

SERMON 109:

The Trouble and Rest of Good Men

An Introductory Comment

Wesley embarked for Georgia on [October 14, 1735](#). The decision for that surprising venture had been only recently taken, and the seven weeks since August 28 (when the invitation was first tendered by Dr. John Burton) had been filled with distractions — an array of family problems complicating his preparations for his voyage into the unknown. In the midst of all this, however, he had kept a previous appointment to preach to the university, in Oxford, on Sunday, [September 21](#). There is no mention of this in any of Wesley's records, and there is no evidence about its provenance other than its title page. Even so, it stands as Wesley's first published sermon, and it is from

the same text as his very first sermon ten years before (see No. 133, 'Death and Deliverance') . That he intended for it to be published, 'at the request of several of the hearers', is suggested by the fact that he left it with the same publisher who had just brought out his new translation of Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ* (viz., 'The Christian's Pattern: Or, a Treatise of the Imitation of Christ, London, C. Rivington, 1735'). The sermon was published during Wesley's absence from England, and never reprinted in his lifetime. Its title was, [A Sermon Preached at St. Mary's in Oxford, on Sunday, September 21, 1735](#). The present title was supplied by Thomas Jackson in his edition of Wesley's *Sermons* in 1825. For fuller details of its history, see *Bibliography*, No. 6.

Its significance for us lies in its lucid mirroring of Wesley's mind — — at a critical stage in his theological development — — of an idea already adumbrated in the funeral sermon for Robin Griffith, January 11, 1727 (see No. 136, 'On Mourning for the Dead'). It is yet another comment in the famed *ars moriendi* tradition, with special stress on the notion that while death is the *effect* of sin, it has also been appointed by God as the *cure* of sin. Thomas Jackson found himself moved to warn all readers against this 'unevangelical' idea and to 'observe that while the sermon displays great seriousness and zeal, it exhibits a very inadequate view of real Christianity' (see his editorial note in Works, 1829, VII.365-66).

Clearly, Jackson was indifferent to

the fact, if indeed he knew it, that the sermon's point about death as deliverance from our mortal ills and sin would have been familiar to an Oxford audience as an oversimplification of the old tradition of 'the art of dying' which had flourished in England since at least the fifteenth century; see Nancy Lee Beaty, 'The *Ars Moriendi*: Wellspring of the Tradition', ch. 1, in *The Craft of Dying: A Study in the Literary Tradition of the *Ars Moriendi* in England* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1970); see also Mary Catherine O'Connor, *The Art of Dying Well* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1942). Wesley knew this tradition best from Jeremy Taylor, although he seems to ignore Taylor's crucial distinction **between** death as deliverance from the bodily agent of sin **and** death as deliverance

from the guilt of sin. Many of his hearers would also have recognized in it a variation on the well-known Lutheran doctrine of invincible concupiscence² and its implication that 'the sense of sin [though not its guilt, reatus³] is removed in death and the matter of sin in the dissolution of the body,' as in J. A. Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica* (1685), II.62; cf. Heinrich Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (1889), pp. 238, 250, 624.

'Unevangelical' or not, Wesley's doctrine here represents two established traditions and reflects a stage of Wesley's theological development that deserves careful notice in special relationship to the earlier university sermons on '**The Image of God**' (No. 141), and '**The Circumcision of the Heart**' (No. 17) . For when he

later changed his basic understanding of 'sin in believers', he quite pointedly left this sermon in limbo¹, where it has remained ever since, as far as any attention paid to it in Wesley studies is concerned. This means that it might be ready for reconsideration in the light of the whole question of his theological development and in connection with his doctrine of perfection in love in this life.

The Trouble and Rest of Good Men

Job 3:17

There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest. When God at first surveyed all the works he had made, behold, they were very good.¹ All were perfect in beauty, and man, the lord of all, **was perfect in holiness**. And as **his holiness** was,

so was **his happiness**; knowing no sin, he knew no pain. But when sin was conceived, it soon brought forth pain; the whole scene was changed in a moment. He now groaned under the weight of **a mortal body** and —— that was far worse —— **a corrupted soul**. That 'spirit' which could have borne all his other 'infirmities' was itself 'wounded'¹ and sick unto death. Thus 'in the day wherein he sinned he' began to 'die';² and thus, 'in the midst of life we are in death';³ yea, 'the whole creation groaneth together',⁴ 'being in bondage to sin',⁵ and therefore to misery.

The whole world is indeed, in its present state, only one great infirmary: "all that are therein are sick of sin, and **their one business there is to be healed**. And for this very end the great Physician of

souls is continually present with them, marking all the diseases of every soul, and 'giving medicines to heal its sickness'. 'These medicines are often painful, too. Not that God willingly afflicts his creatures, but he allots them just as much pain as is necessary to their health; and for that reason because it is so.

The pain of cure must then be endured by every man, as well as the pain of sickness. 'And herein is manifest the infinite wisdom of him who careth for us, that the very sickness of those with whom he converses may be a great means of every man's cure. The very wickedness of others is, in a thousand ways, conducive to a good man's holiness. They trouble him, 'tis true, but even that trouble is 'health to his soul, and marrow to his bones'. 'He suffers many

things from them; but it is to this end, that he may be 'made perfect through' those 'sufferings'.²

But as perfect holiness is not found on earth, so neither is perfect happiness: some remains of our disease will ever be felt, and some physic be necessary to heal it. ³Therefore we must be more or less subject to the pain of cure, as well as the pain of sickness. And, accordingly, neither do 'the wicked' here 'cease from troubling', nor can 'the weary be at rest.'

'Who then will deliver us from the body of this death? ¹'Death will deliver us. Death shall set those free in one moment who were 'all their lifetime subject to bondage'.² Death shall destroy at once the whole body of sin,³ and therewith of its companion, pain. And

therefore, 'there the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest.'

The Scriptures give us no account of the place where the souls of the just remain from death to the resurrection.¹ But we have an account of their state in these words; in explaining which I shall consider,

I. How the 'wicked' do here 'trouble' good men.

And,

II. How the 'weary' are there at rest'.

[I.] Let us consider, first, how the 'wicked' here 'trouble' good men. And this is a spacious field. Look round the world, take a view of all the troubles therein — — how few are there whereof the wicked are not the occasion!

'From whence come wars and fightings among you?' 'Whence all the ills that embitter society? That often turn that highest of blessings into a curse, and make it 'good for man to be alone'?² 'Come they not hence',³ from self-will, pride, inordinate affection — — in one word, from wickedness? And can it be otherwise, so long as it remains upon earth? As well may 'the Ethiopian change his skin'⁴ as a wicked man cease to trouble both himself and his neighbour, but especially good men; inasmuch as while he is wicked he is continually injuring either them, or himself, or God.

(明日 from here)

1. First, wicked men trouble those who serve God by the injuries they do them. As at first 'he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after

the Spirit, even so it is now.'²¹
And so it must be till all things
are fulfilled; till 'heaven and earth
pass away',²² 'all that will live
godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer
persecution.'²³ For there is an
irreconcilable enmity between the
Spirit of Christ and the spirit of
the world. If the followers of
Christ 'were of the world, the
world would love its own; but,
because they are not of the world,
therefore the world hateth
them.'²⁴ And this hatred they will
not fail to show by their words:
'they will say all manner of evil
against them falsely';²⁵ 'they will
find out many inventions'²⁶
whereby even 'the good that is in
them may be evil spoken of',²⁷
and in a thousand instances 'lay to
their charge' the ill 'that they
know not'.²⁸ From words in due
time they proceed to deeds;
treating the servants as their

forefathers did their Master, wronging and despitefully using them in as many ways as fraud can invent and force accomplish.

[2.] 'Tis true these troubles sit heaviest upon those who are yet weak in the faith; and the more of the Spirit of Christ any man gains the lighter do they appear to him; so that to him who is truly renewed therein, who is full of the knowledge and love of God, all the wrongs of wicked men are not only no evils, but are matter of real and solid joy. But still, though he rejoices for his own sake, he cannot but grieve for theirs. 'He hath great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart' for his 'brethren according to the flesh',²⁹ who are thus 'treasuring up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God'.³⁰ 'His eyes weep for them in secret

places';³¹ he is 'horribly afraid'³² for them; yea, 'he could even wish to be accursed himself',³³ so they might inherit a blessing. And thus it is that they who can not only slight but rejoice in the greatest injury done to them, yet are troubled at that which wicked men do to themselves, and the grievous misery that attends them.

[3.] This was the circumstance which made the contradiction of sinners³⁴ so severe a trial to our Lord himself: 'He that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.'³⁵ And how are these despisers now multiplied upon earth! Who fear not the Son, neither the Father. How are we surrounded with those who blaspheme the Lord and his Anointed, either reviling the whole of his glorious gospel, or making him a liar as to some of the blessed truths which he hath graciously revealed therein!

How many of those who profess to believe the whole, yet in effect preach another gospel; so disguising the most essential doctrines thereof by their new interpretations as to retain the words only, but nothing of the faith once delivered to the saints!³⁶ How many who have not yet made shipwreck of the faith³⁷ are strangers to the fruits of it! It hath not purified their hearts; it hath not overcome the world; they are yet 'in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity'.³⁸ They are still 'lovers of themselves',³⁹ 'lovers of the world',⁴⁰ 'lovers of pleasure', and not 'lovers of God'⁴¹. Lovers of God? No. 'He is not in all their thoughts!'⁴² They delight not in him, they thirst not after him; they do not rejoice in doing his will, neither make their boast of his praise! O faith working by love,⁴³

whither art thou fled? Surely the Son of man did once plant thee upon earth. Where then art thou now? Among the wealthy? No. The 'deceitfulness of riches' there 'chokes the word, and it becometh unfruitful'.⁴⁴ Among the poor? No. 'The cares of the world'⁴⁵ are there, 'so that it bringeth forth no fruit to perfection.'⁴⁶ However, there is nothing to prevent its growth among those who have neither poverty nor riches.雄 es, the desire of other things. And experience shows, by a thousand melancholy examples, that the allowed desire of anything, great or small, otherwise than as a means to the one thing needful,⁴⁷ will by degrees banish the care of that out of the soul, and unfit it for every good word or work.⁴⁸ Such is the trouble, not to descend to particulars which are endless, that wicked men continually

occasion to the good. Such is the state of all good men while on earth. But it is not so with their souls in paradise. In the moment wherein they are loosed from the body they know pain no more. Though they are not yet possessed of the fullness of joy, yet all grief is done away.⁴⁹ For 'there the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.'

II.[1.] 'There the weary are at rest'^謡 hich was the second thing to be considered ^溶 ot only from those evils which prudence might have prevented or piety removed even in this life, but from those which were inseparable therefrom, which were their unavoidable portion on earth. They are now at rest whom wicked men would not suffer to rest before; for into the seat of the spirits of just men, none but the spirits of the just can enter.⁵⁰ They are at length hid

from the scourge of the tongue:51
their name is not here cast out as
evil.52 Abraham, Isaac, and
Jacob, and the prophets do not
revile or separate them from their
company.53 They are no longer
despitefully used and
persecuted;54 neither do they
groan under the hand of the
oppressor.55 No injustice, no
malice, no fraud is there; they are
all 'Israelites indeed, in whom is
no guile'.56 There are no sinners
against their own souls;57
therefore there is no painful pity,
no fear for them. There are no
blasphemers of God or of his
Word, no profaners of his name or
of his sabbaths; no denier of the
Lord that bought him;58 none that
tramples upon the blood of his
everlasting covenant:59 in a word,
no earthly or sensual, no devilish
spirit;60 none who do not love the
Lord their God with all their

heart.⁶¹

2. There, therefore, 'the weary are at rest' from all the troubles which the wicked occasioned; and, indeed, from all the other evils which are necessary in this world, either as the consequence of sin or for the cure of it. They are at rest, in the first place, from bodily pain. In order to judge of the greatness of this deliverance, let but those who have not felt it take a view of one who lies on a sick- or death-bed.⁶² Is this he that was made a little lower than the angels?⁶³ How is the glory departed from him! His eye is dim and heavy, his cheek pale and wan, his tongue falters, his hand trembles, his breast heaves and pants, his whole body is now distorted and writhed⁶⁴ to and fro, now moist and cold and motionless, like the earth to which it is going. And yet all this which

you see is but the shadow of what he feels. You see not the pain that tears his heart, that shoots through all his veins, and chases the flying soul through every part of her once loved habitation. Could we see this, too, how earnestly should we cry out: 'O sin, what hast thou done? To what hast thou brought the noblest part of the visible creation? Was it for this the good God made man?' O no! Neither will he suffer it long. Yet a little while, and all the storms of life shall be over! And thou shalt be gathered into the storehouse of the dead! And there 'the weary are at rest.'

3. 'They are at rest,' from all these infirmities and follies which they could not escape in this life.⁶⁵ They are no longer exposed to the delusions of sense, or the dreams of imagination. They are not hindered from seeing the noblest

truths, by inadvertence, nor do they ever lose the sight they have once gained, by inattention. They are not entangled with prejudice, nor ever misled by hasty or partial views of the object. And consequently, no error is there. O blessed place, where truth alone can enter! Truth unmixed, undisguised, enlightening every man who cometh into the world.⁶⁶ Where there is no difference of opinions, but all think alike, all are of one heart and of one mind.⁶⁷ Where that offspring of hell, controversy,⁶⁸ which turneth this world upside down, can never come. Where those who have been sawn asunder thereby, and often cried out in the bitterness of their soul,⁶⁹ 'Peace, peace,'⁷⁰ shall find what they then sought in vain, even a peace which none taketh from them.⁷¹

4. And yet all this, inconceivably great as it is, is the least part of their deliverance. For in the moment wherein they shake off the flesh they are delivered, not only from the troubling of the wicked, not only from pain and sickness, from folly and infirmity, but also from sin. A deliverance this in sight of which all the rest vanish away. This is the triumphal song which everyone heareth when he entereth the gates of paradise: 'Thou, being dead, sinnest no more. Sin hath no more dominion over thee. For in that thou diedst, thou diedst unto sin once, but in that thou livest, thou livest unto God.'⁷²

5. hThey no longer mourn the 'flesh lusting against the Spirit';⁷⁵ 'the law in their members' is now at an end, and no longer 'wars against the law of their mind, and brings them into captivity to the

law of sin.'⁷⁶ There is no root of bitterness⁷⁷ left, no remains even of that sin which did so easily beset them;⁷⁸ no forgetfulness of 'him in whom they live, move, and have their being';⁷⁹ no ingratitude to their gracious Redeemer, who poured out his soul unto the death for them;⁸⁰ no unfaithfulness to that blessed Spirit who so long bore with their infirmities. In a word, no pride, no self-will is there; so that they who are thus delivered from the bondage of corruption⁸¹ may indeed say one to another, and that in an emphatical sense, 'Beloved, now we are the children of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.'⁸²

6. Let us view a little more nearly the state of a Christian at his entrance into the other world.

Suppose 'the silver cord' of life just 'loosed', and 'the wheel broken at the cistern';⁸³ the heart can now beat no more; the blood ceases to move; the last breath flies off from the quivering lips, and the soul springs forth into eternity. What are the thoughts of such a soul, that has just subdued her last enemy, death?⁸⁴ That sees the body of sin lying beneath her, and is new born into the world of spirits? How does she sing: 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God, who hath given me the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ!'⁸⁵ O happy day, wherein I begin to live, wherein I taste my native freedom! When I was 'born of a woman', I had 'but a short time to live', and that time was 'full of misery';⁸⁶ that corruptible body pressed me down,⁸⁷ and enslaved

me to sin and pain. But 'the snare is broken, and I am delivered.'⁸⁸ 'Henceforth I know them no more.'⁸⁹ That head is no more an aching head; those eyes shall no more run down with tears;⁹⁰ that heart shall no more pant with anguish or fear, or be weighed down with sorrow or care; those limbs shall no more be racked with pain; yea, 'sin hath no more dominion over me.'⁹¹ At length I have parted from thee, O my enemy, and I shall see thy face no more. I shall never more be unfaithful to my Lord, or offend the eyes of his glory!⁹² I am no longer that wavering, fickle, self-inconsistent creature, sinning and repenting, and sinning again. No. I shall never cease, day or night, to love and praise the Lord my God, with all my heart, and with all my strength. But what are ye? 'Are all these ministering

spirits sent forth to minister' unto one 'heir of salvation?'⁹³ Then, dust and ashes, farewell. I hear a voice from heaven saying, Come away, and rest from thy labours; 'thy warfare is accomplished, thy sin is pardoned,'⁹⁴ 'and the days of thy mourning are ended.'⁹⁵

7. Brethren, these truths need little application. Believe ye that these things are so?⁹⁶ What then hath each of you to do but to 'lay aside every weight, and run with patience the race set before him'?⁹⁷ 'To count all things else but dung and dross'?⁹⁸ 容 specially those grand idols, learning and reputation, if they are pursued in any other measure, or with any other view, than as they conduce to the knowledge and love of God. To have this one thing 'continually in thine heart',⁹⁹ 'when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the

way, and when thou liest down,
and when thou risest up';¹⁰⁰ to
have thy 'loins' ever 'girt', and 'thy
light burning';¹⁰¹ to serve the
Lord thy God with all thy
might;¹⁰² if by any means, when
he requireth thy soul of thee,¹⁰³
perhaps in an hour when thou
lookest not for him,¹⁰⁴ thou
mayst enter 'where the wicked
cease from troubling, and where
the weary be at rest'.

*1【ラテン】

[副] ((主に英正式))すなわち, 換言すると《◆通例 namely / néImli / と読む; 今は namely がふつう》.

*1 死は罪の結果とともに、死の癒やしとして神に定められてきている。

*1 テイラーの重要とした区別

罪の肉体的執行者からの解放としての死と

罪の咎からの解放としての死

をウェスレーは無視しているように思われる(ウェスレーは)

*2unconquerable lust

*3accusation

*1 in (a státe of) límbo

((正式))不確実な状態で.

*1See Gen

*1Cf.Prov.18.14

14 The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?

*2Cf.Ezek.18.4, 20;33:12

*3BCP,Burial.

*4Cf.Rom.8:22

*5Cf.Rom8:21

*6 Cf. Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici* (1642), II.11 ('For the world I count not an inn but an hospital . . .'); see also Jeremy Taylor, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying* (1651), ch. I, sect. IV, 3 (*Works*, I.530): 'an hospital . . . is indeed a map of the whole world, where you see the effects of Adam's sin and the ruins of human nature'; and Taylor's *Great Exemplar* (1649), Pt. I, sect. IX, Discourse V, §10 (*Works*, I.105): 'Those are the persons of Christ's infirmary whose restitution and reduction to a state of life and health was his great design.'

*1Cf.Ps.147:3 (BCP)

*2 See No. 73, 'Of Hell', I.1 and n., for a later comment on a distinction that Wesley would have learned in Oxford between *poena sensus* and *poena damni*.

*1Cf.Prov.3:8

8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

*2Cf.Heb.2:10

10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

*3 An explicit assertion of the Puritan doctrine that perfection is reserved for 'the state of glory only' (*in statu gloriae*). Wesley will reverse himself on this point completely. Cf. Nos. 40, *Christian Perfection*; and 76, 'On Perfection'; see also, below, II.3.

*1 Cf. [Rom. 7:24](#); see also No.136, 'On Mourning for the Dead', ¶¶6-7.

*2Heb.2:15

15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

*3 An echo from *The Apology of the Augsburg Confession* (1531), sections 151-54, and of 'The Second Part of the Sermon Against the Fear of Death' in the Edwardian *Homilies*, IX. Contrast this with No. 13, *On Sin in Believers*, I.4 and n.

*1See below, I .3 and n.

*1Jas.4:1

1 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

*2

A curious inversion of [Gen. 2:18](#); wickedness confounds God's judgment that 'it is *not* good that man should be alone.'

*3 Jas.4:1

*4 Jer.we.13 : 23

23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.