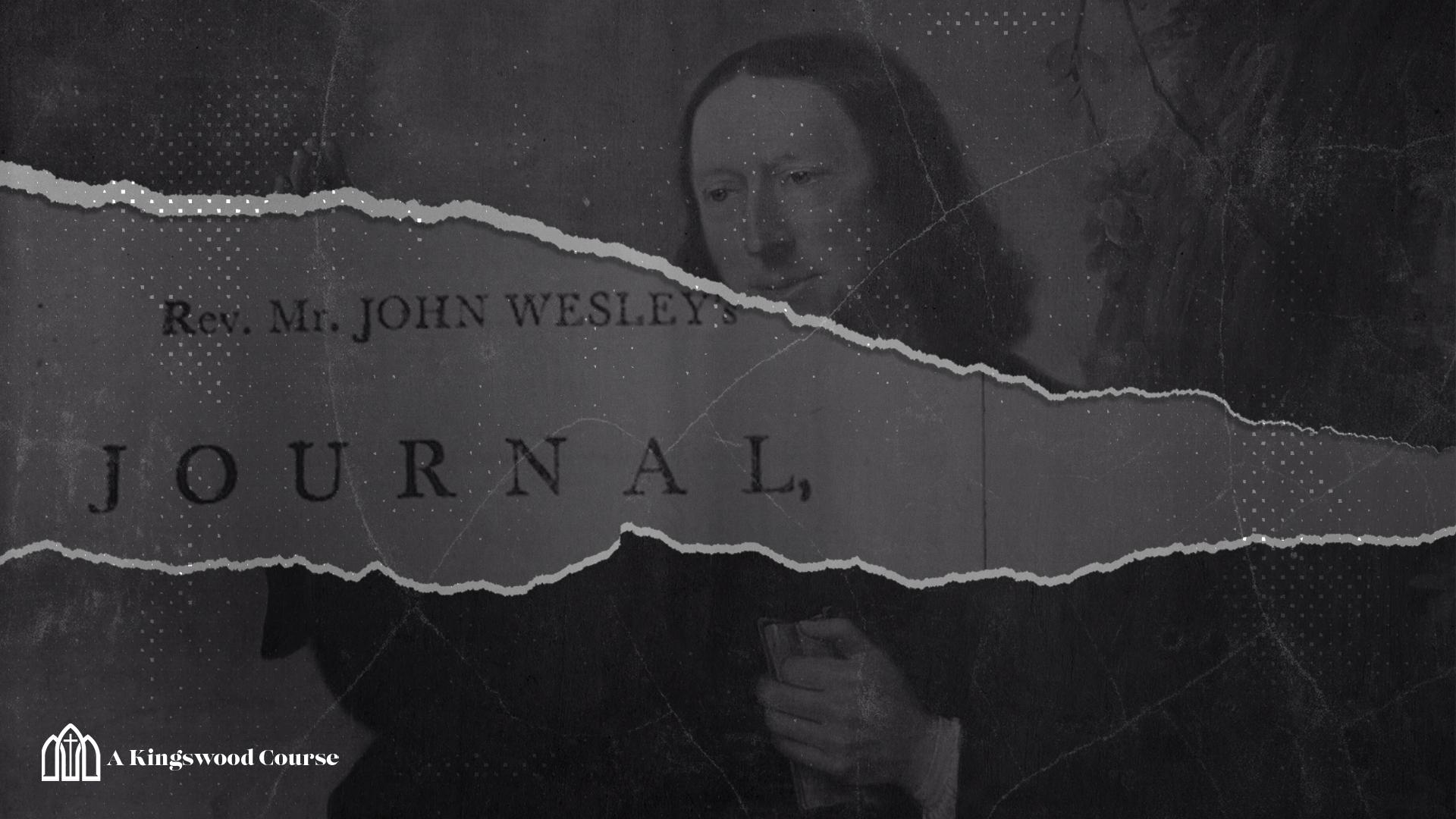
**Total Depravity – We are completely fallen in our sin and have no hope of salvation on our own.**

**Conditional Election – All those who respond to God's grace will be saved.**

**Universal Atonement – Christ died for all.**

**Resistible Grace – God's grace is co-operant, and it will be effective wherever and whenever it is accepted. But it can also be reject by the power of God's grace.**

**Perseverance of Believers – All those will be saved who believe. True backsliding is a possibilty.**



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## “On Working Out Our Own Salvation” (1785)

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

Philippians 2:12-13

Proceed we now to the second point: If God ‘worketh in you’, then work out your own salvation. The original word rendered, ‘work out’, implies the doing a thing thoroughly. ‘Your own’; for you yourselves must do this, or it will be left undone forever. ‘Your *own salvation*’—Salvation begins with what is usually termed (and very properly) ‘**preventing grace**’; including the first wish to please God, the first dawn of light concerning his will, and the first slight transient conviction of having sinned against him. All these imply some tendency toward life, some degree of salvation, the beginning of a deliverance from a blind, unfeeling heart, quite insensible of God and the things of God. Salvation is carried on by ‘**convincing grace**’, usually in Scripture termed repentance; which brings a larger measure of self-knowledge, and a farther deliverance from the heart of stone. Afterwards we experience the proper Christian salvation; whereby, ‘through grace,’ we ‘are saved by faith;’ consisting of those two grand branches, **justification** and **sanctification**. By justification we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favour of God; by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God. All experience, as well as Scripture, shows this salvation to be both instantaneous and gradual. It begins the moment we are justified, in the holy, humble, gentle, patient love of God and man. It gradually increases from that moment, as ‘a grain of mustard-seed, which, at first, is the least of all seeds,’ but afterwards puts forth large branches, and becomes a great tree; till, in another instant, the heart is cleansed, from all sin, and filled with pure love to God and man. But even that love increases more and more, till we ‘grow up in all things into him that is our Head;’ till we attain ‘the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.’ (§II.1)

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**Preventing (or Prevenient) Grace:** the grace that awakens us to our sinful condition and our need to seek God.

**Convincing Grace:** the grace that convinces us of our guilt and drives us to repentance.

**Justifying Grace:** the grace that cleanses us of sin and restores us to the favor of God, bringing about a new birth in us.

**Sanctifying Grace:** the grace that frees us from the power of sin and renews us in the image of God.

# The Way of Salvation

