Wesley Academy 2

Door of Religion (Justification and Regeneration)

I. Justification:

A. Objective grace:

Justification is the objective grace for us, out of us through the grace of Jesus the Christ. Before Althersgate experience Wesley did not trust Jesus as the redeemer for him. He tried good works for justification and salvation. Morvian leader Peter Boeler advised him that he will get inner assurance by the Holy Spirit just as so many people got momentary experience of faith in Acts. Wesley got the experience of justification and salvation by faith through the grace of redemption. At that night of Aldersgate Street experience he confessed like this: "My heart was strangely warmed!" After this experience he preached in June 11, 1738 and wrote no.1 written sermon, "Salvation by Faith:"

Christian faith is then not only assent to the whole gospel of Christ, but

also a full reliance on the blood of Christ, a trust in the merits of his

life, death, and resurrection; a recumbency upon him as our atonement

and our life, as given for us, and living in us.

B. Relative change: reconciliation with God.

Justification is relative change from the enemy of God to the child of God. Justification is adoption. We can call God 'Aba, Father'. Wesley described in his sermon, "The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption:" This state we are thirdly to consider; the state of one who has found 'grace,' or favour in the sight of God, even the Father, and who has the grace, or the power of the Holy Spirit, reigning in his heart; who has received, in the language of the Apostle, 'the Spirit of adoption, whereby he now cries, Aba, Father.'

C. Forgiveness: remission from all actual sins.

At the moment of justification we are forgiven from all the actual sins. We can have freedom from guilt feeling. We are accepted in Jesus the Christ. Forgiveness and acceptance are well expressed in his sermon, "The Scripture Way of Salvation:"

Justification is another word for pardon. It is the forgiveness of all our

sins, and (what is necessary implied therein) our acceptance with God.

The price whereby this hath been procured for us (commonly termed

the meritorious cause of our justification) is the blood and righteousness

of Christ, or (to express it a little more clearly) all that Christ hath done

and suffered for us till he pours out his soul for the transgressors.

The immediate effects of justification are the peace of God, a peace

that passeth all understanding, and a rejoicing in hope of the glory of

God, with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

D. Justification by faith: Rome 1:17, Rome 10:17, Ephesus 2:8. “fides ex auditu: faith from hearing”

His theology changed from theology by good works to theology by faith. He recognized that the mystical efforts of good works are not useful for salvation through storm experience in Atlantic ocean and faith is a gift given from the Holy Spirit in terms of the passive imputed grace from hearing the God's word like Martin Luther...

E. Present salvation: Ephesus 2:8, John 5:24, Luke 21:17.

Justification is an experience of a present Kingdom of God like a mustard seed which are growing from seed, plant and tree. Wesley emphasized present salvation in his sermon, "The Scripture Way of Salvation:"

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 death, or (as we usually speak) in the other world. The very

words of the text itself put this beyond all question. You are

saved. It is not something at a distance: it is a present thing,

a blessing which, through the free mercy of God, you are now in

possession of.

F. Imputation and impartation of righteousness:

Wesley found imputation of rightness of God as an alienated righteousness like Martin Luther at Aldesgate Street. However, he criticized Luther's concept of imputation alone and went beyond imputed righteousness. He accepted Roman Catholic Augustinian concept of impartation in the process of sanctification. He made a combination of Lutheran imputed justification and Augustinian Catholic imparted sanctification. In his sermon, "On God's Vineyard" he mentioned like this:

Many who have spoken and written admirably well concerning

justification had no clear conception, nay, were totally

ignorant, of the doctrine of sanctification. Who has wrote

more ably than Martin Luther on justification by faith alone.

And who was more ignorant of the doctrine of

sanctification, or more confused in his conceptions of it?

........On the other hand, how many writers of the Romish Church

have wrote strongly and scripturally on sanctification who

nevertheless were entirely unacquainted with the nature of

justification..... But it has pleased God to give the Methodists

a full and clear knowledge of each, and the wide difference

between them.

He made a wonderful harmonization of imputed righteousness in the epistle to Romans and imparted righteousness in the epistle of James. In his sermon, "Lord Our Righteousness" Wesley insisted that human beings can imitate Jesus the Christ's imputed and imparted righteousness:

But do not you believe inherent righteousness? Yes, in its proper

place; not as the ground of our acceptance with God, but as

the fruit of it; not in the place of imputed righteousness, but as

consequent upon it. ....I believe Jesus Christ is made of

God unto us sanctification as well as righteousness; or that God

sanctifies, as well as justifies, all them that believe in him.

They to whom the righteousness of Christ is imputed are made

righteous by the spirit of Christ, are renewed in the image

of God after likeness wherein they were created, in righteousness

and true holiness.

II. Regeneration:

A. Subjective grace: in us by indwelling of the Holy Spirit. For Wesley on one hand justification is the objective grace for us by the grace of redemption of Jesus the Christ, on the other hand regeneration is the subjective grace in us by indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In his sermon, "New Birth" Wesley interpreted as following:

The former (justification) relating to that great work which God does

for us, in forgiving our sins; the latter (born again) to the great work

which God does in us, in renewing our fallen nature. In order of time

neither of this is before the other. In the moment we are justified

by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Jesus we are

also born of the Spirit; but in order of thinking, as it is termed,

justification precedes the new birth. We first conceive his wrath to be

turned away, and then his Spirit to work in our hearts.

There are no differences in order of time. It means that in the same moment justification born again happen. At the Aldersgate Street moment Wesley had been justified and had been born again. When we have a faith of trust in the grace of cross of Jesus the Christ, the Holy Spirit indwells in us with inner and spiritual assurance.

B. Real change: restoration of imago Dei.

When Adam and Eve fell, human beings lost the moral image of God totally, even though .natural image of God and political image of God lost partially. But when we have born again experience, we get restoration of moral image. That moral images are righteousness and true holiness.

D. Suspension of inner sin:

Whereas our actual sins are forgiven in the moment of justification, our inner is still remaining. At the moment of born again our inner sin has suspension but not destructed. Our inner anger, pride, desires are annoying us, even though inner sin cannot control us.

E. Spiritual baptism:

For Wesley spiritual baptism by the Holy Spirit is more important than physical baptism by water. Spiritual baptism is born again.

F. Entrance of sanctification:

When we are born again, we have not total sanctification but initial sanctification. It is entrance of sanctification. From the moment of born again we must grow and mature until the full imitation of the Christ, entire sanctification or final sanctification or perfection.

G. Methods of regeneration:

1. by the Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is mother of spiritual baby. By the work of the Holy Spirit we can be born again.

2. by the word of God: I Peter, 1:23. The Holy Spirit uses the Words as means of the grace of born again. Faith of trust comes from hearing the Word of God.

3. by the blood of the cross: The center of the Words is the cross. The event of the cross can and must make us born again.

H. Marks of regeneration:

1. faith, hope and love: I Cor. 13:13

When are born again, the Holy Spirit give us faith, love and love.

2. thanksgiving, joy and prayer: I Thes. 5:16-18

The marks of born again are thanksgiving, joy and prayer. The Holy Spirit testifies in us the marks of born again.

3. nine fruits of the Holy Spirit: Gal. 5: 24.

The Holy Spirit makes in us nine fruits of holy temper. Those fruits show us the image of God.