

Skipper Hall on the Methodist Doctrine

The doctrine of John Wesley was that we grow toward perfection even as our Heavenly Father is perfect. I think that's in the Scripture. And I really interpret that in — a lot of what I've been saying is that you forever move toward a richer maturity and you never reach the place where you are through. And so I'm continually growing, and I never reach the place where I say I'm saved.

And that's where the Methodists have had the popular saying of “backsliding.” We do not believe that once you have had a saving experience, so-called, then you're saved. We believe that the personality has to develop completely as long as you live. Naturally, there are some who grow senile, and maybe it's partly physical, and quit developing in the last few years of their existence. Either the old age of the body or something — but, basically, that is the concept as we inherited it from John Wesley. Not that these men displaced Jesus, but the human being has to have other humans. For example, you do not give things to God directly. God does not have a bank. God does not run finances. You either have to give to God — if you want to call it that — you have to give to God by feeding someone that's poor, or helping someone that's poor, or give your money to an institution that has a certain purpose to use it for. You have to operate through the human being; and that's true politically, too.