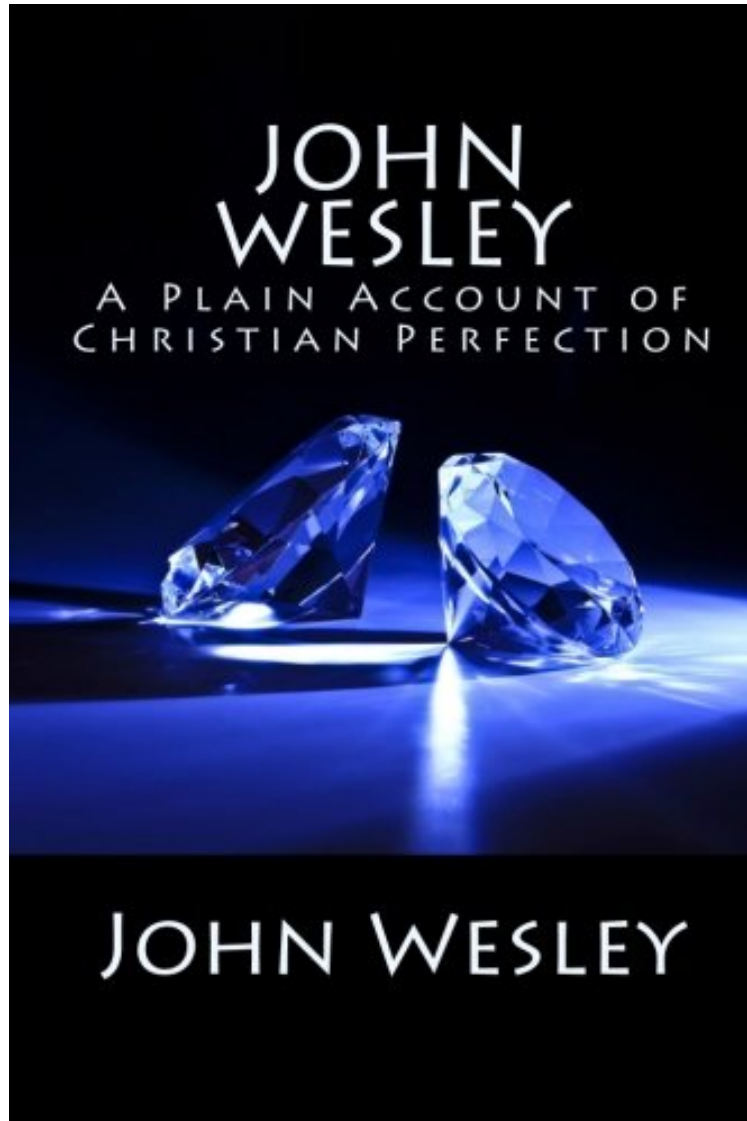


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John Wesley: A Plain Account of Christian Perfection

John Wesley

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John Wesley (1703-1791) firmly believed that God continued to work in the life of the believer subsequent to justification. In "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," John Wesley provides an account of the development of his understanding of the doctrine of Christian Perfection. This short work contains a lucid explanation of the doctrine with special attention not only to the Biblical promises and commands that are the basis of the doctrine but also the practical way that "perfect love" works in the life of the believer. While this work was certainly intended to instruct those who were seeking "perfect love," it also attempts to answer those who would deny the doctrine. The essence of Christian Perfection, for John Wesley, was clearly defined by Christ when an expert in the law asked him, "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 23.36-40 NRSV) Here one sees that, for John Wesley, the main point of Christian Perfection is "perfect love." "Perfect love" thus defines our relationship to God and others. "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection" is essential for those in the Wesleyan tradition and a worthwhile read for those from other Christian perspectives that wish to understand what John Wesley thinks Christian Perfection is and is not.

About the Author John Wesley (1703-1791) was an Anglican cleric and Christian theologian. Wesley is largely credited, along with his brother Charles Wesley, with founding the English Methodist movement which began when he took to open-air preaching in a similar manner to George Whitefield. In contrast to George Whitefield's Calvinism, Wesley embraced Arminianism. Methodism in both forms was a highly successful evangelical movement in the United Kingdom, which encouraged people to experience Jesus Christ personally.