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Wesleyan Theological Journal

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Barry L. Callen, 1993 to present

All communications concerning editorial matters should be addressed to the Editor, Barry L. Callen, c/o Anderson University, 1100 East 5th Street, Anderson, Indiana 46012. Communication about book reviews is to be directed to the Book Review Editor, David Bundy, c/o Fuller Theological Seminary. Membership dues and other financial matters should be addressed to the Secretary-Treasurer, William Kostlevy, c/o Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky 40390. Rate and application form are found at the end of this issue. E-mail addresses for all officers of the Society are also found on the inside of the back cover.

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The Society's mission is to encourage the exchange of ideas among Wesleyan-Holiness theologians; to develop a source of papers for CHP (Christian Holiness Partnership) seminars; to stimulate scholarship among younger theologians and pastors; and to publish a scholarly journal.

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CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS NUMBER

ARTICLE WRITERS:

**E. Byron Anderson, Christian Theological Seminary,
Indianapolis, Indiana**

David Bundy, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California

**Dean G. Blevins, Trevecca Nazarene University, Nashville,
Tennessee**

**William M. Greathouse, Executive, Church of the Nazarene,
Retired**

Rob King, Ph.D. Candidate, University of Notre Dame, Indiana

**Randy L. Maddox, Seattle Pacific University, Seattle,
Washington**

**Clark H. Pinnock, McMaster Divinity School, Hamilton,
Ontario, Canada**

John Sanders, Huntington College, Huntington, Indiana

**Matthew R. Schlimm, Research Assoc., Duke Divinity School,
Durham, North Carolina**

John R. Tyson, Houghton College, Houghton, New York

M. William Ury, Wesley Biblical Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi

BOOK REVIEWERS:

David Bundy, W. Stephen Gunter, William Kostlevy.

EDITOR'S NOTES

In contrast to the Spring issues of the *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, the Fall issues do not feature key presentations made at the Annual Meetings of the Wesleyan Theological Society. Rather, they present a series of significant materials that emerge from other sources and settings. This current Fall issue makes available major articles on a range of subjects, with several centering around the nature of the human person and the transforming Christian experience of persons. Dean Blevins and William Ury speak of notions of the self and personhood in a Wesleyan setting and find important implications for the current postmodern setting. God's gracious transformation of the sinful self is then explored in various ways. It is done by Byron Anderson through comparing "new creation" in the Methodist hymnals of 1780 and 1989, by William Greathouse through John Wesley's connecting of sanctification and the Christus Victor model of the atonement, by Matthew Schlimm through noting the dynamic nature of Christian perfection, and by Rob King as he details how select Eastern Patristic sources on the Spirit-filled life influenced John Wesley and should influence contemporary Wesleyans.

Two additional emphases are found herein. One is social ethics. John Tyson examines the connection between Wesleyan soteriology and social ethics by using the political poems of Charles Wesley. The other emphasis has to do with Christian theism. Clark Pinnock highlights John Wesley's transforming vision of a beautiful God and urges contemporary Wesleyans to keep this distinctive biblical vision alive. Then John Sanders, with particular reference to the issue of divine foreknowledge, compares the emphasis common in today's "open theism" with the classic stance of Arminianism.

Four other doors are opened in these pages, each celebrating in different ways the Wesleyan past. First, Randy Maddox, noting that the library of the Charles Wesley family has been kept largely intact, reviews the process of this significant fact and provides a detailed record of this library's contents. Next, David Bundy details a very special gathering in Nassau, Bahamas, in January, 2003, co-sponsored by the Wesleyan Theological Society and the Bahamas Wesleyan Fellowship and celebrating the 300th birthday of John Wesley. Then appropriate note is made of the Lifetime Achievement Award given by the Society in its 2003 meeting to Charles Edwin Jones. Finally, the Society's annual Smith/Wynkoop Book Award for 2003 was given to Laurence W. Wood for his outstanding volume titled *The Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism* (Scarecrow Press, 2002). An ad for and extensive review of this book appear in the Spring 2003 issue of the Journal.

Included here also is a series of book reviews, book advertisements, and detail about the 2003-2004 officers of the Society and their email addresses. Note should be made of: the Society's web address (www.wesleyanforum.org/wts/); the 2004 Annual Meeting of the Society scheduled for March 5-6, 2004, at Northeastern Theological Seminary, Rochester, New York; and the sixth international Wesleyan/Holiness Women Clergy Conference endorsed by the Society and scheduled to convene April 15-18, 2004, in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Barry L. Callen, Editor,
Anderson University, October, 2003

wesley.nnu.edu/wts

A WESLEYAN VIEW OF THE LITURGICAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE SELF

by

Dean G. Blevins

The emergence of the postmodern world places new challenges on the fields of theology and personality concerning traditional notions of identity, personhood, and the self. Many philosophers, personality theorists, and other scholars charting the death (or at least the dissolution) of the “modern” or “Cartesian” self now posit a different, socially constructed self that is much more contingent.¹ Summarizing this new postmodern “psychology,” Walter Truett Anderson offers two assumptions that support most “postmodern” views of the self. The first is:

(I)dentify is a social product and that people in different kinds of societies have quite different kinds of identity-forming experiences. The second, and more likely to provoke argument, is that most of us today live in “postmodern” societies in which it is difficult—if not impossible—to create and maintain a single, stable, personal identity.²

This position does have its detractors, particularly scholars in the field of theoretical psychology; however, any idea of a return to an insular, Cartesian “self” appears remote.³

¹Walter Truett Anderson, *The Future of the Self: Exploring the Post-Identity Society* (New York: Tarcher Putnam, 1997).

²Anderson, 35.

³Henderrikus J. Stam, “Social Constructionism and Its Critics,” *Theory & Psychology* 11, no. 3 (June 2001), 291-296.

Anderson's proposition of the dissolution of the self proves difficult for theological traditions like Pan-Methodism that places considerable emphasis on the possibility of "holy" persons as recipients and expressions of God's prevenient, transforming love. Even so, for Wesleyans, the turn to a postmodern representation of the self may provide new opportunities to articulate a broader theological view of human identity and the holy life, overcoming some of the previous impasse between Cartesian selves and community life.

Seizing this "post-modern" opportunity, however, may prove to be a venture fraught with hazard, particularly since the challenge of the ultimate loss of the self is evident in a number of prominent postmodern writers like Foucault, Barthes, and Derrida. Philosopher Calvin Schragg writes:

Confronted with the mosaic messages dealing with the death of the man [sic], the demise of the author, and the deconstruction or dissimulation of the subject, one finds oneself in a crisis of concepts relative to matters pertaining to the human self, understood as subject and agent in discourse and action.⁴

Theorists like Schragg may prove helpful for Wesleyans. Schragg offers an alternative approach embracing a four-fold postmodern depiction of identity as the self in discourse (the narrating self), in action (the embodied/enacted self), in community (the ethical praxis of the self), and in transcendence (the self before radical alterity).⁵ Scholars within the "Radical Orthodoxy" movement provide additional avenues for exploration, so Wesleyans may well discover new ways to articulate the idea of the transformed self.⁶ The question remains as to whether such formulations will

⁴Calvin O. Schragg, *The Self after Postmodernity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 3.

⁵Schragg, 4 ff.

⁶M. Douglas Meeks, "Wesleyan Theology in a Postmodern Era: The Spirit of Life in an Age of the Nihil," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 35, no. 1 (Spring 2000), 22-40; John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1990); John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward, eds., *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology* (London: Routledge Press, 1999); Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Inc, 1998); Catherine Pickstock, "Liturgy, Art and Politics," *Modern Theology* 16, no. 2 (2000): 159-80; R. R. Reno, "The Radical Orthodoxy project," *First Things* (2000): 37-44; Henry W. Spaulding

be true to the Methodist tradition, particularly true to the tradition's namesake, John Wesley.

Finding guidance in Wesley's writings for negotiating the postmodern world may prove difficult in light of Wesley's Cartesian and Platonic inclinations as well as his Lochean sensibilities.⁷ Previous investigations of Wesley's own interior life have been equally bound to modern personality theories.⁸ A new avenue, however, may lie not in what Wesley said, nor in the idiosyncratic expressions of his personal life, but in his Christian practice. Wesley lived a life anchored in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and the worship that surrounded this key practice.⁹ He regularly

II, "Good Conscience or Good Confidence: A Postmodern Re-thinking of Ethical Reflection in the Wesleyan/Holiness Tradition," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 35, no. 1 (Spring 2000), 41-66; "Milbank's Trinitarian Ontology and a Re-Narration of Wesleyan-Holiness Theology," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2001), 134-159.

⁷Richard E. Brantley, *Locke, Wesley and the Method of English Romanticism* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1984); W. Stephen Gunter, "Personal and Spiritual Knowledge: Kindred Spirits in Polanyian and Wesleyan Epistemology," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 35, no. 1 (Spring 2000), 130-148; Albert Outler, "Introduction" Sermon 116: What is Man?" in John Wesley, *Sermons*, Volume IV, ed. Albert Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, Bicentennial ed., 15 vols. gen. eds. Richard P. Heitzenrater and Frank Baker (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975-1995), 4:19. Methodist patriarch Albert Outler coins Wesley "a third generation Cartesian" (4:19), while other scholars such as Gunter and Brantley have noted Wesley's appeal to Locke's empirical tendencies, often ascribing a "spiritual sixth sense" to human capacity. Subsequent references to the Bicentennial set, *The Works of John Wesley*, will be cited as *Works*.

⁸James Fowler, "John Wesley's Development in Faith" in *The Future of the Methodist Theological Traditions*, ed. M. Douglas Meeks (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 172-192; Robert L. Moore, *John Wesley and Authority: A Psychological Perspective* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979).

⁹Ole E. Borgen, *John Wesley on the Sacraments* (Zurich: Publishing House of the United Methodist Church, 1972; reprint Grand Rapids: Francis and Taylor Press, 1985); John C. Bowmer, *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism* (London: Dacre Press, 1951); Steve Harper, *The Devotional Life in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Upper Room, 1983); Henry Hawthorn Knight, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life: A Contemporary Understanding of John Wesley's Means of Grace*, Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1987 (Ann Arbor, MI.: UMI, 1988); Henry Hawthorn Knight, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life: John Wesley and the Means of Grace* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1992); J. Ernest Rattenbury, *The Eucharistic Hymns of John and Charles Wesley* (London: Epworth Press, 1948).

participated in the Eucharist and encouraged Methodists to do the same.¹⁰ He acknowledged that he was faithful to the rubrics of the *Book of Common Prayer* and had a high opinion of its Eucharistic liturgy.¹¹ He was not only the leader of a Methodist movement, but an Anglican priest who did not want to be perceived as leading a nonconformist sect diverging greatly from the Church of England's liturgy.¹² Such practices undoubtedly shaped Wesley's understanding of "holy character."

This "liturgical" disposition affords Wesleyans a framework for understanding the postmodern self that may resist both Cartesian and deconstructionist understandings of identity. The framework is "social," but also theological; one where Schragg's categories of narrative, enactment, community, and transcendence intersect with particular clarity. The liturgical world, as will be shown, disrupts modern, insulated notions of the self, but provides a "gestalt" or liturgical "pattern" to give "space" for organizing diverse representations of the self into a whole identity. One can assert that the liturgical construction of the self provides an appropriate means for articulating postmodern identity. What that identity would look like may be discerned from three liturgical principles or "themes" of Wesley's day. The interrelated acts of *doxology*, *oblation* and *epiclesis* provide a matrix for theologically articulating the self in the postmodern world. The following explores the emergence of these themes in Wesley's day and applies them to personality theory for the contemporary setting.

Wesley's Liturgical World

John Wesley's appreciation of and participation in the Lord's supper cannot be understood unless attention is given to the liturgical context (and the disputes) that surrounded the Eucharist for three generations prior to his day. These ongoing formulations framed the creation and revisions of the *Book of Common Prayer* (*BCP*) and shaped Wesley's own liturgical sensibilities.¹³ The crafters of the *BCP* sought to create a world for Angli-

¹⁰Wesley, "The Duty of Constant Communion," *Works*, 3:427-439.

¹¹*The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church* (England, 1663; Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 1986), microfilm.

¹²Bowmer, 99-100; Wesley, "Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," *Works*, ed. Cragg, 11:79.

¹³Louis Weil, *Sacraments and Liturgy: The Outward Signs* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 3.

cans through the practices defined by the various rubrics (instructions) to the priests or ministers. The language of the *Prayer Book* indicated a particular view of *both* the nature of the Eucharistic community and the “real presence” of Christ. Wesley’s Eucharistic theology was deeply intertwined with these sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth-century constructions and debates over the sacrament and accompanying liturgy.¹⁴

Controversies over the actions of the liturgy continued across the centuries preceding Wesley.¹⁵ The structure of the *BCP*, however, began to shape a particular world of praise to God and celebration of the Eucharist. Each successive change in *BCP* included elements of conservatism and controversy.¹⁶ The intent here is not to rehearse all the nuances in the his-

¹⁴Dean G. Blevins, “Appendix: Anglican Eucharist in Historical Context,” *John Wesley and the Means of Grace: A Wesleyan Approach to Christian Religious Education*, Ph.D. diss. (Chicago: UMI, 1999), 409-429

¹⁵Cressy and Ferrell, 8-9; Dugmore, 48. For instance, Puritans often celebrated Communion at a simple table in the midst of the congregation. Archbishop William Laud created controversy in 1616 in Gloucester by moving the altar from center of the church to an area dominated by the clergy and demanding all to bow to it. For Puritans this was an act of idolatry.

¹⁶Cuming, 15, 30-44, 104; Echlin, 47-63; John Harper, *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 166-167; Ronald C. D. Jasper, *The Development of the Anglican Liturgy, 1662-1980* (London: SPCK, 1989), 1-7; Bard Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church* (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1961; reprint, Cleveland: William Collins Publishers, 1962), 236-243, 345-405. Cranmer’s first edition (1549) represented a shift from Latin to English vernacular, which actually began with other documents in 1534. This *BCP* was a rather conservative revision of the Roman Sarum or Salisbury Rite. Cranmer’s revision was due to immediate controversy, primarily with the inclusion of older ceremonies that could be misunderstood as representing the “Old Learning” of transubstantiation versus the “New Learning” of memorialism (Cuming, 15; Echlin, 47-63; Bard Thompson, 236-243). The controversy of the order of worship, including the order of Holy Communion, did not end. The *BCP* was revised in 1604 when the King James Bible was introduced into the readings, though the final Bible was not complete until 1611 (Cuming, 104). The *BCP* was again revised in 1662, just after the Restoration. This Prayer Book was created in an environment of conservatism and nostalgia for earlier times before Cromwell’s rebellion and Puritan rule of England. This last revision was the most moderate, accommodating neither High Church nor Puritan fully. The revision relied heavily on the 1604 text (Jasper, 1-7). While this text remained in observance during Wesley’s day, there were other books and manuals of prayer that challenged the 1662 *BCP*, both prior to its creation (including the Westminster Directory and the Savoy Conference liturgy) and following its inception. Later challengers included Scottish, Puritan, Nonjuror, and Unitarian groups (Cuming, 128-146; Jaspers, 1-39; Bard Thompson, 345-405).

tory of the *BCP* from 1542 to Wesley's day. The concepts that emerge from the historical process must be noted, however, since they did influence Wesley's practice, including the creation of many Methodist hymns. Even Wesley's abridgement of *The Sunday Service* for American Methodists was a conservative revision, primarily to accommodate the special circumstances of the American social environment and to include extemporary prayer as well as John and Charles Wesley's hymns.¹⁷ While the battle for the *Prayer Book* included a number of political and social agendas, three theological issues seem to summarize the struggle: (1) determining the culture of the Eucharistic community (*doxology*), (2) remembering Christ's sacrificial life in community (*oblation*), and (3) understanding the celebration of Christ's dynamic presence via the Holy Spirit at the table and in the world (*epiclesis*).¹⁸ Doxology provides a logical point for entering into these themes.

The Eucharistic Community as Doxology

Doxology, praise, and worship toward God remain key themes describing John Wesley's understanding not only of the focus of individual believers, but also of the character or culture of the liturgical community that received the Eucharist. Descriptive words were important in connection to the "speech act."¹⁹ While prayers often conveyed meaning, the actions did likewise, suggesting a particular intent to the liturgy.²⁰

¹⁷Bowmer, 211-215; James F. White, *Introduction to John Wesley's Sunday Service* (Nashville: Quarterly Review, 1984), 9-37. One must note that Charles Wesley had considerable influence on John in particular and Methodism in general. A limitation of this presentation is that much of Charles' influence is discussed only indirectly through studies of John. Such limitation is noted and probably should be remedied at a later time but it will suffice for now to acknowledge this influence. One obvious place where the Wesley voice "merges" is in the hymns that will be discussed in the future.

¹⁸Clifford W. Dugmore, *Eucharistic Doctrine in England from Hooker to Waterland* (London: SPCK, 1942); H. R. McAadoo and Kenneth Stevenson, *The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Anglican Tradition* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1997).

¹⁹Teresa Berger, *Theology in Hymns? A Study of the Relationship of Doxology and Theology According to A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodist* (1780), trans. Timothy E. Kimbrough (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 19, 163-165.

²⁰Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: A and C Black, 1945; Reprint, New York: Seabury Press, 1982), 2, 13; David Cressy and Lori Anne Ferrell, eds., *Religion and Society in Early Modern England: A Sourcebook* (London:

Wesley's personal sacramental practices actually agreed more with the Anglican High Church, the Nonjurors, than with the Nonconformists. Horton Davies notes that Wesley actually preferred the first *Prayer Book* of Edward VI written by Bishop Thomas Cranmer.²¹ Wesley favored Cranmer's collects and traditional lections when John wrote the *Sunday Service* for American Methodists.²² Wesley clearly observed practices consonant with the tenor of the earlier 1549 *Prayer Book*, even when at variance with the 1662 *Prayer Book*.

Doxology, for Wesley and others, emphasizes the corporate context of worship as praise to God. The broader liturgical setting that surrounded Holy Communion generated a "world" for the participant, a culture inhabited by the God of the Eucharist. The creation of this world included ritual actions, the organization of space and ordering of time, as well as some degree of involvement by the participants. The arrangement of furniture, including the altar, and the order of the liturgy often determined who would and would not be a part of the "world" of the Eucharist.²³ The Lord's Supper, in this interpretation, becomes a transformative event in

Routledge, 1996), 47-48; G. J. Cuming, *A History of Anglican Liturgy*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1982), 90, 122-123; Edward P. Echlin, *The Anglican Eucharist in Ecumenical Perspective: Doctrine and Rite from Cranmer to Seabury* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1968), 50-51, 84-88. The act of kneeling at an altar rail versus receiving the elements in a pew suggested something not only about the authority of the priest in relation to the congregation, but also suggested to communicants whether the presence of Christ was explicitly in the host (an issue of transubstantiation). This distinction created the addition of the celebrated "black rubric" in Cranmer's revised 1552 edition of the *BCP*. Cranmer, responding to a theological and political controversy over a particular liturgical action, created what Echlin believes is Cranmer's most mature view of "real presence" in order to mitigate a particular impression created by the act of kneeling.

²¹Cuming, 45-66; Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*. Book 2, Pt. 3 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961. Revised, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1996), 187; Jasper, 19.

²²James F. White, "Introduction," in *John Wesley's Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America* (Nashville: Quarterly Review, 1984), 27.

²³Dix, 598; John Harper, 156-165; Bard Thompson, 39-51, 98-101, 145-146, 293. As the Gallican ceremonies were added to the Mass, the liturgy around the Lord's Supper became more ornate. The idea of participating in the sacrifice (oblation) shifted away from the activity of the people toward a new understanding of the activity of Christ in the elements, which was mediated by the bishop or priest as the central "actors" of Eucharistic worship. Reactions by the Reformers also included liturgical reform in a variety of expressions.

which eschatology, the new heaven, becomes realized in the midst of the worshipping people. The arrangement of the worship “space” (from placement of the Supper, reception of the elements, and other actions) indicates something of the representation (even nature) of heaven on earth. Tension often occurred in determining who was able to participate in this new community.²⁴ How persons were included or excluded (including rulers, enemies and even the dead) and how they were treated in the service indicated how they were or would be received in heaven.²⁵

Wesley, who fenced the table while in Georgia, later opened communion to all willing to receive during the Methodist revival so that full participation in the liturgy was expected of all.²⁶ Although there is no detailed account of an early British Methodist Communion service, John Bowmer provides a detailed reconstruction of Wesley’s practice of the Lord’s Supper. Bowmer notes that Wesley expected an attitude of reverence when taking the Eucharist. He, however, included the unconventional practice of using hymns to establish the ethos of the service, and he inserted these hymns within the *BCP* liturgy. The result was a modified text, but a text intent on preserving the doxological ethos of worship that surrounded the Eucharist.²⁷ Doxology, in its fullest expression, became the overall structure that defined our “eternal” relationship with God, best *remembered* in the sacrificial act of Jesus Christ.

Oblation As Memory and Action

A second key aspect of Wesley’s liturgical life centered on the ongoing *anamnesis*, the remembrance, of God’s mighty works for the people,

²⁴Dix, 36-37; Keith Watkins, *The Great Thanksgiving: The Eucharistic Norm of Christian Worship* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1995), 94-128. The structure or “shape” of the liturgy appears to be fairly consistent since early apostolic times. It consisted of two major but separate parts, the *synaxis* (or gathering) followed by the Eucharist (thanksgiving), which fused into a single rite by the fourth century. Later both sections again began to separate into services of “Word” and “Table.” Each service also developed its own particular structures, rites, and ceremonial actions. The *BCP*, following this general pattern across its development, included variations of Morning Prayer (Matins) or a Sunday litany followed by the Eucharistic service.

²⁵Echlin, 35, 50-69.

²⁶Bowmer, 103-122.

²⁷Berger, 137-42.

particularly the oblation or sacrifice of Jesus Christ.²⁸ *Anamnesis*, the remembering or re-living of God's saving acts by the people of God, has long been advocated as a key act of liturgy. The central theme of this remembrance was Christ's oblation or sacrifice. While the term "oblation" often describes a specific theological controversy concerning Christ's ongoing sacrifice in the Lord's supper (memorialism versus transubstantiation), the issue actually involves the liturgical acts of the priest and the participation of the congregates as well.²⁹ The service of the Eucharist moved through what Gregory Dix called a "four-fold" action, beginning with the oblations of the people, including the bishop and presbyters (through offerings of bread, water and wine).³⁰ The second action included the consecration of the oblation, the invitation by the bishop to the people, and the Eucharistic prayer, originally a single prayer that explained the meaning of the Eucharist.³¹

Expressions of oblation and doxology often intertwined as people were called to celebrate Christ's sacrificial act.³² Doxology, normally associated with the *synaxis* as a gathering of praise to God, intertwined with actions of oblation implicitly in the very sacrificial intent of

²⁸Paul Bradshaw, *Early Christian Worship: A Basic Introduction to Ideas and Practice* (London: SPCK, 1996), 45-57.

²⁹Bard Thompson, 49-51.

³⁰Bard Thompson, 5. Sacrifice was modeled when the people baked and brought the bread to be used in Communion.

³¹Dix, 104-105. The final two actions included the receiving of Communion, first by the bishop and presbyters, then by the people (all standing and responding to the words of administration with "Amen"). After the Eucharist, the vessels were cleansed and the people were dismissed.

³²Cuming, 5, 80, 94-96; Dix, 397-433; Echlin 43-58; Bard Thompson, 41-44. Each element of the Eucharistic service was elaborated over the centuries but the general structure (from community sacrifice to Communion) marked the general movement of the service. At times the service would be modified to stress an element of the service. Cranmer, for instance, included an oblation (or Thanksgiving) to follow the consecration to demonstrate a response by the people as well as a benediction by the priest. The later ceremonial additions of incense (prayers rising before God), the drama of the fraction of the host, the allegorical emphasis of each vestment, utensil, motion, and human "actor" either heightened or obscured (for the sake of Mystery) the full meaning behind the "act" of the Eucharist. Many later revisions to these actions were designed to correct the perceived liturgical superstitions of the people (including corporeal presence in the elements). A deeper reality, however, lay behind these superstitions.

Eucharist (praise to the sacrificial lamb), inviting worshipers into a realm of praise and sacrifice.³³ Determining the relationship between Christ's sacrifice and the commensurate "sacrifice" of the priests or the people was often debated.³⁴ Oblation, for certain Anglicans, becomes a theme to describe the nature of Christian community.³⁵

The connection between *anamnesis* and oblation is documented particularly in the Wesleys' *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* where sacrament and sacrifice are twin themes of a number of the hymns.³⁶ For Wesley, oblation meant *mutual acts* of sacrifice by Christ and by His people. Wesley's Eucharistic Hymn 128 demonstrates that the oblations of Jesus and the "body" of Christ (the church) are commingled:

Saviour, to Thee our Lives we give,
Our meanest Sacrifice receive
And to thy own Oblation join,
Our suffering and triumphant Head,
Thro' all thy States thy Members lead,
And seat us on the Throne Divine.³⁷

Wesley notes in Hymn 146 that the mutuality of the oblations of Jesus and Jesus' people is not natural but rests in what Christ had first provided in His sacrifice. Nevertheless, "oblation" clearly implied both the act of

³³Dix, 265. Dix notes, "the Eucharist is the contact of time with the eternal fact of the Kingdom of God through Jesus. In it the church within time continually, as it were, enters into its own eternal being in that Kingdom, 'in Him,' as Body of Christ, *through His act*."

³⁴Dugmore, 90. Early Anglicans like Cranmer, as well as later liturgists like Daniel Waterland, seemed to place an emphasis on understanding the Church as a sacrificial community rather than emphasizing Christ's ongoing sacrifice in the Lord's Supper as the basis for atonement.

³⁵Bard Thompson, 45. A larger tension occurred in trying to resolve the creation of a particular community oriented toward the glory of God (doxology), yet also modeling the sacrificial character of Christ (oblation). Originally, public involvement included both an oblation by people (bringing the Communion bread as gifts), as well as a doxology offered by the priests and people through song, prayer, and benediction (including the "amen" of the people).

³⁶Geoffrey Wainwright, "Introduction," in *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, ed. John Wesley (Bristol: Felix Farley, 1745; reprint Madison, N.J.: The Charles Wesley Society, 1995), ix.

³⁷Wesley, *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, 110.

Christ and the actions (responses) of the Methodist people as well.³⁸ How these sacrificial actions are understood under the presence of the Holy Spirit invites the third movement of epiclesis.

Epiclesis and the “Real Presence” of Christ in the Eucharist

Anglicans constantly struggled to define exactly the presence of Christ and the exact nature of Christ’s work (sacrifice) in the Eucharist. This struggle emerged from the sacrificial theme already discussed, oblation, yet resulted in a distinct struggle to name both the presence of Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the liturgical life.³⁹ The struggle was to define the relationship between Christ’s actual presence *and* the Holy Spirit, who was often invoked to mediate the presence of Christ.

The theological issues are complex. They stem from the European Reformation’s rejection of Transubstantiation and the rejection of any understanding of the Eucharistic host as an ongoing propitiatory sacrifice.⁴⁰ Catholic doctrine placed Christ physically in the elements (transubstantiation) and asserted that the Easter sacrifice of Christ was repeated each time that the Eucharist was celebrated, so the Mass itself

³⁸Wesley, *Hymns on the Lord’s Supper*, 124-125. Wesley writes, “2. Thy Sacrifice with heavenly Powers/Replete, All-holy, All-divine/ Human and weak, and sinful Ours;/ How can the two Oblations join?/ 3. Thy Offering doth to Ours impart/Its Righteousness and Saving Grace/ While charg’d with all our Sins Thou art/ To Death devoted in our Place. 4. Our mean imperfect Sacrifice/ On This is a Burden thrown,/ Both in a Common Flame arise/And both in God’s Account are One.”

³⁹Dugmore, 16-19, 38-39, 68-70. From Thomas Cranmer and Richard Hooker to the “High Churchman”(e.g., Lancelot Andrewes and William Laud), an ongoing tension existed with the Puritans as Anglicans rejected existing interpretations (transubstantiation, consubstantiation, and memorialism), yet asserted that there was a “real presence” of Christ that must be revered (consecrated) in the elements. Dugmore acknowledges that his use of “High Churchman” is broad and somewhat imprecise in this circumstance (68-70).

⁴⁰Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 216-218; Cuming, 87-89, 98-101, 105; 137; Dugmore, 23-26; Heron, 85-107; Bard Thompson, 43-46. Oblation originally carried a more communal understanding, but from the tenth to thirteenth century the celebration of the Eucharist became almost the exclusive property of the priests, placing greater emphasis upon Christ’s propitiatory sacrifice repeated in the Eucharistic act. The Reformers, particularly the Geneva (and subsequent Puritan) reformers, reacted strongly to Catholic teachings on the Lord’s supper.

had salvific power.⁴¹ The Reformers rejected this understanding of the host and continuous sacrifice since it implied that Christ was no longer understood to be in heaven and that the original death of Christ was not sufficient for salvation.⁴² Alternative Eucharistic interpretations became necessary to counter Roman Catholic writings and practices during this period of the Reformation. Reformation responses to this Eucharistic controversy, however, were quite varied.⁴³ Anglicans and Puritans also struggled to define “real presence” through the liturgy, particularly in the lan-

⁴¹Alasdair I. C. Heron, *Table and Tradition: Toward an Ecumenical Understanding of the Eucharist* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 92-107. At first the doctrine of transubstantiation was not a part of the Catholic teaching of the Eucharist. As participants knelt to receive the host, and as the host was elevated as an act of reverence, people began to associate the elements with the actual physical presence of Jesus Christ. Often the highly nuanced Aristotelian interpretations of Aquinas and other early Catholic interpreters gave way to local, more literal views that stressed the carnality of the elements. These views were eventually reified into the Tridentine doctrine of transubstantiation.

⁴²McAdoo and Stevenson, 127; Thomas Cranmer, *An Answer by the Reverend Father in God Thomas Archbishop of Canterbury*, 352, quoted in Echlin, 12. The reformers, including Thomas Cranmer, challenged the idea that Christ’s sacrifice must be mediated through the priest rather than by faith. Cranmer writes, “The benefit hereof is in no man’s power to give any other, but every man must receive it at Christ’s hands himself, by his own faith and belief, as the prophet saith” (Cranmer, 12).

⁴³Cuming, 15-29; Dix, 629-636; Flew, 60-68; Heron, 108-129; Jaroslav Pelikan, *Reformation of Church and Dogma (1300-1700)*, vol. 4 of *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 188-217; Lawrence Hull Stookey, *Eucharist: Christ’s Feast with the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 55-56; Bard Thompson, 42-43, 144. Luther responded with a form of mediated presence known as consubstantiation, which remained close, but distinct from Catholic doctrine. Zwingli, Oecolampadius, and others denied any real presence. They preferred to see the Eucharist as strictly a memorial representation of the Christ’s original sacrificial act, which did not “convey grace, mediate the divine life or remit sins.” Calvin revised Zwingli’s position by allowing for the presence of Christ primarily through the Holy Spirit. Calvin then drew upon the Eastern tradition’s emphasis on epiclesis, the invocation of the Holy Spirit, rather than on the Western emphasis upon epiphany, the presence or manifestation of Christ through the words of institution. This epicletic emphasis, associated with later Puritans, was a type of Virtualism, where communicants became virtually present before Christ in heaven via the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit represented the Jesus of heaven as grace was communicated.

guage of the *Book of Common Prayer*.⁴⁴ Ultimately the Church of England separated into representative positions designated by “High” churchmen, opposing Puritans, and moderate Anglicans that Clifford Dugmore classifies as “Central” churchmen.⁴⁵ The Nonjurors, including John Johnson and Robert Nelson, added a particular emphasis upon the coming of the Holy Spirit as the one who transforms the bread and wine, into the spiritual-material representation of Christ.⁴⁶

Clifford Dugmore identifies Daniel Waterland as the eighteenth-century telos of Central Churchmanship. Waterland concludes a theological tradition that extends from Cranmer through both High and Central

⁴⁴Cressy and Ferrell, 3-4; Cuming, 70-81, Dugmore, 6-16; Echlin, 1-2, 17, 22; McAdoo and Stevenson, 28-31. Thomas Cranmer wrote the first *BCP* in 1548 but was forced to revise it by 1552, based upon Reformation critiques that too much Catholic influence was evident in the first draft. Cranmer, however, was then interpreted as a Zwinglian, based primarily upon his revised text. Other Anglicans entered the struggle to acknowledge the presence of Christ without giving too much away to either Reformed or Catholic interpretations. John Jewel, for instance, acknowledged the revised (1563) Article of Faith concerning the Lord’s supper (Article 28) that states, “The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith” (Dugmore, 6). Jewell, however, refused to accept that Christ was physically present in the bread, “the bread is on the table: the body is in heaven” (Dugmore 7). While clearly against transubstantiation, Jewell’s position was broad enough to accommodate different factions in England; it left the nature of Christ’s presence ambiguous. Dugmore notes that Richard Hooker, in 1597, also rejected transubstantiation, yet “insisted that by means of the sacrament there is a real participation in the body and blood of Christ” (Dugmore, 15). This participation, according to Hooker, occurs within the believer. He writes, “The real presence of Christ’s most blessed body and blood is not therefore to be sought for in the sacrament, but in the worthy receiver of the sacrament” (Dugmore, 22).

⁴⁵Cuming, 109-112; Dugmore, 38-60. The differences between High Church leaders, such as Lancelot Andrewes and Bishop William Laud, and the Puritans focused on issues of political authority (divine right of kings) and ecclesial leadership. Puritans, strong advocates of scripture and strong antagonists against “popery,” early viewed communion as a commemorative meal and came closer to a Receptionist view where Christ is received spiritually by faith. High churchmen who resisted the physical presence of Christ yet preferred to emphasize a spiritual presence, opposed this view. The High Church’s tradition of a spiritual presence that was not dependent upon faith of the believer also continued through the teachings of the Nonjurors.

⁴⁶Dugmore, 57-58, 144-154.

Churchmen to the period antecedent to Wesley's day. This tradition sought its own form of Eucharistic *via media* that stressed the "real presence" of Christ without giving into carnality, memorialism, or even virtualism. The presence of the Holy Spirit was also invoked, but primarily (at least for Waterland) for the sake of the communicants. Christ was present, spiritually, immediately, independently, interacting with the recipient to convey grace.⁴⁷

Bowmer and Davies note that Wesley was influenced by the view of a group of Nonjurors known as the "Usagers."⁴⁸ Davies summarizes the Usagers' perspective on the practices that are essential for the Eucharist.

Like them he (Wesley) believed in intinction (that is, the mixed chalice), the necessity of a prayer of oblation as appropriate for the re-presentation of Christ's sacrifice, the need for an "epiclesis" or explicit invocation of the Holy Spirit on the elements, and, finally, in prayers for the departed to be included.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Dugmore, 178-79. Waterland acknowledges no real change in the bread and wine but acknowledges that they contract a relative holiness by their consecration. The supper is a means of salvation (applying and sealing Christ's pardon), but this is predicated on faith and repentance in the believer. Waterland states that the presence of Christ is in the Eucharist. Dugmore then offers a fascinating quote by Waterland concerning the words of institution ("this is my body, this is my blood . . .") as a symbolic "grammar" for each succeeding Eucharistic celebration. Dugmore quotes Waterland, "But the words then spoken by our blessed Lord are conceived to operate now as virtually carrying in them a rule, or a promise, for all succeeding ages of the Church. . . . If the elements were then sanctified . . . and if the worthy receivers were then understood to partake of the true spiritual food upon receiving the symbolical; and if all this was then implied in the words 'This is my body' &c.m [sic], so it is now" (Dugmore 177-78). Taken collectively, the rule provides the ongoing motivation for participation in the sacrament, trusting in Christ's ongoing consecration of the elements. The promise (like any other form of investiture such as a land deed or signet ring) is that one day the communicants' subsistence will be guaranteed by Christ as they live and feast in heaven. Waterland also opposes the Nonjuror's interpretation of the Holy Spirit's joining with the elements. Waterland, drawing from Hooker's emphasis on the presence of Christ within the believer, believes that the Holy Spirit is present not for the sake of the sacrament, but for the sake of the believer.

⁴⁸Bowmer, 35; Davies, 187; Jasper, 28-39.

⁴⁹Horton Davies, 187.

The controversy over the presence of Christ was at the center of the Eucharist, but Wesley seems to understand that Jesus' presence was directly related to the presence of the Holy Spirit. Henry Knight notes that, as such, Wesley retained a form of virtualism (though not the same as Calvinist virtualism).⁵⁰ Wesley's Eucharistic Hymn 72 bears witness to the invocation of the Holy Spirit to consecrate the elements. Hymn 150, however, reveals Wesley's understanding that the Holy Spirit also "consecrates" the larger "body" of Christ, the congregation. Wesley writes:

O let the Spirit sanctify
Whate'er to Thee we now restore,
And make us with thy Will comply,
With all our Mind and Soul and Power,
Obey Thee as thy Saints above
In perfect Innocence and Love.

It would appear that the epiclesis, for Wesley, was an invocation not only to transform the elements into Christ's body and blood but also the community of faith. The concept finds future expression in many of Wesley's sermons, where transformation and power for daily living are directly connected with the presence of the Holy Spirit. What is remarkable for this study is that this "transformation" finds the same source as that of the "sanctifying" of the Eucharistic elements. It would appear that Wesley's liturgical understanding could include the epicletic "call" of the congregation to be the body of Christ.

The revisions of the *BCP* mirrors an historical Anglican struggle to both define the presence of Christ and also to reconcile the tension of the sacrificial yet also eschatological community that celebrated the Eucharist. Wesley was a recipient of these struggles in his own liturgical practice and writings. At least three themes emerge from this liturgical "world," doxology, oblation, and epiclesis. All three themes are interdependent yet also distinct enough to pursue as a framework for exploring the liturgical "self." They are also themes that appear consistent with Wesley's life and thought. How these themes "play" in a postmodern notion of the self is the next challenge.

⁵⁰Henry Knight, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life: A Contemporary Understanding of John Wesley's Means of Grace*. Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1987 (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI, 1988), 191.

The Liturgical Self: Diversity in Harmony

Beginning with the understanding of the diverse self, Wesleyans may embrace an alternative reading of human personality that is theologically rather than socially grounded. Such a view invites a new set of dialog partners from the Radical Orthodoxy movement. Their presence is appropriate since many of the theorists, like Wesley in his modernist days, attempt to script the world theologically, resisting secular “space.” The resultant view need not deny the influence of society in the construction of the self, yet presses on to name a particular construction that is grounded theologically in the life and liturgy of the faith community. The underlying assumption, as with Radical Orthodoxy, is that this liturgy, this blending of aspiration and action, is more “true” to reality as it names the self in participation with God. The self is seen as theologically rather than socially constructed. The result is a diverse personality, with various roles, identities, and ego states, held together in peaceful theological harmony. This interpretation is not always “true” for all persons. Fragmentation and diffusion are also possible due to the brokenness of the world, but theorists should not assume a necessary “ontology of violence.”⁵¹ The interpretation of the self-in-harmony, however, provides a more “real” theological reading of personality than either modern or secular postmodern interpretations.

The metaphor of harmony does imply a dynamic understanding of the self. Catherine Pickstock argues that the liturgy itself portrays this dynamic through certain theological elements of the Roman rite, adulation and abasement (which will be discussed later under the framework of doxology and oblation). These elements are held in constant tension, thus opening the self to a form of “de-centering” through a constant re-articulation of the various elements of the self in conversation with the liturgy.⁵² Such a dynamic interplay constantly frustrates the modern, Cartesian notion of the self. This dynamic, however, occurs within an overall frame-

⁵¹John Milbank, “Postmodern Critical Augustinianism: A short summa in forty-two responses to unasked questions.” In *The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader*, Graham Ward ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997); *Theology and Social Theory*, 278-325; Pickstock, *After Writing*, 101-118. Milbank, Pickstock and others oppose most postmodern theorists because of their implicit nihilism, particularly among deconstructionists, that favors a violent reading of reality that results in fragmentation rather than harmony.

⁵²Pickstock, *After Writing*, 189.

work, the liturgy, so that the diversity of the self is held within liturgy's aesthetic, musical movements and counter-movements that are complementary rather than dualistic.

Describing the Liturgically Constructed Self

Noting the interplay of these themes, it is necessary to “suspend” the dynamic if only to explore the three possible liturgical movements that form and inform the diversity of the self. While the elements are deeply interrelated, much like the Trinity, there are distinctive themes within each “movement” that inform certain notions of the self. Entering into these interdependent movements through a celebration of praise again seems to be the most appropriate approach.

The Doxological Self. Doxology provides a “double-movement” through the orientation of heaven and the otherness of prayer. Doxology, worship, is the representative expression of “heaven-come-down” into the presence of the community.⁵³ In the praise and adulation of God the worshiping community finds its focal point of praise in the Trinitarian God. The doxological movement includes a transformation of the broader liturgical “space” (the sanctuary, furniture, rubrics of the minister, actions of the people, even the Christian time and season) into a transfigured reality marked by the presence of God and best described as “heaven.” This ordering is different from the spatialization of both the modernists and the secular postmodernists, who demean reality by reducing it to a “map” or formula that may be used for subjective control.⁵⁴ Instead, all possible attempts to order time and space are transformed into a reality beyond human definition.

The doxological moment is also understood as a form of prayer. As an act of prayer, worship is offered “outward” toward God who seems at times to be “above” or “beyond” the congregation. Worship, as doxological petition instead of praise, seems to seek God not in the midst of the people but apart, if not aloof, from the struggles of the people. Doxological prayer can become a seeking after God to intervene in the life of the people.

The doxological self can mirror both the “world” creating and the otherworldly “searching” of the congregation. First the celebration of the

⁵³Don E. Saliers, *Worship as Theology: a Foretaste of Glory Divine* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 41-42.

⁵⁴Pickstock, *After Writing*, 47-100.

glory of God troubles a Cartesian self, as the *certainty* of who “I” am is lost in a cacophony of praise to God.⁵⁵ This “troubling” of insularity does not result in the loss of the self but does reveal the necessity of a new “coherence” organized around the act of worship. The collection of the people of God into a transformed community has not only interpersonal implications (where one understands oneself based on intersubjective understanding of the other), but also intra-personal implications of relating diverse aspects of the self as a collective “community.” As the diverse self becomes “lost in wonder, joy and praise,” the diverse “elements” of personal identity cohere into a transformed community of the person. “Heaven” not only embraces the various expressions of the self but transforms them into a new constellation marked by God, just as the worshipping community is transformed into one voice, one heart for God. The diverse self is collected together but also transformed, marking a convictional moment through an intense, focused, gestalt of transformation.⁵⁶

Worship as doxological, petitionary prayer invites the dispersion of the self in liturgical form. Early psychologists, such as William James, have noted that some forms of prayer can be seen as transmarginal or dissociative experiences.⁵⁷ The mind, in prayer, moves beyond its “self” in an attempt to seek God through imaginative thought.⁵⁸ The very diversity of the self is then encouraged in this form of prayer where doxology

⁵⁵Berger, 160.

⁵⁶James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1981), 267-291; James E. Loder, *The Transforming Moment*, 2nd ed. (Colorado Springs, Co.: Helmers and Howard Publishers, 1989), 35-65. This doxological moment resembles descriptive elements of both James Loder and James Fowler in their attempts to describe transformation.

⁵⁷William James. *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Longman, Green and Co., 1902; reprint, 1985, Penguin Classics), 511-517; Michael G. Kenny, “Multiple Personality and Spirit Possession,” *Psychiatry*, 44 (November 1981): 337-358.

⁵⁸Sharon Parks, *The Critical Years: the Young Adult Search for a Faith to Live By* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 113; Michael Polanyi, “Tacit Knowing: its bearing on some problems of philosophy,” in *Knowing and Being*, ed. Marjorie Grene (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 53-69; Harold O. Rugg, *Imagination* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963), 39-61. Theorists studying imagination have argued that imagination is both a tacit and a transmarginal state with the ability to cohere various musings into one unitive thought.

implies a type of extended mysticism of the “self.” It may be noted that the doxological self might provide an interesting interpretation of mystical prayer (often thought antithetical to the ordered life of a congregation). While certain mystical moments may be seen as unitive for the personality, the act of prayer includes a type of dissociation where the unitive experience often seems to come from “outside” rather than from within the self. The diversity of the self (the seeking self) is then held in “tension” with the gathered moments of transformation. This tension is further accentuated by the call to “re-member” one’s identity based upon the living reminder of Christ’s sacrificial act, resulting in the next movement of the oblation or sacrificial self.

The Sacrificial Self. As noted previously, oblation defines both a liturgical “memory” (*anamnesis*) of Christ’s sacrificial act and the corresponding sacrificial “response” of the people through their offerings.⁵⁹ The very sacrificial act of God again troubles any notion of the Cartesian self. The worship of the sacrificial Lamb reminds each person of the need to have the “I” of personal identity recede in the face of the “You” or otherness of God.⁶⁰ Yet *anamnesis* invites a “re-gathering” of the diverse self as well.

The church is both called to “remember” what God has done in Christ and to “respond” in gratitude to this historic act. In the early church the “offerings of the people” were often the Eucharistic elements themselves. This human, corporate response of the gift of the elements, however, participated in the eventual re-creation of the sacramental elements (transformation even if not transubstantiation), so that gratitude was transformed into the humble expression of the self-sacrificing God.⁶¹ Oblation then calls the diverse self to begin in memory. The singularity of Christ’s act provides one focal point for organizing the “self” across time. The remembrance of Jesus points to a particular narrative (scripture) that invites the “self” to participate within the story of God. The competing

⁵⁹Paul Bradshaw, 45.

⁶⁰Berger, 160. Teresa Berger references this as “the I is sacrificed in Doxology.” This particular sacrificial move, however, is not merely the resignation of sinful pride or the self-deprecation of personal self worth; it is the reality of the limits of an insular, independent personhood devoid of an interrelationship between humanity and God.

⁶¹Pickstock, *After Writing*, 190-191.

narratives within the diverse human self, along with corresponding images and roles, are linked within the larger narrative of salvation history via this memory.⁶²

This narrative construal of the human personality is balanced by the self's outward giving or "personal" oblation. Theologically it is the open, sacrificial disposition of the self that allows for a continual "interplay" of the various aspects of the self into a sacrificial/sacramental reality. While the self is organized around a particular narrative, the self's diverse parts practice a form of "hospitality," resisting the dominance of one role or image.⁶³ The various roles of the human person express themselves not as a violent dysfunction but as a gentle expression of human "giftedness."⁶⁴ Gratitude becomes the orientation of the self, even in accepting its ongoing diversity. The oblation of the "self" creates "space" not only for new roles, new personal expressions, but for the humble interplay of the existing diversity of personality. Memory and humility then collaborate in this second liturgical movement to both provide a meta-narrative of coherence and a humble, open disposition of gratitude. This gratitude invites one to explore the nature of the gracious, sacrificial God to whom worshipers call and are called. The calling, or *epiclesis*, reveals the nature of Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit in shaping identity.

The Epi­cletic Self. *Epiclesis*, the third liturgical term, essentially describes the invocation of the Holy Spirit as well as the invocation or "calling" of Christ (i.e., the consecration of the elements), and also the petitionary prayers of the people.⁶⁵ This calling serves both as a summons to transform the elements and also to bind the community. In keeping with the Greek Orthodox tradition, it is the presence of the Holy Spirit and not the words of institution that transform the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. The controversy of adequately describing this transformation (via transubstantiation, consubstantiation, or a virtual "real presence") does not diminish the act of transformation itself. In some way, Christ is invoked . . . although the elements remain

⁶²Herbert Anderson and Edward Foley, *Mighty Stories and Dangerous Rituals: Weaving Together the Human and the Divine* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers, 1998), 3-56.

⁶³Pickstock, *After Writing*, 176-177.

⁶⁴Personality "quirks" may be a part of one's giftedness.

⁶⁵Bradshaw, 45; Pickstock, *After Writing*, 180.

apparently identical to their original form. In a sense they are “both” bread and wine as well as body and blood.

The presence of the Holy Spirit is not only for the transformation of the Eucharistic host, but also for the binding of the community. The biblical witness reminds the congregation that they are *also* the body of Christ, bound together by the Spirit of God in order to pray for and attend to the needs of the “saints.” The invocation of the Holy Spirit acknowledges the ingathering of the community through the presence of the Spirit, which is also the ingathering of the body of Christ as a part of the “real presence” of Christ as the church. Catherine Pickstock notes that the scandal of transubstantiation may not be the change in the host but the broader sacramental transformation of all reality into the body of Christ.⁶⁶ The invocation “This is my body” includes the Christian community and perhaps ultimately the whole of creation.

Theorists exploring the notion of the epicletic personality first acknowledge the strange reality of the coexistence of elements of the self that, much like the elements of the Eucharist, appear to be more than they seem. The difference (following Derrida and Deluze) that marks these elements of human personality isn’t reconciled through coercion, but through mysterious transformation.⁶⁷ The diversity of the epicletic self is therefore not anchored in violence but in mystery. There is a reality to the “presence” of the person much as there is an acceptance of the “real presence” of Christ in the host.

The diversity of the self is also bound together by the same Holy Spirit that binds the body of Christ, the church. Here the metaphor of “body” can almost be taken quite literally as each person is “embodied.” This epicletic “body” is more than flesh and bone, but it is *also* flesh and bone. In a liturgical framework the emphasis for embodiment comes not only from creation but also from the “gathering” of the self through the Holy Spirit. This liturgical framework explains why any spirit/body dualism makes little sense either from the perspective of creation or from a pneumatological perspective that takes seriously the body of Christ. The self is mysteriously diverse yet gathered together as one expression of the ongoing gathering of the body of Christ.

⁶⁶Pickstock, *After Writing*, 259-266.

⁶⁷Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 306-313.

One caution is offered. This “binding” or gathering by the Holy Spirit of the various aspects of the diverse self both physically and psychologically should not be perceived as a strange form of mysticism (which is more a result of the limitation of the author’s grasp of descriptive language). Instead, this portrayal should lead to an epicletic “self” awareness that implies that each person is able to “embody” the very transformative, sacrificial, empowered life suggested by the liturgy as he or she follows the Holy Spirit into God’s world. Holiness of heart and life becomes more than an ethical ideal; it becomes the trajectory of the liturgical life, lived out daily in participation with God.

Each liturgical element, doxology, oblation, and epiclesis, interacts with the others. The variations of the themes suggested above become complex, weaving a mosaic of the self that harmoniously embraces diversity and collectivity. The diverse self may not be dismissed as dysfunctional (as theorists embracing multiple personality disorder might suggest); instead the diverse self is understood as mysterious, seeking, and hospitable. The diverse self, however, is not deconstructed. Instead, identity is bound together, anchored in memory and ultimately transformed. This theological/liturgical construal of the self produces a musical quality that “plays” the various expressions of the self into a gracious, dynamic harmony that is essentially the work of the “people” as one body in Christ. Ultimately the “collectivity” of the congregation and the “collectivity” of the person seek similar expressions from the same liturgy.

Wesleyans and Christian Ministry

Wesleyans who embrace this project of re-visioning the self from a liturgical viewpoint will hopefully recognize the desire to situate the self theologically within the life of God in a way that is consistent with the life of community of faith. Liturgical formation must begin in the theological understanding that the self begins in a community that receives its identity as a gift from God, and “the person” then intentionally seeks to model this theological reality. Pickstock writes:

Only the gift from above does not have to be defended, and only this gift gives the community as peace: the integration of time and space, individual with collective, universal with locality. The gift is not an abstract liberal formula which can be fully appropriated, nor a spatial plot which we can mythically circumscribe, but a divine person, Christ himself, who

must depart from us in order that we receive him as the gift of peace “dispersed.”⁶⁸

As such the “social construction” of the self cannot be defined coercively, but in peace and harmony. Liturgical themes help express both the diversity of the self and the harmony that may emerge in their collectivity. While the themes explored above are shaped by Wesley’s liturgy, Wesleyan ministers from a host of other Pan-Methodist traditions might also begin to explore their liturgical practices for similar emphases.

Wesleyans may wonder if a good liturgy is the only thing necessary for discipleship. Frankly, it is probably a good start as long as the themes of doxology, oblation, and epiclesis reveal diverse yet appropriate expressions within the large “family” of Pan-Methodist traditions. Wesleyans, however, might expand the notion of “liturgy” to the total life of the church and its formative expressions. There are cautions to this “formative” approach to discipleship (particularly how leaders might abuse power coercively), but formation does seem consistent with Wesley’s approach to discipleship.⁶⁹ Discerning how the Christian community models the themes of oblation, doxology and epiclesis might give new understanding to previous ministerial practices. In the shifting sands of postmodernity, the idea of a liturgically constructed self might provide a new way of thinking of personhood and community that is much more theologically scripted and more faithful to Wesley’s life-world. Re-conceptualizing key Wesleyan themes in light of this liturgical construction might provide new energy for traditional discussions, including Wesley’s understanding of holiness of heart and life for individuals and for the entire community. Ultimately, exploring Wesley’s “practices” of sacrament and discipleship as liturgical approaches provide fresh insight to the interdependence of worship renewal, Christian formation, and social witness.

⁶⁸Pickstock, *After Writing*, 178.

⁶⁹Dean G. Blevins, “Resident Aliens and the Exercise of Power: Toward a Wesleyan Postmodern Education,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 34, no. 2 (Fall 1999), 175-195; Sondra Higgins Matthaëi, *Making Disciples: Faith Formation in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000). Dr. Matthaëi’s text is an excellent example of Wesleyan formation within a sacramental framework, while my article discusses the limits of formation and the need for ongoing discernment as a part of discipleship.

A WESLEYAN CONCEPT OF “PERSON”

by

M. William Ury

I want, I value, I preach the love of God and man. These are my “favourite tenets” (if you will have the word), “more insisted on” by me ten times over, both in preaching and writing, than any or all other subjects that ever were in the world.¹

Every theologian tied to a tradition with giants in the past must fight the dual nemeses of hagiography or deconstruction. John Wesley never intended to solve every theological debate, but neither did he miss interpreting for his contemporaries any of the major ideological concerns of the church of his day. There is much more to Wesley than we have as yet accessed. The layers run deep in him. Anyone who reads Wesley is soon intimidated by his encyclopedic knowledge, the brilliance of his logic and, maybe most apropos for the topic at hand, the ability to communicate discrete spiritual realities at apprehendable levels. Personal response to the three-personed God is the grammar of Wesley’s ministry. He considered a day of study, which began at 5 p.m. and ended at 8 p.m. only because it hurt his eyes to read more, to be a day of rest if he only preached in the morning and evening.

At the dawn of this century it behooves us to see if there are themes in Wesley’s thought that either tangentially or overtly support a vital system of thought and life for the church in the world that now is. It is the

¹Vol. XII: 62-63.

thesis of this paper that the paradigm he points us toward is more redolent with implications for the postmodern (ultramodern) person than any other present theological statement.²

The Need for a Wesleyan Statement on Personhood

Any cursory review of present theological "fronts" reveals resurgence in Trinitarian engagement. This dialogue has elicited another round of debate on personhood.³ Despite its importance, one stultifying absence remains, namely a strong Wesleyan statement on personhood. Granted, the topic is enervatingly subtle. It is hard to dive into mystery and feel that one has touched on every facet in an adequate manner. Anyone seeking to minister to today's world will find the issues surrounding consensual personhood, if integrated into one's theological perspective, foundational to a full-orbed ministry in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It now remains to be seen if there are elements in the Wesleyan corpus which might assist us in gaining a deeper understanding of Wesley's view of both the divine and, as a consequence, the human person.

The Trinity, for Wesley, is more than a liturgical backdrop, more than a repetition of Anglican orthodoxy.⁴ What is interesting to consider is the doxological starting point of any Wesleyan concept of Trinitarian person-

²In a previous foray into this arena, it has been suggested that Wesley viewed Scripture in a Trinitarian, and thus a highly personal way. He interpreted reality and thus the Scripture in a way that was immediately personal and thus broader in its scope than his immediate predecessors. "The 'Personal' Hermeneutics of John Wesley," unpublished paper given at the Wesleyan Theological Society Annual Meeting, November 4, 1994. Fruit has also been evident while surveying the variety of insightful references to the persons of the Trinity in both the *Notes* and *Sermons*. "Wesleyan Perspectives on the Trinity: Transcripts of the Trinity in the Twenty-First Century," unpublished paper given at a conference on Wesleyan Theology and the 21st Century, Asbury College, Oct. 2, 2001.

³Other terms equal to and similar to person are often used: e.g., soul, individual, personal identity, self.

⁴See "A Collection of forms of prayer, for every day in the week, Sunday morning." Vol. XI:203. Also see "The sum of all is, we are to 'honour the Son even as we honour the Father.' " We are to pay him the same worship as we pay to the Father. We are to love him with all our heart and soul; and to consecrate all we have and are, all we think, speak, and do, to the THREE-ONE GOD, Father, Son, and Spirit, world without end! Vol. VII:296

hood. Take, for instance, *Hymns on the Trinity*.⁵ In my short acquaintance with the progress of Christian thought I have not found anything remotely comparable to the sustained poetic theologizing on the Three-One God as in this source by both John and Charles Wesley. The biblical groundwork was laid by William Jones in the mid-eighteenth century, but the Wesley's explored both the theological essence and the practical/ethical extrapolations of such a doctrine of God in remarkable style.⁶ In a methodology that mirrors the early church's worshipful appropriation of the mighty acts of God in Christ through the Spirit, the Wesleys offered a profoundly personal context for true worship. Worship "properly and directly consists in the knowledge and love of God, as manifested in the Son of his love, through the eternal Spirit."⁷ They recognized the need for parishioners to be at home with the Trinitarian Persons. What follows is an exploration of several cogent areas that might inform a Wesleyan concept of the person.

The Foundation of True Personhood: The Relationship of Holiness and Love

The debate over a Wesleyan systematic principle is unending, at times unnerving, but always elucidative. Wesley would agree with the ancients that the essence of what is divine is Holy, but the emphasis upon the descriptors of basic divine reality informs every foundational statement that arise from it. The question remains however. What is it at the center of divine life before creation? The church has emphasized two crucial essence statements in Scripture, God is holy (Lv. 11:44) and God is love (1 Jn. 4:8).⁸ An intriguing theological recapitulation in our genera-

⁵John attributes the hymns to Charles. Vol. XIII:30. Frank Baker placed this work as produced by the Wesley's in their *Hymns and Sacred Poems* in April, 1767. He also proffers no commitment as to their authorship, assigning it to an anonymous author. But a cursory comparison of their other hymnic offerings indicates that "the poet" referred to in the preface is a euphemism for Charles' participation in the project. So little work has been done on this that it is difficult to find what actually transpired in its production. John tells us when and where these hymns were published in 1768, XIV:336.

⁶William Jones of Nayland (1726-1800) formed the basis of this paean of praise by the Wesleys in his work, *The Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity*.

⁷Vol. VI:432.

⁸This love is revealed in both of the Testaments, though it is the holiness of God that provides the basis of a progressively revelatory picture of God. The love of God is discerned a holy love. Dt. 7:6-9, Ps. 95:3-5, Is. 43:14, Ez. 36:23,

tion is the reconsideration of the claim that this love is primarily related to the essence of the triune Godhead and as such is fundamental to a proper understanding of reality before it ever becomes creatorial or redemptive love. Wesley, unpretentiously, almost totally unconsciously weaves them together. Take, for example, this statement:

What is holiness? Is it not essentially love? the love of God, and of all mankind? love producing "bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering?" And cannot God shed abroad this love in any soul without his concurrence, antecedent to his knowledge or consent? And supposing this to be done, will love change its nature? Will it be no longer holiness? This argument can never be sustained, unless you would play upon the word habits. Love is holiness wherever it exists.⁹

It is not intrusive to estimate from this decidedly soteriological framework that the "consequence" (love) is based upon a preceding "idea" (holiness). But, if pushed, the line between holiness and love was only a distinction and never a division for John Wesley. More to the point theologically, consider his commentary upon the prayer of our Lord as he views the meaning of holiness.

"Hallowed be thy name."—This is the first of the six petitions, whereof the prayer itself is composed. The name of God is God himself, *the nature of God*, so far as it can be discovered to man. It means, therefore, *together with his existence, all his attributes or perfections; —His Eternity; . . . —His Fullness of Being, . . . —His omnipresence; —His omnipotence; . . . —His wisdom. . . .*

But note how he ends this discussion of God's holiness which may pertain to what he has referred to above as God's "existence":

His Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, discovered to us in the very first line of his written word; *bara' 'elohim* —literally, the Gods created, a plural noun joined with a verb of the

Hb. 1:12. R. N. Flew confirms the same interconnection in the New Testament. *The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1934), 116. See Thomas C. Oden, *Systematic Theology: Volume One, The Living God* (New York: Harper and Row), 118-126.

⁹Vol. IX:292.

singular number; as well as in every part of his subsequent revelations, given by the mouth of all his holy Prophets and Apostles; —His essential purity and holiness; —and, *above all, his love*, which is the very brightness of his glory.¹⁰

Wesley may not clearly indicate a distinction between attribute and essence, but the logic flows this way: Trinity, holiness, love. Whether holiness precedes love or not in the ultimate nature of things will never be solved. One does not solve any triune mystery. Scripture places them both at the heart of reality.

What is crucial is that Wesley continually incorporated all the attributes of God in a balanced way, but he placed love in immediate proximity to the essence of holiness.¹¹ On the importance of love in relation to other attributes, he stated:

It is not written, “God is justice,” or “God is truth” (although he is just and true in all his ways). But it is written, “God is love,” love in the abstract, without bounds; and “there is no end of his goodness.”¹²

As has been underscored so often and many times overstated, Wesley disavowed theological speciousness.¹³ All things being equal, Wesley saw

¹⁰Vol. V. 334-35 (underlining is author’s addition).

¹¹Wesley offers an interesting definition of virtue in “An Israelite Indeed.” “This then is real, genuine, solid virtue. Not truth alone, nor conformity to truth. This is a property of real virtue; not the essence of it. Not love alone; though this comes nearer the mark: For love, in one sense, “is the fulfilling of the law.” No: Truth and love united together, are the essence of virtue or holiness. God indispensably requires “truth in the inward parts,” influencing all our words and actions. Yet truth itself, separate from love, is nothing in his sight. This theological balance is the burden of Allan Coppedge’s fine biblical foray into a panorama of holiness in *Portraits of God* (Downer’s Grove: IVP, 2001).

¹²The quote continues: “His love extends even to those who neither love nor fear him. He is good, even to the evil and the unthankful; yea, without any exception or limitation, to all the children of men. For “the Lord is loving” (or good) “to every man, and his mercy is over all his works.” XI:227.

¹³The over-emphasis on his pastoral/evangelist distinction between the “fact” and the “manner” of Trinitarian reality must be handled very carefully. First, the series of sermons in which this is found in Vol. VI indicates that he is not adverse to intricate theological statements. These include eternity, the fall, predestination, and eschatological judgment. It may be resignation, or it may be a thorough understanding of the Christian tradition (cf. Vol. IV: 149) which brings Wesley to say, “I

the potential demise of spiritual life in any form of scholasticism. Its problem, he said, lay in its lack of orthopraxy. Concerning it, he avers, "If anything is wanting, it is the application, lest it should appear to be a merely speculative doctrine, which has no influence on our hearts or lives."¹⁴ Beyond his statements that the "manner" of the Trinitarian inner life was of no real interest because it was not specifically revealed, one is hard pressed to find much reflection at all on the divine nature. We are stopped from full-fledged rejection of intricate Trinitarian concepts because Wesley sees the dangers in non-consensual dalliances. Yet, he is concerned about encroaching Sabellianism, as in this statement regarding the inexorable nature of the language of the church: "As to the manner (wherein the whole mystery lies), I believe nothing about it. The quaint device of styling them three offices rather than persons, gives up the whole doctrine."¹⁵

It would be anachronistic to force the implications of twentieth-century trinitarianism upon Wesley. As in most of his mature thought, it is not difficult to imagine that he would be critical of Augustinian psychological analogies for the Trinity. On the other hand, the basic criticisms of the social analogy of the Trinity were surely known by one so facile with the history of Christian thought. If it is accurate to presuppose that inner-trinitarian relationships are the foundation, the source, for all meaningful concepts of personal love, then one is forced to inquire how it is conceivable that the creature would experience a more personal or "fulfilling" reality than the Source of that very Life in a statement like the following:

We must be holy of heart, and holy in life, before we can be conscious that we are so; before we can have the testimony of our spirit, that we are inwardly and outwardly holy. But we must love God, before we can be holy at all; this being the root of all holiness.¹⁶

Would it be equally true to say of God that at the root of all holiness is the co-inherent love of the three persons of the blessed Trinity?

do not insist upon any one's using the word Trinity, or Person. I use them myself without any scruple, because I know of none better." Vol. VI: 200. See his other caveats on Trinitarian language at Vol. XII: 293 and XIII:30.

¹⁴XIII:30.

¹⁵XII:293.

¹⁶What is holiness? Is it not essentially love, the love of God and of all mankind, the love producing "bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering"?

As Wesleyans continue to reflect on the unique aspects of our particular branch of thought about God, it would seem that this interrelationship is of momentous consequence. It is foolish to reduce necessary truths to an aetiological conundrum. We must affirm that holiness is not a term of nominal abstract transcendence, but the first principle of the revealed nature of God, namely the love that issues from the eternal life of the three divine persons. What should one make of the following statements?

Love existed from eternity, in God, the great ocean of love. Love had a place in all the children of God, from the moment of their creation: They received at once, from their gracious Creator, to exist and to love.¹⁷

Here is the height, here is the depth, of Christian experience! “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.”¹⁸

That he should be pure in heart, even as God is pure; perfect as his Father in heaven was perfect: That he should love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength; that he should love every soul which God had made, even as God had loved him: That by this universal benevolence, he should dwell in God, (who is love,) and God in him.¹⁹

We are immediately introduced to a broader paradigm of reality regardless of Wesley’s reserve about abstruse ontological statements. Everywhere his highest view of God as holy love permeates his concepts of recreative grace. Whether it is possible to assert that he makes the connection between economic and immanent divine life remains to be seen. However, in light of the assistance of twentieth-century trinitarianism, it is apparent that the definitive phrase of Wesleyan soteriology is a reality based upon the triune life of holy love. Take for instance this typical ontological contrast:

It [regeneration] must infer not only an outward change, from stealing, lying, and all corrupt communication; but a thorough change of heart, an inward renewal in the spirit of our mind.

¹⁷Vol. V:463. Wesley only uses this analogy of an “ocean of love” once in the corpus apart from the hymns.

¹⁸Vol. XIII:55.

¹⁹Vol. VI:67.

Accordingly, "the old man" implies infinitely more than outward evil conversation, even "an evil heart of unbelief," corrupted by pride and a thousand deceitful lusts. Of consequence, the "new man" must imply infinitely more than outward good conversation, even "a good heart, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness;" a heart full of that faith which, working by love, produces all holiness of conversation.²⁰

The inseparability of holiness and love is replete in the work of John Wesley.²¹ Besides the hundreds of places where the two concepts are verbally joined, there are hundreds more where they are clearly the major topics of the theological thrust of the context.²² These coordinate themes are found specifically in a high percentage of the sermons.²³ The personal experience of holiness and love is a constant refrain in Wesley's description of the Christian life.²⁴ Another intriguing find is that this particular pair of essence statements is found at the end, or the climax of some of Wesley's major arguments and calls to spiritual commitment.²⁵ Imagine closing an evangelistic message with Trinitarian life being that which is

²⁰Vol. I:214. See also Vols. VI: 64, VIII: 47-48, XII: 416, V: 184.

²¹Many examples could be given. One stark example is, "You want love; you want holiness. The Lord God supply all your wants from the riches of his mercy in Christ Jesus!" Vol. XII:191. Another, "That at what time soever faith is given, holiness commences in the soul. For that instant "the love of God" (which is the source of holiness) "is shed abroad in the heart." Vol. VIII:68-69.

²²Research has revealed that there are over two hundred and twenty places where the terms "holiness" and "love" are found within the same phrase, sentence, or to the farthest extent, paragraph. There are over four hundred and fifty with the terms "holy" and "love" by the same standard above. See, for a taste of this relationship, Vol. V: 60, 143, 211, 426, 464, 466, 468; VI: 53.

²³In the time allotted for review here it was found that of the 141 sermons included in the Jackson ed., Sermons 28, 35, 38, 44, 49, 62, 64, 65, 67, 73, 80, 81, 82 did not have a direct reference to these theological concepts in tandem. Though not exhaustive and not including other consonant ideas such as "righteousness" and "charity," it is bracing to see how fundamental to Wesley's thought these notions of divine reality are woven in the matrix of his worldview.

²⁴For a short review, note such instances as: Vols. III: 24, 341, V: 43, 58, 60, 89, 115, 143, VI: 272, XI: 208, 368.

²⁵V:25 and 52 (he speaks of the Holy Ghost and love) and Vols. V:111, 184-185, 223, 277, 294, 446, 466, 478, VI: 43, 72, 360, 369, 401, VII: 67, 107-108, 317, XI: 168, 178.

offered. This coincidence of divine concepts provides the essential framework for Wesley's highest statements of reality both divine and human. Any notion of personhood in the Wesleyan tradition must find its origins in the "co-indwelling" of these terms.

Trinitarian Kenosis: Space for Real Personal Love

The baptism of Jesus revealed reality in a way that may have been intimated before but could never truly be conceived until that moment. The incarnation, deity, "contracted to a span," offered insight into personhood in two directions. Indications and promises of personal differentiation within the life of God became an explorable phenomenon. The church moved from historical revelations of that sort, even reflexively mining the Old Testament for its Trinitarian intimations, coupled with a discernment of the experience of salvation, to the articulation of the nature and persons who graciously bestowed that very nature to creatures. Over the centuries deeper reflection by the body of Christ resulted in more concentrated categories of nature and personhood. Several major concepts rose to the center out of tentative debate, reactive excommunication, horrendous schism, and eventually a Trinitarian détente of sorts.

There is no doubt that Wesley's Trinitarian emphasis is primarily economic in its expression. The scandal of the gospel is Trinitarian to Wesley. He repeatedly articulates the power of the self-giving of the Father in the sending of the Son and bestowal of the Spirit.²⁶ Even though sovereignty is a category with which Wesley is at home, it is also clear that divine omnipotent life is never coercive or mechanical in any salvific sense. Holy love is couched in mutual deference, obedience, submission, and honor—all of which necessitate divine freedom. To be God is to love freely within Himself first.

With rhetorical flourish in the strongest of the *felix culpa* tradition, Wesley ponders with a Trinitarian outline the advantages humanity would not have known of faith and love had not the fall occurred. Here we see an example of what might be termed a Trinitarian *kenosis*:

²⁶For example: "The origin and cause of our redemption is the ineffable love of God the Father, who willed to redeem us by the blood of his own Son; — the grace of the Son, who freely took our curse upon him, and imparts his blessing and merits to us; —and the Holy Spirit, who communicates the love of the Father and the grace of the Son to our hearts." Vol. IX:490.

We might have loved the Author of our being . . . —but we could not have loved him under the nearest and dearest relation, —as delivering up his Son for us all. We might have loved the Son of God, as being “the brightness of his Father’s glory, the express image of his person;” . . . but we could not have loved him as “bearing our sins in his own body on the tree.” . . . We could not have loved the Holy Ghost, as revealing to us the Father and the Son; . . . renewing the image of God in our soul. . . .

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. If God SO loved us; —observe, the stress of the argument lies on this very point: SO loved us, as to deliver up his only Son to die a cursed death for our salvation. Beloved, what manner of love is this wherewith God hath loved us; so as to give his only Son, in glory equal with the Father, in Majesty co-eternal? What manner of love is this wherewith the only begotten Son of God hath loved us so as to *empty himself*, as far as possible, of his eternal Godhead.²⁷

The personal kenotic activity of the Son is a fulcrum to Wesley’s orthodox soteriology. If the Father gives his Son, then the Son gives himself. The orthodoxy of Wesley’s approach is quite remarkable. The work of the Son is inseparable from the heart of the Father and it is incomplete if the Atonement is all that the Son came to do. It is only in the experience of Pentecost—in the self-giving of the Holy Spirit who is willing to be sent for the express purpose of an endowment of holy love, that the fullness of Triune self-dispensation is expressed.²⁸ This is never a mere program for Wesley; this is the essence of what truly is life.

This eternal *life* commences when it pleases the Father to reveal his Son in our hearts; when we first know Christ, being enabled to “call him Lord by the Holy Ghost;” when we can testify, our conscience bearing us witness in the Holy Ghost, “The *life* which I now *live*, I *live* by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” And then it is that

²⁷Vol. VI:235. He also uses there the phrase “divest himself.” Wesley discusses the *kenosis* at VI:507, VII:172.

²⁸In “On Grieving the Holy Spirit,” Vol. VII:486, Wesley begins a discourse on the divine response to volitional rejection. In contradistinction to passion, Wesley delineates the Spirit’s personal response by saying, “By grief, therefore, we are to understand a disposition in God’s will, flowing at once from his boundless love to the persons of men.”

happiness begins; happiness real, solid, substantial. Then it is that heaven is opened in the soul, that the proper heavenly state commences, while the love of God, as loving us, is shed abroad in the heart, instantly producing love to all mankind . . . but more properly when we are *filled with him*; when “Christ in us, the hope of glory,” is our God and our All; when he has taken the full possession of our heart; when he reigns therein without a rival, the Lord of every motion there; when we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, we are one with Christ, and Christ with us; then we are completely happy; then we *live* “all the *life* that is hid with Christ in God;” then, and not till then, we properly experience what that word meaneth, “God is love; and whosoever dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.”²⁹

It could not be clearer. Life is love, and that love below is a picture of eternity, a transcript of the Trinity. What is important to note here is that Wesley seems never to discuss the self-emptying nature of the Trinity, whether all three or only two persons are emphasized, where in the immediate context there is not also a reference to the human reception of that

²⁹Vol. VI: 430-431. Italics mine. The theme of dwelling in the nature of God as love is important to Wesley. In nine uses of this idea from 1 John 4:7-16, the most insightful is found in Vol. X: 304. There Wesley carefully distinguishes between “dwelling in” and “loving God.” One is struck with the recurrent usage of Rom. 5:5. The phrase “love shed abroad . . .” is often used as a summative statement of the new birth; “being justified by faith, we may have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; that we may rejoice in God through Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement; that the love of God may be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” X:86. It was also central to his *plerophoria piteos*, Vol XII:34. Wesley uses both “his heart” and “our hearts” as he chooses in the use of this verse. Vol. V: 4, 40, 48, 59, 86, 146, 219, 220, 227, 391, 467; Vol. I:5, 70, 93, 111, 229, 359, 360, 430; Vol. VII: 40, 47, 62,206, 236, 272, 325, 352, 432, 462, 495-6; VIII:5, 10, 69; IX:17, 497; X:256. The connection between Rom. 5:5; Gal. 4:6; 1 Jn. 3:1, and 4:10-11 is an avenue into the center of Wesley’s concept of personal salvation and the Persons who save.

³⁰For one small example from the many available, see the above sermon and the quote immediately following.

“If God so loved us, how ought we to love one another! But this motive to brotherly love had been totally wanting if Adam had not fallen. Consequently, we could not then have loved one another in so high a degree as we may now. Nor could there have been that height and depth in the command of our blessed Lord, “As I have loved you, so love one another.”

“God’s Love to Fallen Man,” Vol. VI: 235.

bestowed love and its consequent self-giving toward other persons.³⁰ Holy Love, or "Christian liberty," is the freedom to give and receive love if true personhood is present.³¹ To demand of Wesley an ontological discourse is misguided. But to miss the necessary theological fundament for his spectacular view of the meaning of reality is to be functionalistic at best and obscurantistic at worst. In the best of Trinitarian excursions both ancient and modern, one will not find a more consistent and thorough application of the essential meaning of personhood than in Wesley's thought.

Contextualizing Wesley's Concept of Personhood in Christian Thought

Divine love, then, is not only God's initiative towards humanity, but also the essential nature of the Godhead. Historically, biblical and theological constructs confirm that the best, howbeit the most controversial, analogy of that love has been expressed by an interpersonal dynamic relatedness within the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. In this school of thought, the love between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the prior analogy. All else that we determine about God is somehow related to the eternal mutuality.

Theological consensus confirms that the modern notion of person finds its ultimate origin in the early church experience and subsequent exegesis of the revealed truths that formed the basis of christology and trinitology. The uniqueness of the individual person is a distinctly Christian phenomenon.³² As Christian Schutz states, "The value of the person emerged first in the Christian context where God's action first touches man as a particular person and only from there reaches mankind as a whole. . . .

³¹"You judge rightly: Perfect love and Christian liberty are the very same thing; . . . And what is Christian liberty, but another word for holiness? And where is this liberty or holiness, if it is not in the creature? Holiness is the love of God and man, or the mind which was in Christ. Now, I trust, the love of God is shed abroad in your heart, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto you. And if you are holy, is not that mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus?" Vol. XII: 413, Letter to Joseph Benson.

³²Origen, *Against Celsus*, Bk 4.23-25, 99, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 506-507, 541. Hereafter ANF. It might be possible to compare individual merits within and without the Judeo-Christian schema, but the distinction which Christianity made from other anthropologies was that each individual was of extreme importance to God.

In Him (Christ) is established both the possibility and the necessity of developing the concept of person.”³³

The church systematically corrected extraneous definitions by emphasizing the centrality of notion of “person.” The Cappadocians and subsequently John of Damascus provided us with the concepts that have shaped all successive discussions of the Trinity. *Perichoresis*, or literally “about making room for another,” gave an ontological framework for the “in-ness” language of John.³⁴ From the so-called Western strain of thought, Augustine’s constant return to trinitarian “Oneness” for all its truth overrode some of the personal distinctions that would have mollified some of his stronger essence statements. Whether he intended the consequential conclusions or not, his strong themes pertaining to the unity of God became the first principle of most Western discussions on divine and human personhood. It was that conflicted philosopher Boethius who laid the groundwork for almost all future discussion of personhood as *ratio-nalis naturae individua substantia* or an individual substance of a rational nature, thus the influential notion of person as a “rational individual.”

There were renegades from both perspectives. In the West, notably in the Augustinian domain, were Hilary of Poitiers and later Richard of St. Victor. But the gargantuan influence of Aquinas eclipsed the more relational aspects of the Victorine. It is here that Wesley’s statements find an interesting “catholic” home. With the turn of a couple of words, Richard challenged the existing establishment. While incorporating all that rationality might mean, he emphasized the particular personal reality from which reason arises. For him a person is an *intellectualis naturae incommunicabilis existentia*. While this fine tuning might tempt the practitioner among us to join the “mild” Calvin in encouraging the gathering

³³Christian Schutz and Rupert Sarach, “Der Mensch als Person,” in *Mysterium Salutis*, ed. Johannes Feiner and Magnus Löhrer, vol. 2 (Einsiedeln, Benzinger Verlag, 1967), 637-639. Speaking of the category of the person, Romano Guardini writes, “If I am not mistaken, antiquity did not have a true concept of person—indeed, one does not seem to find it outside the realm of revelation,” *The World and the Person*, trans. Stella Lange (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1965), 115.

³⁴The importance of John 17 in this deliberation cannot be underestimated. These fathers saw it as crucial to the revelation of Ultimate Life and the mutuality of the Trinity in the co-indwelling implied by statements regarding: Will, 17:2, 11-12, 23-24; Work, 17:4, 6-9; Word, 17:26; Know, 17: 25; Love, 17:23-24; Glory, 17:1,5 and most conclusively with “ev” or the “in-ness” language of 17:21.

of moist green wood so that the proponent, as Servetus, might suffer more than the reader—in a “slow fire.”³⁵ It is instructive to ponder Richard’s thrust on person as rational and as “incommunicable ex-sistent.”

Like the Bishop of Hippo, Richards’ medieval counterpart, Thomas emphasized personhood as rational and as relation. He states, “Therefore, a divine person signifies a relation as subsisting.³⁶ Immediately, reflection upon these brilliant axioms reveals that a divine person is a “relation.” Note the difference. Richard can emphasize rationality and volition, but that particular mind and will is set over against another. It is his way of saying that there is no true personhood without another person. To exist is to “ex-sist,” that is, to be toward another.

From this scintillating discussion, two major trinitarian analogies surrounding the divine persons arose. With them the church has continually grappled and they serve to categorize many subsidiary suggestions. First in prominence came the Augustinian/Thomistic intra-subjective (or psychological) analysis of the essence of knowing, loving, and willing. Second was the inter-subjective (or social) analogy of Love, Lover, and Beloved proposed by the Cappadocians and Richard of St. Victor.³⁷

It is readily apparent that, until quite recently, the Western interpreters opted almost exclusively for the former, the psychological analogy, the idea of God as One in whom memory, intellect, and will reflect the Trinity. This conclusion, it seems to many, is insufficient with regard to the distinct divine threeness revealed in Scripture. On the other hand, the structural oneness of the Trinity is hard to express analogically when attempting to protect a notion of threeness that does justice to the evidence.³⁸ While the first of these analogies has been deeply engrained into

³⁵Wesley refers to this sad occurrence twice with virtually the same language. Vol. X:351 and VI:200-201.

³⁶*Persona igitur divina significat relationem ut subsistentim.* Elsewhere in the *Summa* he defines person as a “distinct subsistent in an intellectual nature,” and again, as a “relationally distinct subsistent in the divine nature.”

³⁷There is a third discernment that I would consider major, but it is ancillary to our present discussion. It closely corresponds to the second, and some have termed it the Franciscan analogy which finds itself in the idea of an ontological “fecundity” or the extra-subjective self-diffusiveness of the Good. It can be discerned in Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure as well.

³⁸Cf. H. R. Niebuhr’s classic statement of three Unitarianisms while warning against theological “snobbery” which produces strong trinitarian statements. “The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Unity of the Church,” *Theology Today* 3:3 (Oct. 1946): 371-384.

the church's thoughts about the persons of the Trinity, it is arguable that the analogy of love between divine persons is the highest and clearest analogy Scripture employs.³⁹

Once again, the analogical use of the term "person" is not best understood as a direct statement of divine mystery, hence the reserve in its usage by many theologians. Those likenesses are to be based first on the many "relational" statements found in Scripture, and then upon a high view of created vestiges that signify a transcendent Reality. An analogical participation in this divine mystery results from an acknowledgement that no individual fully represents the Trinity. However, full, mature and productive love relationships between persons do bear living resemblances to a primordial referent or model. The focus is the similarities and likenesses that exist in inter-communal, co-inherent love. It is we who are to image the Original, and our biblical and theological exegesis ought to reflect that comparison.

As an increasing family of similar minds are proffering for discussion, to be a person is to be in relationship.⁴⁰ Dennis F. Kinlaw states, "To be a person is to be incomplete." To be a person, in essence is to have a counterpart. To be a divine person is to also be "incomplete" if that personhood is defined in the context of divine relationality. This points us to Wesley again. It cannot be proved that Wesley drew singularly from either of the camps articulated above. A full reading indicates that the genius of his Anglican *via media* shows through here. If the progression of the sermons is as important as some have indicated, it is interesting to note that the sermon "On the Trinity," although not overtly Eastern, occurs just after the first series in the Jackson edition of primarily soteriological themes. And in the third series there is a strong Western title very early on, "The Unity of the Divine Being."⁴¹

³⁹Tavard, *Way of Love*, 130. He adds, "Analogies are meaningful only as they are freed from limits and imperfections that human experience fastens to them." *Ibid.*, 130. This coincides with the assessment that the depth of a metaphor multiplies the difficulty in either discerning or expressing all the similarities that are being resident within the term. The key is the knowledge of the analogates. If one is secure there, one has hope of determining the relative worth of fruitful similarities and, if present, what effect the dissimilarities have on the results.

⁴⁰T. F. Torrance, Jürgen Moltmann, John Zizioulas, Heribert Muhlen, Colin Gunton, Christoph Schwoebel, Cornelius Plantinga, Royce Gruenler, Miroslav Volf, et al., comprise a growing number of thoughtful theologians whose works are reforming the present theological landscape in personal categories.

⁴¹Alan Torrance is one whose criticism of the Eastern focus on the *arche* of the Father as rendered in John Zizioulas' remarkable text, *Being as Communion*, is both insightful and appreciative. Torrance's reserve is important. An incipient sub

Regardless, there are to be found in Wesley all the biblical categories of a strong trinitarianism and a thorough compilation of many of their traditional interpretations. And that remains his genius in most areas of Christian doctrine. The "imago dei" as Wesley articulated it several places is thoroughly tied to the actual Edenic situation.⁴² A closer look, however, indicates not only an agreement with the best statements of the church on personhood, but a full-orbed appraisal, amalgamation, and structuring of these themes, a trinitarian worldview not found in such a complete and balanced way in most other thinkers.

Taking the well-known tripartite division of the image and conflating the natural and the political, we now will draw a comparison with other insights to note where Wesley relates to the traditional conceptions of personhood.⁴³

ordination framework is established that misses, as Torrance indicates, the best the Eastern and Western Fathers had to offer. Primordial reality is not the Father, but the Triune communion. See Torrance's *Persons in Communion: Trinitarian Description and Human Participation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark: 1996): 282-298.

⁴²Randy Maddox ("John Wesley and Eastern Orthodoxy: Influences, Convergences and Differences," *Asbury Theological Journal* 45:2 [1990]:34-35) describes some of the strands of Wesley's anthropology. A rehearsal of the passages relating to both "image" and "likeness" may not support the conclusion made regarding their connection to the natural and the moral image. See his note 51 on p. 48.

⁴³Of the several places where these categories occur, we include one of the most succinct:

And God, "the three-one God," said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him" (Gen. 1:26-27:) —Not barely in his *natural image*, a picture of his own immortality; a spiritual being, endued with understanding, freedom of will, and various affections; —nor merely in his *political image*, the governor of this lower world, having "dominion over the fishes of the sea, and over all the earth;" —but chiefly in his *moral image*; which, according to the Apostle, is "righteousness and true holiness." (Eph. 4:24). In this image of God was man made. "God is love." Accordingly, man at his creation was full of love; which was the sole principle of all his tempers, thoughts, words, and actions. God is full of justice, mercy, and truth; so was man as he came from the hands of his Creator. God is spotless purity; and so man was in the beginning pure from every sinful blot; otherwise God could not have pronounced him, as well as all the other work of his hands, "very good." (Gen. 1:31). This he could not have been, had he not been pure from sin, and filled with righteousness and true holiness. For there is no medium: If we suppose an intelligent creature not to love God, not to be righteous and holy, we necessarily suppose him not to be good at all; much less to be "very good." [VI:66-67 (italics and bold by author)].

For Wesley, the “Natural Image” incorporates a focus on Being, of personal existence (ontological/substantive) and Wesley’s view of person begins at the broadest levels. The image is, of course, finite, but is created to possess the spirit of God in a unique and thoroughly personal way.⁴⁴ Each person has a body and a soul with natural characteristics, distinctives that are unrepeatable and, he adds, immortal. As one recounts the history of terms like “hypostasis” or “prosopon” (Lat. *persona*), these attributes seem very close to the concept of the “incommunicable” aspects of personhood. Though absolutely finite, Wesley is intrigued by the profound spiritual reality which is evidenced in self-transcendence. Personality for him includes the irreducible attributes of reason, speech, emotions (“affections”), and volition.⁴⁵ In other words, the natural image points us to all that is meant by personal subjectivity, that part which resides in rationality, including will, affections, and imagination.⁴⁶

Perceptively, Wesley couches personal being prior to an emphasis on doing. The ontological supercedes the deontological or functional in his construction. Under that aegis which demarcates humanity from the rest of creation, Wesley discerns the “political” aspects of the image—being made in the image is to live out the command of God to rule (dominion), to work (creativity).

His emphasis on the “moral image,” in line with much of the Lutheran and Reformed tradition, is repeatedly discerned as “righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:24). But those moral qualities are not ever divorced from the nature of God. At one place Wesley ties his argument to

⁴⁴To take the matter from the beginning: “The Lord God” (literally, JEHOVAH, the GODS; that is, One and Three) “created man in his own image;” —in his own natural image, as to his better part; that is, a spirit, as God is a spirit; endowed with understanding; which, if not the essence, seems to be the most essential property, of a spirit. Vol. VI:269-270.

⁴⁵For more of a discussion of these see, “On the General Deliverance,” Vol. VI:242.

⁴⁶Wesley discussed the “conscious” nature often. A fruitful study in the postmodern context and preoccupation with rational definitions of personhood is a review of Wesley’s critique of Lockean propositions (and by implication their Cartesian reductionism) regarding person in such responses as: “Mr. Locke thinks, ‘consciousness makes personal identity;’ that is, knowing I am the same person, makes me the same person. Was ever a more palpable absurdity?” Vol. XIII: 458.

the relation between the dual natures of Christ.⁴⁷ The "moral image" emphasizes the freedom to decide, to choose, to love God and others. It is given to all made in the image to choose, not in absolute freedom, but in a derived freedom. The focus here is distinct from consciousness and is related to the conscience. While he does not agree with calling it a "moral sense" as some contemporaries, it definitely carries more than a mere rationality.⁴⁸

Freedom from sin and resultant freedom in the conscience is the freedom to give oneself away in a decidedly "moral" way. For Wesley, all personal actions in this regard are dynamically creative and responsible. In a discussion of creation He refers to this nature in relation to God as

⁴⁷With the use of "image" language and or "transcript" as well, John Wesley wrote the following:

The human righteousness of Christ belongs to him in his human nature; as he is the "Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus." This is either internal or external. His internal righteousness is the image of God, stamped on every power and faculty of his soul. It is a copy of his divine righteousness, so far as it can be imparted to a human spirit. It is a transcript of the divine purity, the divine justice, mercy, and truth. It includes love, reverence, resignation to his Father; humility, meekness, gentleness; love to lost mankind, and every other holy and heavenly temper; and all these in the highest degree, without any defect, or mixture of unholiness. Vol. V:236.

⁴⁸He makes the distinction clear as he concludes:

"Its [the conscience's] main business is to excuse or accuse, to approve or disapprove, to acquit or condemn. Some late writers indeed have given a new name to this, and have chose to style it a moral sense. But the old word seems preferable to the new, were it only on this account, that it is more common and familiar among men, and therefore easier to be understood. And to Christians it is undeniably preferable, on another account also; namely, because it is scriptural; because it is the word which the wisdom of God hath chose to use in the inspired writings. And according to the meaning wherein it is generally used there, particularly in the Epistles of St. Paul, we may understand by conscience, a faculty or power, implanted by God in every soul that comes into the world, of perceiving what is right or wrong in his own heart or life, in his tempers, thoughts, words, and actions. [Vol. V: 135-136.]

the “image of his own eternity.”⁴⁹ Dwelling in trinitarian love results in goodness before and toward others.⁵⁰ Submission, or obedience, to the full will of God in every way is a mirror of the type of mutual submission which marks the life of the Trinity. Holiness is a bias toward the other.⁵¹ In Wesley, we note a fresh and impartial option for the “other” no matter what the spiritual or economic status involved. The pastoral theology of Wesley indicates clearly that submissive “otherness” is not maudlin or manipulative, but enables the space for the other to be free in Christ.⁵²

⁴⁹He wrote:

“In the image of God was man made, holy as he that created him is holy; merciful as the Author of all is merciful; perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect. As God is love, so man, dwelling in love, dwelt in God, and God in him. God made him to be an ‘image of his own eternity.’” [V:54. At Vol .VII: 266 he uses the phrase “picture of his eternity.”]

⁵⁰See his usage of image connected to goodness in this selection:

“Thus was man made originally righteous, being ‘created in God’s own image,’ (Gen. 1:27,) which consists in ‘knowledge, righteousness, and holiness’ (Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24). All that God made ‘was very good,’ according to their several natures. (Gen. 1:31). And so man was morally good, being ‘made after the image’ of Him who is ‘good and upright’ (Psalm xxv. 8). Without this he could not have answered the end of his creation, which was to know, love, and serve his God. Nay, he could not be created otherwise; for he must either have been conform [sic] to the law in his powers, principles, and inclinations, or not. If he was, he was righteous: If not, he was a sinner; which is absurd and horrible to imagine. [Vol. IX:436, also X: 400).

⁵¹Note the agreement Wesley shows between his doctrine and Dr. Isaac Watts. Wesley quotes Watts (Vol. IX:354).

⁵²Notice the definition of true friendship in this regard:

Friendship is one species of love; and is, in its proper sense, a disinterested reciprocal love between two persons. Wicked persons are, it seems, incapable of friendship. For “he who fears no God, can love no friend.” Nor indeed is every one that fears God capable of friendship. It requires a peculiar turn of mind, without which it can have no being. The properties of Christian friendship are the same as the properties of love; with those which St. Paul so beautifully describes in the thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians. Vol. XII:295.

"Disinterested" love, if viewed from this perspective, is a freedom from the interest of control or self-aggrandizement.⁵³ According to Wesley, we are only images, either an image of the self-exaltation of the devil or the self-exinination of the Son of God.⁵⁴

Wesley's "Social" Definition of Personhood

From what we have shown briefly above, all the major categories of the creation narratives and consensual distinctions can be found clearly in Wesley. Besides the natural and moral there is also the portion of the image that is not tied to a specific command but rather to a divinely orchestrated realization. Something was not good in Eden. One concept of the image that is not addressed overtly in Wesley is the social, at least not in the way we are now used to construing it. Relationality is to be thoroughly aware that personal identity is to be inherently other-oriented. Just as there is no oneness without threeness in God, so the image is inexplicable without an "other." The God who gives Himself creates in us a need (sociality) not for Him alone, but for another. Yahweh is not all Adam needs for a reason. Immediately following a discussion of the natural, political and moral aspects of the image in "The New Birth, Wesley states that God desires to share the "divine life": "In this image of God was man made. 'God is love.' Accordingly, man at his creation was full of love;

⁵³"Then 'the Father reveals his Son' in his heart; and he 'calls Jesus, Lord, by the Holy Ghost.' And then the love of God is 'shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit which is given unto him.' From this principle springs real, disinterested benevolence to all mankind." Vol. VII:272. Or find another Trinitarian self-conception for the Christian" "Then 'the Father reveals his Son' in his heart; and he 'calls Jesus, Lord, by the Holy Ghost.' And then the love of God is 'shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit which is given unto him.' From this principle springs real, disinterested benevolence to all mankind; making him humble. . . . This is religion, even the whole mind which was also in Christ Jesus" [Vol. VII:227.]

⁵⁴In a word, it is that change whereby the earthly, sensual, devilish mind is turned into the "mind which was in Christ Jesus." This is the nature of the new birth: "So is every one that is born of the Spirit." [Vol. VI:71.] Who then is a Christian . . . "born of the Spirit;" inwardly changed from the image of the devil, to that "image of God wherein he was created:" He that finds the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him; and whom this love sweetly constrains to love his neighbour, every man, as himself." [Vol. VII:207.]

which was the sole principle of all his tempers, thoughts, words, and actions.”⁵⁵

What sin did to produce a preoccupation with the self rather than a predilection to the other is what is recovered according to Wesley. Imagining God is not left for heaven; it is an expectation in the present. Thus, it is normal Christianity for Wesley to state that:

He has given me to resemble Himself; he has stamped His image on my heart.⁵⁶

Holiness, a recovery of the image of God, a renewal of soul “after his likeness.”⁵⁷

Positively speaking, the circumcision of the heart is openness to a personal Triune God who lives in a believer’s life.⁵⁸ But it also enables a free self-giving love. That element of personhood is based upon the creation of the image as both male and female. To conceive of selfhood in relation to others, at base, is to reflect on a distinction between persons, equal in worth but different in role and expression. Again, personhood requires a clear consciousness of identity, of self-possession, but if it ever remains an incurved reality it becomes maddeningly narcissistic and destructive.

Perichoresis (Lat. *Circumissio*), that ancient concept of distinctiveness in relation, or giving space to another out of respect, love, and submission, arose out of a preceding idea that changed the way humans looked at God and themselves, *homoousion* (Lat. *consubstantia*). If divine nature was going to be related to the Scripture, then there had to be a view

⁵⁵Vol. VI:66. “I now live; namely, a divine, heavenly life; a life which is hid with Christ in God. I now live, even in the flesh, a life of love; of pure love both to God and man; a life of holiness and happiness.” [Vol. 5:428.]

⁵⁶Vol. X: 71.

⁵⁷Vol. V: 141.

⁵⁸“I will circumcise thy heart;” but a positive one likewise; even the planting all good dispositions in their place; clearly implied in that other expression, “To love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul.”[*An interesting perception of selfhood.*] These are they to whom the Apostle John gives the venerable title of Fathers, who “have known him that is from the beginning;” the eternal Three-One God. One of these [we find that this ‘father’ is M. de Renty in VI:205 where the quote is used in “On the Trinity”] expresses himself thus: “I bear about with me an experimental verity and a plenitude of the presence of the ever-blessed Trinity.” [Vol. VII: 237.]

of that reality that was vital and personal before history. If not then, adoptionism or modalism would be the result.

Even if the Western church could not agree with the Eastern at every point, it could agree that at the heart of God was a dynamic reality. It was the East that placed the social nature of the Trinity in its rudimentary construction. Being was never static; it was always relational. That is where there is found a connection to Richard of St. Victor's *ek-sistence* or being (*sistere*) that is outside of (*ek*) itself. The Greeks used a word we are more familiar with, *ekstasis* or ecstasy. This idea included the notion of self-emptying, deference, and bestowal. It was a way of saying that true objectivity resided in giving oneself to another. Reciprocity, both giving and receiving, and the more philosophical, intersubjectivity helped the early church discern its deepest articulation of God's inner life. It is not surprising then that Wesley makes selfless giving the central impression of life in God.⁵⁹ He wrote:

Now God is love: Therefore, they who resemble him in the spirit of their minds are transformed into the same image. They are merciful even as he is merciful. Their soul is all love. They are kind, benevolent, compassionate, tender-hearted; and that not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. Yea, they are, like Him, loving unto every man, and their mercy extends to all his works.⁶⁰

This radical (from Lat. *radix*, *root*) focus on the "other" to Wesley, is first who Jesus was, in heaven and on earth, as well as what he came to proclaim by his life and passion. It is his glorious person that gives us the depiction of true personhood. T. F. Torrance speaks of his being the "personalizing person."⁶¹ Thus, far deeper than grudging obedience, "Righteousness, as was observed before, is the image of God, the mind which was in Christ Jesus. It is every holy and heavenly temper in one; springing

⁵⁹This is that kingdom of heaven, or of God, which is within us; even "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." And what is "righteousness," but the life of God in the soul; the mind which was in Christ Jesus; the image of God stamped upon the heart, now renewed after the likeness of Him that created it? What is it but the love of God, because he first loved us, and the love of all mankind for his sake? [Vol. V: 256.]

⁶⁰Vol. V: 381.

⁶¹T. F. Torrance, *The Mediation of Christ* (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard), rev. ed., 1992, 67-68.

from, as well as terminating in, the love of God, as our Father and Redeemer, and the love of all men for his sake.”⁶² Here we see “mind” as the disposition of the Second Person of the Trinity.⁶³ That “mind” is, as P. T Forsyth muses, the “theology of Jesus.” In a sense that mind is the theology of God. It is no wonder then that in its earliest etymological form “person” came from terms which surrounded the face. Only persons have faces. The other I am to love always has a face.

Wesley recognized the biblical “roots” of Triunity and saw it as the foundation of all important reflection within the Christian tradition. The Persons of the Trinity formed the matrix of his pastoral theology. His was a ministry suffused with Divine “Life” and the call to receive not a

⁶² Vol. V: 267. “I believe it (holiness) to be an inward thing, namely, the life of God in the soul of man; a participation of the divine nature; the mind that was in Christ; or, the renewal of our heart, after the image of Him that created us. [Vol. I:225, Journal, Sept. 13, 1739.]

⁶³Note the strong hint at a trinitarian outline of salvation couched in the terms or reality of love in this excerpt from “On Perfection”:

Love is now “the fulfilling of the law;” which is given to fallen man. . . . What is then the perfection of which man is capable while he dwells in a corruptible body? It is the complying with that kind command, “My son, give me thy heart.” It is the “loving the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul and with all his mind.”

This is the sum of Christian perfection: It is all comprised in that one word, Love. The first branch of it is the love of God: And as he that loves God loves his brother also, it is inseparably connected with the second: “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Thou shalt love every man as thy own soul, as Christ loved us. “On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets:” These contain the whole of Christian perfection.

Another view of this is given us in those words of the great Apostle: “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” For although this immediately and directly refers to the humility of our Lord, yet it may be taken in a far more extensive sense, so as to include the whole disposition of his mind, all his affections, all his tempers, both toward God and man. Now, it is certain that as there was no evil affection in him, so no good affection or temper was wanting. So that “whatsoever things are holy, whatsoever things are lovely,” are all included in “the mind that was in Christ Jesus.”

St. Paul, when writing to the Galatians, places perfection in yet another view. It is the one undivided fruit of the Spirit, which he describes thus: “The fruit of the Spirit is love.” [Vol. VI: 413.]

"thing" but the Three-One God. He was convinced that from age to age that the Eternal Life proffered was intensely personal. The divine perichoretic ex-sistence was foundational to all definitions of communion and community. That is shown by his insistence that at its most basic all communion is essentially self-giving love. To see the face of Christ is to be able to honestly face one another in open-hearted love.

Wesley would not be deterred by our ontological, deontological, or teleological definitions of person. He would recognize with us that the prominence of rational categories in the modern period in large part produced the honest yet hopeless nihilism of the post-modern world. The critique of Cartesian categories is a simple recognition of an era that lost a basis for true relationality. We are a faceless generation. The meaning of what is personal in theology cannot be efficacious if it is philosophically driven or ethically defined. There must be an immediate connection to supernatural personhood for it to have any lasting value.

Wesley saw the all-encompassing implications of faith in a personal God. His construction of a truly personal theological worldview, in effect, helped many to redefine the Absolute. His focus, maybe drawn from the East, on God as Father offered a sovereign Creator who was eternally personal. He took the statement "God is love" as more than descriptive of actions. It's meaning cut at the sinews of ultimate reality. Personal self-giving, life-giving, is the source of true intimacy. The face of God was revealed to us in His eternal Son.

While the freedom to love and be loved finds its origin in the mutual deference of the Trinity, that freedom is never arbitrary in Wesley's thought. He maintained the absolute distinction between God and Creation as crucial for many reasons. One in particular is that agape is only possible where there is creation, not out of need but out of divine love. Freedom cannot precede God. It is found primarily in the triune love. It is the self-determination of the three Persons to love each other that enables freedom. Without the Three in self-giving love, there is no true freedom.

Similar to the argument of Richard of St. Victor, Wesley's God is never solitary and thus never capricious or fickle as he understood his contemporary's focus on absolute power. Breaking stride with much of the Reformation tradition, he did not see bald "will" standing in a coercive, dominating, or ego-centric way. The choice to respond to grace was an act of receiving the fact that God is Love. God is Self-expending, other-affirming, and communion-enabling—and so must the one be who would be as He. Holiness is never solitary.

If the Triune “kenosis” is revealed in the Incarnation and the recapitulation it enables then there cannot be higher expressions of holiness than what is found in the love between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Holy love is best expressed in mutual self-surrender. To be a person is to be in relationship, and thus to be incomplete and to be completed in and for another. To be a person is to give to and to receive from another, and to share with another—to complete the other. The Wesleyan focus on holy love makes that intercommunion essential to real fullness of life and the necessity of allowing the Holy Spirit to deal with every de-personalizing hindrance.

What of the claim earlier that Wesley would make a marvelous evangelist to a world like ours? What if he were the pastor of a post-modern parish? In a period as suicidal to the self as ours, the implications of a relational view of the Trinity in Wesley’s preaching, correspondence, and system of discipleship offered meaning amidst the crises of loneliness. He might say to us as he did then, the radical cure of all dissipation is the “faith that worketh by love.”⁶⁴ There arose through the various levels of the Wesleyan societies an experience of wholeness built upon trust, purposefulness in depth communication, the sharing of infirmities within a context of the integration of life with the Life, finding a home in the Triune God and that God finding recumbency in the life of a believer.⁶⁵

Faith Working Through Love

I offer a few final comments in reflection on the Wesleyan use of the Pauline phrase “faith working through or by love.” There are two places where it occurs that intrigue me.

Is it accidental that at Madeley in 1790, Wesley used the nuptial image of the “wedding garment” as a true picture of holiness, “the renewal of the soul “in the image of God wherein it was created”? In “Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.” It first, through the energy of God, works love to God and all mankind and, by this love, every holy and

⁶⁴Vol. VI: 449.

⁶⁵Note the experience of a Methodist with regard to holiness and love: “At the instant I felt an entire change. I was full of love, and full of God. I had the witness in myself, that he had made an end of sin, and taken my whole heart forever. And from that moment I have never lost the witness, nor felt anything in my heart but pure love.” [Vol. II: 398, April 16, 1757.]

heavenly temper, especially lowliness, meekness, gentleness, temperance, and longsuffering. In a word, holiness is having "the mind that was in Christ" and "walking as Christ walked."⁶⁶ We recollect that Wesley said it is love that cuts in circumcision and its purpose is offer up a heart of holy love to the Father through the Son.⁶⁷ The Trinitarian life and our love are nearly indistinguishable.

In another familiar passage, Wesley contrasts secluded mystics with true holiness. Directly opposite to mysticism is the gospel of Christ. Solitary religion is not to be found in the gospel. "Holy solitaries" is a phrase no more consistent with the gospel than holy adulterers. The gospel of Christ "knows of no religion, but social; no holiness but social holiness." We often stop the quote there, but it continues: "Faith working by love" is the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian perfection. "This commandment have we from Christ, that he who loves God, love his brother also;" and we manifest our love "by doing good unto all men, especially to them that are of the household of faith."⁶⁸

How often it has been said that faith "is nothing without love." "It is only the handmaid of love" and its purpose is to "restore men to love."⁶⁹ I wonder if the "energy" of love is not so much my effort alone, but a pointer to Triune "*energeia*."⁷⁰ Whatever my faith might consist of, it is only as good as the love which is its source. And thus it must originate, be constituted by, and flow selflessly out of the love at the center of heart of God. That is the highest concept of person in human history. It is the life to which Wesley pointed all who would hear.

I close with two quotes. The first is from the hymnbook to the Trinity. Note the chiasmic structure beginning and ending with Trinitarian love, with the human reflection of that love in the middle. Sacrificial love is that which reflects the character of God; it is the imaging of the Image.

⁶⁶Vol. VII: 316-317.

⁶⁷Vol. V:211.

⁶⁸Vol. XIV: 321.

⁶⁹Vol. V:462-462. Also see this important phrase in Vol. III: 35, 42, 157; Vol. V: 23, 318, 422, 537; Vol. VI: 100-101, 303, 308, 449 (2t), VII:43, 45, 51, 54, 56, 317, 368; VIII:48,69, 182, 290; Vol. IX:312; X:205; Vol. XI:181, 495; XIII:314; Vol. XIV:240; 321.

⁷⁰ Wesley sounds quite Eastern. Steve McCormick has argued forcefully for an origin for this phrase and usage in Chrysostom.

Baptized into Thy Name,
 Mysterious One in Three,
 Our souls and bodies claim
 A sacrifice to Thee:
 We only life our faith to prove
 The faith which works by humble love;
 O that our light may shine,
 And all our lives express
 The character Divine,
 The real holiness!
 Then, then receive us up to adore
 The Triune God for evermore.⁷¹

And in a quote which incorporates the full meaning of human history,

In anywise, let me know thee, and love thee, that I may be formed after thy likeness! *That I may be love, as thou art love*; that I may now be happy in thee; and, when thou wilt, fall into the abyss of thy love, and enjoy thee through the ages of eternity.⁷²

Abbreviations Used in the Footnotes

Wesley, John. *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*. rep. Salem: Schmull Publishers, 1975. Hereafter, *Notes*.

Wesley, John. *The Works of John Wesley*. Edited by Thomas Jackson. Authorized Edition. 14 volumes. London: Wesleyan Conference Office; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. Hereafter *Vol. Jackson ed.*

Wesley, John. *The Works of John Wesley* [editors vary]. Bicentennial Edition. 32 volumes. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979- . Hereafter, *Works*.

⁷¹*Hymns on the Trinity*, in the section “Hymns and Prayers to the Trinity,” #VIII: 306.

⁷²End of “Farther Appeal,” Pt. II, *Works of John Wesley* (Telford ed.), VIII: 201.

THE BEAUTY OF GOD: JOHN WESLEY'S REFORM AND ITS AFTERMATH

by

Clark H. Pinnock¹

It is only right that we honor John Wesley on his 300th birth anniversary. The work of the Wesleys represents a turning point in the history of Christianity. The adjustments which they made have influenced the life and mission of the Protestant churches. They were major authors of modern evangelicalism. Theirs was a concern, inherited from the Puritans and especially from Pietism, for heart-felt religion in contrast to religious nominalism. They focused on regeneration and a changed life rather than on outward rituals. They cared about conversion rather than systems of doctrine. Not so much into constructing theories about the Bible, they cherished God's Word itself. How relevant this is today, besieged as we are by a new wave of scholasticism which pursues its own kind of orthodoxy in place of the Spirit-empowered gospel. We need more of John Wesley's orientation toward convertive piety if we are to stem the attack of hard-rational scholasticism upon the Puritan/Pietist legacy and Wesley's Aldersgate reform.

I did not grow up with John Wesley but was inexorably drawn to him. Though denominationally Baptist and pentecostal by experience, I have found myself for decades moving theologically toward his thought

¹This paper was delivered in Nassau, Bahamas, in January, 2003, at a special gathering celebrating the 300th anniversary of the birthday of John Wesley and sponsored jointly by the Wesleyan Theological Society and the Bahamas Wesleyan Fellowship.

and spiritually toward his warm heartedness. Converted in a gospel way, I wasted some years in the company of paleo-Calvinist thinking, only to return home to the convertive piety of my youth. Of all the reformers, as far as I am concerned, John Wesley is the best. I even believe, had I been a Wesleyan, I might have had an easier time of it, thinking through the doctrines of grace and living the holy life. What a treasure and precious source of evangelical piety for all believers these Wesleys are.

The Transforming Vision of God

There is much to celebrate about John Wesley, most notably his revivalism and his advocacy of holiness. What I want to lift up in his work is the transforming vision of God that lies at the heart of his reform and to urge his heirs to keep the vision alive. It represents such an advance over the doctrine of God in the conservative reformers and much of theology since Augustine. Wesley's re-interpretation continues to be fruitful down to the present day and holds the promise of becoming even more fruitful in the future. It has overcome many of the deficits of classical theism and has been practically adopted by the church universal. It is so important to understand God as loving and personal, as relational and triune. It makes such a difference in every way. Luther and Calvin did little to reform the doctrine of God, but Wesley and others began to do so. They moved it in a personal and dynamic direction and thereby injected into it a revolutionary, practical punch and raised up an army of Christians who believed they can make a difference in human history. It has been a burden of mine for decades to overcome the tilt toward hyper-transcendence and to overcome the soul-destroying abstract categories just like Wesley began to do.

Wesley offers us a better way to read the Bible than had been customary, following a personalistic (biblical) rather than a absolutistic (philosophical) conception of God. For him, it was not so much God as creator, judge, and king, with the emphasis on divine control and unchangability, as it was on God as saviour, lover, and friend, with the emphasis on relationality and response-ability. He viewed God not as a unilateral power that takes no risks, but as a bilateral power which gives creatures room. He reads the story of redemption as a genuine dialogue, not a monologue where God would be the only one responsible for anything. For Wesley, prayer is meaningful because it affects the God who is not bound either by an immutable plan or by inexorable knowledge. Wesley read the Bible through personalistic lenses through which he could see the love relationship that God offers us as open and personal.

In Wesley one finds the vision of the sovereign God freely creating human beings capable of experiencing his love, opening the way for them to enter into reciprocal relationships with God and fellow creatures. God has goals and invites us to collaborate freely with him toward their achievement. Even when we turn away from him, God remains faithful to his intentions for creation where God makes some of his actions contingent upon our requests and actions and elicits our free collaboration in his plans. God can be influenced by what we ask for and responds to what we do. God genuinely interacts and enters into dynamic give and take relationships with us. Having chosen to exercise general rather than meticulous providence, God gives space for us to operate and cooperate and for God himself to be resourceful and wise in relation to us. God does not want to control everything as much as he wants us to love him by choice and not by necessity. Love requires choice. God wants love and is willing to run the risk of not getting it. God has flexible strategies and takes into account the decisions of his creatures. He is endlessly wise in the working out of his plans. Sometimes he acts unilaterally, but usually he elicits our cooperation such that God and humanity together decide what the future shall be. History is not a scripted play in which present and future decisions are irrelevant. God responds to his people's petitions and is affected by what they do. God may change his mind and alter his plans as he relates to his people. Above all, God wants all to be saved and come to know the truth.

Theology as a Science of Beauty

Surely this is a beautiful vision of God! Or so it seems to me. How can one not be drawn to it? How can theology be anything but a beautiful science when dealing with it? There is no place here, as Barth says, for "sulky faces, morose thoughts, and boring ways of speaking." This is God's true glory, the God who loves us in freedom. Here is a divine self-sufficiency which overflows its banks and gives the creature room to be. God not only sustains himself and creates, but has willed a world which would not be a mere mechanical expression of his purposes. Creation is the womb in which God would make free spirits, beings who, as pale images of himself, could exist with a degree of creaturely autonomy, decide things with a measure of authentic freedom, and act with real independence of him, themselves being laborers together with God (1 Cor. 3:9). I wonder if it is not true that in theology as in science, beauty is a

test for truth. It is so in the double helix of the DNA. That is, you know that you have grasped something when the equations are elegant.

Mark it well—theology has not always been beautiful. Augustine, though he spoke of God’s beauty around the event of his own conversion, was not so convincing later on (*Confessions* 10:27). In his response to Pelagius, he mapped out a monergistic doctrine in which God predestined the fall of men and angels and stands behind every sin and evil in a comprehensive plan. Augustine’s obsession with the absolute and unconditional power of God makes him the absolute ruler of the universe whose will directs every event in creation, regardless of the consequences that flow from it. It cannot be said that Augustine affirms the unqualified goodness of God because he found it impossible to conceive of a self-limitation of God’s power such that God could allow free creatures to act against his own perfect will. We can say that, according to Augustine, God is *great*, but not (I believe) that God is *good*. If God dominates the world completely, then his goodness is in serious doubt. Wesley saw this clearly. He saw that the sovereign God gives power to others and that control is not the highest form of power. Power can also be expressed when God empowers others to choose to love him or not. It takes a truly sovereign God to love and therefore be vulnerable. Simply to control others in order to get your way is a sign of weakness not strength. How is one supposed to love a God who gets his way at our expense?

The Thomistic view of God is no better. His emphasis is not so much on control as on static motionlessness. The God of Thomas resembles Aristotle’s unmoved mover, on which everything that moves depends, but which cannot change in any way. Here is a God completely immutable, having pure actuality and no potentiality, unaffected by any creature and apathetic to the world, having no real relations—because relationships are banned from God’s essential nature. God cannot be involved, God cannot respond, God cannot suffer. God is in the Thomistic scheme like a stone column. As Walter Kasper puts it: God is like “a solitary, narcissistic being which suffers from its own completeness.” Or, as W. Norris Clark puts it: God is like “an indifferent metaphysical iceberg.” There is not a lot of beauty in this doctrine of God unless you go in for abstractions. This is not the dynamic God of the Bible.

Wesley’s Reform in Perspective

Let me place the Wesley reform of the doctrine of God in historical perspective. Christian theism began rather well. The earliest theologians

were relational theists in their orientation, not predestinarians. They believed strongly that God gave humankind libertarian freedom, which distinguished them from other creatures and made them spiritually and morally accountable beings. Rejection of freedom was the view of the heretics. During the first four centuries, all the church fathers defended the human freedom which makes genuinely loving relationships possible. This (in part) explains why Wesley resorted to the Greek more than to the Latin fathers, although Jerome too was on his side as far as freedom goes.

Augustine began with this orientation too, but was (in his own words) "overcome" by a different doctrine and reversed himself (see "Predestination of the Saints," 8, 16). What a tremendous departure from the original consensus it was and what harm it has done. It may be that Augustine, not being a reader of Greek, was not fully aware of the strength of the earlier view. But he was the first predestinarian and he did introduce a "new theology" which became influential on the churches subsequently. Added to that was a strong dose of immutability such that neither God's will nor his knowledge can change in any respect. Thus, there are no uncertain outcomes and no give and take relations, which would imply change in God. Augustine made axiomatic for much of Western theology God's immunity to time, change, and responsiveness to the creature.

Tragically, Luther and Calvin did almost nothing to challenge this Augustinian shift. Though they did point us back to the scriptures and did find fault with aspects of speculative thought, the hiddenness of God remains. In Luther there is a God hidden behind his revelation, a God not known to us who has an inscrutable will. In the gospel, it might say that God wants all to be saved, but according to God's secret will, it may not be so, indeed it is not so. From this hidden God we must flee to the God of the cross. What a tension if not contradiction lies at the heart of this theology. Who will save us from the inscrutable God? Calvin too spoke of God in evangelical terms. But when he gets right down to it, it's the same old story: God is in no way dependent on the creature and relationships are a one-way street. History is like a novel in which the characters do precisely and only what the novelist decides. God exercises exhaustive control over absolutely everything and nothing happens except what is knowingly and willingly decreed by him. When Calvin comes across a text which says God changes his mind, he simply denies its apparent meaning because he thinks it cannot be. It can sound as if Calvin believes

God is responding to the creature, but no such thing is happening. As Brunner says, “The personal relation between God and man has become a causal relation: God the cause, faith the effect.”

Fortunately, the unfinished business of the Reformation did not remain unfinished. The Wesleyan/Arminian challenge directed theology back to the Bible and the early church, to the God who relates and responds. It did not do everything necessary, but it was a good beginning. Arminius, like Calvin, displayed the tensions of the biblical-classical synthesis. For him too, God was immutable, impassible, pure actuality, simple, and eternal. He followed the Reformed line in many respects, but made a decisive break when it came to the will and knowledge of God. He proposed that God’s foreknowledge of the future is caused by what creatures themselves freely decide to do and not by God’s immutable will. Thus he introduced a degree of dependence in God that allows God to enter into reciprocal relations with creatures. He returned to an idea of the early fathers, that God’s foreknowledge is based, not on God’s immutable will, but on what creatures freely do. Thus God genuinely responds to his creatures and there is a degree of conditionality in God. Wanting freely chosen reciprocal relations, God accepted a limitation of the divine power for the sake of human freedom, which directed theology in a different direction, the path of evangelical synergism. As for Arminius, I do not think that he meant to challenge Reformed theology quite as much as he did. I think he sought an adjustment rather than a new paradigm but nevertheless he did in fact signal a real alternative. It was a good beginning even if only a beginning and it launched a full-scale alternative to Reformed thought.

John Wesley reached similar conclusions, rather independently of Arminius. He arrived at a truly relational model when debating the issue of predestination with church leaders in England. He thought that the predestination doctrine was incompatible with God’s mercy and God’s distributive justice, that it rendered insincere God’s offer of salvation to the world, and was inconsistent with God’s goodness. Like so many today, he could not believe that God would unconditionally save some and damn others. He could not imagine that God as a loving Father would withhold redemptive help from any of his children. His theology was thoroughly relational—to know God is to live in a personal relationship with him. Such relations cannot be coerced, therefore the grace of God cannot be irresistible. God is wise and loving and not merely powerful. His wisdom

is displayed in working with creatures as free persons made in the image of God, not as “senseless stocks and blocks.” I see his contribution to the doctrine of God in his emphasis on God’s love and relationality. As with Arminius, there are tensions in Wesley. On the one hand, he sees God as involved with us in time and facing an open future; on the other hand, he affirms non-temporality and exhaustive definite foreknowledge. His emphasis is always on the loving relationships, but not everything lined up. Most decisively was his conviction that predestination was something incompatible with the nature of God. Randy Maddox comments: “While a sovereign monarch might technically be free to dispose of subjects as he sees fit, a loving parent would not even consider withholding potential saving aid from any child.”

Ideas have consequences and the value of them gradually dawns. The wonderful thing since Wesley is that, not only have his followers borne witness, but others who were not attending to his work have picked up on the reform. Innumerable interpreters have come to see that God is relational in his very essence and that there is a divine self-limitation in the world project which God has brought into being. These things are not now denominational ideals, if they ever were. The truth has penetrated the thinking of believers across the worldwide church. One sees it in the amazing 20th-century renaissance of trinitarian theology. The focus has returned to the trinity, to that summary description of the witness of scripture to the love of God incarnated in Jesus Christ our Lord, which is the doctrine of God as essentially relational in nature. To confess that God is triune is to affirm that God is personal life in community and self-giving inter-personal love. It expresses our belief in a God who is not solitary but a communion of love marked by overflowing life. A threefoldness of personal relations is a symbolic picture of shared life at the heart of the universe, a perfect sociality which embodies the qualities of mutuality, reciprocity, and peace. Is this not the true beauty of God and the loving perichoresis of the persons in God?

What insight this affords us in understanding many of the attributes of God, especially the divine loving relationality, not to mention the openness of God to vulnerability and even suffering. It suggests a unity which is no mere mathematical oneness, but a living unity that includes diversity. Not a dead immutability but a steadfastness and dynamic constancy of character. Not raw omnipotence but a sovereignty of love. Not a trivial know-it-allness but deep wisdom. The doctrine of God has been bedeviled

by the confusion of biblical categories with speculative ideas about what God must be like. The way of reform is to consider the attributes of God in the light of the living and triune God of the biblical story. Calvin could have gotten it right with his doctrine of the trinity. He had a view of the divine life which could have led him toward a different conception of the divine-human relationship. He could have made room in his thought for God to have reciprocal relations with creatures, but he did not. What a missed opportunity! Though he can speak of the fatherhood of God in our lives, it is not a Father to whom our concerns and sorrows can make any real difference. If they did, God would be affected by us, which would imply a degree of conditionality in God. The great watershed between classical and free-will theism is whether one affirms or denies that some of God's decisions and actions are contingent on and influenced by the creature.

One detects the influence of the Wesley reform also in the work of contemporary free-will theists from many traditions, such as Paul Fiddes, Keith Ward, John Polkinghorne, Richard Swinburne, W. H. Vanstone, and Nicholas Wolterstorff. In these and other thinkers, the creation is seen as an act of kenosis or self-limitation. As personal and relational, God limits his power for the sake of love. Whereas inauthentic love seeks control, authentic love brings with it the risk of rejection. God accepts the suffering that comes from love's precarious nature. God is with us in our suffering, though he is not overwhelmed or defeated by it. God is involved with the world, not detached. God is affected by creation, delighting in its beauty and grieved by its tragic aspects. God's activities are inherently temporal, responsive, and contingent. God's power and knowledge are limited by the creature's power and freedom which he freely gave them. God chooses the good and accepts evil as its concomitants. God has chosen to self-limit for the sake of human freedom. It was something that God chose to do and not anything that was imposed on him. And gloriously too, kenosis brings with it a *pleroma* as well. Kenosis is more than just self-giving. By self-limiting, God obtains new sorts of values that would not otherwise be obtainable. The kenosis is also a gain, a self-realization, a way in which God realizes possibilities eternally present in the divine being but not yet experienced by God. For example, by giving up total control, God is able to enjoy real relations with finite creatures. If God were to give up on exhaustive foreknowledge, he would be able to enjoy forms of creativity. God may limit the divine properties in order

that free creatures might exist, but he thereby realizes new possibilities for himself. Therefore, we can speak of both kenosis and pleroma. In short, the reform of classical theism is well under way and in the basic directions which Wesley indicated.

Further Growth in Hearing God's Word

The work of Wesleyans themselves has included a longing to grow further as hearers of God's Word. We ask, "Where might the Spirit be pointing us?" "What fresh interpretations and practices are called for and possible in the present situation?" Some are looking to process theism for help—others are settling for open theism. I doubt if many will decide to move in the direction of undiluted process theism. Though it attracts liberal Methodists, it seems to evangelicals more like an alternative than a legitimate variation of the Wesleyan reform. In process thought, God and the world are essentially and necessarily related. God is an ever-changing being evolving toward perfection. God is creative mainly in the sense that God creates as we act, since he cannot act unilaterally in the world but can only lure us by love toward his purposes. I believe that process theology strays away from the biblical moorings too far and substitutes a metaphysics of change for a metaphysics of static substance. It seems to end up with a God who cannot act in history. Process theism is a version of relational theism, but a deficient one since a personal relationship is undermined. The God-world relation for process theism is not one of God's choosing—God is necessarily and ontologically dependent on the world. God needs the world in order to be God. The absence of trinitarian theology and "creation out of nothing" leads one to an ontologically needy God. God and creation are co-eternal, reciprocally related, and inter-dependent. God's only option is persuasion toward the good. As the proverb puts it, "God proposes, man disposes." I think this will not do.

What about open theism then? Given its great similarity to the Wesley project, it seems like more of a possibility. In this model, God creates the world out of nothing and has sovereignly decided to create beings capable of experiencing his love. A divine self-limitation for the sake of love allows for real give and take relationships and holds to general not meticulous providence. We see God's plan not as a blueprint but as a broad intention that allows for a variety of options as to how God's goals may be reached. Open theism might strike a fair-minded person as a variation of the Wesleyan/Arminian model.

It is not exactly the same, however. Were it the same, it would not now be so widely discussed. Open theism proposes a few modifications to the Wesleyan tradition which we think can strengthen it. One is to think of God as everlasting, not timeless. We believe the Bible is rather clear on this. It presents God interacting with us in real-life, temporal situations. There is a story to be told, the history of God who acts and re-acts. He is a God who was and is and is to come. It would be a mistake in my judgment to cast doubt on this truth. Whatever you may think about God apart from the world, God is in relation to the world and to us as a temporal agent, which is important if we are going to hold onto a dynamic historical project. The burden of proof is on the tradition—why would we discard the plain scriptural witness and go after a frankly hellenistic doctrine? It strikes me that many Wesleyans today and even some Calvinists are in agreement.

Second, and more controversially, open theism puts forward a conviction about the nature of the future. It is not about the omniscience of God primarily, though it affects the content of it. We find the Bible to be teaching that the future is partly settled and partly unsettled. The future is not fixed in every respect. God is even now working with us to bring it about. This is the basis of our having “say so” in the unfolding of history. It is central to the Wesleyan conviction that we are in a position to make a difference. In this matter, we see God knowing the past and present exhaustively, as well as that part of the future which is determined either by God’s plan or by other considerations. And we believe that God also knows all the possibilities of what humans might do and could do and even are likely to do, but lacks absolute certainty about what we will actually do with the freedom he gave us. This is important because it is a question of whether we possess real freedom or not to affect anything. God invites us to collaborate with him to bring the as-yet open parts of the future into being. How (we wonder) can we be said to be free if our future is settled in God’s mind from eternity? It is not helpful to think that every detail of the future has been settled even before we were even born. We think that it plays into the hands of Reformed thought—and so do they. Thus, open theism proposes at least two modifications in the standard Wesleyan model (temporality and foreknowledge) in an attempt to strengthen it.

I know that many conservative Wesleyans are reluctant to accept this latter modification. Their feeling is that open theism has jumped off the

deep end and that it would be better to stick with alternative explanations. I would say, by all means do that, if you wish. Timeless foreknowledge or temporal middle knowledge or simple foreknowledge each has strengths and is working with the same issues. There is very little practical difference between them. All I am asking is that Wesleyans open the door a little. My hope is that they will find it possible not to view open theism as an alternative to, but as a variation of their own position. I hope that the judgment of Roger Olson will carry the day. He writes: "There are weaknesses in open theism and whether it will be defeated by its critics and either disappear or move outside the circle of authentic Christianity is yet to be seen. But, so far, there is no good reason to condemn it as heterodox; open theism deserves to be treated as one legitimate option for interpreting and envisioning divine sovereignty and providence."

It might help those who are hesitant to remember a couple of things. First, notice Randy Maddox's opinion that open theism is basically in line with Wesley's thought and might have been accepted by him were he now living. Second, notice that this discussion about divine omniscience is not new to the Wesleyan tradition. It was widely discussed as a result of the work of Lorenzo Dow McCabe who taught at Ohio Wesleyan University for over thirty years. And it was discussed amicably by the likes of systematic theologian John Miley who treated it with respect and was not alarmed by it. Notice the positive tone in Miley when he evaluates McCabe. He is fair, acknowledges good arguments, calms fears by saying that it would not be revolutionary for Wesleyan thought, and says that no vital truth would be sacrificed.

Third, it should count for something to realize that nothing much is gained from God's having exhaustive definite foreknowledge (however he gets it) because if God has it he can't do anything with it. It's too late to change anything now. Nothing new can now be done by God or man because it's in effect video-taped. It doesn't help to know the future if you can't change it. It gives God little or nothing by way a providential control. Even God can't regulate a future that is settled. Let's put our weapons aside and agree that there is hardly any difference between what open theism is saying and what Wesleyans have always believed. We must not let our real critics divide us.

Open theism is a current and lively version of Wesleyan/Arminian thought. It is far from radical. At most it is a neo-Wesleyan position. For some, it breathes life into the tradition by offering a fresh reading of

scripture. It cleans up the tradition of some elements that are no longer needed and speaks wonderfully to the modern world. It is also intensely practical and offers a terrific existential fit. I hope Wesleyans will be able to see it as a legitimate variant of their own position and one way among others to construe the Wesley reform. I even dare to hope that the response might be more than toleration but some actual gladness to see that the Wesley reform continues to be fruitful. I do harbor a fear that conservative Wesleyans may listen to their fears and refuse any new thinking for fear it might lead them astray. They might even believe that if we throw the open theists to the Calvinistic wolves they will not soon turn round and snap at them. This is wishful thinking! These antagonists do not merely despise open theism—they despise every form of the Wesleyan reform. It would be wise to remember that, as both Wesley and Arminius found, hostility from the traditional Augustinian model is practically inevitable and always a possibility. Therefore, take heart and keep up the good fight. Do not join with those who would like nothing better than to murder open theism in the crib before turning their rage upon you.

What is going on here? What is all the fuss about? It is not that open theism is very different from Wesleyan theology. But there is something different about it. What is different is the fresh and effective way in which open theism has put forward the Wesley challenge. Here we have a compelling version of old convictions that now look better than ever. The paleo-Calvinists are feeling the strength and virility of the Wesley reform. And they are running scared. Open theists have delivered what is arguably the best refutation of Augustinian determinism in years. They have made the case that the God of classical theism is unable to respond to anything we do and in other ways have pointed to its many disagreeable features. There is a fuss because the drawbacks of determinist theology are only too obvious and because it is getting harder and harder to sell the old position. It is no accident that most of the fierce criticism comes from one place—from the theological determinists.

Of course, a given model is sometimes up and sometimes down with regard to its power to convince. Just because the deterministic model is down now does not mean its days are over. I say to critics—relax. You don't need to lash out. Verbal violence suggests that too much stock is being placed in theological correctness and too little on the gospel of Jesus and the theism that we obviously share. Stridency and aggressiveness do not serve the theological conversation we need to be having. And it does nothing to display the beauty of the Lord the way Wesley did.

“OPEN THEISM”: A RADICAL REVISION OR MINISCULE MODIFICATION OF ARMINIANISM?

by

John Sanders

There has been much discussion and some vociferous rhetoric about what some consider a new view of God. While some believe “open theism” is the freshest breath of air since the sixteenth-century Reformation, others believe it will destroy the church. Is either of these sentiments justifiable? Is open theism a radical departure from previous views? Is it really that distinct of a position? Some critics have labeled openness “neo-Arminianism,” seeing it as a variety of a larger Arminian perspective.

A number of years ago I argued that “openness” diverged from what I call “establishment Arminianism” in two respects: (1) God’s relationship to time; and (2) whether God has exhaustive definite foreknowledge of future contingent events. I also argued that the openness view of omniscience known as “present knowledge” was not all that different from the simple foreknowledge view affirmed by establishment Arminians.¹ I now believe that divine timelessness is no longer an issue separating establishment from the openness form of Arminianism. In order to ascertain whether open theism is a radical revision or miniscule modification of Arminianism, I will first compare and contrast two different understandings of God and providence: classical theism and freewill theism. Next, I

¹See my “Why Simple Foreknowledge Offers No More Providential Control than the openness of God,” *Faith and Philosophy* 14, no. 1 (Jan. 1997): 26-40.

will compare two forms of freewill theism (establishment Arminianism and open theism) on God's relationship to time and God's knowledge of the future as it relates to providence. Finally, I will explore some possible reasons why open theism has received so much attention. I will introduce and use the following abbreviations of positions on the question of the foreknowledge of God:

EDF—exhaustive definite foreknowledge

PK—present knowledge

SF—simple foreknowledge

CSF—complete simple foreknowledge

ISF—incremental simple foreknowledge

Comparison of Classical Theism and Freewill Theism

Though a number of different forms of theism exist, I will focus on two understandings of God and divine providence that have been dominant in Western thought. Both of these models are more highly developed views of what might be called basic theism. A standard definition of basic theism is: God is a personal being, worthy of worship, self-existent, the free creator of all that is not God, separate from the world, the sustainer of the world, perfectly good, all-powerful, all-knowing, and eternal.² Also, these theological models may be distinguished from basic or mere Christianity as defined, for instance, in the Apostle's Creed. One may be a Christian without affirming either classical or freewill theism.

Classical Theism. Classical theism affirms basic theism but adds a number of very carefully defined attributes. God is *a se*, simple, immaterial, immutable, impassible, timeless, necessary, personal, pure act, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, and wholly good.³ The term "classical theism" was coined to designate the view of God developed by certain Jewish, Christian, and Islamic thinkers. It may be outlined as follows:

²See H. P. Owen "Theism" in the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan, 1967) and *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Thomas Mautner (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996), 425.

³This is the accepted definition. See the discussion of "Classical Theism" by the classical theist, Brian Leftow, in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (NY: 1998), 98-99. This is the position developed by Philo of Alexandria, Augustine, Maimonides, Al-Ghazzali, and Aquinas.

“OPEN THEISM”: RADICAL REVISION OR MINISCULE MODIFICATION?

- A. God is timeless (no before or after for God, only an eternal present).
- B. Pure act: God has no potentiality for change in any respect.
- C. Simple: God is not composed of parts for then God would be dependent upon them. We must think of each of the divine attributes in an identical way.
- D. Immutable: God does not change in any respect including thoughts, will, or emotions. The divine plan is unchanging.
- E. Impassible: God cannot be affected by creatures. God never responds or reacts to what we do. Our prayers never affect God, rather God uses our prayers to effect what he desires to bring about through our prayers. There are no reciprocal (give-and-take) relations between God and creatures for, as pure act, God cannot receive anything from creatures. God is closed to us.
- F. Specific sovereignty: Only what God specifically ordains to occur actually happens. Nothing happens unless it has been specifically ordained by God to happen as part of his meticulous plan. Proponents of this view typically affirm “compatibilistic” freedom for humans in which you are free so long as you act on your desires, but your desires are determined.
- G. God has a meticulous blueprint for everything that happens in history.
- H. God exercises meticulous providence so that the divine will cannot fail or be thwarted in any detail. God never takes risks. In soteriology this leads to the doctrines of unconditional election and irresistible grace.
- I. God is omniscient (knows all that is knowable).
- J. God has exhaustive and definite foreknowledge (EDF). God knows the future because God actively determines what the future will be, not because God passively previsions the future.

Classical theism has been an extremely influential view that has been widely held by some of the most important thinkers in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In fact, for many centuries it was the dominant view among Christians (e. g., Augustine, Aquinas, and Calvin.). The view of the divine nature affirmed by classical theists differs significantly from that of other Jews and Christians who affirm freewill theism (stated below) and these differences lead to disagreements on a range of theological issues as well as to divergent readings of scriptural texts. According to classical theism, divine perfection means that God is absolutely independ-

ent of creation and cannot be dependent upon a creature in any respect. The motivation for this view arises out of a particular conception of perfection as applied to God. That is, if it is good to have qualities such as knowledge, will, power, and love, then what must a being that is perfect in these qualities be like? It is argued that God is perfect in the sense that there can be no possible improvement or potential for change since any change in God could only be a change for the worse.

From this conception of God a family of attributes arise: God is simple, immutable, impassible, timeless, necessary, pure act, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, and wholly good. Together, these combine to affirm that there is no change of any kind in God nor is God dependent upon anything other than himself. “Simplicity” means that there is no genuine differentiation in God. God is identical with his properties such that God does not have, for instance, omnipotence and omniscience, as distinct parts. As pure act, God has no potential for change of any kind since change would mean God was less than complete. As immutable, God cannot change in any respect including thoughts, intentions, or emotions. Being impassible, nothing external to God, such as creatures, can affect God in any way. God is timeless in that there is no before or after for God, only an eternal present.⁴

It is clear that a timeless and wholly immutable being cannot change whatsoever. Augustine said: “only what does not only not change but also cannot at all change falls most truly . . . under the category of being” (*On the Trinity*, 5.2-3). If God were passible (affected by creatures), God would be changeable and less than self-sufficient. If God had changing emotions or could suffer, then God would be less than perfect. So God cannot be affected or influenced in any way by creatures. Our prayers of petition serve as instruments by which God brings about what he has ordained, but our prayers never affect what God has eternally willed to bring about. It is impossible for our prayers to have any influence on God’s decisions.⁵

⁴Some contemporary evangelical Calvinists who claim to be classical theists reject divine timelessness while others hold that some of God’s decisions are conditioned by creatures (God responds to us). However, it is contradictory to affirm both meticulous providence and that God is conditioned by us. God cannot be pure actuality and also be affected by our prayers. It is not justifiable to call such modifications classical theism.

⁵However, some evangelicals who claim to be classical theists say that God responds to our prayers and thus are at pains to explain how a completely changeless God can respond to a temporal event.

Since the divine plan is unchanging, God exercises meticulous providence by specifically ordaining each and every event to occur. God tightly controls everything so that whatever happens, down to the smallest detail, is exactly what God wanted to happen. God has a meticulous blueprint for everything that happens in history, including evil and suffering. All events are ordained by God for good reasons that remain hidden from us. The divine will cannot fail or be thwarted in any detail. God never takes risks, for whatever we do is precisely what God wanted us to do. We cannot act in such a way that God would fail to get exactly what he desired in every detail. In reference to salvation, this leads to the doctrines of unconditional election and irresistible grace. God’s decision to save an individual cannot be dependent in any way upon humans, as that would deny the doctrines of immutability, impassibility, and self-sufficiency. Regarding evil, this view repudiates the freewill defense and affirms instead the soul-making theodicy.

Regarding omniscience, there can be no change in God’s knowledge from before to after. Consequently, omniscience must include exhaustive and definite foreknowledge of future contingent events (human actions). The entire future is completely definite or certain for God. God knows the future as what will actually happen and not what might possibly happen. God knows the future as certain because God determines what the future will be. God’s knowledge of what we will do in the future cannot be causally dependent upon us since that would mean God was not impassible or self-sufficient.

Finally, many classical theists affirm compatibilistic freedom for humans in that you are free so long as you act on your desires, but your desires are determined. In this conception of freedom God can perfectly guarantee that humans do exactly what God desires in every circumstance. All God has to do is ensure that our strongest desire in any instance is what God wants. Whatever we do is precisely what God wanted us to do in that instance.

As an aside, many critics of the openness of God claim that it is incompatible with classical theism and so cannot be Christian because they equate Christianity with classical theism. It is commonly asserted that “all” orthodox Christians have affirmed this view of God. However, this is false. First, classical theism cannot be equated with Christianity for there is nothing distinctively Christian about it (some Jews and Muslims affirm it as well). Second, orthodox Christianity (e.g. Apostles’ Creed) is

far older, historically, than classical theism. Since classical theism developed in the centuries after Christ, it cannot be the foundation of Christianity. Third classical theism is often depicted as “the” traditional view of God but it is not since there are other traditional views of God within each of these religions. I now turn to a major tradition that is incompatible with classical theism as well.

Freewill Theism. Like classical theism freewill theism also affirms *theism simpliciter*, but goes beyond it in a different direction than does classical theism.⁶ With *theism simpliciter*, it holds that God is a personal being, worthy of worship, self-existent, the free creator (*ex nihilo*) of all that is not God, separate from the world (and is immaterial), sustains the world, continually active in it, perfectly good, all-powerful, all-knowing, and eternal. Moreover, it even includes some of the attributes of classical theism. However, it modifies or rejects several key attributes of classical theism such as immutability, pure actuality, and impassibility. Freewill theists affirm that humans have “libertarian” freedom (the ability to do otherwise than what one actually did), that God can be affected by creatures, and that God enters into genuine give-and-take relations with us. It emphasizes relationality because God is understood to enter into genuinely reciprocal relations with us. Consequently, freewill theism cannot be equated with classical theism. The great watershed between classical and freewill theisms is whether one affirms that some of God’s decisions and actions are contingent upon or influenced by creatures. If you answer yes to this, then you are not a classical theist. That is the most important issue.

Freewill theism has been held by many Jewish and Christian thinkers. In Christianity, this view has been affirmed by many of the early fathers, the Eastern Orthodox church, Arminians, Wesleyans, and Pentecostals. Historically, it is older than classical theism. It may be outlined as follows.

⁶David Basinger, *The Case for Freewill Theism: a Philosophical Assessment* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1996), distinguishes between “theological determinism” and freewill theism. Both Basinger and I include Molinism (middle knowledge) as a form of freewill theism even though it has some peculiarities that put it at odds with some of the general characteristics of freewill theism. For instance, a God with middle knowledge takes risks only in a highly qualified way. It is more accurate to say the God of Molinism is fortunate or unfortunate rather than takes risks.

- A. God is eternal (either God is atemporal or temporally everlasting).
- B. Rejects pure actuality because God does receive our prayers and worship.
- C. Rejects divine simplicity.
- D. Immutable: the *character* of God does not change, but God can have changing plans, thoughts and emotions.
- E. Rejects divine impassibility. God can be affected by creatures. God responds or reacts to what we do. This is especially seen in the doctrine of conditional election. Moreover, our prayers may affect God.
- F. General sovereignty. God ordains the structures of creation (our boundaries) and allows for human freewill (libertarian freedom). Sometimes God acts to ensure that specific things happen and may override human freedom, if necessary, to carry this out.
- G. God does not have a meticulous blueprint for everything that happens.
- H. God does not exercise meticulous providence. The divine will can be thwarted for some things so God takes risks.
- I. God is omniscient (knows all that is knowable).
- J. Freewill theists disagree about whether God has exhaustive, definite foreknowledge. That is, they differ as to what is knowable (e.g., are counterfactuals of freedom knowable? Does the future exist and, if so, is it knowable?). Yet, even those freewill theists who claim that God has exhaustive, definite foreknowledge disagree with classical theists as to how God has such knowledge. Freewill theists reject the notion that God knows it because he determines it.

Freewill theism defines some of the key divine attributes in ways significantly different from classical theism. According to freewill theism, God decided not to create a world in which everything that happens is divinely determined. Instead, God decided to be open to what creatures would do in response to the divine love. Most freewill theists emphasize that there is a give-and-take dynamic relationship between God and creatures.⁷

Though freewill theists believe God is perfect, immutable, and omniscient, they do not define these in the same way as classical theists. God is perfect in that the divine character (love, wisdom and holiness) is complete and incapable of improvement. But, unlike classical theists,

⁷I say “most” because I get the impression from some Roman Catholic Molinists that they do not emphasize this.

freewill theists believe God has the potential for change in some respects. For instance, God perfectly relates to creatures in on-going dynamic interaction. For God to fail to change in relation to us as the relationship changes would be less than perfect. Thus, though the divine nature is immutable, God can change in thoughts, will, and emotions. For freewill theism God is steadfast and faithful but is able to change in certain respects. A God who experiences our love, or lack of it, in dynamic relationships cannot be completely unchangeable.

Unlike us, God cannot be forced to react or suffer. However, God can voluntarily choose to enter into such relationships and be passible.⁸ Consequently, God can be influenced and affected by what we do as well as by our prayers. Though prayer cannot force God to do what we want, God has opened himself to our prayers so that our prayers can have an impact on what God decides to do. God is receptive rather than purely actual. Our prayers really matter to God.

Freewill theists derive their name from the belief that God has given humans libertarian freedom (the ability to do otherwise than we did even in the same circumstances) and elicits our free cooperation with his plans. This means that humans can accept or reject God's initiatives. God can sovereignly choose to make some of his decisions dependent upon the decisions of creatures. God takes the risk that his desires may be thwarted in some cases—we may not do what God desires.⁹ Hence, given the type

⁸This idea occurs as early as the third-century in the work *Ad Theopompum* by Gregory Thaumaturgus. See Joseph Hallman, *The Descent of God: Divine Suffering in History and Theology* (Minneapolis, Minn: Fortress, 1991), 46-49.

⁹Basinger, *Case for Freewill Theism*, 36 also claims that risk is a central element of freewill theism. Molinism, as a form of freewill theism, must be qualified on this issue. Molinists such as Thomas Flint typically deny that God takes "risks" (see his *Divine Providence: The Molinist Account*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998, 98-107). It is true that since Molinists affirm that God grants humans libertarian freedom, they believe that humans can act in ways that God wishes they would not (sin). However, since a God with middle knowledge knows all that would happen in any feasible world he could create, God knows how we would respond in any situation in which we might be placed and places us in situations knowing precisely what will result. God does not take a risk that we will do something he did not have complete knowledge of. It is correct to say a God with middle knowledge is either lucky or unlucky that we do what God wants us to do, but God does not take risks in the normal sense of the term. Even so, Basinger (*Case for Freewill Theism*, 48) asserts that Molinism entails divine risk-taking in this sense.

of world God decided to create, he cannot guarantee that everything will go precisely the way he would like. The freewill defense to the problem of evil arises from these premises. Evil is allowed but not desired by God. Moreover, the doctrines of conditional election and resistible grace are developed out of this view of the divine nature and human freedom. God has sovereignly decided to make his election to salvation dependent upon human response to divine grace. This does not undermine God’s self-sufficiency since God’s existence is independent of creation and it was solely God’s decision to do things this way instead of exercising meticulous providence. Moreover, God has not chosen to be dependent upon humans for all things—God can act unilaterally.

It cannot be said that everything that happens is intended by God for God has chosen to exercise general rather than meticulous providence. God has chosen not to tightly control everything that happens and so, at times, his will for us may be thwarted. Sometimes God alone decides what shall be but most often, with regard to human action, God initiates and solicits our cooperation. Also, God is omnipotent and so could have prevented each and every act of sin had he so chosen. But God granted us libertarian freedom and so God has chosen to exercise general rather than meticulous providence. Hence, the divine will can, for some things, be thwarted and this means that God takes some risks regarding human sin.

When God created he did not have a blueprint for everything in creation. Instead, he had a destination in mind and desired to take a journey with us. Both the ultimate goal and the boundaries of the journey are set by the Creator, but many of the specifics of the course are set by both God and humans as we travel together in history. Freewill theists believe that God is flexible and resourceful in working with us in life.¹⁰

Having explained freewill theism in general I will now explore areas of disagreement regarding two divine attributes within the Arminian tradition of freewill theism. The openness controversy may be seen as a family squabble between Arminians about (a) the nature of the future and God’s

¹⁰Some freewill theists believe that God has a “perfect will” for every decision we make (e.g., who to marry, what career to go into) while others reject this idea. This issue has been debated for quite some time. See Gary Friessen, *Decision Making and the Will of God: A Biblical Alternative to the Traditional View* (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1980) and John Boykin, *The Gospel of Coincidence: Is God in Control?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986).

relationship to time and (b) exhaustive definite foreknowledge.¹¹ In one sense open theism is merely an attempt to correct some logical problems that proponents of openness claim are present in establishment Arminianism.¹² Open theism affirms all of freewill theism and most of establishment Arminianism. It has emphasized the belief that God enters into dynamic give-and-take relations with creatures and that God is affected by what we do. Two beliefs have been singled out as hallmarks of open theism: divine temporality and the denial of exhaustive definite foreknowledge. Each of these points will now be addressed.

Establishment Arminianism and Open Theism on God, Time, and the Future

The first area of disagreement concerns whether God experiences time and whether the future is a reality that already exists. Many establishment Arminians believe God is atemporal, while others believe God is temporal. Atemporality or divine timelessness holds that God does not experience duration or sequence (all God's thoughts and will are one thought and one will that works out in our history). God timelessly sees all that will happen though God does not determine all things to happen. Nevertheless, the future is completely definite. Temporalists, on the other hand, believe God is everlasting in duration (always was, is, and will be). Time is understood to be an aspect of God's eternal experience between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is not captive to time as though time were an entity over God. Rather, it is simply a name for eternal consciousness.

Moreover, there is disagreement among Arminians as to the nature of the future. However, it must be noted that most Arminians have never explained their understandings of the nature of time and the status of the future! For instance, they have not been clear regarding whether or not they affirm the tensed or stasis theory of time or whether they hold to the block theory of the future. Recently, Jack Cottrell, a distinguished establishment Arminian theologian, examined the nature of God and time and

¹¹Actually, the debate whether God is timeless or not is occurring among Calvinists as well. The reason it is a "family" squabble is because in virtually all other areas establishment and openness Arminianism agree. It is like the family squabble among Calvinists over infralapsarianism and supralapsarianism.

¹²By "establishment" Arminianism I mean the position taken by the majority of Arminians throughout history regarding divine atemporality and exhaustive definite foreknowledge.

has decided that to be consistent with key Arminian beliefs (e.g., that God is involved with us in give-and-take relationships and that prayer influences God) the doctrine of divine timelessness must be rejected.¹³ Timelessness implies absolute immutability and impassibility and these are clearly incompatible with the core values of Arminian theology since they lead to unconditional election, irresistible grace, and that our prayers have no affect on God. A timeless deity cannot plan, deliberate, respond, regret, grieve, or get angry. What will happen when more Arminian theologians examine these issues? What is non-negotiable in Arminianism? It seems that in order for establishment Arminianism to be logically consistent, it must affirm divine temporality. This is precisely the move made by openness Arminianism in order to follow through on the logical implications of the core doctrines of Arminianism.

Some Arminian temporalists believe the future is completely definite because it already exists in some sense.¹⁴ This seems to imply the block theory of time where past, present, and future are understood via the spatial metaphor of a block. The present would be placed somewhere on the block and all the events of the past would extend in one direction from the present while all the events of the future would extend in the other. All events, then, exist. God, it is claimed, has the ability to see the entire block and this furnishes God with exhaustive, definite foreknowledge (EDF). Other Arminian temporalists deny that the future exists now. Those who believe God experiences time in some sense typically affirm the tensed theory of time in which only the present is real, the past did exist at one point but does not continue to exist and the future does not exist—it is not yet real. This position is typically called “presentism” in that only the present actually exists. We remember the past and we anticipate the future, but they do not exist as ontological realities.

Hence, one of the key issues in this debate is the ontological status of the future—is it a reality or nothing at all? This is an important question for all to answer and the position of open theism—that the future does not exist—is widely accepted (if not the dominant position) among

¹³ Cottrell, “Understanding God: God and Time,” paper presented at the Evangelical Theological Society meeting, November 19, 2002. See his earlier work, *What the Bible Says About God the Ruler* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1984).

¹⁴ Jack Cottrell, for instance.

contemporary Christian philosophers who publish on God and time.¹⁵ For openness, there is no reality or entity called the “future” that exists—open theism denies the ontological reality of the future. For openness, God knows all the facts that exist and the truths that can be known. Propositions about a non-existent reality simply have no truth value so there is actually nothing for God to know in this regard. Hence, openness affirms God’s full omniscience because if there is a fact to know or a proposition with truth value, then God knows it.

This is similar to the issue of whether God can make a square circle or a colorless red car. Aquinas argued that these words do not describe “things” at all. They are literally nothing and it cannot be claimed that God is not omnipotent because he cannot make a nothing. In a similar way, if there is literally nothing (a non reality), it cannot be held against God’s omniscience that God does not know a nothing. It might be the case that propositions about the future are neither true nor false for there is no reality to which they correspond.¹⁶ It is like the proposition: “The present king of France is bald.” This statement is not about a person since there is no king of France today. Alternately, it might be the case that propositions about the future are true or false, depending on how the future actually turns out. But if they are actually contingent events, then there is nothing about the world now that makes these propositions true or false.¹⁷ Either way, present statements about the future do not describe any actual “entity” for there is no presently existing reality to which they correspond. Openness affirms that God knows all reality and is therefore fully omniscient. God knows all the facts: the dispute is about what facts exist.

A second key issue regards the “ability” of God—what can God do. Can God know the future? Openness claims that God could create a world in which the future of humans could be known. All God would have to do is determine all that humans do (meticulous providence) and, since God would know everything God determines, God would know the “script”

¹⁵This is the conclusion of my colleagues William Hasker and David Woodruff, both of whom have published on God and time. Woodruff had a difficult task finding defenders of divine timelessness for his volume, edited with Greg Ganssle, *God and Time: Essays on the Divine Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹⁶ The open theist, Greg Boyd, prefers this formulation.

¹⁷ The open theist, William Hasker, prefers this formulation.

already written for the future.¹⁸ William Hasker, a proponent of open theism, says, “God could have created a world in which he would have full foreknowledge of every detail, simply by creating a world in which everything that happens is fully controlled by his sovereign decrees.”¹⁹ Consequently, openness affirms that God can know the future if God wants to create a deterministic universe. If God wanted a reality in which the future was knowable, then God could have created it. Consequently, openness affirms the full omniscience and omnipotence of God.

Dallas Willard puts forward a variation of this view (dispositional foreknowledge).²⁰ He says that God could know what humans will do in the future, but God chooses not to know it. However, this could mean at least two different things. (1) It could mean that God could know what humans would do in the future if God did not grant them libertarian freedom and God, as in classical theism, determined all events. (2) It could also mean that God can know what creatures with libertarian freedom will do in the future, but refuses to know it. This would imply that God can somehow peek into the future and see what humans with libertarian freedom will do, but God chooses not to peek.²¹ This second interpretation would mean that the “future” exists as a reality to be known. In this case, it would agree with proponents of simple foreknowledge that the future already exists in some sense. However, this interpretation would also entail a major objection. The problem with claiming that God could know a reality but chooses not to know it is that this means that God is not omniscient in the sense that God knows all truths available to be known at

¹⁸This brings us to the old issue of whether it is the case that, if the future is known, are humans free to do otherwise than God knows they will do? Does foreknowledge imply determinism? Many open theists affirm that exhaustive definite foreknowledge implies determinism. In this they tend to agree with classical theists against freewill theists who affirm simple foreknowledge.

¹⁹Hasker, “Philosophical Perspective,” in Pinnock, et. al., *The Openness of God* (Downers Grove, ILL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 151.

²⁰Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy* (New York: Harper Collins, 1998), 244-46.

²¹This would mean that God limits his knowledge in the same way that God limits the use of his power. This view, with God’s self-imposed ignorance, would explain divine providence, prayer, and salvation in precisely the same ways as PK and ISF (explained below). Either of these two interpretations of Willard are compatible with open theism, so Willard does affirm a form of open theism.

any one time.²² If omniscience is defined as God knowing all that can be known, then this view rejects omniscience for there are facts that can be known but God does not know them.²³ In other words, there are propositions that God does not know the truth value of and that entails a denial of the standard definition of omniscience.²⁴ The situation is quite different from the simple foreknowledge propounded by most establishment Arminians. According to simple foreknowledge, future contingent events are facts and God knows them. Thus, God is omniscient.

Establishment and Openness Arminianisms on Foreknowledge and Providence

Since proponents of establishment Arminianism disagree among themselves regarding whether or not God experiences time, divine tempo-

²²Arminian theologian Jon Tal Murphy seeks to escape from this conclusion by distinguishing between God's knowledge and God's consciousness. He claims that God has exhaustive definite foreknowledge of future events, but can choose to have "selective consciousness" of those future events. That is, God can selectively choose not to be conscious of what he knows to be a future fact (truth). He says that, although God's store of knowledge includes his prevision of, for instance, the fact that Abraham willingly offers Isaac, at the point where God announces the test, God blocks out of his consciousness the fact that Abraham actually passes the test. Otherwise, says Murphy, it would not be a genuine test. The claim that God can both know a fact and not be conscious of that fact is, to say the least, a radical view of omniscience. It seems to me that to claim God both knows and can block out of his consciousness some knowledge implies that God both knows and does not know a fact—and that is a contradiction. Also, what value is it to claim that God is unconscious of a future fact if it cannot actually be changed? This would not help God provide guidance to us. Moreover, if a timeless God blocks out some knowledge at a particular time, then God is blocking out the knowledge for a specific time. Blocking implies process which entails time, and that contradicts divine timelessness. Murphy claims God has a bipolar relation to time. He claims that God has a two-leveled experience of both timelessness and temporality (pp. 30-33). However, to say that God experiences both successive duration and does not experience successive duration is clearly contradictory. However, I give Murphy credit for trying to articulate an Arminian understanding of how foreknowledge works, for he understands the contradiction in saying both that God knows X is a fact and that God can bring it about that X not occur. See his, *Divine Paradoxes: A Finite View of an Infinite God* (Christian Publications, Camp Hill, PA 1998), 49-56.

²³This is not what proponents of open theism have affirmed. Rather, they claim that God is fully omniscient for God knows all available facts/truths that are knowable at any time.

²⁴Perhaps, however, one could argue that this only means God is not essentially omniscient.

rality cannot be a distinguishing feature of open theism. I would now like to turn to what, so far as I can tell, is the only difference between establishment and openness forms of Arminianism. It is the debate over divine foreknowledge. The disagreement between Simple Foreknowledge and Present Knowledge is the only difference between openness Arminianism and establishment Arminianism. It is certainly the issue that gets all the headlines and causes some virulent reactions from proponents of meticulous providence. That these reactions are misplaced will be made clear by an examination of what a God with present knowledge can do providentially and what a God with simple foreknowledge can do providentially.

According to open theism, God has what may be called “present knowledge” (PK). God knows all that is logically possible to know. Thus, God knows all the past and present exhaustively, but God does not have exhaustive definite foreknowledge of the future because there is no such reality to be known. A God with PK knows those events that will be future that are determined (i.e., not contingently free) either because God specifically determines the event or because God knows that present causal factors will determine the event. In other words, though the future does not exist, God knows some events will happen (certain possibilities will become actualities). That part of the future that is indefinite is known by God as possibilities and probabilities. God is not caught off-guard since God knows everything that can possibly happen and the precise probability that something will happen.²⁵ In dealing with the future God anticipates what we will do and plans his responses accordingly. In this view God is able to hear our prayers and respond to them, dispense guidance out of his unfathomable wisdom, and be flexible when necessary to adjust his plans as the situations change. God is involved with humans in

²⁵Gregory Boyd has shown this to be the case since God could, from all eternity, have prepared for each and every possible situation. He develops an “infinite intelligence” argument to the effect that God could perfectly anticipate all of our possible responses. In this respect he says that open theism is really “neo-Molinism.” If God knows both “might counterfactuals” and “would counterfactuals,” then God is eternally prepared for any situation that arises and God then perfectly anticipates all human actions in terms of their probabilities. In my view, a proponent of ISF could claim that God anticipates and prepares for our future actions in the same way as Boyd asserts. In other words, ISF and neo-Molinism could have the same explanations of how God works providentially. See Boyd’s *Satan and the Problem of Evil: Constructing a Trinitarian Warfare Theodicy* (Downers Grove, ILL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 127-132.

dynamic give-and-take relationships, working with us to bring about the future.

Establishment Arminianism affirms a position known as Simple Foreknowledge (SF). God somehow simply “sees” (previsions) all that will ever happen in our history. At some point prior to creation God acquired exhaustive definite foreknowledge (EDF) of future contingent events without, it is claimed, causing those events to happen. Though openness Arminianism denies this, the differences between the two forms of Arminianism are not as great as might be suspected. As with God’s relationship to time, establishment Arminians have not articulated what they mean by simple foreknowledge in any great depth. They have simply stated that God has EDF without explaining how this works for divine providence. Certain Arminian philosophers, however, have delineated the implications of this view and some of the logical tensions inherent in it.

Two different versions of how God’s foreknowledge is accessed have been developed.²⁶ Simple Foreknowledge is commonly explained as God “seeing the whole at once,” with the result that God knows all that will happen. For example, God provisioned before the creation of the world my birth, sibling rivalries, marriage, adoption of children, etc. What God provisioned, moreover, includes all the details leading up to and surrounding all these events—right down to the number of hairs on my head at any given moment. This vision of God happens all at once and even though God knows things will occur in sequence, God does not acquire the knowledge in sequence. I shall designate this version “Complete Simple Foreknowledge” (CSF) for God has immediate access to the complete future.

Unfortunately, CSF has a difficult time explaining how God can intervene in what he foresees will happen. The problem arises because what God provisions is what will *actually* occur (*not* what *might* occur). Divine foreknowledge, by definition, is always correct. If what will actually happen is, for example, the holocaust, then God knows it is going to happen and cannot prevent it from happening since his foreknowledge is never mistaken. Furthermore, if what God has foreseen is the *entire* human history *at once*, then the difficulty is to somehow allow for God’s

²⁶For a much more in-depth treatment, see my “Why Simple Foreknowledge Offers No More Providential Control than the openness of God,” *Faith and Philosophy* 14, no. 1 (Jan. 1997): 26-40.

intervention into that history. This raises a serious problem. Does simple foreknowledge imply that God previsions his own decisions and actions? If a God with CSF possesses foreknowledge of his own actions, then the problem is to explain how the foreknowledge can be the *basis* for the actions when it already *includes* the actions. Hasker explains: “it is impossible that God should use a foreknowledge derived from the actual occurrence of future events to determine his own prior actions in the providential governance of the world.”²⁷ Such a deity would then know what he is going to do before deciding what to do. God would learn of his own future actions. But that seems to imply that a script has been written and even God is captive to it.

A God with CSF would be unable to plan, anticipate, or decide—he would simply know. This seems to call the divine freedom into question, making God a prisoner of his own foreknowledge, lacking perfect freedom. For instance, if God sees Abraham’s birth, life, and death all at once, how does God interject the test of the binding of Isaac (Gen. 22) into Abraham’s life? How does God see God’s own actions in Abraham’s life which would alter Abraham’s life and consequently change God’s foreknowledge? As Swinburne points out: “what God already knows is beyond his making a difference to.”²⁸ Hunt is correct that a God “with total foreknowledge . . . is equipped to make maximally informed decisions—but there is nothing left to be decided.”²⁹ Now that God has knowledge of all that will happen, it is “too late” logically for God to change anything. The divine freedom is seriously curtailed. What a sorry state for God to be in!

There is, however, another explanation of how simple foreknowledge works. Cottrell, who has written three lengthy volumes on the nature of God and providence from an Arminian perspective, sees the problems with CSF. He now affirms that God accesses the future *in sequence* or *incrementally*.³⁰ This position may be called “Incremental Simple Foreknowledge”

²⁷Hasker, *God, Time and Knowledge*. Cornell Studies in the Philosophy of Religion. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 63.

²⁸Swinburne, Richard. *The Coherence of Theism*. Revised ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 181.

²⁹David P. Hunt “Divine Providence and Simple Foreknowledge,” *Faith and Philosophy*. 10, 3 (July, 1993): 408.

³⁰ Cottrell, “Understanding God: God and Time,” Paper presented at the Evangelical Theological Society, November 19, 2002. When I developed ISF, I had linked it with divine timelessness. But Cottrell is correct that ISF is compatible with divine temporality.

(ISF). When God is foreseeing the future he sees only part of it at a time—not the complete whole at once as in CSF—and learns about what will happen in the future incrementally or step by step. Speaking metaphorically, God rolls the tape of the future up to a certain point and then stops it in order to interject his own actions into our history and then rolls the tape further to see what his creatures will do in response to his actions. Then God again pauses the tape and thinks about what he will do and then rolls the tape further. Hence, there is a logical sequence in the way God comes to access his foreknowledge. In this version God still learns what will happen in the future prior to creation, but he learns it incrementally (in sequence).³¹ For instance, prior to creation God learns that Abraham will obey his call to leave his homeland. Yet Abraham has some questionable character traits and so God decided to put him to a test to find out whether Abraham had really changed or not. At this point in the tape God does not yet know the outcome of this test. God pushes the play button to see whether Abraham passes the test. God learns that he does (Gen. 22:12). Then God decides to make another promise to Abraham. At this point on the tape God does not yet know how Abraham's descendents will turn out. So God continues to work his way through the tape, pausing it to interject his own actions until God comes to the end. At this point, just prior to actually creating, God *now* knows all that will happen in human history. Cottrell calls God's acquisition of this knowledge the "noetic big bang." ISF has a huge advantage over CSF since God can freely interject his own decisions. It does not undermine the divine freedom or render a deistic God.

Of what value is it for God to have foreknowledge? Doctrines are supposed to solve problems and help us live the Christian life. So what is the cash value of affirming simple foreknowledge? Some have suggested that it gives God a providential advantage over a deity lacking foreknowledge. Could a God with SF have foreknown certain individuals would commit moral evils and so have decided not to allow them to be created? John Hick thinks so. He says it is "hard to clear God from ultimate responsibility for the existence of sin, in view of the fact that He chose to create a being whom He foresaw would, if He created him, freely sin."³² Lorenzo

³¹This means that EDF is *not an essential property* of God for either ISF or PK since, for ISF, there was a time prior to creation when God did not have EDF.

³²John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, revised ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 69.

McCabe, who wrote two large volumes on foreknowledge and defending open theism in the nineteenth-century, agrees, saying, “a being who the Creator foreknew would be disobedient should not be created. . . . How easy for omnipotence to prevent the existence of those who, as his omniscience foresaw, would choose to be disobedient.”³³ The claim is that foreknowledge gives God the option of either permitting or preventing human choices once God knows them as actual. However, this is erroneous. Once God knows something as actual he cannot make it the case that it not be actual. Only if it is the case that God knows that something is *likely* to happen, though it has not yet happened, can God choose to either permit or prevent the as yet possible event.

Can a God with SF prevent sinners from being born or prevent certain evil choices? No, for the simple reason that if what God *foreknows* is the *actual* world then God foreknows the births, lives, and deaths of actual sinners. Once God has foreknowledge he cannot change what will happen for that would make his foreknowledge incorrect. God cannot make future actual events “deoccur.” If God foreknows (has knowledge of the actual occurrence) that Saul will freely choose to mistrust God, then God cannot intervene to prevent Saul from this mistrust. Hence, God can see the evil coming before he creates the world, but is powerless to prevent it. Hasker correctly observes:

[I]t is clear that God’s foreknowledge cannot be used either to *bring about* the occurrence of a foreknown event or to *prevent* such an event from occurring. For what God foreknows is *not* certain antecedents which, unless interfered with in some way, will *lead to* the occurrence of the event; rather, it is *the event itself* that is foreknown as occurring, and it is contradictory to suppose that an event is *known* to occur but then also is *prevented* from occurring. In the logical order of dependence of events, one might say, by the “time” God knows something will happen, it is “too late” either to *bring about* its happening or to *prevent* it from happening.³⁴

³³McCabe, *The Foreknowledge of God* (Cincinnati: Cranston and Stowe, 1887), 364.

³⁴Hasker, *God, Time, and Knowledge*, 57-58. This same point was made in 1843 by the Methodist preacher Billy Hibbard, *Memoirs of the Life and Travels of B. Hibbard*. 2nd ed. (New York: self-published, 1843), 387, and is also discussed by Keith Ward, *Rational Theology and the Creativity of God* (New York: Pilgrim, 1982), 152.

It is a logical contradiction to affirm that God both knows something will happen and that God knows he will bring it about that it not happen. Hence, a God with CSF cannot act providentially in history and ends up being a deistic God.

Recognizing such difficulties, the proponent of SF may appeal to Incremental Simple Foreknowledge (ISF) in an attempt to rescue providential control. In this version of foreknowledge God roles the tape forward and learns (prior to creation) that Saul is succumbing to temptation—but does not role the tape far enough to see whether he actually sins or not. At this point God may press the pause button on his remote and decide to intervene in order to buttress Saul’s flagging trust. Will God’s efforts be successful? To find out, God rolls the tape forward to see how Saul will respond. If Saul chooses to continue to trust God then the temptation is overcome. If he fails to trust God, then sin enters the world. Regardless, once God sees the actual future choice of the creature he is powerless to prevent it. Prior to God’s foreseeing the actual choice being made, God can seek to persuade Saul to trust God but, once God knows that Saul will fail to trust God, it is too late for God to prevent the sin.

It must be remembered that a God with SF (either CSF or ISF) does not have middle knowledge and so cannot “try out” alternative scenarios in order to ascertain which one will achieve God’s objective in preventing Saul from sinning.³⁵ A God with SF does not know before he decides to create this particular world that decisions and actions will actually occur in history. Consequently, a God with SF is no less a risk taker than the openness God with present knowledge (PK). A God with SF might “luck out” in that his free creatures never, in fact, decide to sin. Even so, it will not be because of any advantage afforded by SF. On the other hand, a God with SF cannot (contra Hick) be blamed for not preventing sin from coming about since this was not possible.

What of all those God foreknew would never exercise saving faith in him and thus are not part of the elect of salvation? Can God decide not to create them? James Mill, the father of John Stuart Mill, thought so.

³⁵According to middle knowledge (or Molinism) God not only knows what will actually occur in the future, God knows what humans would do under any hypothetical situation. For instance, God knows exactly what you would be like and all the decisions you would make if, for instance, you had been raised in a different culture. It may be the case that some establishment Arminians actually believe middle knowledge without being aware of it.

“Think of a being,” he says, “who would make a hell, who would create the race with the infallible foreknowledge that the majority of them were to be consigned to horrible and everlasting torment.”³⁶ Although this objection is valid for classical theism (where God foreordains all things), it is not valid for either SF or PK because it misunderstands the nature of simple foreknowledge. Though God may use foreknowledge to see which individuals will freely come to faith in Christ and so decide to elect them, he cannot guarantee that only those who exercise faith in God come into existence.³⁷ For SF, God’s election is dependent on, and logically subsequent to, the choice of the creatures, even though God’s election of them is prior to creation. According to conditional election, God *responds* to the free choices of his creatures. A God with SF takes risks in creating a world where God does not foreordain all things. But this means that God cannot be held responsible for ensuring that only those people who will love God will be born. Once he decided to create, God could have learned through his foreknowledge that no humans would ever freely come into a loving relationship with him. Thankfully, there are those who love God, but this is not due to the providential use of foreknowledge. So long as one affirms that simple foreknowledge is conditioned upon what creatures with libertarian freedom actually do, then one cannot escape the conclusion that God took a risk in bringing about this type of creation. The only way to avoid divine risk is to maintain some form of divine foreordination of all things or affirm Molinism.³⁸ All forms of freewill theism affirm that humans do things that God prefers they not do.

It is often assumed that a God with CSF would be in a maximally informed position to offer guidance and protection to those who petition him in prayer. For instance, say Mandie asks God whether she should marry Matthew or Jim, believing that God knows how everything will turn out. Mandie believes that God knows for a fact whether Jim will be

³⁶Quoted in McCabe, *Foreknowledge of God*, 25.

³⁷This might be possible for a God with middle knowledge. Some Molinists believe that God does not create any being he knows will ultimately be lost, while other Molinists assert that God could not prevent people from being created that he knew would be damned for there were no such feasible worlds available for God to create. Consequently, Molinists either have to say God is very unlucky or that universalism may be true. See my “The Soteriological Problem of Evil and Middle Knowledge” (forthcoming).

³⁸ See note 8 above.

loving or abusive towards her and would advise her appropriately. The problem is that if God only knows truths and God *knows* it as true that she actually marries Jim and that he actually will start out good but end up abusive, then God cannot change that from happening. Once God knows it as fact that she will actually marry Jim and be quite unhappy, then it is useless for God to give her the guidance to marry Matthew. It would be incoherent to claim that God, knowing the actual future and on the basis of this knowledge, changes it so that it will *not* be the actual future, for God's knowledge is never false. Of course, God might foreknow that Jim will be a wonderful husband for Mandie. Even so, it is not because God brought it about. A God who already knows the future cannot answer such prayers.

Fortunately, ISF does not have this problem. For ISF God only accesses his foreknowledge up to the point where Mandie invokes God for guidance as to whom she should marry—but does not yet know whom she will actually marry nor knows for sure whether Jim or Matthew will be good husbands. Consequently, God's advice to her will be the best God can give at that moment. God is able to advise her on the basis of his exhaustive knowledge of all facts up to that point in the tape. That is, God does not yet know exactly how Jim and Matthew will turn out. What God knows at this point is their present characters, goals, and the like. So, the guidance given will be based on God's exhaustive knowledge of their pasts and their present characters.³⁹ God's guidance will be based on his anticipation of how these men will develop. This explanation of divine guidance is exactly the same as would be given by an open theist, so there is no difference between an establishment Arminian who affirms ISF and open Arminianism on this point.

The same is true concerning prayers for protection. For instance, if God knows that Susan will actually be seriously injured in an auto accident on a trip from Chicago to Minneapolis, then no prayer for "traveling mercies" can alter this situation. God's knowledge cannot be wrong so if

³⁹Greg Boyd explains this in *God of the Possible*, 103-106, 151-153. Some critics object that such a deity would not be able to guide us into the best choices since not even God would know for sure the final outcome. However, the situation for a proponent of meticulous providence is not that rosy. For instance, if the God of meticulous providence guides Mandie into a marriage with Jim and he turns out to be horribly abusive, did God guide her wrong? The proponent of meticulous providence says no, for God ordained for some good reason.

God knows that she will become a paraplegic, then that is what will happen and God is powerless to prevent it. Consequently, prayers for protection would be useless and any divine interventions prohibited. Only if, at the point the prayer is offered, God does not yet know the outcome of Susan’s journey can a prayer for safe traveling be coherent for simple foreknowledge. If God decides to act in response to my prayer, it cannot be based on his foreknowledge for that would involve a contradiction. A God with ISF would preview the tape of the future up to the point where he would foresee our prayers for Susan and would not yet know whether she is involved in an accident or not. At this point God can decide whether he will intervene or not should he anticipate that an accident is immanent. If God decided to protect her, then as God rolls the tape further and sees an accident about to happen (it will happen unless some circumstance changes), then God can act to prevent her from being severely injured. Hence, the explanation of how a God with ISF answers prayer is no different from the explanation given by open theists. What is different is the time when God acquires this knowledge.⁴⁰ For ISF, God receives it prior to creation as he previsions history unfolding moment by moment whereas for PK God acquires it as history now unfolds. For example, according to ISF God learned prior to creation that Abraham would pass the test and according to PK God learned that Abraham passed the test as it actually unfolded in time. But both views agree that God did not know whether Abraham would pass the test when he decided to put Abraham to the test.

The Arminian who affirms ISF and the Arminian who affirms PK will have precisely the same understandings of how God works providentially. They will explain in exactly the same way the passages about God “changing his mind” (e.g., Ex. 32:14; 1 Sam. 15), being surprised (Jer.3:7), and why God tests people to find out what they really believe (Ex. 15:25). They will have the same explanation for God saying “now I know that you fear me” (Gen. 22:12) to Abraham for in both views, though God may have had a good idea, he did not know Abraham would in fact pass the test at the moment God put him to the test. Moreover, they

⁴⁰Of course, there would also be a difference regarding “how” God comes by this knowledge. This will involve different conceptions of the nature of time and the reality of the future. As of yet, proponents of ISF have not clarified their understandings on these matters.

will explain predictive prophecies in the same ways (as conditional statements of what will happen unless someone changes their present direction, as statements about a future event that is determined to occur either because God determines it or because God knows all the causal factors at work and their determined results). Both views will explain the way in which God responds to human prayers the same way. Both will explain God's experience of grief (Gen. 6:6) and disappointment (1 Sam. 15:11) in the same way. Both views will explain the same way God's flexibility to switch to plan "B" when necessary. In fact, all of the issues separating classical theism from establishment Arminianism will be identical to the issues separating classical from open theism. These include the use of the freewill defense in coping with the problem of evil, the explanation of the way in which prayer affects God and how God can respond to our prayers, the understanding of how grace works in our lives in the process of salvation, the explanation of how we come to be the elect of God, the explanation of why there will not be sin in heaven, and the way in which God can guarantee a specific eschaton. All of these explanations will be identical whether one believes God has ISF or PK.⁴¹ There are *no practical differences* between these two views of omniscience.

Are There Advantages to Affirming ISF?

If there is no meaningful difference between ISF and PK (openness), of what value, then is ISF? Why would an Arminian affirm ISF? Perhaps because one could then say that at this moment God knows all that will happen in the future. This may give some people a psychological assurance, believing that God knows everything will work out all right. However, this ignores the explanations above that God may now foreknow that things will not work out all right because God knows that, despite all God has done, the humans involved may not obey God. Simple foreknowledge fails to provide God with any greater degree of control or providential advantage over a God with PK.

It should be noted that, though Cottrell articulates a temporal version of ISF, he does not accept my conclusion that ISF has no providential advantage over PK. He believes that it may be possible that, even after

⁴¹For a discussion of sin in heaven and the guarantee of the eschaton, see my "The Assurance of Things to Come" in *Looking to the Future: Evangelical Essays on Eschatology*, ed. David Baker (Baker Book House, 2001), 281-294.

God has “rolled the tape” to its conclusion, God may be able to go back and “touch up” the tape. That is, a God with ISF may be able to revise his providential activity once his “viewing” of the tape is complete. After the noetic big bang, perhaps God can go back prior to the bang and alter the course of the bang. Consequently, Cottrell believes this would mean that he would explain predictive prophecies and certain other providential activities differently than I have claimed a proponent of ISF is entitled to. Cottrell acknowledges, however, that he does not yet know how to explain how this can be. He does not know how to articulate ISF in a way that avoids the contradictions I have explained above—in particular, how could God change an event he knows to be actual (fact) to be not actual (a non event)? If proponents of ISF want to have providential advantages over PK, then they need to demonstrate how it is coherent to make such claims. In other words, if the proponents of ISF believe the problems described above can be surmounted, they need to show in non-contradictory ways how this is so.⁴² Perhaps they will. However, in the absence of any valid arguments to the contrary I will stand by my conclusion that ISF provides no providential advantages over PK and it is incoherent to claim otherwise.

A possible benefit of ISF over PK is that it allows one to affirm a common explanation of those scriptural texts that speak of God doing something “before the foundation of the world” (e.g., Eph. 1:4; Rev. 13:8). That is, God now knows all the elect, although he does not foreordain the elect. In other words, it would enable an Arminian to affirm that God, prior to creation, foreknew all the individuals who put their faith in Christ and thus it can be said that God elected them before the foundation of the world. This is, in fact, the reason why Cottrell says he goes with ISF. Though these scriptures can be interpreted differently, Cottrell, finds this the best way of explaining them.

A temporal version of ISF allows Cottrell to uphold core Arminian doctrines. Divine temporality allows him to affirm conditional election,

⁴²David Hunt admits that the “practical problem” is the most serious and difficult problem for SF to overcome. He attempts to defend SF from the contradiction (circular loop) by claiming that God can foresee all future events yet somehow bracket out some of his foreknowledge when guiding humans. See Hunt, “The Simple Foreknowledge View,” James Beilby and Paul Eddy eds., *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 96-101.

that prayer influences God, and that God has genuine give-and-take relations with us. ISF allows him to affirm that God now has foreknowledge of all contingent future events and that God elected individuals in Christ before creation. He believes divine temporality coupled with ISF offers the best explanation of the biblical material on divine providence and omniscience and offers a coherent way of maintaining a give-and-take relationship with God.

The main difference between ISF and PK is that the God of openness is presently working providence out whereas a God with ISF worked it out just prior to creation. However, Cottrell acknowledges that ISF and PK are in agreement that both *before* God makes his decision about what sort of world to create and immediately *after* he makes that decision, God does not know in full detail what the future will be. Where the two views differ is in *how quickly* God acquires the knowledge of what will be. Proponents of openness hold that God acquires the knowledge as time goes on, whereas for proponents of ISF God “learns” this somewhat faster. But this makes no difference whatever to God’s providential control or to the degree of risk taken by God. That is, in terms of the cash value or usefulness of the two views, there is no difference whatsoever. Viewed in this light, how important can be the difference between the two views regarding how fast God acquires the knowledge of the future? It seems that when ISF and PK are properly understood, there is no significant difference between them.

Objections to Open Theism are Just as Applicable to Establishment Arminianism

Observing the sorts of parallels just mentioned has led establishment Arminian theologian Roger Olson to say that most of the criticisms of Open theism brought forth by proponents of meticulous providence are familiar criticisms of establishment Arminianism (they just have not been made in a long time).⁴³ I agree.⁴⁴ Furthermore, if an establishment Armin-

⁴³Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief: Twenty Centuries of Unity and Diversity* (Downers Grove, ILL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 196.

⁴⁴I have examined many of these points in my “The Assurance of Things to Come;” “Why Simple Foreknowledge Offers No More Providential Control than the openness of God;” and “Be Wary of Ware: A Reply to Bruce Ware;” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* (June 2002): 221-231.

ian affirms ISF, then 99% of the criticisms against open theism will also be criticisms against ISF.⁴⁵

To see that this is so, we simply have to examine a few of the criticisms leveled against open theism. For instance, it is claimed that since the God of open theism did not know prior to creation that humans would, in fact, sin, then the divine plan of salvation could be nothing more than a “contingency plan.”⁴⁶ Any form of Arminianism is going to have this supposed “problem.” The reason why is that in the logical order of knowing, according to simple foreknowledge, God did not know that humans would actually sin until after his decision to create a world with free creatures. God may have had a plan in mind for this contingency, but since for Arminianism sin was not ordained as part of God’s plan for creation, it had to be a contingency plan.

In a similar vein, it is said that the God of open theism could not have known at the time of Christ all those subsequent individuals who would put their faith in him, so Christ could not have died for them.⁴⁷ Setting aside the dubious theological assumption behind the criticism, it should be clear by now that the proponent of ISF will face the same criticism for, at the point on the tape of the future where Christ dies, those who will be born subsequently are not yet known by God.

It is also charged that, according to open theism, God could make incorrect predictions about the future since God does not know with certainty, when the prediction is made, all that will happen. For ISF, God does not know with certainty at the time of the prediction all that will occur in the future. However, neither open theists nor proponents of ISF believe this entails that God makes mistakes for God will never *definitely* believe something will occur unless it is certain to occur.⁴⁸

⁴⁵One of the few criticisms of open theism that is not shared by ISF is the idea that God knew about and selected specific individuals for salvation “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). Of course, open theists do not believe this verse is about foreknown specific individuals.

⁴⁶Bruce Ware, “Defining Evangelicalism’s Boundaries Theologically: Is Open Theism Evangelical?” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 45, no. 2 (June 2002), 204.

⁴⁷ See Ware, “Defining,” 205.

⁴⁸ See my “Be Wary of Ware,” 224, 228-29. Ware’s use of Isaiah 40-44 where God declares the end from the beginning would be just as much a “criticism” of ISF.

It is charged that God cannot guarantee the nature of the eschaton unless he foreknows it. However, omniscience is not the issue here, omnipotence is. Sam may know that he is going to buy a piano tomorrow, but he is prevented from doing so because of an automobile accident. God, however, can guarantee that he will bring about an eschaton because he has the power to bring it about and no one can prevent him from doing so.⁴⁹

It is claimed that open theists cannot pray for the salvation of others since, if humans have libertarian freedom, God does not override their freedom in order to guarantee their salvation. Of course, this is an old criticism of establishment Arminianism. Moreover, it is claimed that the open theist view of petitionary prayer is “presumptuous” and “arrogant” to think we could advise God. Since Arminians believe that their prayers can affect God, they are just as guilty of being “presumptuous” and “arrogant.”⁵⁰

It is charged that a God who takes risks is an unwise God since it is foolish to create beings that God does not meticulously control. However, this is just as true for all Arminians since when God decided to create beings with libertarian freedom God chose not to meticulously control them and this implies risk-taking for God.

Finally, Norman Geisler claims that open theism does not “fit comfortably in the theistic category” since it denies “God’s immutability, eternity, simplicity, and pure actuality.”⁵¹ What he fails to notice is that if one must affirm these four divine attributes the way he defines them, then all forms of freewill theism are excluded from theism. All forms of Arminianism reject strong immutability, simplicity, and pure actuality, and many Arminians such as Cottrell reject divine timelessness.

Consequently, the vast majority of criticisms leveled against open theism are also criticisms of establishment Arminianism. Furthermore, to my knowledge only one of the criticisms of PK is not also a criticism of ISF. In other words, open theism’s understanding of omniscience is virtually identical to this particular understanding of omniscience by establishment Arminians.

⁴⁹See especially my “Assurance of things to Come.”

⁵⁰See my “Wary of Ware,” 229-230.

⁵¹Norman Geisler, *Creating God in the Image of Man?* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1997), 73-74.

Why Then is Open Theism Receiving So Much Attention?

If this is the case, then why the great attention to and conflict about open theism? Why the uproar from certain quarters? Two reasons stand out to me.⁵² First, many have mistakenly believed that the denial of exhaustive definite foreknowledge is a huge divergence from simple foreknowledge. However, this is largely due to the misunderstanding of the value of simple foreknowledge to God. Simple foreknowledge is useless for providential activity—it affords God no more providential control than a God with present knowledge. Once establishment Arminians understand this, they are likely to turn to ISF, PK, or middle knowledge. But since I have shown that there is no significant difference between ISF and PK, if one is going to create an uproar over open theism, then one is going to have to do likewise with Arminian proponents of ISF. Again, the reason why this is so is because the watershed issue separating open theism from classical theism is not foreknowledge, but the divine nature and the type of providence God exercises. Even Bruce Ware, at the end of his diatribe against open theism’s view of foreknowledge, admits that the key issue is whether God has granted humans libertarian freedom.⁵³ The key issue is not exhaustive definite foreknowledge, but whether God can be affected by creatures and whether humans have libertarian freedom. For if humans have libertarian freedom then God does not exercise meticulous providence and God takes some risks—ideas that are anathema to Ware but affirmed by all Arminians.

This leads to the second reason for the brouhaha—open theists have presented the most acute criticism of and alternative to meticulous providence (theological determinism) in quite some time. Open theism has raised some extremely important points about classical theism, such as the inability of the God of classical theism to respond to what we do or be affected by our prayers. Open theists have exposed these drawbacks and the proponents of meticulous providence know that their model simply will not sell in many evangelical circles. It is no surprise that virtually all

⁵²Another possible reason is that some people do not like it that we apply human logic to God. Some people are not bothered if their theology is contradictory on issues such as a timeless God responding to us or the God of meticulous providence being grieved by what we do.

⁵³Bruce Ware, *God’s Lesser Glory: The Diminished God of Open Theism* (Wheaton, ILL: Crossway Books, 2000), 220, 226.

of the railing accusations and virulent rhetoric have come from proponents of meticulous providence. establishment Arminians have, overall, viewed open theism as a positive development, even though they still have a number of questions.

The reaction to open theism, however, has not been merely negative. Some people consider it the freshest breath of air since the Reformation. Why all the excitement over it if it really is not that different from establishment Arminianism? I will hazard to put forward a number of reasons. To begin, open theism has emphasized certain matters more than other relational theologies. Community and relationships are important components in contemporary theology and open theism has taken a leading role in promoting these. More than other models, open theism has emphasized a dynamic give-and-take relationship with God. God is flexible and resourceful in his dealings with us. Also, open theists have highlighted the importance of prayer for the well being of the Christian community. open theism resonates deeply with the piety of many Christians. It also has focused attention on biblical texts that bring out a dynamic relationship with God. This way of reading scripture strikes a chord with many people. The doctrine of the Trinity has had a huge resurgence in the past few decades and open theists have made it a focal point of their theology. Also, in Christology, open theists have affirmed that the God who comes to us in Jesus is truly what God is like—we do not worry about a “God behind the God of Jesus” who has a secret will different from that which has been disclosed.

Moreover, open theists have made extensive use of recent Christian philosophy—particularly the voluminous literature examining the divine attributes of classical theism. Doctrines that used to be taken for granted, such as strong immutability, impassibility, and timeless, are no longer seen as essential to Christianity by a majority of Christian philosophers. Though the rejection of several of these attributes has always been required of Arminianism, this has rarely been highlighted. Also, proponents of openness have concentrated on the problem of evil and many people find it liberating to not have to blame God for our evil and suffering. We do not have to think that God specifically ordained some horror for our supposed well being. We do not have to pretend to be thankful for the evil that comes our way. Instead, we are liberated to fight against it, taking personal responsibility to collaborate with God (2 Cor. 6:1). Open theists have received thousands of letters and phone calls from people

saying that they are so glad that they no longer have to believe God wanted their baby to die or their daughter to be raped. Furthermore, open theism provides a coherent explanation for the notion of spiritual warfare. God is actually at war with the forces of evil—they are not simply doing his bidding.⁵⁴ One cannot affirm meticulous providence and claim that God is at war with the forces of evil without contradiction.

It hardly needs pointing out that none of these emphases are really new or unique to open theism. Perhaps it is because open theism has put them all together or perhaps because it just came along at the right time that it has captured so much attention. Perhaps it is the willingness of open theists to follow out the logical implications of certain key doctrines of Arminianism, such as God’s relationship to time, that draw major attention to it. Possibly it is because open theists have sought to apply Arminianism in ways relevant to our contemporary context. Whatever the reasons might be for its high profile, open theism is not putting forth a radical new model so much as it is making some important modifications to an old paradigm.

Conclusion

Three general conclusions are reached here.

1. All the varieties of Christian theism discussed in this paper affirm “mere” Christianity—that represented by, for instance, the Apostles’ Creed. Mere Christianity has developed historically into a number of more detailed versions of the Christian faith. Two of these more detailed traditions, classical and freewill, have been compared in this paper. Though both of these theisms affirm mere Christianity, they differ over some substantive matters. The watershed divide between classical and freewill theisms is the nature of God (especially regarding immutability and impassibility) and the type of providence God chose to exercise. All Arminians, whether temporalists or atemporalists and whether one affirms that the future is real or the future does not exist, agree that God has chosen to make some of his decisions and actions contingent upon creatures. Anyone who says that has rejected Classical theism. Openness is a mem-

⁵⁴See Gregory Boyd, *God at War* (Downers Grove, ILL: InterVarsity Press, 1997) and *Satan and the Problem of Evil*.

ber of the Arminian family.⁵⁵ Certainly openness does not meet the criteria for being classified as classical theism. No variety of freewill theism is a member of classical theism. In theological terms, the taxonomy is:

Mere Christianity

(divides into two main traditions)

1. Classical Theism

Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin

2. Freewill Theism

Eastern Orthodoxy, Wesleyanism,
Pentecostalism, Arminianism

2. In terms of the differences between establishment Arminianism and openness Arminianism, they are not so different as people have thought. Both affirm the core doctrines of Arminianism (doctrines one cannot jettison and remain an Arminian such as libertarian freedom, conditional election, divine conditionality, and that our prayers can affect God). Within establishment Arminianism there are those who affirm and those who reject divine timelessness. Openness affirms divine temporality, but so do some establishment Arminians. Hence, there is not necessarily any difference between the two Arminianisms on this point. One can jettison divine timelessness because it is not a core doctrine of Arminianism.

Regarding foreknowledge, some establishment Arminians seem to affirm CSF (though it remains unarticulated), while others affirm ISF. The majority of Arminians have not articulated their understanding of either the nature of time or the way in which simple foreknowledge works for providence. As more establishment Arminians investigate the nature of time itself, the nature of the future, the nature of timelessness, and the problems with CSF, perhaps more establishment Arminians will follow the lead of Cottrell in affirming both divine temporality and ISF. If my analysis is correct that it is contradictory to claim that a God with exhaustive definite foreknowledge can then change what he knows will be the case, then establishment Arminians are faced with several options. They might give up simple foreknowledge altogether and affirm either PK or middle knowledge. Or, like Cottrell, they might affirm ISF and hope that the contradiction and other problems can be overcome even if, at present, they do not know how. At the least, it seems irresponsible on the part of

⁵⁵Proponents of open theism will manifest the same range of views on scripture, baptism, ecclesiology, sin, eschatology, etc., that are found within establishment Arminianism.

Arminian scholars to ignore these implications and continue to make assertions about the providential usefulness of SF that are incoherent.

Regardless of which option is taken, it should be clear by now that there is absolutely *no difference whatsoever* between ISF and PK on any of the *core beliefs* of Arminianism. Also, I have argued the stronger claim that there is no practical difference between ISF and PK. Simple foreknowledge provides God no providential advantages over a God with PK. If so, then it does not seem that there is any substantive difference between these two Arminian views of omniscience. Both views are identical in the way they explain how God works providentially in answering prayer, evil, salvation, guidance, and the like. Both views agree that prior to creation there was a time when God did not know all future contingent events. For ISF God learned about these events in a “noetic big bang” prior to creation and as God rolled the tape forward he decided how he would respond in each situation. Figuratively speaking, we could say that, for openness, God is now “rolling the tape” forward and deciding how he will respond in each situation.⁵⁶ Does this difference make any meaningful difference? No. When the providential implications of ISF are correctly identified there is no significant difference between ISF and PK. Arminians who affirm ISF and Arminians who affirm PK are going to interpret scriptures about prophecy and providence in exactly the same way and will understand God’s activities in the Christian life in precisely the same ways.⁵⁷ Perhaps the hullabaloo over openness is much ado about nothing. The only real argument between these two forms of Arminianism is the nature of the future: does the future already exist and is it knowable?

3. Since the vast majority of objections leveled against open theism are also objections against establishment Arminianism, openness is shown to be a subset of Arminianism rather than a stand-alone theological model. Open theism has emphasized some of the core values of Arminianism more than other versions of Arminians and so has taken a leading role in the Arminian resurgence in theology. Furthermore, to my knowledge only one of the criticisms of PK is not also a criticism of ISF. Therefore, in this sense open theism is not a radical revision of establishment

⁵⁶Actually, openness denies that there is a “tape” of the future.

⁵⁷Again, Cottrell disagrees with my conclusion. However, he is going to have to put forth valid arguments, and not merely claims, if his objection is to have any force.

Arminianism. But is it a merely a “miniscule modification?” Perhaps not if establishment Arminians either turn to middle knowledge in large numbers or if they are able to overcome the problem of the providential uselessness of simple foreknowledge. Also, some establishment Arminians will believe that it is important for God to have exhaustive definite foreknowledge even if it does not help him in his providential governance. So, in this sense it seems that open theism is somewhere between a miniscule modification and a radical revision of Arminianism.⁵⁸

⁵⁸I would like to thank Jack Cottrell and my colleagues, William Hasker and David Woodruff, for helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper.

THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE: EASTERN PATRISTIC SPIRIT-CHRISTOLOGY FOR CONTEMPORARY WESLEYAN FAITH PRACTICE¹

by

Rob King

The influences of Eastern Patristic theology on the life, witness, and ecclesial projects of John Wesley have been noted for some time. Albert Outler well summarizes such influence when he writes:

In the thought and piety of the early Church he discovered what he thereafter regarded as the normative pattern of catholic Christianity. He was particularly interested in “Macarius the Egyptian” and Ephraem Syrus. What fascinated him in these men was their description of perfection” (*teleiwsis*) as the goal (*skopos*) of the Christian in this life. . . . The “Christian Gnostic” of Clement of Alexandria became Wesley’s model of the ideal Christian. Thus it was that the ancient and Eastern tradition of holiness as *disciplined* love became fused

¹I would like to thank Dr. Brian Daley, S.J., for his helpful feedback in “navigating” the Eastern Patristic influences on John Wesley; Dr. Geoffrey Wainwright for first introducing me to Eastern Patristic theology; Fr. Radu Bordeianu and Deacon Stephanos Alexopolos for their ongoing dialogue as long-lost Eastern Orthodox brothers in Christ; and for Methodist missionary to Mexico, Rev. Florencio Guzman, through whom the Spirit has worked mightily to bring healing and new life to me and countless others.

in Wesley's mind with his own Anglican tradition of holiness as *aspiring* love.²

More recently, renewed interest has been generated by Wesleyan historians and theologians alike concerning Wesley's Eastern Patristic influences and how they helped to promote in Wesley a normative catholic vision of the Christian life.³ Much of this influence can be traced theologically through attention to Eastern Patristic understandings of the Holy Spirit's presence and work (i.e., pneumatology) as Western appropriations of Eastern Patristic pneumatological insights, especially concerning the Spirit's relation to the person and work of Christ and the Spirit's role in "empowering" the Christian life of discipleship leading to "perfection in love" (e.g., the fifty *Spiritual Homilies* of Macarius).⁴ Finally, although the initial "waves" of Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity have been largely divided from the Wesleyan tradition of both Holiness and Episcopal orientations,⁵ renewed contemporary interest in charismatic expres-

²Albert Outler, *Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 9-10.

³Most notable from a historical perspective is Ted Campbell's helpful overview of the primary Patristic influences upon Wesley, *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity: Religious Vision and Cultural Change* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1991). Other recent helpful contributions include Mark Kurowski's "First Step Toward Grace: John Wesley's Use of the Homilies of Macarius the Great" in *Methodist History*, 36:2 Jan. 1998, 113-124; and Frances Young's essay similarly exploring Macarius's influence upon Wesley, "Essence and Energies: Classical Trinitarianism and 'Enthusiasm,'" in *Trinity, Community, and Power: Mapping Trajectories in Wesleyan Theology* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2000) edited by Douglas Meeks, 127-141.

⁴I concur with both Young and Kurowski in referring to the author of the *Spiritual Homilies* by the traditional name of "Macarius," while noting the current historical debate concerning the precise authorship of the homilies and whether or not they may be of Syrian and/or Messalian origin.

⁵On the "holiness" side of the Wesleyan family tree (e.g., Nazarenes), the charismatic gifts of the Spirit associated with Pentecostalism (e.g., speaking in tongues) have generally not been accepted, or at least not defined in the same way as Pentecostalism. On the "Episcopal" side (e.g., Methodist Episcopal Church that came to be United Methodism), the charismatic gifts have not been flatly rejected, only marginalized from Methodist theology/practice. For a fuller bibliographical listing of the more recent charismatic movement stemming from the 1960s, please see Charles Edwin Jones's *The Charismatic Movement: A Guide to the Study of Neo-Pentecostalism with Emphasis on Anglo-American Sources* (Metuchen, N.J.: The American Theological Library Association, 1995).

sions of the Spirit's work, such as that expressed in the Macarian homilies, can be seen.⁶

Given both historic Wesleyan emphases on the person and work of the Holy Spirit and contemporary charismatic and non-charismatic re-emphasis on the Spirit's workings (e.g., the generally non-charismatic lay renewal programs of "Walk to Emmaus," the Disciple Bible studies, etc.), this paper will offer a constructive theological reading of Eastern Patristic Spirit-Christology as a resource for contemporary Wesleyan "faith practice."⁷ Given the significant influence of the Macarian *Spiritual Homilies* on John Wesley himself, I begin with an exposition of the Spirit-Christology expressed in these writings, with particular emphasis on how the practices of prayer and discernment provide essential grounding for both charismatic and non-charismatic uses of the Macarian homilies in rendering a normative catholic vision of the Christian life of discipleship (here-

⁶Much of the renewed Wesleyan interest in charismatic expressions of the Spirit's work, at least in my own ecclesial locus of United Methodism, can be seen arising at the popular level of the laity through such lay-oriented emphases upon intercessory prayer (e.g., annual conference-wide intercessory prayer seminars led by Dr. Terry Tekyl) and evangelism (e.g., recent popularity of the Anglican charismatic evangelistic program "ALPHA"). Additionally, the March 2003 meeting of the Wesleyan Theological Society at Asbury Theological Seminary is a joint meeting with the Society for Pentecostal Studies entitled "Wesleyan and Pentecostal Movements for a New Century: Crucial Choices, Essential Contributions."

⁷I use the term "faith practice" out of concern for avoiding false bifurcations between "theology" (i.e., systematic or dogmatic theology) and the life of Christian discipleship (i.e., ethics). Such divisions were foreign to Patristic theology of both the West and the East (e.g., ranging from Augustine's prerequisite Incarnational "healing of our prideful souls" as expressed most beautifully in Book IV of *De Trinitate* to Gregory of Nyssa's ascending life of virtuous ascetic purification of the "image of God," expressed in his *Life of Moses*). Additionally, as John Wright has helpfully pointed out, such divisions between doctrine and discipleship are antithetical to John Wesley's own vision of the Christian life. In his article "Wesley's Theology as Methodist Practice: Toward the Post-Modern Retrieval of the Wesleyan Tradition," in the *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, Fall 2000, volume 35, Number 2., Wright argues that "theology, for Wesley, was practical, advocating certain linguistic patterns necessary to sustain practices that formed holy believers in order to keep the church faithful to God" (7).

after termed simply “faith practice”).⁸ The task of theological reflection, although inseparable from practices of discipleship, is nonetheless not simply reducible to such practices. Thus this paper will conclude with a brief exposition of the Spirit-Christology expressed in John Damascene’s *De fide orthodoxa* as a helpful “dogmatic” synthesis of earlier orthodox Eastern Patristic theology, most notably arising from the Cappadocian Fathers. Hopefully, through such a focusing on both the “faith by which Christians believe” (*fides qua creditur*) of Macarius and “the faith which Christians believe” (*fides quae creditur*) of John of Damascus, fresh blowings of the Spirit may be felt and co-operated with by those within contemporary Wesleyanism, and throughout the church catholic.⁹

Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi: Wesleyan Pneumatic Faith-Practice Seeking Greater Understanding

As a “programmatically” Anglican of his time, Wesley shared the conviction that the “ideals” of Christian antiquity should be reinstated in order to bring reform to English Christendom.¹⁰ Although Wesley’s vision

⁸My own reading of the Macarian homilies will be from a centrist position that acknowledges both the charismatic and non-charismatic elements of Macarian pneumatology. Although the most recent English translator of the homilies, George Maloney, S.J., notes the charismatic nature of the homilies, and their potential fruitfulness as a resource for contemporary charismatic/Pentecostal theology, both Kurowski and Young fail to mention the many charismatic emphases within the homilies (e.g., Spirit-baptism, discernment of spirits, pneumatic “deliverance” as part of the Spirit’s sanctifying grace, spiritual warfare, etc.).

⁹The writings of Macarius and John Damascene are obviously not reducible to only “act” and “content” of faith respectively. By using such classifications, I wish simply to highlight their respective emphases. Additionally, as I will argue in this paper, theology must *first* be grounded in the forms of pneumatically empowered ascetic practice (i.e., prayer, discernment, etc.) within a Trinitarian economy of salvation before even beginning to explicate such faith practice “dogmatically.” Failing to do so runs the risk not only of distorting theological reflection, but also of eviscerating salvation itself of its bodily, material content—to quote the key pro-Nicene Cappadocian soteriological criterion (later synthesized by John Damascene), “For what has not been taken cannot be healed” (John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa* III.6 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 9, Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Press, 1999, 50).

¹⁰Ted Campbell, *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity: Religious Vision and Cultural Change* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1991), 16. Campbell notes how “programmatically” Anglicans appealed to Christian antiquity for the purposes of reform, whereas “conservative” Anglicans appealed to the same sources as a way of countering Roman Catholic appeals to authority on the one side, while maintaining the status quo of Anglican liturgy and doctrine against Puritans and other “Free Churches” on the other side.

of Christian antiquity was rooted in numerous emphases of faith practice,¹¹ the person and work of the Holy Spirit was nonetheless a central concern. Not only did Wesley question on numerous occasions why the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit disappeared from the earliest apostolic era,¹² but such concern for the Spirit's apparent absence in the more formal ecclesiastical structures of his own day propelled him "outwards" to the unreached working-class masses of England and "backwards" to the earliest history of Christianity.¹³

Second, just as Wesley's "programmatic" concerns influenced his turning towards Christian antiquity for understandings of the Holy Spirit, so also did such early Christian sources for understanding the Holy Spirit

¹¹From Wesley's earliest days, he appealed to Christian antiquity as a programmatic impetus for his work. For example, beginning in 1732, through the Oxford Society, Wesley sought to reinstitute the ancient practices of fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays, a practice Wesley would later chide Methodists for beginning to abandon and thus leading to the chilling of original Methodist fervor (in Wesley's 1789 sermon "Causes of the Inefficiency of Christianity" quoted in Campell).

¹²Regarding the disappearance of the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit within the early church, Wesley offers a harsh indictment of the "post-Constantinian" church, claiming that "Constantine's calling himself a Christian—and pouring in that flood of wealth and power on the Christian church, the clergy in particular—was productive of more evil to the church than ten persecutions put together. From the time that the church and state, the kingdoms of Christ and of the world, were so strangely and unnaturally blended together, Christianity and heathenism were so thoroughly incorporated with each other that they will hardly ever be divided till Christ comes to reign upon earth" (Wesley's sermon, "Of Former Times," quoted in Kenneth Collins, *A Faithful Witness: John Wesley's Homiletical Theology* [Wilmore, KY: Wesley Heritage Press, 1993], 70).

¹³It must be particularly noted that Wesley was truly an Anglican clergyman of his time, and thus only deviated from standard ecclesiastical practices when the need compelled him to do so. For example, concerning Wesley's participation in "field preaching," such practices initially went sorely *against* his Anglican liturgical and aesthetic sensibilities, noting in his journal that "I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church" (quoted in Heitzenrater's *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995, 99]). Additionally, Heitzenrater points out how it was not until the "Third Rise" of Methodism in post-1737 London that the fires of revival swept Wesley into a new appreciation for the "explicit role of the Holy Spirit as central, both as a source of self-knowledge (direct internal evidence—witness of the Spirit, the basis for claiming assurance) and as source of the fruits (indirect external evidence—fruits of the Spirit, the basis for confirming assurance)" (91).

influence his own faith practice.¹⁴ This interpenetration of Christian antiquity and Wesley's contemporary faith practice regarding the Holy Spirit is especially demonstrated in his relationship with the Macarian *Spiritual Homilies*.

Following the lead of Albert Outler who noted the impact of the Macarian homilies on the young Wesley during his missionary venture in Georgia (1736–1737), Mark Kurowski sets out to analyze the “subtle, yet major, theological distinction” between the theologies of Macarius and John Wesley.¹⁵ In particular, Kurowski demonstrates the difference in understandings of the will in the initial human turning toward God within the economy of salvation, with specific attention given to Wesley's [mis?]quoting of Macarius to support his own constructive construal of the *via salutis* (i.e., “way of salvation”) in Wesley's famous sermon “The Scripture Way of Salvation.”¹⁶ Although Kurowski's own reading of the Macarian homilies omits their numerous charismatic aspects,¹⁷ he nonetheless astutely points out how central and formative a place the homilies had in Wesley's entire construal of the Triune economy of salvation.¹⁸

¹⁴Ted Campbell well elaborates how Wesley's vision of Christian antiquity developed and changed over time. In particular, he notes how Wesley begins his ministry with an idealistic view of the purity of the pre-Constantinian, ante-Nicene church, only to adopt a more nuanced reading of early church history later in life. In general, however, Campbell's book well demonstrates the overwhelming functional, “practical” impetus that propelled Wesley's use of early Christian sources. See Campbell, 116–118.

¹⁵Kurowski, 113.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 123.

¹⁷Kurowski's own reading of the homilies is supported primarily by an unpublished dissertation on the homilies by Anthony Paul (Benedict) Clarkson, O.C.S.O. of New Zealand, of which only one publicly accessible copy exists in the United States (in the library of the Divinity School of Duke University, Durham, N.C.), and secondarily by an overview article by George Florovsky.

¹⁸It must be noted that Wesley himself preferred a more “dynamic” understanding of the Triune God that focused primarily on God's economy of salvation rather than on God's intra-Trinitarian relations. Wesley thus preferred the term “Three-One God” (rather than Trinity) and interpreted Nicene/Chalcedonian orthodoxy through a greater reliance upon the ante-Nicene Fathers as soteriologically interpreted within a Trinitarian hermeneutics of biblical interpretation. See Geoffrey Wainwright's “John Wesley's Trinitarian Hermeneutics,” in the *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, vol. 36, no. 1, Spring 2001, 7–30.

“The Spirit-Filled Life”: Macarian Spirit-Christology

Although the *Spiritual Homilies* attributed to Macarius were most likely not written by the Desert Father Macarius,¹⁹ they nonetheless contain a unified theological vision. Prominent themes reoccurring throughout the homilies include: (1) a positive anthropology of the human soul originally created as good according to God’s image;²⁰ (2) an understanding of sin as an ever-pervasive infection of human beings needing a Divine cure;²¹ (3) the primacy of the Holy Spirit’s work in casting out evil spirits and sin as part of the ongoing work of sanctification;²² (4) the necessity of examination by self and others;²³ (5) practice of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, including healing,²⁴ revelations,²⁵ and especially discernment;²⁶ and (6) the primary theme to be treated throughout this paper—namely a dynamic and empowering Spirit-Christology as the key to God’s economy of salvation.²⁷

In order to trace this vision of Spirit-Christology within the Macarian homilies, rather than “systematizing” such Pneumatic-Christological insights into clearly defined analytical terms, I will instead treat major passages dealing with the interpenetrating work of Christ and the Holy Spirit sequentially as the homilies themselves treat Spirit-Christology.²⁸

¹⁹In his introduction, translator George Maloney particularly notes the strong connections with Messalianism, and the possibility that they may have been composed by Symeon of Mesopotamia who lived in northeast Syria in the middle of the fourth century. *Pseudo-Macarius: The Fifty Homilies and the Great Letter* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 7.

²⁰*Spiritual Homilies* I.7, I.10, 41, 43.

²¹*Ibid.*, III.4, 4b; IV.8, 53; XXVI.23, 173; XLV.4, 228.

²²*Ibid.*, VI. 5, 77; XXI.3, 154; XLI.3, 220.

²³*Ibid.*, VI.3, 77; XV.34, 121; XLVIII.2, 239; L.4, 245.

²⁴*Ibid.*, XLV.7, 229; XXVI.16, 170; XLVIII.4, 240.

²⁵*Ibid.*, VII.5, 80; XIII.6, 107; XXVI.16, 170; XLIX.4, 243.

²⁶*Ibid.*, IV.1, 50; VII.3, 79; XV.6, 110; XXXVIII.1, 211.

²⁷Because this theme is the focus of my analysis, references to the soteriologically empowering Spirit-Christology of Macarius will be included throughout the remainder of the paper.

²⁸For a helpful attempt at “systematizing” both Irenean Patristic and contemporary Charismatic/Pentecostal Spirit-Christology, see Ralph Del Colle’s *Christ and the Spirit: Spirit-Christology in Trinitarian Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). Del Colle’s treatment is especially helpful in providing a historical overview of both Eastern and Western theological reflections on Spirit-Christology. For a more succinct treatment of charismatic/Pentecostal Spirit-Christology, see his article “Spirit-Christology: Dogmatic Foundations for Pentecostal-Charismatic Spirituality,” *Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, no. 3 (O 1993), 9–112.

In taking a more exegetical rather than analytical approach, I hope to maintain the dynamism of the homiletical genre in which Spirit-Christology is both instantiated and in turn produces as the preached Word of God.

Although the first four Macarian homilies mention alternating ways in which the Spirit or Christ works within the process of redemption,²⁹ the first particularly clear collusion of the Spirit's and Christ's redeeming/sanctifying work comes in homily V. At the beginning of this homily, Macarius instructs his hearers concerning the great differences between "the world of Christians" and the world of other human beings.³⁰ Those who are not Christians are tossed continually to and fro by the turmoil and anxieties of this world.³¹ In contrast, however, "true Christians" who "participate in the Holy Spirit" (thereby being able to gaze on "heavenly things") are marked by a state of "equilibrium, tranquility and peace."³² Such fruits of participating in God's Spirit are produced by "many labors and sweat endured over a long time,"³³ yet the true source of such spiritual fruits is attributed to both Christ and the Spirit. Macarius states, "In this they are greater and better than those of the world, because their intellect and thinking of the soul is permeated by the peace of Christ and the love of the Spirit."³⁴ Such "renewing of the minds" allows the true Christian to spurn the glories of this world. For example, rather than desiring "the sight of an earthly king" in his worldly fineries, Christ-transformed persons instead have tasted the "ineffable beauty" by receiving in their "inner person" another Spirit much more compelling than "the spirit of the world."³⁵

Such spiritual indwelling, however, is not a cause for pride or elitism. Many Spirit-filled Christians can end up becoming sidetracked eventually by the cares of the world, either through "weakness, laziness, and

²⁹Most notable is homily I.10 (42) in which the "Spirit of Christ . . . directs [holy souls] wherever he wishes them to go" in the process of restoring the tarnished image of God within human beings.

³⁰Ibid., V.1, 63.

³¹Ibid., V.3, 64.

³²Ibid., V.4, 64.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid., V.5, 65.

cowardice” or through holding onto some “earthly attachment.”³⁶ Therefore, one must not judge another, for to do so is to fall into yet a more subtle form of worldly attachment.³⁷ Although emphasizing the need for complete humility, the true Christian nevertheless is completely surrendered to the Lord,³⁸ does not fear death,³⁹ and through participation in the holiness of the Holy Spirit will be purged of all traces of evil in order to receive new bodies at the time of resurrection.⁴⁰

The pneumatic-Christological themes of homily V are further expanded in Homily IX. In this homily, Macarius begins by emphasizing the need for endurance in the face of various trials and tribulations that confront Christians. Once again, Macarius stresses a “synergistic” relationship between Pneumatic and human agency. Although given “the power of divine grace” and “the gift of the Holy Spirit,” when faced with afflictions Christians must be careful not to “grieve the Spirit in any way.”⁴¹ Instead, Christians are called to keep all of the commandments whereby we are “regarded as worthy to receive freedom from all passions” and receive full adoption of the Spirit.⁴²

Through such spiritual adoption, Christians become “enflamed with a heavenly longing for Christ” which renders all other things insignificant compared to that Divine love.⁴³ Macarius exhorts, “One cannot possess his soul and the love of the heavenly Spirit unless he cuts himself off from all the things of this world and surrenders himself to seek the love of Christ.”⁴⁴ Through such surrender to the love of Christ the soul becomes adorned with “the Gospel virtues and the heavenly Spirit” and thus may become a “participator in the purity and sanctification of Christ.”⁴⁵

Several observations can be made. First, in these two homilies, the economy of salvation is consistently portrayed as an interpenetrating mutual activity of the Holy Spirit and Christ. The Holy Spirit points to

³⁶Ibid., V.6, 66.

³⁷Ibid., V.6, 67.

³⁸Ibid., V.6, 69.

³⁹Ibid., V.7, 72.

⁴⁰Ibid., V.12, 75.

⁴¹Ibid., IX.7, 85.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid., IX.9, 86.

⁴⁴Ibid., IX.10, 86.

⁴⁵Ibid.

Christ and Christ points to the Holy Spirit. Second, from such melodious Divine interpenetration, human cooperation is both sought and required. Truly, such human agency is “empowered” by God’s grace, but such Divine empowering manifests itself in the ability to actually fulfill the commandments. Third, although the vision of Christian faith practice here described is quite stringent involving seemingly complete renunciation of the world, such progressing life of Gospel virtue is no cause for spiritual elitism. Not only is one’s empowerment wrought by participation in the Divine life, but even following complete surrender to the Spirit’s indwelling, one can still choose to fall from such holy living.

Keeping in mind the empowering and synergistic Spirit-Christology of Homilies V and IX further illumines other noteworthy passages in the Macarian homilies. Through the empowerment of the Spirit of Christ Christians are made “worthy vessels” to receive the anointing and habitation of the Holy Spirit,⁴⁶ and we are freed from the powers of death that Christ conquered through his own death, descent into hell, and resurrection.⁴⁷ Through the Spirit, we are also granted “spiritual vision” whereby we can actually see, at least in part, the unseen realms of the spirit. In Homily XIV, Macarius states, “Neither can the luminous world of the Godhead be touched or seen with physical eyes. But to those who are spiritual, namely, who see with the eyes of the heart, both the world of Satan and darkness and also the world of divine light lie revealed.”⁴⁸

Although human cooperation in both the overall economy of salvation and the receiving of spiritual gifts is consistently rooted in the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, such salvific faith practice is described by the Macarian homilies as a life of continual spiritual battle and progress. For example, Christians must be careful to never grieve the indwelling Holy Spirit,⁴⁹ and although we are warned by the same Spirit of future spiritual attack,⁵⁰ we must nevertheless be ever careful to discern what is truly the Spirit’s work from that which is not.⁵¹ Additionally, Macarius

⁴⁶Ibid., X.5, 90.

⁴⁷Ibid., XI.10-11, 94-95.

⁴⁸Ibid., XIV.6, 107.

⁴⁹Ibid., XV.2, 108.

⁵⁰Ibid., XV.4, 109-110.

⁵¹Ibid., XV.5, 49, 110, 127.

claims that God allows tribulations to occur in order to “dry up” the very roots of sin within us.⁵²

As one progresses in the life of the Spirit who indwells us, such Divine fellowship becomes the fount from which our entire lives of faith practice flows. In Homily XVIII, Macarius exhorts Christians to pray to God in order to receive the empowering “treasure of the Spirit” leading to the purity and perfection by means of “the heavenly treasure which is Christ.”⁵³ As Christians receive such treasured spiritual fellowship, we are thus able to offer “spiritual conference” and edify others with our words.⁵⁴ Regarding Spirit-Christology, Macarius again grounds such Divine fellowship, and the fruits that flow from it,⁵⁵ in the interpenetrating and dynamic cooperative action of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Macarius writes, “so such persons as these are totally penetrated by the Holy Spirit. They become like to Christ, putting on the virtues of the power of the Spirit with a constancy.”⁵⁶

Although Macarius certainly includes strong healing imagery to describe the sanctifying work of the Spirit of Christ (as Kurowski points out), what is perhaps more noteworthy, both within its own historical context and for contemporary application in charismatic ecclesial settings, is the description of the Spirit’s salvific work as a form of purgative “deliverance.”⁵⁷ Following Homily XX’s description of the “Spirit of Christ” who applies His salvific healing touch by “drying up” the passions,⁵⁸ Macarius further elaborates such healing as a deliverance from evil spirits in Homily XXI. Internally, Macarius describes such delivering Pneumatic action thusly, “he can obtain from him [the Lord] inward deliverance from the bonds and barriers and the ambushes and darkness of the evil spirits,

⁵²Ibid., XVI.4, 130.

⁵³Ibid., XVIII.2, 142.

⁵⁴Ibid., XVIII.5, 143.

⁵⁵Ibid., XVIII.11, 145; XIX.2 – 6, 147–48.

⁵⁶Ibid., XVIII.10, 145.

⁵⁷Kurowski’s own theological synthesis of Macarius (following the lead of Clarkson and Florovsky) focuses primarily on the healing themes within the Macarian understanding of salvation. Although such themes are certainly present within the text, the precise way in which such “healing” is described is as a form of charismatic deliverance from evil spirits that afflict a person both externally and internally.

⁵⁸Ibid., XX.1–7, 150–152.

who operate in the area of the hidden passions.”⁵⁹ Externally, not only must a Christian withdraw from the bonds of the world to even recognize the internal battle waging within us,⁶⁰ but in confronting the “hidden deceits of the devil” and his accompanying evil forces, the various “weapons of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6) must be utilized.⁶¹ Such a “charismatic” reading of Macarian deliverance from evil spirits is further supported in Homily XXV in which Macarius claims that our “attachment to the passions” renders our bodies as “the temple of idols and the receptacle of evil spirits,”⁶² and in Homily XLIII which describes demons being burned up by the divine power of being “baptized in the Holy Spirit.”⁶³

The allusion to “Spirit baptism” in the Macarian homilies is perhaps the most striking parallel with modern Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity. Regarding Spirit baptism, Homily XLIII portrays it as being all consuming of impurity so that Spirit baptized Christians “have no experience of evil.”⁶⁴ Contrary to more modern views of total and instantaneous sanctification, however, the effects of Spirit baptism can only be realized through a progressing life of human cooperation with such Divine purification.⁶⁵ If such human cooperation with the Spirit’s work falters even just a bit through “sloth” or even the slightest “frivolity,” then the “spirits of error” have been welcomed into the “pastureland” of the soul, thereby ruining spiritual fellowship.⁶⁶

Finally, the interpenetrating and purgative salvific work of the Spirit of Christ becomes in itself our source of Divine knowledge. Such Divine

⁵⁹Ibid., XXI.3, 154.

⁶⁰Ibid., XXI.4, 154.

⁶¹Ibid., XXI.5, 155.

⁶²Ibid., XXV.4, 161. Granted, such descriptions may simply reflect the rhetorical nature of the preaching genre, rather than a coherent theological anthropology of indwelling evil spirits. Such a “rhetorical” reading of indwelling evil spirits seems unlikely, however, when one takes into account more “mainstream” fourth-century liturgical practices of exorcism as part of the rites of Christian initiation (e.g., the *Apostolic Tradition* attributed to Hippolytus and Cyril of Jerusalem’s *Mystagogical Catecheses*). For a helpful overview of exorcistic baptismal practices during this period, see Henry Ansgar Kelly’s *The Devil at Baptism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985). See especially chapter three (45–56) on early Christian understandings of indwelling “sin demons.”

⁶³Ibid., XLIII.3, 220.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid., XLIII.5, 221.

⁶⁶Ibid., XLIII.6, 221.

knowledge can be characterized in primarily three ways. First, Macarius claims that direct Pneumatic knowledge of God is most available to the simple because it contradicts the received “wisdom” of the world. Contrary to strong “Logos” Christologies that make significant use of pre-Christian, pagan philosophical sources, Macarius claims in Homily XLII that thinkers such as Aristotle, Plato, or Socrates “who were skilled in knowledge, were like great cities, but they were laid waste by the enemies because the Spirit of God was not in them.”⁶⁷ In contrast to such intellectual elites, Macarius offers the antithesis of “many simple people, who are participators of grace [and] are [thus] like little cities fortified by the power of the cross.”⁶⁸

Such censuring of claims to worldly wisdom is not a pretext for producing a different type of elitism based in foolishness, however. For example, in Homily XLV, although Macarius advocates a similar censuring of worldly wisdom in which human skills can become “slaves of the power of evil,” the emphasis is on Divine indwelling as the source for theological knowledge. Macarius writes, “Thus no pursuit in this life, no brothers, no wealth, no courage, none of all the things mentioned above relieve man of sin, man who has been submerged in sin and cannot see things clearly. Only the presence of Christ can purify soul and body.”⁶⁹

Second, Divine knowledge that results from the Spirit’s indwelling also manifests itself in the development of “spiritual senses.” The charisms of healing, knowledge and revelation are given to the Christian in close fellowship with the Spirit,⁷⁰ and one’s “spiritual eyes” can become enlightened by such spiritual indwelling. Macarius writes in Homily XLVI:

If then, the soul of the sinner is so subtle and volatile that his mind is not hindered from places far away, much more does

⁶⁷Ibid., XLII.1, 218.

⁶⁸Ibid., XLII.2, 218. Macarius further elaborates in this homily that the “spirit of evil” that creeps within one’s soul appeals to “reason” as it seeks to cast its veil of darkness (XLII.3, 218). Also in Homily XLIII.8, Macarius states that the “simple ones begin to hear the Word, and they do the Word’s work with loving attitude, and they receive from God the grace from the Spirit. But the wise and those who seek superficially the Word, these flee from the war and they do not progress. They are found behind those who entered the war and won the victory” (222).

⁶⁹Ibid., XLV.3, 227.

⁷⁰Ibid., XLV.7, 229.

the soul from which the veil of darkness has been removed by the power of the Holy Spirit and whose spiritual eyes have been enlightened by the heavenly light and whose soul has been perfectly set free from the passions . . . such a person finds himself so expanded in consciousness as to be everywhere, where and when he wishes to serve Christ.⁷¹

Third, although the development of one's spiritual senses enables one to see the invisible spiritual realm,⁷² the primary "lens" through which the spiritual senses must be directed is Scripture. Beginning with an exposition of Ezekiel 1:4 – 2:1 in Homily I, in which Ezekiel could see in a trance the future coming of Christ,⁷³ a spiritual (i.e., figurative) exegesis of Scripture seems largely presupposed throughout the remaining homilies.⁷⁴ Such spiritual exegesis understands the biblical text as being a type of "gateway" through which one is able to view true spiritual realities, and is perhaps most clearly demonstrated in Homily XLVII.

In this homily, Macarius interprets the Exodus story as being a figurative lens through which Christians can understand deeper "spiritual realities."⁷⁵ Thus, Christ is interpreted as the "spiritual Moses" who sets humanity free from the captivity of sin,⁷⁶ and Satan is deemed the "spiritual Pharaoh" who pursues the soul with "afflictions, trials and invisible wars."⁷⁷ Rather than simply being a "metaphorical" description, however, Macarius views Scripture as providing the lens through which the Holy Spirit can direct one's spiritual senses to view and understand *true spiritual realities*. Macarius states, "For the figures and shadows of earlier time were of true, present realities. For the ancient worship is a shadow and image of the present worship."⁷⁸

In explicating the Spirit-Christology found within the Macarian homilies, one thus finds an extremely rich theological vision of not only God's indwelling and sanctifying presence, but by extension a vision of the entire Christian life. First, the Macarian homilies provide a beautiful

⁷¹Ibid., XLVI.4, 231.

⁷²Ibid., XXXIII.4, 202; XXXIV.1, 203; XLV.5, 228.

⁷³Ibid., I.2, 37.

⁷⁴Ibid., XXXV.1, 204; XLVII, 232–233; L.3, 244.

⁷⁵Ibid., XLVII.11, 236.

⁷⁶Ibid., XLVII.7–9, 23–35.

⁷⁷Ibid., XLVII.12, 236.

⁷⁸Ibid., XLVII.16, 238.

rendition of the interpenetrating, sanctifying work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, which serves as essential grounding for a dynamic Trinitarian economy of salvation. Second, such a theological vision is offered without losing the ascetical and spiritual practices (e.g., prayer, discernment of spirits, etc.) and homiletical locus (i.e., the preached Word of God) by which spiritual indwelling can synergistically occur. Third, through rooting human knowledge of God in the development of “spiritual senses,” the Macarian homilies provide Christians with a rendering of spiritual gifts that can be used in both recognizing and operating more effectively when confronting the unseen realms of the spirit through the “lens” of Scripture. Since the practice of spiritual discernment is key to any claims of Divine knowledge, spiritual warfare, or biblical exposition, it is necessary to examine key points of theological discernment that the Spirit may have led the church to adopt in its early history.

The Spirit Rendered Coherent: Towards a Tentative Patristic Dogmatic Synthesis

Grave dangers exist for Christian theology whenever the act of faith (*fides qua creditur*) is divorced from its content (*fides quae creditur*). First, if the Christian church has truly been established by the sending of the Holy Spirit upon the first apostles at Pentecost, then one must take seriously the specific authoritative theological judgments (*fides quae creditur*) rendered by Christian ecclesial bodies throughout history. To do otherwise would be to potentially blaspheme the Holy Spirit.⁷⁹

Second, Christianity has been splintered by ecclesial division throughout much of its history, and has often sided with the prevailing “wisdom” of the world, rather than the “foolishness” of the cross.⁸⁰ In choosing the so-called wisdom of the world, many times Christian theology has run the counter risk of sheering the content of Christian faith (i.e., “belief”) from

⁷⁹A reoccurring danger within different forms of Pietism is the temptation to reduce theology/knowledge of God to *mere* human experience (of either the Evangelical or Protestant Liberal variety). Not only does Macarius offer an “experiential” approach to theological knowledge that involves rigorous scrutiny by oneself and others, but such “experience” is rooted in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the practice of the spiritual gifts through continual prayer and spiritual fellowship.

⁸⁰A wonderful theological assessment of the particular plight of Western Christianity and our own adoption of worldly wisdom (positively and negatively) is Lesslie Newbigin’s *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986).

any active vision of normative Christian practice that would either inform, be guided by, or instantiate such belief (i.e., *fides qua creditur*). Such a sheering off of Christian “belief” from normative Pneumatic practice could therefore also signal an opposite form of Holy Spirit blasphemy. As the Epistle of James reminds us, “Even the demons believe and shudder.”⁸¹

Finally, as the recent theological analysis offered by Ephraim Radner argues, Christian division itself could well be the result of God’s active pneumatological abandonment of a church whose shepherds have let the sheep wander astray.⁸² John Wesley certainly interpreted parts of Christian history through the lens of Pneumatic abandonment, and the current “non-Western shift” in world Christian demographics could also be similarly interpreted in such a way.⁸³

Fortunately, the normative catholic vision of the empowering Spirit-filled life offered by the Macarian homilies challenges contemporary Christians on all three fronts. To the Evangelical, the Macarian homilies challenge us to be filled with the Spirit’s presence in ways decidedly more “charismatic” than propositional Evangelicalism.⁸⁴ Also, the Evangelical is challenged by the ascending life of holiness more characteristic of Eastern Orthodoxy or Roman Catholic callings to universal Christian sainthood.⁸⁵ To the Catholic or Orthodox, the Macarian homilies challenge

⁸¹James 2:14–26.

⁸²Ephraim Radner, *The End of the Church: A Pneumatology of Christian Division in the West* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998).

⁸³Concerning such a non-Western shift in Christian population, consider these striking statistics offered by religious historian Mark Noll. Each Sunday, more Christians attend worship in China than in all of so-called Christian Europe. Each Sunday, more Anglicans attend worship in each of Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda than did Anglicans in Britain and Episcopalians in the United States combined. Even among Pentecostal Christians, each Sunday, more members of the Assemblies of God in Brazil attend worship than the combined total of the Assemblies of God and the Church of God in Christ in the United States (in *First Things* April 2002, 81).

⁸⁴I am here relying on George Lindbeck’s helpful three-fold typology of cognitive-propositionalism, experiential-expressivism, and cultural-linguism espoused in his *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984). Although Lindbeck’s typology is useful as a descriptive “lens,” such a scheme of qualification runs the risk of reducing complex traditions to only a handful of qualities that may be limited to only a narrow modern Western rendering of theology.

⁸⁵In his watershed 1993 papal encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media), Pope John Paul II offers a wonderful and radical calling to pursue truth within the context of growth in holiness through a pastoral exegesis of the “Rich Young Ruler” story in Matthew 19.

one to seek personal and ongoing conversion and the active practice of the spiritual gifts, rather than reducing or ignoring such “Evangelical” or “Charismatic” callings to more personally appropriate one’s faith. Finally, to the Pentecostal or Charismatic, the Macarian homilies offer a vision of Pneumatically-empowered life that is much more rigorous, and thus the cause for much greater humility and more precise ongoing spiritual discernment than charismatic Christians are often prone to exhibit.

One area where Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity could especially benefit is a greater appreciation of Christian tradition as a living guide for our conduct of worship and evangelism.⁸⁶ One particularly helpful synthesis of the living tradition of theological discernments made by Spirit-empowered ecclesial leaders during the Eastern Patristic era is John of Damascus in his *De Fide Orthodoxa*. Such a synthesis will be offered only “tentatively,” however, out of the theological conviction that practices of prayer and discernment (i.e., *lex orandi*) must be rigorously practiced before any “dogmatic” specification is attempted (i.e., *lex credendi*). To do otherwise would run the risk of removing theological reflection from its primary locus of Spirit-empowered growth in Divine revelation, tested by Scripture and by the lives of Pneumatically-empowered saints and martyrs who have gone before us.⁸⁷

⁸⁶An especially helpful explication of the role of “living tradition” as a tool within the spiritual discernment of theological formulation is Romanian dogmatic theologian Dumitru Staniloae’s *The Experience of God* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Press, 1998). See especially Staniloae’s chapters one through five on “Natural Revelation,” “Supernatural Revelation,” “Scripture and Tradition,” “The Church as the Instrument for Preserving Revelation,” and “Theology as Ecclesial Service.”

⁸⁷In his 1994 papal encyclical *Tertio Millenio Adveniente* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1994), Pope John Paul II utilizes language reminiscent of Charismatic/Pentecostal spirituality when he states that the aim of the new millennium is to have an “increased sensitivity to all that the Spirit is saying to the Church and to the Churches (cf. Rev. 2:7 ff.), as well as to individuals through charisms meant to serve the whole community. The purpose is to emphasize what the Spirit is suggesting to the different communities, from the smallest ones such as the family to the largest ones such as nations and international organizations” (III.23, 29). Such charismatic discernment, John Paul suggests, is carried out best ecumenically through the “*ecumenism of the saints and the martyrs*” (IV.37, 44). Regarding theological knowledge, rather than continually attaching the practice of theology to worldly conventions of “rationality,” perhaps the true key to even beginning to catch a glimpse of God’s own rationality is through closely observing the lives of martyrs and “saints” in each respective ecclesial tradition (an “epistemology of martyrdom”?). See Ralph Del Colle’s article exploring such parallels between John Paul II and Charismatic/Pentecostal Christianity, “Theological Dialogue on the ‘Full Gospel’: Trinitarian Contributions from Pope John Paul II and Thomas A. Smail,” in *Pneuma*, 20 (Fall 1998), 141–160.

John of Damascus (675–749), a defender of devotional icons against Byzantine Emperor Leo’s iconoclastic edict of 725, lived under Moslem rule and eventually joined the Monastery of St. Sabas near Jerusalem. In his greatest theological work, *Sources of Knowledge*, John Damascene analyzed Aristotle’s philosophical terms (Part I), identified over one hundred heresies (Part II), and presented a synthetic, “unoriginal” account of Orthodox theology up until his time (Part III—*De Fide Orthodoxa*).⁸⁸ Although his extensive use of pre-Christian pagan philosophy would obviously stand in tension with aspects of the Macarian homilies, John Damascene’s work is especially helpful in elucidating key theological discernments made by Orthodox Christianity through the first seven centuries. Most notable of these discernments is Damascene’s rendering of Spirit-Christology.

In book I of *De Fide Orthodoxa*, Damascene begins by emphasizing God’s ineffability,⁸⁹ his Divine attributes,⁹⁰ and Christ as Logos.⁹¹ Beginning in chapter VII, however, Damascene begins his dogmatic treatment of the Holy Spirit. First, “The Word must also possess Spirit,”⁹² which inextricably links Christ with the Holy Spirit. Second, because the divine nature is “simple and uncompound,” the Spirit is truly a part of the entire Godhead united in essence. Damascene writes, “Now we cannot, in piety, consider the Spirit to be something foreign that gains admission into God from without, as is the case with compound natures like us.”⁹³ Third, the Spirit of God is the “companion of the Word and the revealer of His energy, and not as mere breath without subsistence.”⁹⁴ As the companion of the Word, the Spirit proceeds from the Father as well as “resting in the Word.”⁹⁵ Such an interpenetrating relationship between the Spirit and Christ (i.e., the Word), as can be seen in the Macarian homilies, is essen-

⁸⁸John of Damascus particularly notes how he has not been the recipient of “the gift of miracles” nor “the gift of teaching” and thus only offers a synthesis of “the things which have been delivered to us . . . by the expounders of grace” (*De Fide Orthodoxa*, I.3 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 9 [Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Press, 1999], 2).

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, I.1, 1.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, I.2, 1.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, I.6, 4.

⁹²*Ibid.*, I.7, 5.

⁹³*Ibid.*

⁹⁴*Ibid.*

⁹⁵*Ibid.*

tial for maintaining any understanding of Pneumatic empowerment in leading the Christian into a life of progressive holiness that is rooted in Christ's death, descent into hell, and resurrection.

Next, Damascene turns to an exposition of creedal Trinitarian theology at the beginning of chapter VIII, before returning specifically to the Spirit at the end of the chapter. Similar to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed of 381, Damascene begins doxologically by defining the Holy Spirit, who "proceedeth from the Father and resteth in the Son," as "the object of equal adoration and glorification with the Father and Son."⁹⁶ Relying upon Gregory Nazianzen's *Orations* 37, however, Damascene goes beyond the creed itself by defining the Spirit as "co-essential and co-eternal" with the Father and Son. To such a dogmatic definition, Damascene adds the Spirit's attributes such as "the fountain of wisdom, and life and holiness," "deifying, not deified," "filling, not filled," and "sanctifying, not sanctified."⁹⁷ Finally, contrary to Western inclusion of the *filioque* clause (i.e., the Spirit proceeding "from the Son" as well as the Father), Damascene writes that the Spirit proceeds "from the Father and communicated through the Son, and participated in by all creation."⁹⁸

This last point is essential for maintaining a dynamic Spirit-Christology that is truly rooted in the salvific work of Christ. Contrary to historic Western dogmatic tendencies to undervalue both the person and work of the Holy Spirit in sanctifying creation,⁹⁹ the Spirit's procession *through* the Son is essential for maintaining the grounding of Pneumatic sanctification in the atoning work of Christ who died for all of creation.¹⁰⁰ The Holy

⁹⁶Ibid., I.8, 9.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹A glaring example among an intentionally highly "orthodox" theologian is Karl Barth's separation of the doctrine of sanctification from the doctrine of creation in his *Church Dogmatics* (placing sanctification well towards the end of the *Dogmatics* in volume IV.2). Another example of diminished pneumatology is when Barth makes a rather bizarre claim that only the other two "persons" of the Trinity can be described according to "person" language, but never the Spirit. See his *Church Dogmatics*, I.1, PP 12.2 (Edinburgh: T& T Clark, 1936), 469.

¹⁰⁰Of course it can be argued that inclusion of the *filioque* can also insure the same Christological grounding of the Holy Spirit. Although this may indeed be true, by insisting upon the Spirit's procession "from the Son," the tradition of Western theology (Catholic and Protestant) may have significantly diminished the role of the Holy Spirit, especially in the Spirit's role of empowering Christians to grow into greater Christ-likeness in Spirit-empowered witness to the world.

Spirit is not simply some “anonymous” spirit that can empower those in the world apart from explicit confession of Jesus Christ and incorporation into the church, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Rather, the Holy Spirit *is* the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and as such is involved intimately in the ongoing, interpenetrating, and sanctifying redemption of the entire cosmos through the witness of Christians who display the Spirit’s fruits.¹⁰¹

Finally, in chapter XII of Book I, John Damascene describes some of the “effects” of the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying work within Christians. First, similar to the Macarian homilies (and the Cappadocian Fathers who were influenced by them and who in turn influenced Damascene), Divine knowledge is rooted in the Spirit’s self-communication. Damascene writes, “And the Holy Spirit is the power of the Father revealing the hidden mysteries of His Divinity, proceeding from the Father through the Son.”¹⁰² Second, once again similar to the Macarian prerequisite of continual growth in holiness in order to not grieve the Holy Spirit, Damascene links the ability to be filled with God’s presence with our human cooperation in such Divine fellowship. Damascene writes, “For He penetrates everything without mixing with it, and imparts to all His energy *in proportion to the fitness and receptive power of each.*”¹⁰³

Although Damascene offers extensive reflection (throughout book III) on Christology as defined by Chalcedon (451), for the purposes of this paper the following summary of dogmatic reflections must suffice. First, through clearly defining the Holy Spirit as “co-essential” and “co-eternal” with the Father and the Son (a step beyond the creedal formulation of 381), John Damascene safeguards the Spirit from being reduced to creaturely status, which in turn enables the sanctifying work of the Spirit to be a *true material communication* of the holiness and purity that only God can bestow.

¹⁰¹A greater emphasis on the Holy Spirit proceeding “through” the Son can also help guard against Eastern Orthodox tendencies to “translate” the indwelling of the Holy Spirit into a more generally accessible Platonic category—i.e., “theosis” only makes Christians similar to God when such pneumatological empowerment is grounded firmly in the Holy Spirit, Who is the Spirit of *Jesus Christ*. Additionally, Christians can become “God-like” *only* through the mediation of Jesus Christ whose Spirit was sent through Himself to the apostles at Pentecost, and to all Christians each time we gather to sing and pray in *koinonia* as the united Body of Christ in unified praise to Abba and evangelism to the world.

¹⁰²Ibid., I.12, 15.

¹⁰³Ibid., I.13, 15, emphasis mine.

Second, through consistently linking the Holy Spirit with Jesus Christ as procession *through Christ*, charismatic Christologies are safeguarded from modalistic conflation of the Trinitarian Persons on the one side (e.g., “Oneness” Pentecostals) and pluralist pneumatologies on the other side (i.e., the Holy Spirit *must* be thought of as the Spirit of Jesus Christ first sent to the church at Pentecost, thereby requiring *explicit* confession of Christ’s unique lordship and bodily incorporation into the church as the “fellowship of the Holy Spirit” in continuity with the faith practice of the first apostles).

Finally, although John of Damascus is a dogmatic “synthesizer” of the Orthodox catholic tradition that had preceded him, he still maintains a genre of theological reflection that does not separate participation in spiritual fellowship and an ascending life of holiness as prerequisite for the task of theological reflection. To be sure, by his own admission, Damascene lacks the specifically charismatic practices that had marked the Macarian homilies and the early church of the New Testament era, but he nevertheless maintained an understanding of theology that was rooted in faithful piety as much as it was rooted in analytical precision. Because of his life of holiness, Damascene’s theology can be trusted to provide a synthetic rendering of earlier pneumatically-empowered theological discernments that may end up providing necessary theological criteria for the church to utilize in discerning the theological challenges of new times and places.

Conclusion: Living the Spirit-Filled Life

In examining one Eastern Patristic source that significantly influenced not only John Wesley, but church leaders throughout history,¹⁰⁴ the challenge is simply to “go and do likewise.” As the *Spiritual Homilies* of Macarius challenged and inspired Wesley and the first people called Methodists, so also do they challenge contemporary Christians (both inside and outside of the Wesleyan family tree) to live the Spirit-filled life. Additionally, through utilizing the synthetic dogmatic insights of fellow Spirit-empowered Christians of a different time and era, our “life of piety” can be kept more clearly centered within the full salvation that Christ has won for us. To quote Charles Wesley, “Love divine, all loves excelling . . . fix in us thy humble dwelling. . . .”

¹⁰⁴George Maloney, S.J., offers a helpful summary of the influence of Macarius throughout the ecclesial histories of both East and West. Notable figures include Symeon the New (949–1022), Gregory Palamas (1296–1359), the Spiritual Franciscans, and Protestant Pietists such as John Arndt (1555–1621), and of course the Wesley family.

THE PUZZLE OF PERFECTION: GROWTH IN JOHN WESLEY'S DOCTRINE OF PERFECTION

by

Matthew R. Schlimm

One of the more puzzling concepts in John Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection is his conviction that those who are perfect still grow and improve their "perfection." One finds reference to such a concept in Wesley's *Thoughts on Christian Perfection* where he describes perfection as loving God with one's entire being, having all one's thoughts and behaviors governed by pure love, and being entirely renewed in the love and image of God.¹ Wesley asserts that one who has attained this lofty ideal of perfection "still 'grows in grace and in the knowledge of Christ' [cf. 2 Pet. 3:18], in the love and image of God, and will do so not only till death, but to all eternity."²

¹John Wesley, *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 1, 26, in *John Wesley*, ed. Albert Outler (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 284, 293.

²Wesley, *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 28, in *John Wesley*, 294. For the sake of clarity, one should note that, although question and answer no. 28 do not explicitly refer to Christian perfection, context makes clear that perfection is the topic being discussed. All the questions and answers in *Thoughts on Christian Perfection* deal with perfection, and no. 28 is no different. It asks, "Is this death to sin and renewal in love gradual or instantaneous?" Death to sin and renewal in love are ways of characterizing perfection. Question no. 26 asks, "When may a person judge himself to have attained [perfection]?" The answer given is: "When . . . he experiences a total death to sin and an entire renewal in the love and image of God" (Wesley, *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 25-26, in *John Wesley*, 293).

At least initially, assertions like this are puzzling. On the surface of things, Wesley does not explain how someone who is “perfect” could possibly improve on the described perfection, nor does he explain why he made such assertions. Thus, while a number of scholars are quick to mention that Wesley believed those who are perfect continue to grow, few offer an in-depth analysis and explanation of the ways those who are perfect can experience growth.³ In order to understand more fully Wesley’s doctrine of perfection, one must seek to solve this puzzle of perfection by analyzing in greater depth the possible areas of growth in perfection. A closer look at Wesley’s writings reveals both how growth is possible for those who have attained perfection and why Wesley found it important to stress such growth. He contends that those who have attained perfection continue to grow and improve their perfection because, like parts of the New Testament and Eastern Orthodoxy, he was convinced that perfection is a dynamic state that builds upon past progress and results in becoming increasingly like God.

How Growth Is Possible: Forms of Growth

Freedom from Evil Thoughts and Tempers. Wesley believed that growth among those who attained perfection takes a number of forms. One form mentioned relatively early in his career is growth toward freedom from evil thoughts and tempers.⁴ In *Christian Perfection*, Wesley asserts that those who do not commit (deliberate) sin are “in such a sense perfect.”⁵ Later in the same work, he explains that there is another group of people who have attained a higher degree of perfection: “It is only of

³Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Nashville, Tennessee: Kingswood Books, Abingdon Press, 1994), 187; Robert Sheffield Brightman, “Gregory of Nyssa and John Wesley in Theological Dialogue on the Christian Life” (Ph.D. diss., Boston University Graduate School, 1969), 303-305; D. Marselle Moore, “Development in Wesley’s Thought on Sanctification and Perfection,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 20, no. 2 (Fall 1985): 35-36, 39; Harald Lindström, *Wesley and Sanctification: A Study in the Doctrine of Salvation* (London: The Epworth Press, n.d.), 143.

⁴For an analysis of what Wesley meant by the term “tempers,” see Kenneth J. Collins, “John Wesley’s Topography of the Heart: Dispositions, Tempers, and Affections,” *Methodist History* (April 1998): 165-170.

⁵John Wesley, Sermon 40, *Christian Perfection*, II.2-4, in *Sermons*, 4 vols., ed. Albert C. Outler, in *The Works of John Wesley*, Bicentennial Edition, 34 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976-), 2:105-106.

those who ‘are strong’ in the Lord . . . that it can be affirmed they are in such a sense perfect as, secondly, to be freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers.”⁶ Movement from a perfect state in which no deliberate sin is committed to a state freed from evil thoughts and tempers constitutes one way in Wesley’s mind that those who are perfect could experience growth.

Growth does not end once such freedom is attained, however. In *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, for example, Wesley speaks about perfection exclusively in terms of freedom from evil thoughts and tempers. In the first question and answer of this tract, he defines what he means by Christian perfection, asserting that perfection entails “that no wrong *temper*, none contrary to love, remains in the soul and that all the *thoughts*, words and actions are governed by pure love.”⁷ After this definition of perfection is claimed, he asserts that those who are perfect still grow in a number of areas. Thus, although growth in perfection can entail movement from a state where no deliberate sin is committed toward a state where one is free from evil thoughts and tempers, growth continues even after such freedom is attained.

Grace. Wesley believed that grace is one area in which growth occurs even among those freed from evil thoughts and tempers. In *Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, he asks, “Can those who are perfect grow in grace?” His answer is, “Undoubtedly they can; and that not only while they are in the body, but to all eternity.”⁸ A similar affirmation is found in Wesley’s 1764 summary of his doctrine of perfection in which he claims, “One perfected in love may grow in grace far swifter than he did before.”⁹

⁶Wesley, *Christian Perfection*, II.21, in *Works*, Bicentennial Edition, 2:117.

⁷Wesley, *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 1, in *John Wesley*, 284, emphasis added.

⁸John Wesley, *Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 29, in *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection as Believed and Taught by the Reverend Mr. John Wesley from the Year 1725 to the Year 1777*, 25, in *Thoughts, Addresses, Prayers, Letters*, in *The Works of Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson, 3^d ed., 14 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1978), 11:426.

⁹This unidentified tract is quoted in John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection as Believed and Taught by the Reverend Mr. John Wesley from the Year 1725 to the Year 1777*, 26, in *Thoughts, Addresses, Prayers, Letters*, in *The Works of Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson, 3^d ed., 14 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1978), 11:442. That this summary is an unidentified tract, see D. Marselle Moore, 53, n., 104.

These affirmations are wholly consistent with Wesley's beliefs about grace. He believed that God's grace enables people to love God and others. Being in a state of perfection where pure love reigns in the heart necessitates a constant reliance upon and faithful response to an outpouring of God's grace. In his sermon "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," Wesley explains the necessity of responding appropriately to the grace of God:

God worketh in you; therefore you *must* work: you must be "workers together with him" . . . otherwise he will cease working. The general rule on which his gracious dispensations invariably proceed is this: "Unto him that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not," that does not *improve the grace* already given, "shall be taken away what he assuredly hath."¹⁰

For Wesley, then, those who are perfect do not stop receiving grace once they have attained perfection. Rather, to retain their perfection, they work cooperatively with God's grace and in turn are given more grace to which to respond. This process of receiving additional grace and improving upon it provides the means by which those who are perfect grow in grace.¹¹

In his journal, Wesley writes, "Hence it is impossible that any should *retain* what they receive without *improving* it. Add to this that the more we have received the more of care and labour is required."¹² For him, those who are perfect grow in grace out of necessity. Failing to grow in grace by receiving and responding appropriately to God's grace results in the loss of perfection.

Knowledge of Christ. Wesley believed those who are perfect grow not only in grace, but also in the knowledge of Christ. In *Christian Perfection* he speaks about the need among those who are perfect "daily to

¹⁰John Wesley, Sermon 85, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," III.7, in *Sermons*, 4 vols., ed. Albert C. Outler, in *The Works of John Wesley*, Bicentennial Edition, 34 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976-), 3:208, first italics ("*must*") Wesley's, second italics ("*improve the grace*") mine.

¹¹On this interpretation, see Wesley, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," in *Works*, Bicentennial Edition, 3:208, n., 60.

¹²John Wesley, *Journals and Diaries*, 6 vols., eds. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, in *The Works of John Wesley*, Bicentennial Edition, 34 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976-), 21:499 (January 31, 1765).

advance in the knowledge . . . of God.”¹³ A similar sentiment is found in *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*.¹⁴ Growth in such knowledge is possible because Wesley defined Christian perfection as neither perfection of knowledge nor freedom from ignorance. Thus he states, “Christian perfection therefore does not imply (as some men seem to have imagined) an exemption either from ignorance or mistake. . . . Indeed, it is only another term for holiness.”¹⁵ Wesley says the following of those who are perfect:

Innumerable are the things which they know not. “Touching the Almighty himself”, “they cannot search him out to perfection” They cannot understand . . . any one attribute, not any one circumstance of the divine nature.¹⁶

Wesley believed that Christian perfection does not entail a perfection of knowledge. In particular, it does not entail a perfect knowledge of divine things. As a result, there is ample room for those who have attained perfection to grow in their knowledge of Christ.

Knowledge and Obedience of God’s Law. Wesley probably believed that those who are perfect grow in their knowledge of and obedience to God’s law, even though he himself did not emphasize this belief. Wesley thought that, while the perfect person is freed from “voluntary transgression[s] of . . . *known* law[s]” of God, such a person could still involuntarily transgress *unknown* laws of God.¹⁷ At least hypothetically, if a perfect person were to increase in knowledge of God’s laws, then there would be more laws this person would need to obey in order to continue in a state free from transgressions against known laws of God. In this

¹³Wesley, *Christian Perfection*, I.9, in *Works*, Bicentennial Edition, 2:104-105.

¹⁴Wesley, *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 28, in *John Wesley*, 294.

¹⁵Wesley, *Christian Perfection*, I.9, in *Works*, Bicentennial Edition, 2:104. See also John Wesley, *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* (1743), 55, in *The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters*, ed. Gerald R. Cragg, in *The Works of John Wesley*, Oxford Edition, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975-), 11:66-67.

¹⁶Wesley, *Christian Perfection*, I.2, in *Works*, Bicentennial Edition, 2:101.

¹⁷John Wesley, Sermon 76, “On Perfection,” II.9, in *Sermons*, 4 vols., ed. Albert C. Outler, in *The Works of John Wesley*, Bicentennial Edition, 34 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976-), 3:79-80, emphasis added. See also Wesley, *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 6, in *John Wesley*, 287.

way, those who are perfect can potentially grow in knowledge and obedience of divine law.

Some could argue, based on Wesley's comments elsewhere, that such growth is impossible for those who are perfect. At times, Wesley speaks of perfection in a way that might suggest that those who are perfect lack no significant knowledge of God's law. For instance, in *Christian Perfection* Wesley asserts:

[Those who have been made perfect] know . . . [God's] providence directing all their paths. . . . Yea, they know in every circumstance of life what the Lord requireth of them. . . .

. . . The children of God do not mistake as to the things essential to salvation. They do not "put darkness for light or light for darkness" . . . for they are "taught of God" . . . and the way which he teaches them, the way of holiness, is so plain that "the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein."¹⁸

Based on these comments, some might argue that those who have been taught by God and know God's providence directing all their paths would not lack any knowledge about God's law relevant to circumstances in life. One would be hard pressed to explain how someone who always knows what God requires could lack any significant knowledge about God's law. The argument can thus be made that those who are perfect cannot grow in knowledge and obedience of God's law.

Such an argument, however, presents more problems than it solves. First, based on the above quotation, to assume that those who are perfect do not lack any significant knowledge about God's law is probably assuming more than Wesley intended his words to mean. Wesley notes in the same work that those who are perfect are capable of ignorantly believing "either past or present actions which were, or are evil, to be good; and such as were, or are, good, to be evil."¹⁹ Even "with regard to the Holy Scriptures themselves, as careful as they are to avoid it, the best of men are liable to mistake, and do mistake day by day."²⁰ Such comments by Wesley give caution to the assumption that those who are perfect do not lack any knowledge about God's law relevant to their circumstances in life.

¹⁸Wesley, *Christian Perfection*, I.1, 4, in *Works*, Bicentennial Edition, 2:100-102.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 102.

²⁰Wesley, *Christian Perfection*, I.5, in *Works*, Bicentennial Edition, 2:102.

Second, even if one assumes that those who are perfect do not lack significant knowledge about God's law, one makes such an assumption based on the writings of an earlier and less refined Wesley. As Wesley progressed in age, his understanding and formulation of perfection experienced some evolution. The above quotation, possibly hinting that those who are perfect know everything necessary about God's law, comes from Wesley's 1741 sermon *Christian Perfection*. Nearly twenty years later, in *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, Wesley found it necessary to emphasize that the freedom from sin in perfection is freedom from *voluntary* transgressions against *known* laws of God. The more mature Wesley allows that those who are perfect could lack knowledge of God's laws.²¹

This allowance is found elsewhere in Wesley's writings. One of the most significant of these writings is *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection as Believed and Taught by the Reverend Mr. John Wesley from the Year 1725, to the Year 1777*. This work is significant because in it Wesley quotes extensively from both works mentioned above. But he omits the comments in *Christian Perfection* implying that those who are perfect lack no significant knowledge of God's law, while he includes the comments from *Thoughts on Christian Perfection* implying that those who are perfect can lack such knowledge.²² This omission of the one text and inclusion of the other suggests that Wesley's thought (or at least the way he presented his thought) evolved and eventually became consistent with the position that those who are perfect can lack knowledge of God's law. This lack allows room for growth among those who are perfect and should be included as a potential area for growth in perfection.

Fewer Mistakes. Another potential way those who are perfect could grow is by making fewer and fewer mistakes. Wesley asserts that Christian perfection is not freedom from mistakes, so there is room for growth in this regard. Those who are perfect, he says, could still have mistaken opinions that could lead to mistaken actions.²³ As we have seen, Wesley

²¹On Wesley's modifying his definition of sin in the context of entire sanctification, see Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 184-185. Cf. also D. Marselle Moore, 41; Colin W. Williams, *Wesley's Theology Today* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960), 126-127.

²²The omission is missing from Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 12, in *Works*, Jackson edition, 11:374. The inclusion is present in Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 19, in *Works*, Jackson edition, 11:396.

²³Wesley, *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 4, in *John Wesley*, 285.

believed that growth in perfection involves growth in the knowledge of Christ.²⁴ If this knowledge were such that it could correct mistaken opinions, then mistaken actions could also decrease. Moreover, a decrease in mistakes could be a way of growing in the *imago dei*, another aspect of growth in perfection.²⁵ Because God presumably makes no mistakes, a decrease in mistakes could entail growth in the likeness one shares with God.

Growth in perfection does not always result in a reduction of mistakes, however. Wesley argues that those who grow in perfection “will do so not only till death, but to all eternity.”²⁶ A decrease in mistakes after death was impossible in Wesley’s mind, because he believed that when Christians die, they cease making mistakes. Thus he writes, “I expect not to be free from actual mistakes *till this mortal puts on immortality*.”²⁷ Similarly, he states, “Every one may mistake *as long as he lives*.”²⁸ Because Wesley believed that mistakes cease after death, there is no room for growth in this regard.²⁹ So, while a decrease in mistakes is a potential way those who are perfect could experience growth, Wesley clearly did not have this way in the foreground of his mind, at least not when he spoke of the growth which continues to all eternity.

Moreover, a decrease in mistakes, though potentially characteristic of growth in knowledge and the *imago dei*, cannot characterize growth in love, which Wesley mentions as another aspect of growth in perfection.³⁰ The types of mistakes Wesley believes perfect Christians make involve confusing things like facts, circumstances, the content and interpretation of Scripture, and the nature of actions and people.³¹ He neither character-

²⁴Wesley, *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 28, in *John Wesley*, 294.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 294.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 294.

²⁷Wesley, *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 3, in *John Wesley*, 284, emphasis added.

²⁸Wesley, *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 4, in *John Wesley*, 285, emphasis added.

²⁹Glorification, which takes place after death, makes it impossible for believers to commit mistakes. See: John Wesley, Sermon 109, *The Trouble and Rest of Good Men*, II.3, in *Sermons*, 4 vols., ed. Albert C. Outler, in *The Works of John Wesley*, Bicentennial Edition, 34 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976-), 3:538.

³⁰Wesley, *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 28, in *John Wesley*, 294.

³¹Wesley, *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 4—5, in *John Wesley*, 256.

izes mistakes as a failure to love nor asserts that an increase in love is congruent with a decrease in mistakes. Indeed, he claims the contrary: an increase in love may actually cause an increase in mistakes since “love itself may incline us to mistake.”³² Because love “thinketh no evil, believeth and hopeth all things,” it “may occasion our thinking some men better than they really are.”³³ Although at times growth in perfection might share an inverse correlation with making mistakes, at other times, as Wesley’s comments show, growing in perfection and committing mistakes are directly correlated.

Love of God. Although making fewer mistakes only occasionally characterizes growth in perfection, growth in the love of God is a nearly constant characterization of such growth.³⁴ As Wesley puts it in *Christian Perfection*, “How much soever any man has attained, or in how high a degree soever he is perfect, he hath still need . . . daily to advance in the . . . love of God his Saviour.”³⁵ Understanding how this type of growth is possible is perhaps the most difficult of all the types to understand. In one of the works where Wesley states explicitly that those who are perfect grow in the love of God, he claims that those who are perfect love God with all of their “heart, mind, soul and strength,” have “pure love reigning alone in . . . heart and life,” and live “the full life of love.”³⁶ Such a characterization of perfection does not allow much room for growth in love.

There are two possible ways of explaining how Wesley believed that those who attained the above definition of perfection could still grow in the love of God. Both center on what Wesley meant by the phrase “grow in love.” One possibility is that to advance and grow in the love of God means continuing to act in ways that reflect a love for God. The total number of deeds governed by love that one has done over the course of one’s lifetime would thus be what grows or increases. While Wesley undoubtedly believed this number increases among those who are perfect, he probably had more in mind when he spoke about growing in the love of God.

³²Wesley, *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 8, in *John Wesley*, 288.

³³*Ibid.*, 288.

³⁴Wesley, *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 28, in *John Wesley*, 294.

³⁵Wesley, *Christian Perfection*, I.9, in *Works*, Bicentennial Edition, 2:104-105.

³⁶Wesley, *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 1, 25, 28, in *John Wesley*, 284, 293, 294.

The second and more likely possibility is that advancing and growing in the love of God means that one's love becomes increasingly like God's love. In this case, what grows is the extent to which the love of those who are perfect resembles the love of God. Wesley says that those who are perfect live the *full* life of love, and love *alone* reigns in their hearts, thus precluding the possibility for an increase in the amount or *quantity* of love in their hearts. The possibility exists, however, that they could experience increases in the intensity or *quality* of love in their hearts.³⁷ Even if love governs all of the actions of a person, one cannot expect such love to have the same intensity and quality as that of God. Every aspect of a person's heart might reflect God's love, but this reflection does not bear the same quality as what it reflects. Because God's love possesses a quality that is infinitely greater than that of any human, there is potential for infinite growth as the love of those who are perfect becomes increasingly like that of God.

The strongest objection to this explanation is that Wesley has asserted that the type of love governing the lives of those who are perfect is *pure* love.³⁸ If this love is pure, how can it grow in quality and become more like God's? The context of the paragraph in which Wesley speaks of pure love asserts that the term "pure" means that sin no longer reigns in the heart. The immediate context does *not* assert that "pure love" means love that is every bit equal to God's perfect love. Indeed, in Wesley's explanatory note on Luke 2.52, he writes, "It plainly follows that though a man were *pure*, even as Christ was *pure*, still he would have room to increase in holiness, and, in consequence thereof, to increase in the favour, as well as in the love of God."³⁹ Even though a person might be so perfect as to have pure love governing her life, that person would still lack

³⁷The Oxford English Dictionary notes that the word "grow," during approximately Wesley's time, could mean *both* "to increase gradually in . . . quantity" and "to increase gradually in magnitude." (Jack Murray and others, eds., "Grow, v.," in *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, 2nd ed. (1989), [n.p.: Oxford University Press, 2000], Section I.7.a.; cf. I.8.b.; available from <http://dictionary.oed.com/entrance.dtl> s.v. "grow;," Internet; accessed 14 November 2000).

³⁸Wesley, *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 1, in *John Wesley*, 284.

³⁹John Wesley, *The New Testament, with Explanatory Notes, by the Rev. John Wesley, A. M.*, rev. ed. (London: W. Nicholson & Sons, [189-?]), 148, emphasis added.

the absolute perfection possessed by God alone. There is thus infinite room for growth toward the infinitely perfect love of God.

Imago Dei. Closely related to this concept of approaching God-like attributes is Wesley's conviction that those who are perfect grow in the image of God. He mentions this form of growth in *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*.⁴⁰ By growing in the image of God, Wesley means growing in the likeness one shares with God. Those who are perfect are able to grow in the image of God by becoming increasingly like God, who is infinitely more perfect than any human can ever be—even the perfect Christian.

Wesley was careful to differentiate the perfection he believed humans could attain from the absolute perfection that God alone possesses. In *A Plain Account of Genuine Christianity*, he speaks of the "immense ocean of all perfections which center in God." These perfections include "boundless wisdom" and "infinite goodness."⁴¹ Clearly, such qualities are far beyond what any human could completely possess. And yet, human beings (including those who attained perfection) can grow in wisdom and goodness, thus increasing the likeness they share with God.

Wesley's explanation of various portions of Scripture shed light on growing in the image of God. 2 Peter 3.18 speaks about growing in grace and the knowledge of Christ, two elements of growth in perfection mentioned previously. In Wesley's explanatory note on this verse, he states:

The design of grace being purchased and bestowed upon us is to destroy the image of the earthly, and restore us to that of the heavenly. And so far as it does this, it makes way for more of the heavenly gift, that we may be filled with all the fulness [*sic*] of God.⁴²

This quotation is significant for a number of reasons. First, it explains that God bestows grace in order to restore humanity to the image of the heavenly, or the image of God. The growth in grace described earlier in this essay provides a means by which growth in God's image is achieved. Sec-

⁴⁰Wesley, *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 28, in *John Wesley*, 294. For an overview and interpretation of Wesley's references to the image of God, see Brightman, 294-295.

⁴¹John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Genuine Christianity*, I.12, in *John Wesley*, ed. Albert C. Outler (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 186.

⁴²Wesley, *The New Testament, with Explanatory Notes*, 600.

ond, this quotation connects being restored to the image of God with being filled with the fullness of God. According to Wesley, Christians participate in being filled with God's fullness without exhausting this fullness.⁴³ He defines "all the fullness of God" as "all [God's] light, love, wisdom, holiness, power, and glory," calling it "a perfection far beyond bare freedom from sin."⁴⁴ These divine qualities are infinitely greater than what humans could fully attain. And yet, while human beings cannot exhaust the fullness of God, those being renewed in the image of God grow in the likeness they share with this absolute form of perfection.

In Wesley's writings, therefore, one finds a scheme for moving toward the absolute perfection God possesses. Though Christians never fully attain this type of perfection, they can continually move toward it, as they are renewed in the image of God. Thus Wesley can claim that those who are perfect continue to grow in God's image "not only till death, but to all eternity."⁴⁵ Those who are perfect are in the process of being filled with the fullness of God both before and after they die. One finds reference to this idea in a work originally written by Charles Bonnet entitled, *Conjectures Concerning the Nature of Future Happiness*, which Wesley translated, abridged, and published, calling it, "one of the most sensible tracts I ever read."⁴⁶ One of the sections Wesley included in his abridgement of Monsieur Bonnet's original work is the following:

There will therefore be a perpetual *advance* of all the individuals of humanity towards greater perfection or greater happiness; for one degree of *acquired* perfection will lead of itself to another degree. And because the distance between created beings, and the uncreated being, between finite and infinite is infinite, they will tend continually towards supreme perfection, without ever arriving at it.⁴⁷

⁴³Thus, throughout Wesley's writings, when he speaks about being filled with the fullness of God, he nearly always speaks of this fullness as something toward which Christians move without ever absolutely attaining.

⁴⁴Wesley, *The New Testament, with Explanatory Notes*, 483.

⁴⁵Wesley, *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 28, in *John Wesley*, 294; Wesley, *Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 29, in *The Works of Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson, 11:426.

⁴⁶Charles Bonnet, *Conjectures Concerning the Nature of Future Happiness*, trans. and ed. with a foreword by John Wesley (Dublin: B. Dugdale, 1787), 2. This work is housed in the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 24.

This paragraph speaks of perpetual (i.e., both preceding and following death) growth in perfection. Additionally, it speaks of such growth in terms of moving toward, though not attaining, the supreme perfection of God, a concept roughly equivalent to “all the fullness of God.” Wesley’s agreement with Bonnet’s statements, evidenced in his praise and distribution of this work, demonstrates that he believed growth in perfection is possible because those who are perfect can continually move toward the infinite perfection of God.

One might object to this line of reasoning, pointing to Wesley’s statement in *Christian Perfection* that “everyone that is perfect is as his master” i.e., Christ.⁴⁸ One could argue that, because those who are perfect are already like Christ, there is no further possibility for growth in becoming like Christ, who presumably possessed absolute perfection. A contextual examination of *Christian Perfection*, however, shows that Wesley contends that those who are perfect are similar to Christ in that they are free from evil thoughts and tempers. Wesley does not suggest that they are in every way equal to God. Additionally, he probably did not believe Christ possessed absolute perfection, at least not a perfection completely equal to the absolute perfection of God. Wesley would probably have echoed New Testament authors who imply that Christ did not possess a perfection of knowledge: “Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, *nor the Son*, but the Father only.”⁴⁹ Again, one does well to remember Wesley’s comment on Luke 2.52: “It plainly follows that though a man were pure, even as Christ was pure, still he would have room to increase in holiness, and, in consequence thereof, to increase in the favour, as well as in the love of God.”⁵⁰

One might continue to object, arguing that when Wesley speaks of those who are perfect being *entirely* renewed in the image of God,⁵¹ he

⁴⁸Wesley, *Christian Perfection*, II.21, in *Works*, Bicentennial Edition, 2:117.

⁴⁹Matt. 24.36 (Revised Standard Version), emphasis added. See also Mark 13.32. In *Christian Perfection*, Wesley notes many concepts of which those who are perfect lack knowledge (Wesley, *Christian Perfection*, I.2, in *Works*, Bicentennial Edition, 2:101). A number of them relate to eschatological events, the details of which Jesus claimed not to know.

⁵⁰Wesley, *The New Testament, with Explanatory Notes*, 148.

⁵¹Wesley speaks about those who are perfect attaining “an entire renewal in the . . . image of God” (Wesley, *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 26, in *John Wesley*, 293).

allows no room for becoming increasingly like God. While such an argument works on the surface of things, it assumes a definition of the word "entire" different from the one Wesley probably had in mind. In his sermon "On Patience," he interprets the phrase "Ye shall be entire" as the following: "Ye shall enjoy as high a degree of holiness as is consistent with your present state of pilgrimage."⁵² Here, Wesley does not define "entire" in the sense of "having no element or part left out."⁵³ Rather, he sees it in the sense of attaining maturity. Most likely, then, when Wesley speaks elsewhere of those who are perfect being entirely renewed in the image of God, he does not mean that those who are perfect have attained God's absolute perfection, but rather that they have attained the highest degree of being like God possible at that time in their journey of becoming increasingly filled with the fullness of God. When he spoke about the perfection that humans could attain, he did not speak of "the condition, state, or quality of being . . . free from all defect; supreme excellence; flawlessness, faultlessness."⁵⁴ This definition of perfection was in use during the eighteenth century, but for Wesley it was reserved for God alone. When Wesley spoke of the Christian perfection that humans could attain, he had in mind another definition of perfection, one also in use during the eighteenth century. This definition equated perfection with "the full . . . development of anything; . . . maturity."⁵⁵ A person might be mature for his or her age, but that does not mean all growth has ended.

Growth in Perfection: Reasons and Influences

Although one cannot know with absolute certainty all the reasons why Wesley stressed that those who are perfect continue to grow, arguments can be made for some of the more significant reasons. One such reason is to clarify the type of perfection he believed Christians can attain. Though many are quick to assume that "Christian perfection" refers to a

⁵²John Wesley, Sermon 83, "On Patience," 14, in *Sermons*, 4 vols., ed. Albert C. Outler, in *The Works of John Wesley*, Bicentennial Edition, 34 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976-), 3:179.

⁵³*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed., s.v. "entire."

⁵⁴Jack Murray and others, eds., "Perfection, n.," in *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, 2nd ed. (1989), [n.p.: Oxford University Press, 2002], Section 3.

⁵⁵Murray and others, eds., "Perfection, n.," *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, Section 2.b; available from <http://dictionary.oed.com/entrance.dtl> s.v. "perfection."

static, absolute state of perfection, Wesley's claims of growth among those who are perfect rebuff such assumptions. His belief in growth in perfection stands in continuity with his claim that there is no "absolute perfection on earth" that "does not admit of a continual increase."⁵⁶ It is also harmonious with his conviction that Christian perfection does not entail freedom from ignorance, mistakes, or even involuntary transgressions of unknown laws of God. By asserting that perfection involves growth, Wesley precludes the notion that Christian perfection entails a state of complete finality.

A second and related reason why Wesley asserts that there is growth in perfection is that in so doing he refutes the idea that Christian perfection is a state of spiritual slothfulness in which perfect Christians do no more because they have already attained so much. Growth carries with it a sense of movement and activity. When Wesley refers to growth in conjunction with perfection, he asserts that perfection is not a state of spiritual laziness or inactivity. We find a similar assertion when he warns, "Beware of thinking, 'Because I have faith and love, I need not have so much holiness; because I pray always, therefore I need no set time for private prayer; because I watch always, therefore I need no particular self-examination.'"⁵⁷ By stressing the importance of growth in perfection, he made clear that perfection is not a spiritual retirement that one enters once godly activity is completed. Rather, it is an active state entailing a continual reliance upon God. Thus he writes in *Farther Thoughts Upon Christian Perfection*:

The holiest of men still need Christ, as their Prophet, as "the light of the world." For he does not give them light, but from moment to moment: The instant he withdraws, all is darkness. They still need Christ as their King; for God does not give them a stock of holiness. But unless they receive a supply every moment, nothing but unholiness would remain. . . . Even perfect holiness is acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ.⁵⁸

⁵⁶Wesley, *Christian Perfection*, I.9, in *Works*, Bicentennial Edition, 2:104-105.

⁵⁷John Wesley, *Cautions and Directions Given to the Greatest Professors in The Methodist Societies*, IV, in *John Wesley*, ed. Albert Outler (New York: Oxford, 1964), 302.

⁵⁸Wesley, *Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 9, in *The Works of Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson, 11:417.

Being in a state of perfection, like the movement toward attaining perfection, is the result of active cooperation between those who are perfect and God. It is not characterized by "indifference or indolent inactivity."⁵⁹ By asserting that perfection entails growth, Wesley refutes any ideas about perfection entailing a state of slothfulness. He reaffirms a statement of William Law who influenced his doctrine of perfection: "For God has there made no promises of mercy to the slothful and negligent."⁶⁰

A third reason why Wesley asserts that there is growth in perfection is that such an assertion resonates with the Greek New Testament's understanding of perfection. The "man of one book" preferred to use the Greek text, rather than the Latin Vulgate or English AV when studying the New Testament. The Greek words for "perfection" and "perfect" can carry with them a number of dynamic connotations and do not refer to a type of perfection in which change is impossible. Thus, they can be translated "maturity" and "mature." This dynamic quality is often lost in the English words "perfection" and "perfect," which are derived from the Latin *perfectus* and often carry a static and motionless connotation precluding the possibility for further change, growth, or development. The dynamic nature of New Testament perfection influenced Wesley's ideas about perfection, as is reflected in his exposition of James 1.4 ("That ye may be perfect and entire"):

Ye shall then be *perfect*. The Apostle seems to mean by this expression, *teleioi*, ye shall be wholly delivered from every evil work, from every sinful thought. . . . Ye shall be entire, *holoklê roi*. . . . This seems to refer not so much to the kind as to the degree of holiness. As if he had said, "Ye shall enjoy as high a degree of holiness as is consistent with your present state of pilgrimage."⁶¹

Thus, a third reason for Wesley's speaking of perfection in dynamic terms is that in so doing he reflects the New Testament, which had highest

⁵⁹Wesley, *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 28, in *John Wesley*, 294.

⁶⁰William Law, *A Serious Call to A Devout and Holy Life* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1948) 23. For a concise sketch of others who influenced Wesley, see R. Newton Flew, *The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology: An Historical Study of the Christina Ideal for the Present Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 314-315.

⁶¹Wesley, "On Patience," 14, in *Works*, Bicentennial Edition, 3:179.

authority for him.⁶² The man who wrote, “Enjoin nothing that the Bible does not clearly enjoin”⁶³ was careful to follow his own advice.

Fourth and finally, Wesley spoke of growth in perfection because such a concept is congruent with the idea of theosis or deification in early Eastern orthodoxy, or as Wesley might say, the “primitive church.” Wesley held the early church in high regard,⁶⁴ and he probably stressed growth in perfection because many early Eastern writers did. One author whose writings Wesley read was (Pseudo-?) Macarius the Egyptian. Though Wesley and Macarius by no means agree with each other about everything related to perfection,⁶⁵ Macarius does speak about “degrees of perfection” and moving from one degree to another.⁶⁶ Such a comment by Macarius probably influenced Wesley’s belief that growth occurs within perfection.

Similar to Macarius’ statement, and bearing even more continuity with Wesley’s idea of growth in perfection, are Gregory of Nyssa’s writings.⁶⁷ Gregory concludes his work *On Perfection* with these words: “For

⁶²Robert R. Moore, Class lecture, Bible and Theology 332: Christian Perfection, Asbury College, Wilmore, KY, 18 Nov. 1997; Thomas C. Oden, *John Wesley’s Scriptural Christianity: A Plain Exposition of His Teaching on Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 320-323; Albert C. Outler, “Towards a Re-appraisal of John Wesley as a Theologian,” in *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage: Essays of Albert C. Outler*, eds. Thomas C. Oden and Leicester R. Longden (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, Harper-Collins, 1991), 52-53.

⁶³John Wesley, “Letter to John Dickins,” in *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., Sometime Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford*, 8 vols., ed. John Telford (London: The Epworth Press, 1931), 8:192.

⁶⁴Albert Outler, “John Wesley’s Interests in the Early Fathers of the Church,” in *Bulletin of the United Church of Canada Committee on Archives and History* 29 (1980-82): 10.

⁶⁵David C. Ford, “Saint Makarios of Egypt and John Wesley: Variations on the Theme of Sanctification,” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 33 (1988): 285-312.

⁶⁶Macarius the Egyptian, “Homily VIII,” in *Primitive Morality: Or, The Spiritual Homilies of St. Macarius the Egyptian* (London: Printed for W. Taylor, W. and J. Innys, and J. Osborn, 1721) 164-166. This work is housed in the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University. See also Ted A. Campbell, *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity: Religious Vision and Cultural Change* (Nashville, Tennessee: Kingswood Books, Abingdon Press, 1991), 66.

⁶⁷On the relationship between Macarius and Gregory, see: Werner Jaeger, *Two Rediscovered Works of Ancient Christian Literature: Gregory of Nyssa and Macarius* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954) passim; Brightman 359-360, 364ff.

this is truly perfection: never to stop growing towards what is better and never placing any limit on perfection."⁶⁸ This comment clearly resonates with Wesley's conviction that growth takes place among those who are perfect. Likewise, Gregory's assertion in the following excerpt from *The Life of Moses* bears many points of continuity with Wesley's conviction that those who are perfect grow by becoming increasingly like God:

Though it may not be possible completely to attain the ultimate and sovereign good [i.e., God and God's nature], it is most desirable for those who are wise to have at least a share in it. We should then make every effort not to fall short utterly of the perfection that is possible for us, and try to come as close to it and possess as much of it as possible. For it may be that human perfection consists precisely in this constant growth in the good.⁶⁹

This type of perfection, known as theosis or deification,⁷⁰ is congruent with the idea of perfection one finds in Wesley. The good, as defined by Gregory, is the very nature and being of God.⁷¹ Gregory's assertion that perfection is growing in the good bears a close resemblance to Wesley's conviction that those who are perfect grow in the image of God and become increasingly like God.⁷²

Despite the close similarities between Gregory's doctrine of perfection and Wesley's, a number of people have questioned whether Wesley actually read the works of Gregory quoted above. Among them is Robert

⁶⁸Gregory of Nyssa, *On Perfection*, in *Saint Gregory of Nyssa: Ascetical Works*, trans. Virginia Woods Callahan, The Fathers of the Church, vol. 58 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1967), 122.

⁶⁹Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, in *From Glory to Glory: Texts from Gregory of Nyssa's Mystical Writings*, trans. and ed. with an introduction by Jean Danielou and Herbert Musurillo (New York: Scribners, 1961), 82-83.

⁷⁰Stanley Samuel Harakas, *Toward Transfigured Life: The Theoria of Eastern Orthodox Ethics* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Light and Life, 1983), 28.

⁷¹Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, 82. See also Harakas, 33.

⁷²Wesley equates being renewed in the image of God with becoming "partakers of the divine nature" in his interpretation of 2 Peter 1.4 (Wesley, *The New Testament, with Explanatory Notes*, 594). Like Gregory who speaks about perfection as growing in the good (i.e., the nature of God), Wesley sees perfection as including growing in the image of God, or by extension, becoming partakers of the divine nature. He similarly equates the nature of true religion with "participation of the divine nature" (John Wesley, Sermon 3, *Awake, Thou That sleepest*, III.10, in *Sermons*, 4 vols., ed. Albert C. Outler, in *The Works of John Wesley*, Bicentennial Edition, 34 vols. [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976-], 1:150).

Brightman. Looking at the similarities between Macarius and Wesley, Brightman notes that the latter spoke very highly of the former. He then looks at the similarities between Gregory and Wesley, noting that Wesley's doctrine of perfection had even more similarities with Gregory than Macarius. Brightman argues that, if Wesley had read Gregory, he would have showered praises upon the Cappadocian just as he did upon Macarius. As he puts it, "There is a significant affinity between Wesley and Gregory, and if Wesley responded to Macarius as he did, it seems to be inevitable that he would have responded with at least as much enthusiasm to Gregory."⁷³ Because Wesley did not record the praise for Gregory that one would expect, Brightman concludes that Wesley did not read much from Gregory. Arguments like Brightman's give caution to the assumption that Gregory directly influenced Wesley. And yet, the close affinities between Wesley and Gregory suggest, at the very least, that Wesley found ideas similar to those of Gregory in his study of the early church. Wesley encountered such ideas, for example, in Macarius who may have been influenced by Gregory of Nyssa.⁷⁴ Encounters like this one are another likely reason why Wesley believed those who are perfect continue to grow.

Conclusion

Wesley believed that those who are perfect grow because he was convinced that human perfection possesses a dynamism allowing for movement toward the absolute and infinite perfection of God. Wesley believed that this movement could take many avenues, including grace, knowledge, love, and, ultimately, likeness with God. The dynamism of perfection found in the New Testament and the early Eastern church likely influenced Wesley in this regard, as did his convictions that Christian perfection is neither absolute nor slothful. Wesley thus believed that Christians should always be in progress, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead.

⁷³Robert Brightman, "Gregory of Nyssa and John Wesley in Theological Dialogue on the Christian Life," Ph.D. diss., Boston University Graduate School, 1969, 364.

⁷⁴Through his study of Macarius, Wesley may have been exposed to the thought of Gregory of Nyssa who possibly influenced Macarius. See: Jaeger, 145-230; Brightman 359-360, 364ff.; Albert Outler, "Introduction," in *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford, 1964), 9, n., 26; John G. Merritt, "'Dialogue' within a Tradition: John Wesley and Gregory of Nyssa Discuss Christian Perfection," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 22, no. 2 (Fall 1987): 94-96, 110-111.

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AS FULL REDEMPTION: CHARLES WESLEY'S APPROACH

by

John R. Tyson

Since Martin Luther's *Christian Liberty* (1520), Protestant theologians have sought to examine the question of human liberty from various angles. Luther's famous work begins by setting forth an important dialectic: "A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all."¹ While the theological axis of Luther's treatise was his "head and chief article"—justification by faith alone—the dialectic was only properly resolved when a person looked to Christ, and then also to his or her neighbor: "We conclude, therefore, that a Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbor. Otherwise he is not a Christian. He lives in Christ through faith, [and] in his neighbor by love. By faith he is caught up beyond himself into God. By love he descends beneath himself into his neighbor. Yet he always remains in God and in His love. . . ." ² One might term this an "oppositional freedom." It is freedom *from* sin, fear, and the law. It is also freedom *for* being a new person.

In a second pivotal treatise of the same year, Luther entered into the world of *reale politik* by linking "Christian Liberty" to the "common priesthood" (priesthood of all believers) in order to invite the Christian

¹Martin Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian*, trans. by Harold Grimm, in Helmut Lehmann, ed. *Luther's Works*: 31 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957), 344.

²*Ibid.*, 371.

nobility of the German nation to enter the cause of the reform.³ Luther argued that, because of the freedom that Christians have from sin, the law, and death, through justification by faith in Christ, all Christians also have both the freedom and responsibility to become new creatures. As members of the “new creation,” each Christian has direct and immediate access to God as well as the responsibility to pursue new life as a “calling” (*vocatio*) from God, carried out under God’s direction. In Luther’s view, this meant that the German princes had both the freedom and the obligation to join him in the cause of reform.

My purpose here is not primarily to compare Luther and Charles Wesley on matters of theological ethics. It is, rather, to examine the interconnection between Wesleyan soteriology and social ethics by using the political poems of Charles Wesley as a test case. While study will probably not resolve most of the complicated issues identified in the fine works that have emerged on Wesleyan ethics,⁴ it is hoped that drawing the work of Charles Wesley into this larger discussion will serve a useful purpose. This study also holds significant methodological promise since it may illustrate how Wesleyan soteriology connects with theological ethics at foundational and operational levels.

Theodore Runyon’s recent work *The New Creation: John Wesley’s Theology Today* offers an opportunity to pursue this comparison since Runyon rightly argues that the “New Creation” lies at the heart of John Wesley’s explication of the Christian faith.⁵ Runyon’s theological construal (or Wesley’s) amounts using the Kingdom of God and its transforming, renewing power as the theological center (*Mitte*) of John Wesley’s theology. This approach necessarily includes, but also goes beyond the “forensic metaphors” (which “predominate” in Western Christianity) for describing the operation of God’s grace upon humans and the rest of creation.⁶ It

³Martin Luther, *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate*, trans. Charles Jacobs, in *Luther’s Works*, 44, 115-220. See especially 128-31.

⁴Leon O. Hynson, *To Reform the Nation* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press/Zondervan, 1984); Manfred Marquardt, *John Wesley’s Social Ethics: Praxis and Principles*, trans. John Stanley and W. Stephen Gunter (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992, reprinted 2000); and Ronald H. Stone, *John Wesley’s Life and Ethics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001).

⁵Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley’s Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 7-12.

will be interesting to see whether metaphors of transformation and recreation do indeed lie at the heart of Charles Wesley's social ethics.

Conversions, Hymns, and Other Early Resources

The "conversion" experiences of both Wesley brothers offer an historical parable of how each evangelist began with Martin Luther's forensic understanding of grace, enshrined in "justification by faith alone," and then went beyond it toward an emphasis on victory over sin, purity of heart (attitudes and intentions—Runyon's "orthopathy"⁷), and (hence) Christian Perfection. The emergence of Luther's theology as a catalyst in the conversions of Charles and John Wesley is hardly a coincidence given the persistent presence and witness of Moravian missionaries like Peter Böhler and John Bray. Charles wrote in his journal (May 17): "I experienced the power of Christ rescuing me in temptation. Today I first saw Luther on the Galatians, which Mr. Holland had accidentally lit upon. We began, and found him [Luther] nobly full of faith. My friend, in hearing him, was so affected as to breathe out sighs and groans unutterable. I marveled that we were so soon and so entirely removed from him [Luther] that called us into the grace of Christ, unto another Gospel [of works]."⁸ Later that same evening Charles reported: "I spent some hours this evening in private with Martin Luther, who was greatly blessed to me, especially his conclusion of the 2nd chapter. I laboured, waited and prayed to feel 'who loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*.'"⁹

Luther's famous "Christ for me" (*Christus pro me*) would subsequently resound in Charles' famous conversion hymn,¹⁰ which he entitled

⁶Runyon, *New Creation*, 28-29. Cf. Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 82-93, 197-201, for further discussion of John Wesley's understanding of grace.

⁷Runyon, *New Creation*, 146-68.

⁸Thomas Jackson, ed. *The Journal of Charles Wesley*, M.A. 2 vols. (London: John Mason, 1849, reprinted Baker Books, 1980), 88.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰While there is scholarly debate as to which hymn deserves the title "Charles Wesley's Conversion Hymn," it does seem appropriate to list "Christ the Friend of Sinners" ("Where shall my wondering soul begin"), "Free Grace" ("And Can it Be?"), "Hymn for Whitsunday" ("Granted is the Saviour's prayer"), and "Congratulations to a Friend Upon Believing in Christ" ("What morn on thee with sweeter ray"), among those compositions that were born in that historical context. Cf. Tyson, *CW Reader*, 101-07, Peter Grant, "The Wesleys' Conversion Hymn," *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, Vol. 35 (Sept. 1966), 161-64, and Neil Dixon, "The Wesleys' Conversion Hymn," *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, Vol. 37 (Feb. 1967), 43-47.

“Free Grace” and we call “And Can it Be?” (“Died He for *me*?—who caused His pain!/ For *me*?—who Him to death pursued./ Amazing love! how can it be/That Thou, my God, shouldst died for *me*?” (v. 1).¹¹ Since Charles Wesley’s conversion occurred on May 21, 1738 on the Day of Pentecost and in the midst of a serious illness, he associated this experience with coming of the Holy Spirit into his life and with healing (or therapeutic) metaphors. This development was anticipated in his “Hymn for Whitsunday,” which was probably begun on May 23, 1738, and completed the next day; it was almost certainly one of the hymns Charles sang in celebration with friends who visited him on May 24.¹² Select verses read:

1. Granted is the Saviour’s prayer,
Sent the gracious Comforter;
Promise of our parting Lord,
Jesus to His heaven restored;
2. Christ who, now gone up on high,
Captive leads captivity;
While His foes from Him receive
Grace, that God with man may live.
6. Come, Divine, and peaceful Guest,
Enter our devoted breast;
Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire,
Kindle there the Gospel-fire.
- 8 Now descend and shake the earth,
Wake us into second birth;
Now Thy quickening influence give,
Blow—and these dry bones shall live.
9. Brood Thou o’er our nature’s night,
Darkness kindles into light;
Spread Thy over-shadowing wings,
Order from confusion springs.

¹¹Carlton Young, ed. *The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989), #363. For the full text see John R. Tyson, ed. *Charles Wesley: A Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 103-04. Emphasis added.

¹²Jackson, ed. *C. Wesley’s Journal*, I, 95.

10. Pain, and sin, and sorrow cease;
 Thee we taste, and all is peace;
 Joy Divine in Thee we prove,
 Light of truth, and fire of Love.¹³

Charles's hymn "Congratulations to a Friend Upon Believing in Christ" was probably penned on May 23, 1738, just after his brother burst into Charles's sick-room with the announcement: "I believe."¹⁴ It describes conversion as "anticipated heaven" (v. 6), and offers a vision of "realized eschatology" that marks out the therapeutic approach to grace that would become a Wesleyan hallmark:

12. Is this the soul so late weigh'd down
 By cares and sins, by griefs and pains?
 Whither are all thy terrors gone?
 Jesus for thee the victory gains;
 And death, and sin, and Satan yield
 To faith's unconquerable shield.
13. Blest be the God that calls thee home;
 Faithful to thee His mercies prove;
 Through death's dark vale He bids thee come,
 And more than conquer in His love;
 Robes thee in righteousness Divine,
 And makes the crown of glory thine!¹⁵

Charles Wesley's sermons and later hymns illustrate this same theological development, but the foundation for it was laid in the theological pilgrimage that preceded the conversion of both brothers. The sermon entitled "The One Thing Needful" is a useful place to begin this examination; it is necessary to term the "the Wesleys' sermon" because it was among a small collection of sermons written by John and preached by

¹³Tyson, *CW. Reader*, 104-105. The hymn was first published in *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1739. It was reprinted in Osborn, *Poetical Works*, I: 188-89.

¹⁴Jackson, *CW. Journal*, I, 95.

¹⁵Tyson, *Reader*, 107. The hymn was first published in *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1739. It was reprinted in George Osborn, ed. *Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, vol. 13 (London: Wesleyan Methodist Conference, 1868-72), I, 180-83. Cf. Henry Bett, *The Hymns of Methodism* (London: Epworth Press, 1912, reprint 1956), 20, for a discussion of the context of this hymn.

Charles during their Georgia mission.¹⁶ Charles preached the “One Thing Needful” in Boston on September 26, 1736, and subsequently on October 30, 1737; both of these instances preceded his “conversion” of May 1738.¹⁷ He also continued to preach this sermon in England after his conversion.¹⁸ His journal entry for October 15, 1738, for example, indicates that Charles preached “The One Thing Needful” several times that day, and its offers the tantalizing aside, “added much extempore.”¹⁹ We can only conjecture what Charles had begun adding to the original text of this sermon, but we might be well within the mark to suggest that it may have involved an infusion of the personal (“for me”) justifying faith and transforming grace he discovered on Pentecost Sunday, 1738.

The sermon “The One Thing Needful” was based on Luke 10:42. Charles Wesley preached it on both sides of the Atlantic and begins by asking the rhetorical question, “What is this *One Thing Needful*?” The reply to this question is characteristically Wesleyan: recreation of the effects of the fall into sin and a restoration of the image of God within each person:

To recover our first estate from which we are fallen is the one thing needful; to re-exchange the image of Satan for the image of God, bondage for freedom, sickness for health! Our one great business is to erase out of our souls the likeness of our destroyer, and to be born again, to be formed anew after the likeness of our Creator.²⁰

The printed version of this sermon evidences foundational Wesleyan soteriological themes: restoration of the *Imago Dei* as the goal of Christian salvation and the transition from “sickness” to “health” in the therapeutic hands of God. The latter emphasis was sounded a second time in the same sermon: “The one work we have to do is to return from the gates of death to have our diseases cured, our wounds healed, and ourselves restored to

¹⁶Richard Heitzenrater, “John Wesley’s Early Sermons,” *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 37 (Feb. 1970), 110ff. These sermons were published in 1816 as though they were composed by Charles Wesley.

¹⁷Jackson, *CW Journal*, I:45.

¹⁸Jackson, *CW Journal*, I:80-92.

¹⁹Jackson, *CW Journal*, I:132.

²⁰N. A., ed. *Sermons by the Late Rev. Charles Wesley, A.M.* (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1816), 86.

perfect soundness.”²¹ But the sermon also betrays its pre-conversion authorship since its theological mood remains strongly moralistic; the reader or hearer of this version of the sermon could easily conclude that the re-creation urged in the homily could be attained by one’s own efforts or inner resources.

The theme of soteriological healing continued to find expression in Charles’ hymns and sermons. One of his favorite metaphors for expressing the therapeutic application of grace is found in his hymns and sermons on the Good Samaritan. Charles’ sparse journal (which has been described as little more than an annotated sermon log) reports that he preached the “Good Samaritan” (Lk. 10:29) eighteen times—it is his second most mentioned sermon.²² Unfortunately, no written text of this sermon has survived, but Charles’s hymns illustrate well how he preached the passage. In Wesley’s homiletical reconstruction, the hearer or singer becomes the wounded traveler who was set upon by thieves and robbed of “the life Divine.” The wounds become metaphors for human sin. Jesus Christ, Who is present to save, both in sermon and in song, becomes the Good Samaritan in Charles’ application of the parable:

6. O Thou Good *Samaritan*,
 In Thee is all my hope;
 Only Thou canst succour man,
 And raise the fallen up.
 Hearken to my dying cry,
 My wounds compassionately see,
 Me a sinner pass not by,
 Who gasp for help to Thee.

8. Saviour of my soul, draw nigh,
 In mercy haste to me;
 At the point of death I lie,
 And cannot come to Thee.
 Now Thy kind relief afford,
 The wine and oil of grace pour in;
 Good Physician, speak the word,
 And heal my soul of sin.

²¹N.A., *Sermons CW.*, 86.

²²Tyson, *CW. Reader*, 487.

10. Surely now the bitterness
 Of second death is past;
 Of my Life, my Righteousness,
 On Thee my soul is cast.
 Thou hast brought me to Thine inn,
 And I am of Thy promise sure;
 Thou shalt cleanse me from all sin,
 And all my sickness cure.
11. Perfect then the work begun,
 And make the sinner whole;
 All Thy will on me be done,
 My body, spirit, soul.
 Still preserve me safe from harms,
 And kindly for Thy patient care;
 Take me, Jesu, to Thine arms,
 And keep me ever there.²³

Charles's sermon "Awake Thou That Sleepest," which was preached before the University at Oxford on April 4, 1742, evidences a hermeneutic similar to that of the "Good Samaritan." Based on Eph. 5:14, "sleep" becomes Wesley's metaphor for the state of fallen humanity in their sin: "By sleep is signified the natural of man: that deep sleep of the soul into which the sin of Adam hath cast all who spring from his loins; that supineness, indolence, and stupidity, that insensibility of his real condition, wherein every man comes into the world, and continues till the voice of God awakes him."²⁴ Awakening from sin becomes a synonym for justification: "Awake and cry out with the trembling goaler, 'What must I do to be saved [Acts 16:30]?' And never rest till thou believest on the Lord Jesus, with a faith which is his gift, by the operation of his Spirit."²⁵ But the goal (*telos*) of justification (being "saved") is transformation: "Art

²³Tyson, *CW. Reader*, 160-62. The hymn was first published in *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1742, in eleven verses. A shortened version of the hymn subsequently appeared in the 1780 *Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists*. The full text was published in Osborn, *Poetical Works*, II: 111-112.

²⁴Albert Outler, ed., *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 1, *Sermons, I* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 142.

²⁵Outler, *Sermons*, I:147.

thou a Christian indeed? That is, a new creature? Are ‘old things passed away, and all things become new’?”²⁶ Charles continued with an entire paragraph of searching questions that urged the importance of this transformation:

Art thou “partaker of the divine nature?” Knowest thou not that Christ is in thee, except thou be reprobate? Knowest thou that “God dwelleth in thee”? Knowest thou not that “thy body is a temple of the Holy Ghost, which thou hast of God?” Hast thou “the witness in thyself,” “the earnest of thine inheritance”? Art thou “sealed by that Spirit of promise unto the day of redemption”? “Hast thou received the Holy Ghost?”²⁷

True to events of his personal Pentecost (Charles’s conversion occurred on Whitsunday), Wesley stressed the crucial role of the Holy Spirit in conversion and the ensuing transformation: “We are called to be ‘an habitation of God through His Spirit;’ and through his Spirit dwelling in us ‘to be saints’ here, and ‘partakers of the inheritance of the sons of light.’”²⁸ It is by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, Charles intones, that Christians are enabled to do the will of God (which is sanctification): “Those promises before made to the fathers [God] hath thus fulfilled: ‘I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes. I will pour out water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.’”²⁹

Christian Liberty: Charles Wesley’s Theological Construction

One of the foundational problems that emerges when one attempts to develop Charles Wesley’s theological formulations, distinct from those of his brother, emerged in what Frank Baker aptly termed “the vexed problem of joint authorship.”³⁰ For our purposes here, we shall assume that most of the original hymns were composed by Charles, and that the translations and adaptations from other authors were the work of John; while specific examples can be cited to disprove both of these generalizations,

²⁶Outler, *Sermons*, I:149.

²⁷Outler, *Sermons*, I:149.

²⁸Outler, *Sermons*, I:153.

²⁹Outler, *Sermons*, I:153.

³⁰Frank Baker, ed., *The Representative Verse of Charles Wesley* (London: Epworth Press, 1962), lviii. Cf. Baker’s discussion of this problem, or mine at *CW Reader*, 20-29.

they do hold true in the main. Further, since it is clear that *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1749) and subsequent publications by Charles did not pass under John's editorial eye, these hymns present the "unretouched" version of the younger Wesley's thought. The hymns from the first decade of the Wesleyan revival do constitute an important witness with respect to the starting point and early form of Charles' theology, and these can be used to reconstruct his thought—but they can be used with the most confidence where one can locate an historical connection between Charles' life or ministry and the specific composition of the hymn (as in the conversion hymns, for example).

Those early hymns, which are as associated with Charles Wesley's "conversion," communicate a sense of "gospel liberty" in various modes and metaphors. "Christ the Friend of Sinners" ("Where shall my wondering soul begin?") describes justification (or initial salvation) as a long and loving embrace, evidenced by Jesus on the cross: "Outcasts of men, to you I call, / . . . He spreads His arms t' embrace you all. . . ." ³¹ It is like a gracious home-coming, that sets guilty people free from their "load of sin":

7. Come, O my guilty brethren, come,
 Groaning beneath your load of sin!
 His bleeding heart shall make you room,
 His open side shall take you in.
 He calls you now, invites you home:
 Come, O my guilty brethren, come!³²

In "Free Grace" ("And can it be?") the singer is characterized as "imprisoned" and "fast bound in sin and [fallen] nature's night." Gospel liberty comes as a "jail break" in which the chains of bondage fall off and the former prisoners are led to freedom by Jesus Christ:

4. Long my imprison'd spirit lay,
 Fast bound in sin and nature's night:
 Thine eye diffused a quickening ray;
 I woke; the dungeon flamed with light;
 My chains fell off, my heart was free,
 I rose, went forth, and follow'd Thee.³³

³¹Tyson, *CW Reader*, 102.

³²*Ibid.*, 103.

³³*Ibid.*, 103.

Charles' "Hymn for Whitsunday" likens salvation to creation, just as the Spirit of God "brooded over the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2b, A.V.) bringing harmony out of chaos, God's re-creating Spirit broods over the nature of fallen humans:

9. Brood Thou o'er our nature's night,
Darkness kindles into light;
Spread Thy over-shadowing wings,
Order from confusion springs.
10. Pain, and sin, and sorrow cease;
Thee we taste, and all is peace;
Joy Divine in Thee we prove,
Light of truth, and fire of love.³⁴

In Charles' "Congratulations to a Friend Upon Believing in Christ" ("What morn on thee with sweeter ray") the author/evangelist returns to creation themes to express salvation as "freedom." In this instance Wesley draws upon the metaphor of the primordial dragon and blends it with the dragon of the apocalypse (Rev. 12:3-4) to describe the "powers" that hold sinful humans in bondage. Hence, Jesus Christ is the dragon slayer Who brings freedom, healing, and sure salvation:

3. Long did all hell its powers engage,
And fill'd thy darken'd soul with fears;
Baffled at length the dragon's rage,
At length the' atoning blood appears:
Thy light is come, thy mourning's o'er,
Look up; for thou shalt weep no more!
4. Blest be the Name that set thee free,
The Name that sure salvation brings!
The Sun of Righteous on thee
Has rose with healing in His wings,
Away let grief and sighing flee;
Jesus has died for thee—for thee!³⁵

Charles' most familiar conversion hymn, written "For the Anniversary Day of One's Conversion" ("O for a thousand tongues to sing")—which

³⁴Ibid., 105.

³⁵Ibid., 106.

was probably written in May 1739—returns to metaphors of bondage and imprisonment to describe the plight from which sinners are saved. In characteristic fashion, however, Wesley blended images of “liberty” or “freedom” with those of healing (“health”), cleansing, and wholeness (“peace” as *Shalom*):

9. Jesus, the name that charms our fears,
 That bids our sorrows cease;
 ’Tis music in the sinner’s ears,
 ’Tis life, and health, and peace!
10. He breaks the power of cancell’d sin,
 He sets the prisoner free;
 His blood can make the foulest clean,
 His blood avail’d for me.³⁶

Charles Wesley’s early sermons evidence this same trend. In his manuscript sermon on “Faith and Good Works,” which he first preached at St. Anthony’s, Islington, on Dec. 21, 1738,³⁷ he describes the various effects of true Christian faith. The third effect enumerated by Charles was “liberty:”

A third effect of faith is liberty not only from the guilt, but likewise from the power of sin. The language of every true believer is this: “There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” [Rom. 8:1-2]. This glorious effect of faith, liberty from sin, is fully and strongly asserted throughout Romans six: “Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law but under grace. Ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you. Being then (namely, when you did first believe with the heart) made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”³⁸

³⁶Ibid., 108-109.

³⁷This date is confirmed both by Charles Wesley’s journal and by the sermon register appended to the sermon booklet. Cf. Jackson, *CW Journal*, I, 138, and Kenneth G. C. Newport, ed. *The Sermons of Charles Wesley* (Oxford University Press, 2001), 154.

³⁸Newport, *Sermons of Charles Wesley*, 161.

This citation, which was constructed out of the phraseology of Romans (chapters six and eight), strongly parallels the “freedom from” aspect of Christian liberty that we observed at the outset in the treatise by Martin Luther. But Charles Wesley’s construct of Christian liberty, as illustrated in this same sermon, goes beyond the “negative approach” to Christian freedom lauded in the Romans text. Wesley wed his theological construct to Johannine scripture texts and to his theology of the Holy Spirit: “Hereby, my brethren, ye may try yourselves whether you be in the faith. If the Son hath made you free, then are you free indeed! [Jn.8:35] Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty [2 Cor. 3:17]; and this Spirit is received by the hearing of faith.”³⁹ A distinctive Wesleyan “spin” to the concept of Christian liberty is further illustrated by Charles’s personification of his description of faith (“if Jesus is by faith *your* Jesus”) and his recourse to the sinlessness of the First Epistle of John: “If Jesus is by faith your Jesus, then hath He saved you from your sins. He that believes is born of God, and whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God [1Jn. 3:9].”⁴⁰

Charles Wesley’s original hymns began to form the foundation and dominate the contents of the brother’s joint editions of *Hymns and Sacred Poems* beginning with the 1742 edition. The Charles Wesley hymns in the later editions were composed after the initial experiential “rush” of the events of 1738 had passed and in the midst of the burgeoning growth of the Wesleyan revival. The foundation themes established in his earlier hymns and sermons continue in Charles’ hymns of the 1740s, and Christian liberty continues to be a prominent theme. It is loudly sounded, for example, in Charles’ poetical commentary on the 52nd chapter of Isaiah:

4. Shake off the bonds of sad despair,
Sion, assert thy Liberty;
Look up, thy broken heart prepare,
And God shall set the captive free.
5. For thus the Lord your God hath said,
Ye all have sold yourselves for nought;

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid. Capitalization added in the phrase “His seed” to clarify the author’s intention.

A ransom (not by you) is paid,
 Received your liberty unbought.⁴¹

Deliverance from a sin-determined sense of bondage remained a prominent theme through out *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742).⁴² Like Luther, Charles Wesley was aware that we struggle against “the tyrants” (“the world, the flesh, and the devil”).⁴³ But an important theological transition can also be detected in Charles’ description of Christian liberty, as it emerged in this poetical corpus. The subsection of hymns “Groaning for Redemption,” for example, began to stress that cleansing and transformation are the necessary outcomes of “release” from the guilt and pain of sin:

3. 'Tis not a bare release from sin,
 Its guilt, and pain, my soul requires;
 I want a Spirit of power within;
 Thee, Jesus, Thee my heart desires,
 And pants and breaks to be renew'd,
 And wash'd in Thine all-cleansing blood.⁴⁴

Cleansing, renewal, and the power of the Holy Spirit within a person become the focus of Charles’ interest in liberty or deliverance.⁴⁵ In a similar fashion, “freedom from” pain and sin gives way to victorious living by the power of the Holy Spirit:

13. We surely shall obtain
 (When Jesus enters in)
 A liberty from pain,
 A liberty from sin,
 We then shall more than conquerors be,
 The Spirit’s cry is “Liberty.”⁴⁶

It is clear throughout this collection of Charles Wesley’s hymns, written in the early 1740s, that themes associated with the “new creation”

⁴¹Osborn, *Poetical Works*, II:168-69, “The 52nd Chapter of Isaiah,” from *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1742.

⁴²Ibid., II:98, 120, 125.

⁴³Ibid., II:253.

⁴⁴Osborn, *Poetical Works*, II:133, “Groaning for Redemption,” Pt. iv.

⁴⁵Cf. Osborn, *Poetical Works*, II: 265, “Waiting for Christ the Prophet,” v. 6.

⁴⁶Osborn, *Poetical Works*, II:329. Based on Ps. 119:126, PBV.

(transformation, wholeness, sanctification) have begun to replace metaphors of deliverance from bondage and captivity as the leading edge of Charles' theology of redemption. This shift in poetical diction suggests a shift in Charles' theology of redemption, a movement from stressing justification towards stressing sanctification as utter transformation; hence becoming a new creature becomes an important emphasis in these hymns. Note:

11. Jesus mighty to renew,
Work in me to will and do;
Turn my nature's rapid tide,
Stem the torrent of my pride,
Stop the whirlwind of my will,
Speak and bid the sun stand still;
Now Thy love almighty show
Make even me a creature new.⁴⁷

Themes of cleansing, purging, wholeness and transformation predominate over those that describe a "bare release from sin, guilt and pain" in this collection.⁴⁸ In some instances this hope for a "new creation" takes on the same eschatological tone that Runyon observed in John Wesley's theology:

9. In patient hope for this I wait,
Till all old things are past away,
Till Thou shalt all things new create,
And I behold Thy perfect day,
The mark of mine election show,
And be in lust a creature new.⁴⁹

The title of the hymn from which the preceding verse comes was "Groaning for Redemption." This suggests that in Charles Wesley's theological diction "redemption" had become more than justification; it had become a synonym for sanctification.

In Charles Wesley's "bride price hymnal," the two-volume edition of *Hymns and Sacred Poems* published in 1749 which Charles hastily constructed out of his manuscripts to raise the money his future mother-in-

⁴⁷Osborn, *Poetical Works*, II:89. Based on Jer. 17:9. Cf. II:79-80.

⁴⁸Osborn, *Poetical Works*, II: 79-80, 89, 106, 137, 158, 242, 265, 329, etc.

⁴⁹Osborn, *Poetical Works*, II:163, "Groaning for Redemption."

⁵⁰Jackson, *CW Journal*, II:45-56.

law demanded he have on hand for his marriage to proceed.⁵⁰ we have another important witness to Charles' theology since John specifically stated that he did not see this collection prior to its publication.⁵¹ While themes of "release"⁵² and "liberty for the captives"⁵³ were sometimes symbolized in the Exodus event,⁵⁴ the phrase "full redemption" as it emerged in a sub-group of hymns entitled "Waiting for Full Redemption" announced the theological emphasis of this collection.⁵⁵ "Full Redemption" is being "saved from our sins below" and being "thoroughly clean, and perfectly renew[ed]."⁵⁶ It is being "saved from the guilt and power of sin" and "to have the grace brought in, the new-created heaven."⁵⁷ Using his usual constellation of biblical and theological themes, Charles described "Full Redemption" as recreation of the fallen image humans inherit from Adam and a renewal in the image of God:

3. Jesus to Thee we look
 Till saved from sin's remains,
 Reject the inbred tyrant's yoke,
 And cast away his chains:
 Our nature shall no more
 O'er us dominion have;
 By faith we apprehend the power,
 Which shall forever save.

4. In sure and steadfast hope
 To be redeemed below,
 On to the holy mountain's top
 We all exulting go:
 We shall the price receive,
 We shall be all renew'd,

⁵¹Jackson, *JW Works*, XI, 391. For a discussion of the importance of this collection for developing Charles Wesley's theology, see Tyson, *CW. Reader*, 23-27.

⁵²Osborn, *Poetical Works*, IV:207.

⁵³*Ibid.*, IV:307.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, IV:326.

⁵⁵Osborn, *Poetical Works*, V:289-313, and with other ramifications, *Ibid.*, V:313-336.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, V:324.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, V:335.

Regain Thine image here, and live
The sinless life of God.⁵⁸

Charles's *Short Hymns on Select Passages of Scripture* (1762) is final hymnological corpus evidence of the same theological development we observed in his earlier hymns. These hymns were begun in the 1760s and a selection of them was published in 1762. Charles continued to write and revise them, however, up to May 11, 1787.⁵⁹ In the mid-1760s the Wesleys found themselves enmeshed in spirited controversy over the doctrine of sanctification or Christian Perfection. A group of fanatical perfectionists (led by George Bell and Thomas Maxfield) had arisen within the Methodist movement and claimed to have been made "perfect as angels."⁶⁰ Their wild claims drew significant public attention, and on five separate occasions between 1760 and 1766 John Wesley penned letters to the editors of various London papers in an attempt to disassociate the Wesleys' position from that of the fanatical pretenders who had arisen in their midst.⁶¹ It was in the context of this controversy that John Wesley penned his first edition of *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (ca. 1765), and Charles Wesley composed many of his *Short Hymns on Select Passages of Scripture*.

Given the historical and theological context of these hymns, it would not be surprising to find that "new creation" themes continue to predominate in Charles Wesley's approach to Christian liberty. Charles continued

⁵⁸Osborn, *Poetical Works*, V:330 "Waiting for Full Redemption."

⁵⁹S. T. Kimbrough and Oliver A. Beckerlegge, eds. *Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley*, vol. II, *Hymns and Poems on Holy Scripture* (Nashville: Abingdon-Kingswood, 1990), 435. The annotation at the end of *Ms. Acts* indicates that Charles finished that section in 1765 and continued to revise the collection a total of eight times until May 11, 1787.

⁶⁰See Kenneth Newport, "George Bell, Prophet and Enthusiast," *Methodist History*, Vol. 35 (Jan. 1997), 95-105, and Kenneth Newport and Gareth Lloyd, "George Bell and Early Methodist Enthusiasm: A New Manuscript Source from the Manchester Archives," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, vol. 80 (Sept. 1998), 89-101.

⁶¹W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds. *The Works of John Wesley*: Vo. 21, *Journal and Diaries IV* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 285-86, 287-90, 291-93, 295-96, 296-99. Cf. *Charles Wesley on Sanctification: A Theological and Biographical Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan-Francis Asbury Press, 1986), 227-301, and W. Stephen Gunter, *The Limits of 'Love Divine'* (Nashville: Abingdon-Kingswood, 1989), 202-26.

to use liberation/victory themes to describe freedom from the power of sin and our fallen nature, as in these lines from *Ms. Luke*: “The Lord hath sent us Christ the Lord,/To bruise our foe, and bust his yoke,/ From sin and death to set us free,/ and slay our last enemy.”⁶² In a similar way, the goal of the work of Christ is to free one’s soul from sin, “loos’d from its infirmity” and “my heart and spirit [to] rectify,/ remove my nature’s bent to ill. . . .”⁶³ Thus, the main emphasis that emerges in this collection of hymns, both published and those which remain in manuscript, urges the singer to press beyond “pardon” toward perfection in love or the mind of Christ:

4. Of pardon possest, my God I adore,
Yet can I not rest, impatient for more;
A greater salvation I languish to prove,
A deeper foundation, a soldier of love.
5. The grace to insure, the treasure conceal’d
A mendicant poor, I purchase the field,
Sell all to obtain it, and seek till I find,
And ask, till I gain it in Jesus his mind.⁶⁴

The “liberty” that Charles Wesley describes in these hymns obviously includes “pardon,” but is more fully nuanced as “liberty from sin,” “grace infused,” “love revealed/ The Kingdom [of God] fix’d within.”⁶⁵ It is a “liberty of love”⁶⁶ that unites “holiness” with “happiness”:

4. Accomplished his kind intent
God into our hearts hath sent
The Spirit of thy love,
Our blood-bought pardon to reveal,
And mark us by his hallowing seal,
For thrones prepar’d above.

⁶²*Ms. Luke*, #18. Kimbrough & Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poetry*, II:78. The hymn is based on Lk. 1:70-71.

⁶³*Ibid.*, #200. Kimbrough & Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poetry*, II:144. The hymn is based on Lk. 13:13.

⁶⁴*Ms. Matthew*, 165. Kimbrough & Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poetry*, II:29. Cf. Osborn, *Poetical Works*, X:313, based on Matt. 17:27, for another instance in which receiving the “mind of Christ” is described as Christian liberty.

⁶⁵Osborn, *Poetical Works*, XI:44, based on Mk. 11:2.

⁶⁶*Ms. Luke*, #101, Kimbrough & Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poetry*, II:101; *Ibid.*, #220, *Unpublished Poetry*, II:152; *Ibid.*, #303, *Unpublished Poetry*, II:190.

5. Peace, joy and righteousness brought in,
 Perfect liberty from sin,
 Our happiness maintain,
 Till Thou receive Thy spotless bride,
 To sit illustrious at Thy side,
 And in Thy presence reign.⁶⁷

The eschatological consummation, echoed in the last lines above, is also a common sanctification theme in this hymnological corpus.⁶⁸ In some instances, the gradual growth of the Kingdom of God is contrasted with the outrageous claims of instantaneous perfection that were being voiced by the “pretenders to perfection.”⁶⁹ A short hymn from *Ms. Luke*, based on Lk. 13:21, illustrates this well:

1. By silent, slow, unnotic'd means
 The heavenly principle procedes,
 And while its secret way it wins,
 Its sanctifying virtue spreads
 Thro' all we think, and speak and do,
 And makes our life and nature new.⁷⁰

Eschatological themes are also a present reality in these hymns. God is “our new-Creator” who “the old rebellious nature/with all its relics slay” and thereby “brings the perfect day.”⁷¹ In a similar way, God—in the Person of the Holy Spirit—comes to “cast out their sin/By his own coming in/And eternally reign in their hearts.”⁷² The “reign” or Kingdom of God is manifested in Christian hearts by the presence of Christ and the dominion of His love.⁷³ The indwelling Christ restores the *imago Dei* (image of

⁶⁷*Ms. Acts*, 53-54, Kimbrough & Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poetry*, II:292-93, based on Acts 3:25-26. Cf. Osborn, *Poetical Works*, X:162, based on Mt. 5:3, for another pairing of “happiness” and “holiness.”

⁶⁸Cf. *Ms. Luke*, #303, Kimbrough & Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poetry*, II:190.

⁶⁹Cf. Tyson, *CW. Reader*, 382-83, for several hymns from Charles’ *Ms. Scripture Hymns* that illustrate this development, especially hymns #188 and #215.

⁷⁰*Ms. Luke*, #202, Kimbrough & Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poetry*, II:145. Cf. *Ibid.*, #247, or II:162.

⁷¹Osborn, *Poetical Works*, X: 183, based on Mt. 6:9-13.

⁷²*Ms. Mark*, #53, Kimbrough & Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poetry*, II:56.

⁷³*Ms. Luke* #148, Kimbrough & Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poetry*, II:118.

God) within Christians by grace working through love.⁷⁴ Charles was careful to stress, however, that the Christian's holiness was a reflection of that prior presence and transformation by Jesus Christ:

2. By faith we our Example trace,
 And more and more like God appear
 Beholding Him with open face,
 Transform'd into His image here;
 Yet still we by reflection shine,
 And own the glory Divine.⁷⁵

In the preceding sections we have examined and endorsed Ted Runyon's conception of "the New Creation" as a suitable nexus for illuminating Wesleyan soteriology. We have also indicated that this soteriological model is an equally appropriate *Mitte* from which one may explicate the theology of Charles Wesley's hymns and sermons. Interestingly, this "new creation" pattern was latent in even pre-conversion expressions of Wesleyan theology, but it clearly began to reach its powerful personification and insistent expressions of healing, wholeness, and transformation after the evocative events of May 1738. We have seen that "the new creation" themes are also encompassed in a Wesleyan understanding of Christian liberty. It remains, then, for us to examine the socio-political role that "Christian Liberty" plays in Charles Wesley's thought.

Charles Wesley's Views on Political Liberty as Seen in His *Occasional Hymns & Poems*

Oliver Beckerlegge rightly reminds the reader that Charles Wesley came to the task of political commentary by way of indirection, since it was a feature of his ministry: "Charles Wesley was not a politician much less a statesman. But from the earliest days of his evangelical ministry, he had been compelled to take notice of political issues."⁷⁶ Charles's political views, as they are evidenced in collections like *Ms. Patriotism* and longer compositions like "The American War" (1779) and "The Revolution," were every bit as conservative as those of his brother John. Charles, per-

⁷⁴Osborn, *Poetical Works*, X:196-97. Cf. Kimbrough & Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poetry*, II:220, *Ms. John* #32; and *Ibid.*, II:154, *Ms. Luke* #223.

⁷⁵Osborn, *Poetical Works*, X:325, hymn based on Mt. 19:17.

⁷⁶Oliver Beckerlegge, "Charles Wesley's Politics," *London Quarterly and Holborn Review*, Vol. 182 (Oct. 1957), 280.

haps even more than his brother, was a staunch Tory who disliked and attacked the Whigs (like Lord North) because they challenged and weakened royal authority.⁷⁷ As Donald Baker put it: “Charles Wesley’s attitude to the war was that of a fairly orthodox High Church Tory.” This meant, for Wesley, that “the war was not really war, but rebellion, not only in a political sense against the mother country, but against God, symbolized in the figure of [King] George III. . . .”⁷⁸

Beckerlegge voiced a similar assessment: “As a good Anglican and Tory, he believed that both throne and magistrates were divinely appointed; loyalty to one’s nation and king was at all times, for Charles, an essential part of religion.”⁷⁹ These assessments are borne out in Charles’ many descriptions of King George III as “our rightful monarch,” God’s “vicegerent here,” a “virtuous king,” a “gracious king,” and an “absolute monarch.”⁸⁰ His frequent pairing of “King and Country” evidenced how closely those twin commitments were joined in Charles Wesley’s understanding of religious and political authority.⁸¹ Because he believed that George III was God’s “vicegerent here,” Charles considered the “rightful King” a “copy” of God’s “majesty/ this image of Thy power. . . .”⁸² Hence, reverence for God and God’s chosen King were deeply intertwined in Wesley’s mind:

Presented in perfect peace
By Thee his only Lord,
Till Britain’s happiness he sees
With harmony restor’d,
United in Thy fear
Till all his subjects join
In George (Thine Image) to revere
The majesty Divine.⁸³

⁷⁷Philip O. Beale, “Historical Introduction,” in ST Kimbrough, and Oliver A. Beckerlegge, eds. *The Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley*, Vol. I (Nashville: Kingswood, 1988), 29.

⁷⁸Donald S. Baker, “Charles Wesley and the American War of Independence,” *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, Vol. 34 (1963), 160.

⁷⁹Beckerlegge, “Charles Wesley’s Politics,” 281.

⁸⁰Kimbrough and Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poetry*, I: 62, 79, 82, 153, 159.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, I: 95, 104, 110, 112, 114, 119, 120, 121, 123, 137, 146, 149, 165, 168.

⁸²Kimbrough & Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poetry*, I: 62.

⁸³*Ibid.*, I: 82.

Charles, even more than John Wesley, was an uncompromising critic of the Americans.⁸⁴ This caused him—as Philip Beale pointed out—“to over-simplify the political issues about which he wrote.”⁸⁵ Like his brother John, Charles sought to promote spiritual, moral, and social improvement among the people, but (also like his brother) Charles equated democracy and the calls for more liberty with mob rule, chaos and social disintegration. Beckerlegge expressed Charles’s conservatism on these matters quite well: “Charles Wesley was, then, clearly a Tory, in the sense that he believed in the right of kings to govern personally; a constitutional monarchy meant nothing to him. The idea that others might know better than the king how to govern was unthinkable.”⁸⁶ Where John Wesley tended to base his political assessments upon broad theological themes (sin, grace, eschatology), Charles often pointed to the failures of particular individuals to explain complex social processes. While lauding the virtues of King George III, Charles dismissed the controversy over “Wilkes and liberty” by pointing out the scandalous character of John Wilkes, and without inquiring into the Parliamentary issues and proceedings that emerged in that debate. Charles’s assessment of the American Revolution was handled in a similar manner: “The reasons why Britain lost the war in America are complex, but Charles reduces them to disloyalty to the King, and the incompetence of the military commanders.”⁸⁷ In his long poem on “The American War,” Sir William Howe is singled out as the scapegoat and reason for Britain’s defeat in North America.⁸⁸ While Howe made his fair share of military mistakes, Charles’s assessment of his role in the British defeat reveals both Wesley’s dislike for Howe’s progressive politics and his superficial understanding of the political situation at hand.⁸⁹ In “The Revolution” the motives and type of liberty sought by the Americans were severely criticized: “When liberty unbridled reigns/

⁸⁴Baker, “Charles Wesley and the American War,” 167.

⁸⁵Beale, “Historical Introduction,” 29.

⁸⁶Beckerlegge, “Charles Wesley’s Politics,” 284.

⁸⁷Ibid., 29-30.

⁸⁸Kimbrough & Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poetry*, I:41-57.

⁸⁹Baker, “Charles Wesley and the American War,” 159. Baker writes: “In fact Howe was barely able to pursue the war at all, owing to Lord George Germaine’s refusal to send reinforcements, and the British government’s complete misunderstanding of American conditions.”

And binds rebellious Kings in chains/. . . And shouts For Ever live King Mob!”⁹⁰

It is clear that John Wilkes was not a person of sterling character. Benjamin Franklin, who was neither a Tory nor a conservative, met Wilkes in Paris in 1768 and described him as “an outlaw, and exile of bad personal character, not worth a farthing.”⁹¹ But Beale rightly describes Charles’s verbal attack upon Wilkes as “more violent than any other he used”⁹² and “a personal one that barely touches on the legal and constitutional issues that arose. While we may consider it significant that the common people had become involved and interested in these matters, the point does not seem to have occurred to Charles.”⁹³ His poem “Written in the Year 1770” weaves Charles’s dislike for Wilkes, his distrust of “the mob,” and his veneration of King George III into a chaotic and licentious depiction of political liberty:

Huzza for Wilkes and liberty!
The rabble are already free,
Free from the bridle in their jaws,
Free from the dead of penal laws;
Free to pull down the wicked Courtiers,
Free to support the good Supporters,
Their friends to guard, their foes to chase,
And curse, and spit in George’s face.⁹⁴

Charles’s scathing criticism of the secular conception of “liberty” that is based in the will of “the people” (and not the authorities established by God) continued almost unabated throughout this same poem:

What tho’ the Quiet in the land
Our freedom cannot understand,
But think Mob-government is ever ill,
Whether for Wilkes, or for Sacheveril.
Their Maxim is by us denied

⁹⁰Ibid., I:161.

⁹¹George Rude’, *Wilkes and Liberty* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), xiii.

⁹²Kimbrough & Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poetry*, I:31.

⁹³Ibid., I:32.

⁹⁴Kimbrough & Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poetry*, I:149. From Ms. Pat. Misc. 27-28.

Who have the rabble on their side,
 And shout with the triumphant Croud
 ‘The People’s is the Voice of God!’[...]⁹⁵

In Charles Wesley’s poetical imagination, the current Wilkesite turmoil blended with previous periods of English social strife and disorder, such as the rebellion of the Jacobite Pretender in 1745 (“Forty-five”) and the so-called “glorious revolution” of Oliver Cromwell in 1641 (“Forty-one”). In each case struggles for so-called “liberty” overturned the rule of law, brought rebellion, and were, in short, the spawn of Hell:

Huzza for liberty and laws,
 For Cromwell, and the good old Cause!
 The glorious struggle is begun,
 The Forty-five is Forty-one!
 The Rabble-rout secures our quiet
 By threats and violence, and riot,
 Brings Ministers and Kings to reason
 By libels, Blasphemy, and Treason,
 In law’s defense all law suppresses [. . .]
 For Liberty Rebellion fights,
 And Hell supports the BILL OF RIGHTS!⁹⁶

Charles’s “Advice to the City” continued his onslaught against Wilkes, his supporters, and mob action (“the many headed Brute”) that seemed destined to take over political affairs in London in “the reign of Wilkes and liberty”:

Whom shall the many-headed Brute,
 With their fierce Driver, first salute?
 Ambitious to deserve the gallows,
 March on, ye Patriots, to the palace,
 Lead your audacious Legions nigher,
 Provoke, and dare the troops to fire,
 And to your King again present
 His choice of death or banishment.⁹⁷

⁹⁵Ibid., 150, with omissions.

⁹⁶Ibid., “Another,” with omissions.

⁹⁷Kimbrough & Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Verse*, I;152, “Advice to the City.”

“Advice to the City” concludes with a poignant and satirical plea to abandon the course of this present course of “reformation.” In Charles Wesley’s view, no unity or peace could come from it, only poison, distraction, and destruction. Wilkes, Horne, the mob and their “licentious” rights are not worth the national calamity that lay ahead, in Wesley’s view; indeed, it can only result in them all concluding their “glorious Course” at the gallows (Tyburn):

And must the reformation spring
From insults on a gracious King?
Your rights licentious be maintain’d
By sacred Majesty prophan’d?
By poisoning a distracted nation,
By Regicide, or Abdication?
Sooner let Horne be dubbed a Martyr,
And factious London lose her charter,
Sooner be wicked Wilkes be forgot,
Or stinking like his memory rot
And your whole Mob, both low and high-born,
Conclude your glorious Course at Tyburn!⁹⁸

Charles Wesley’s hymns on the “American War” evidenced many of the same trends observed in the Wilkesite controversy. A staunch monarchist, Wesley defended the virtue of the British monarch as well as his divine right to rule:

5. By Thee if rightful Monarchs reign,
Against a world of foes maintain
Our King’s authority,
And let him, held in Thy right hand,
Submit to only thy command,
And bow to none but Thee.
6. Our sovereign Lord by right divine
Thy servant, challenge him for thine,
To govern in thy stead,
And let the crown thy hand doth place

⁹⁸Ibid., 153.

Glitter with undiminish'd rays,
 And flourish on his head.⁹⁹

The American Revolution was seen as the spawn of sin and greed, and without political merit or provocation; hence, Charles Wesley frequently termed it “an unprovok'd rebellion.”¹⁰⁰ In this sense, the current political rebellion against King George III could be seen as a parable of all sinful, human rebellion against Jesus Christ—“the King of Kings”:

3. Your unprovok'd Rebellion brings
 Our more disloyal deeds to mind,
 (Disloyal to the King of Kings)
 In league against your Country join'd,
 Ye our ingratitude reprove,
 Against our heavenly Father's Love.

4. To cherish an unthankful race
 What could He more for us have done?
 Riches of unexhausted grace
 He freely gave us in His Son,
 Who, to secure our endless good,
 Expended all his sacred blood.¹⁰¹

Wesley's most complete poetical commentary on the American Revolution was his lengthy “The American War.” The poem is full of his disappointment regarding the course of events in the war, and it is full of invective towards Sir William Howe, with respect to his conduct of the American campaign:

What now has our great Captain done?
 Wilfully lost whate'er he won,
 Done to his friends as little good
 And as much mischief as he could; [. . .]
 Made our amazing Efforts vain;
 Imbroil'd us both with France and Spain;

⁹⁹Kimbrough & Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poetry*, I:62.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., I:65, 71, and 117.

¹⁰¹Ibid., I:71. “To the American Rebels, Hymn IX.”

¹⁰²Kimbrough & Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Verse*, I:57 (with an omission).

Gain'd his own Party the ascendant,
And made AMERICA independent!¹⁰²

On several occasions, however, the sinful motives of the rebellious Americans moved Charles Wesley to offer the gospel of redemption as a more fitting solution to the dilemma of American liberty:

10. Jesus, Almighty to redeem
To us thy great salvation show,
And O, be merciful to them
Who neither truth nor mercy know,
Whose crimes would sink our shattered ship,
And plunge us all into the deep.
11. Let not the pit infernal close
Its mouth on its devoted prey,
But change our proud malicious foes
And take their sins, not Them, away.
Our foes implacable forgive
And let the pardoned murderers live.¹⁰³

Charles Wesley's theology of redemption allowed him to look beyond the current political crisis over liberty towards the eschatological day in which true liberty ("generous, patriotic love") and self-less service would reign:

Happy the days in which we see
Restor'd the reign of liberty,
Of constant faith which nought can move,
Of generous, patriotic love;
When anxious for the public weal,
With pure, disinterested zeal,
The brave, the noble, and the great,
Magnanimous, themselves forget [. . .].¹⁰⁴

Indeed, it seemed that only Divine intervention would be able to heal the strife within the British nation, and it would take both God's sovereign "rod" and transforming power ("reform'd," "converted") for reconciliation to occur. The only option, then, was to call upon God:

¹⁰³Ibid., I:135.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., I: 158-59 (with an omission).

5. Thou canst perform the thing
 With man Impossible,
 Order out of confusion bring,
 And all our breaches heal,
 Canst in our darkest hour
 Thy glorious light display,
 For winds and seas confess thy power,
 And earth and hell obey.

6. If Thou pronounce the word,
 Intestin strife shall cease,
 And Britons sheath the slaughtering sword,
 Reform'd we then shall live
 Converted by Thy Rod,
 And honor to our Sovereign give,
 And glory to our God.¹⁰⁵

Charles Wesley's next composition, "A Patriot's Address," showed his weariness over the war and its senseless destruction. While he continued to find no merit in the American cause, his passion for the vindication of "King and Country" seemed to wane:

Our first Resolve we first declare
 To end at once this ruinous war:
 But if both sides refuse to bend,
 How should the quarrel have an end?
 Then let us beg, or buy a peace,
 The high and mighty States confess,
 Allow them to be Independent—
 And thus we make a glorious End on't!¹⁰⁶

Themes of "new Creation" occasionally resounded in these political poems, and there are instances in which Charles Wesley (almost begrudgedly) drew upon the restraining and restorative power of God as a way of making sense of calamities like the granting of American independence:

¹⁰⁵Ibid., I:85. Cf. *Ibid.*, I: 131-32, "*Pax Quaeritur—Precibus*" ["Peace Proceeds from Prayer"].

¹⁰⁶Ibid., I:149.

7. You ill shall serve th' Almighty's ends,
Hastening the good which He intends,
Shall, spite of hell, prepare his way.
His glorious Majesty display,
The mystery divine fulfil,
And Jesus with his saints reveal.
8. Let earth be glad, the Lord is King,
Let Britain's Isle rejoice and sing,
Rejoice to see the World submit,
And all his foes beneath his feet,
When every tongue shall Jesus own
Triumphant on his great white throne.¹⁰⁷

While Charles Wesley's political poetry consistently maligned the American "patriots," his better sentiments and theological reflection were drawn out by his sympathy for the British loyalists and their plight in America.¹⁰⁸ As Donald Baker surmised: "[Charles] Wesley may have been wrong in most of his judgments on the necessity and the conduct of the war, which are all coloured by his predominant High Church Toryism, and steadfast adherence to the person of the King. But he is right in his emphasis on the plight of the real sufferers in the struggle."¹⁰⁹ Oliver Beckerlegge voiced a similar assessment: "Charles Wesley is on his soundest ground—and incidently writes his finest poetry—when he leaves personal recrimination and speaks on the great human and moral issues."¹¹⁰ The trials the Loyalists in America reminded Charles of the plight of Daniel and his associates in the "firey furnace" as he called upon "the God of pardoning grace" to come once again to save and deliver the martyrs and receive them into paradise:

11. O that the God of pardoning grace
Would to the only secret place
His fugitives remove,
Where ruffians can no more molest,

¹⁰⁷Kimbrough & Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poetry*, I:95.

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, I:115-42, offers a sizable collection of these verses drawn from *Ms. Patriotism*.

¹⁰⁹Donald S. Baker, "Charles Wesley and the American Loyalists," *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, vol. 35 (1965-66), 9.

¹¹⁰Beckerlegge, "Charles Wesley's Politics," 290.

To break the everlasting rest
Of souls conceal'd above!

12. There we shall find the friends we lost,
Who with the martyrs' noble host
Out of the furnace came,
Who for their King and Country died;
And sing with all the glorified
The triumphs of The Lamb.¹¹¹

In view of their past and present trials, Charles frequently reminded the Loyalists of their future eschatological triumphs:

6. Then shall the ransom'd Seed
Return in triumph home,
With crowns of joy upon their head,
To their Redeemer come,
Redeem'd from earth and hell
Thy praises to repeat,
And fall with bliss ineffable
Transported at thy feet.¹¹²

With the war lost, and their political situation quite precarious, Wesley turned to themes of the "new Creation" (like restoration and purification) which were blended with the eschatological resurrection to demonstrate the ultimate triumph of the Loyalists:

9. Then, then their humbled souls indue
With faith that may the fire abide,
Till Thou, like gold hast brought them
thro',
Refin'd, and seven times purified,
Thine all-sufficient grace to prove,
Thy truth, and everlasting love.
10. Arm of the Lord, awake, awake,
Such power belongs to Thee alone
A way for the Redeem'd to make,

¹¹¹Kimbrough & Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poetry*, I:119. Cf. *Ibid.*, I:110.

¹¹²Kimbrough & Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poetry*, I:120. Cf. *Ibid.*, I: 113, 118, 119, 121, 122.

That all thy wondrous deed may own,
And Britain's sons the trophy raise,
Preserv'd, to thy eternal praise.¹¹³

Summary and Conclusion

In the preceding study we have observed that “Christian Liberty” offers an interesting *nexus* for examining Wesleyan soteriology and social ethics, one that encompasses and perhaps goes beyond those themes described as “the new creation.” Like the sixteenth century reformers, Charles Wesley employs “Christian Liberty” in both its negative (“freedom from”) and positive (“freedom for”) aspects. Indeed, in their use of “Christian Liberty” the Wesleys remind us that justification and sanctification by grace are concepts that must be drawn closely together; it is “The One Thing Needful,” which brings forgiveness, reconciliation, healing, and restoration. Both Wesleys saw “liberty” as a specific gift bestowed upon all humans, since we are created in the “image of God.” This understanding of liberty encompasses the whole life of a person, cognitive life, religious life, and ethical life.

This study has indicated that themes of renewal, healing, and restoration occasionally emerge in Charles Wesley’s social ethics, but here we must stress the word *occasionally*. Wesley was more at home with the theology of sin and judgment when it came to apply Christian ethics to specific political situations. He was more apt to see war and social unrest as evidence of human sin or God having “a contention” with wayward nations than to see these as an opportunity for healing or restoration. Indeed, it seems as though what was stressed so strenuously in Wesleyan soteriology, transformation, restoration and sanctification as perfect love, played a minor role in Charles’s political writings. Where transformation and restoration were stressed, those themes were often targeted at individuals, not social collectives.

Manfred Marquardt recognized this deficiency in John Wesley’s social ethics and sought to contextualize it for us: “In Wesley’s eyes,” he wrote, “the most important and most effective means of renewing society was the individual’s moral transformation. Human wickedness was the greatest hindrance to society’s well-being, while human righteousness was its most effective promoter.”¹¹⁴ But what is missing in the Wesleys’

¹¹³Ibid., I:122.

¹¹⁴Manfred Marquardt, *John Wesley’s Social Ethics: Praxis and Principle* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2000), 131.

own writings is the bridge that explicitly connects the individual to society. Resources like Charles's hymn on "The Good Samaritan"¹¹⁵ began the process of connecting the microcosm to the macrocosm, but the transition was not developed in his most social materials—the political writings. When their theodicy forced the Wesleys to look through crises and national disasters like the American Revolution to try to find the hand of a good and merciful God, they found a path that was marked out by judgment, repentance, and hope for an eschatological transformation. While his warning of impending Divine judgment and the call to repentance were sounded quite forcefully, the hope for social transformation was a faint and distant echo (in comparison). In the case of the American Revolution, this hope was more often reserved for the British loyalists who remained in America than for the rebellious Americans.

¹¹⁵Osborn, *Poetical Works*, II:111-12.

THE COLLECTION OF BOOKS OWNED BY THE CHARLES WESLEY FAMILY

by

Randy L. Maddox

One of the significant collections in the Methodist Archives at the John Rylands Library is a group of books identified with the Charles Wesley family.¹ This collection includes over four hundred volumes, containing nearly three hundred distinct titles, of which less than half were publications of John and Charles Wesley themselves. As such, it provides the most detailed evidence remaining of what other authors were influential on Charles Wesley and his family.

Unlike the personal library of John Wesley, which was split during his lifetime between the Kingswood school in Bristol and his house in London, and which suffered some depletion over the years at the hands of memorabilia collectors, this library of the Charles Wesley family has been kept largely intact.² The pedigree of the collection is also quite clear. It was purchased in 1831 from Charles Wesley Jr., along with a large collection of family manuscripts, by the Wesleyan Methodist Conference through the efforts of Thomas Jackson.³ Charles Jr. was anxious to sell

¹I am grateful for the assistance of Peter Nockles and Gareth Lloyd in compiling this list of the Charles Wesley Family collection of books.

²For more on John Wesley's library, see Randy L. Maddox, "John Wesley's Reading: Evidence in the Kingswood School Archives," *Methodist History* 41.2 (January 2003); and Maddox, "John Wesley's Reading: Evidence in the Book Collection at Wesley's House, London," *Methodist History* 41.3 (April 2003).

³The deed of conveyance, dated 4 August 1831, is part of the collection in the Methodist Archives.

the collection because his sister Sarah Wesley, who had long helped manage his resources, had recently died, leaving him both anxious about the future of the materials and in need of money. Jackson held the materials—in trust for the Conference—and added to them a few volumes from other family members.⁴ Then, in 1859 his entire personal library of some 7,500 volumes was purchased by James Heald, a wealthy Methodist businessman, and donated as the core for library collections at the recently founded Richmond and Didsbury colleges.⁵ The Charles Wesley related materials were all located at Richmond, where Jackson was tutor.

While the details are less clear, Jackson also arranged for that part of John Wesley's personal library held at the house at City Road Chapel in London to be part of the collection gathered at Richmond. At some point thereafter the two collections of books owned by the Wesleys were shelved together at Richmond.⁶ While we can assume that there was care taken in keeping the collections distinct, we must also note the exigencies of the times. Consider in particular Oliver Beckerlegge's recent comments on his initial days as a student at Richmond College in 1946. The college had been closed during the war and damaged by a bomb near the end of the war. Beckerlegge was entering just after it reopened, and discovered the bookcases containing the Wesley materials in some disarray. He reports being given permission to clean, dust, and "rearrange" them.⁷

This incident suggests the possibility that there was some mixing of the two collections. A broad intermixing was unlikely, because most books in each set have clear autographs (or initials) to indicate owners. But several books are unsigned and in a few the autographs are indistinct. The ambiguity this raises is clear in a manuscript catalog of the combined collection of "Wesley Family books" at Richmond College that was prepared in January 1951 by two students, John H. Crouch and John P. Horner.⁸ The compilers group the books in sections by ownership, starting

⁴See particularly item 191 below, a gift from the grandson of Charles Wesley Sr. to Thomas Jackson.

⁵See Thomas Jackson, *Recollections of My Own Life and Times* (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1874), 230-31, 481-82, 507.

⁶Cf. C. Ryder Smith, "The Richmond Wesleyana," *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 31 (1937-8): 57-60.

⁷See Oliver A. Beckerlegge, *The Shorthand of Charles Wesley* (Madison, NJ: Charles Wesley Society, 2002), 1.

⁸This catalog now sits (uncataloged) beside volume 429 of the "Charles Wesley Family" collection in the Methodist Archives at the Rylands.

with books belonging to Charles Wesley Sr., then Sarah Gwynne Wesley, then the children of Charles and Sarah, then some broader family members, and then those belonging to John Wesley. They note that in some cases the decisions are unclear, and there are evidences of correcting earlier entries as the work progressed. There is also evidence of a later hand altering some of the suggested classifications.

This later altering was likely related to handling of the collection after Richmond College closed in 1972. The collection was initially moved to the Methodist Archives in the basement of the Epworth Press building in London. Then, after four years of considering options, it was decided to return to City Road Chapel those books originally taken from there—that is, the ones that would have belonged to John Wesley. The rest were sent along with much of the Methodist Archives to the John Rylands Library, as the Charles Wesley family collection. The division between the two collections was guided by John Bowmer, and can be considered broadly reliable. However, it should be noted that there are now two books at City Road that bear Charles Wesley's autograph.⁹ Likewise, there is one volume now in the Rylands collection that has John Wesley's autograph, and four or five with inscriptions in John's hand.¹⁰ There are also a couple of volumes in the Rylands collection, without autographs, that other considerations would suggest were originally part of John's library.¹¹

Apart from these few cases of possible intermixing, it is significant that I have located only two volumes with a Charles Wesley autograph outside of the Charles Wesley family collection (besides the two books at City Road), and one of these is also at the John Rylands library in their larger Methodist Archives holdings.¹² Thus, this collection can be consid-

⁹I list them below, at the end of the bibliography of the Rylands collection, so that I can give details of the inscription.

¹⁰See below, items 342-348.

¹¹The two volumes (337, 340) donated by John Howard to "Mr. Wesley" were surely to John, who met Howard at about the time of the publication of the second volume. Likewise, John showed an active interest in the medical writings of Friedrich Hoffmann (330-332), while Charles had no such interest. And it is possible that John picked up the Freylinghausen hymnal (312) while in Halle, at the same time he obtained the Zinzendorf *Gesang-buch* now in the London collection (because autographed).

¹²See the Samuel Butler and Michael de Molinos books listed at the end of the bibliography that follows. I am indebted to Peter Forsaith for drawing the Molinos volume to my attention.

ered a reliable indicator of books owned and read by Charles and Sarah Wesley and their children, with one significant exception—there are no books bearing the autograph of their son Samuel. It is possible that Charles gave some of his library to his younger son Samuel, as he had to Charles Jr., though the strained relationship between Charles and Samuel (due to the latter's interest in Roman Catholicism) in the later years of Charles's life make this unlikely.

The list of the Charles Wesley family collection which follows is in the order they are now shelved in the Rylands, which follows generally the order of the 1951 manuscript list.¹³ This means that books belonging to Charles Sr. come first. However, given the ambiguities of the original listing, you will find some books belonging to Charles Sr. also much later in the listing. I list any autographs or inscriptions in the books immediately below the title. Charles Sr.'s autograph has been verified with other examples of his writing. Autographs of other family members have been monitored for consistency, which helps to clarify a few cases of ambiguity between Charles Sr. and Jr., and between Mrs. Sarah Wesley and Miss Sarah Wesley. In replicating the autographs below, I add clarifying indicators [in brackets] to indicate any ambiguous examples when the autograph style is that of the child rather than the parent.

While these four persons account for most of the autographs, there are some others of interest. For example, there are six volumes that belonged to Samuel Wesley Jr., the older brother of John and Charles, which Charles likely inherited on Samuel's death in 1739.¹⁴ Similarly, there is a volume (#310) given to Charles's sister Martha by their uncle Matthew Wesley (brother of Samuel Sr.). Another volume appears to come from the family line of Charles's mother, Susannah [Annesley] Wesley.¹⁵ There are also a few volumes with signatures from Mrs. Sarah

¹³One need simply add "MAW CW" to the number of each entry to have the Rylands shelf number for the book. For example, the first listed would be MAW CW1. A few of the volumes are bound collections of pamphlets originally published separately. In these cases the items are catalogued by the individual pamphlet names and each has its own shelf-number. I indicate this by putting the number of the bound volume in [brackets]. There will be no catalogue entry for the bound volume itself, only the individual items.

¹⁴See items 291 & 302-306, 316.

¹⁵See item 315. It is unclear exactly which Annesley this might be.

Wesley's extended family, the Gwynnes. And there is one volume (#425) that is signed by Mary Wesley, John Wesley's wife.

Finally, I would note two manuscript items in the collection. Item #341 is a notebook containing a list of Adam Clarke's library and some letters of Samuel Wesley Sr. Item #78 is Charles' copy of a book of letters by Mrs. Lefevre that John Wesley published after her death; in the front of the book, in Charles' hand, is his poem eulogizing Mrs. Lefevre, dated 6 July 1756.

The Collection in Shelf-Number Order

- 1 Schurman, Anna Maria van (1607-78). *Nobiliss. virgnis Annae Mariae à Schurman Opuscula hebraea, graeca, latina, gallica*. Leiden: Elsevir, 1648.
"C. Wesley ad X Ch. alum. June 22 1733" "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1775"
- 2 *The Psalms of David, and other portions of sacred Scriptures; selected from various authors, adapted to the services of the Church of England*. 3rd edition. London: Watts & Bridgewater, 1800.
- 3 *La Bible: qui est toute la Saincte Esriture du Vieil et du Nouveau Testament*. (Geneva Bible) Paris: Anthoine Cellier, 1652.
"C. Wesley June 1743" "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"
"John Fletcher"
- 4 More, Henry (1614-87). *Conjectura cabbalistica; or, A conjectural essay of interpreting the mind of Moses, according to a threefold cabbala: viz., literal, philosophical, mystical or divinely moral*. London: William Morden, 1653.
"C. Wesley"
- 5 Bacon, Francis (1561-1626). *Francisci Baconi de Varulamio Scripta in naturali et universali philosophia*. Amsterdam: Ludwig Elzevir, 1653.
"C. Wesley 1758" "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"
- 6 Roberti, Antonius (17th cent.) & George Perkins (17th cent.) *Clavis Homerica; reserans significationes, etymologias, derivationes, compositiones, & dialectos omnium vocaulorum quae in viginti quatuor libris Iliadis Homeri continentur*. London: Adreae Crook, 1656.
"Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"

- 7 Pascal, Blaise (1623-62). *Les Provinciales; ou, les Lettres*. Cologne: Pierre de la Vallée, 1658.
“C. Wesley, E. A. P. J., Dec. 1, 1756” “Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
- 8 Stillingfleet, Edward (1635-99). *Irenicum. A Weapon-Salve for the Church’s Wounds; or, the divine right of particular forms of church government*. 2nd edition. London: H. Mortlock & J. Simmers, 1662.
“Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
- 9 Shaw, Samuel (1635-96). *Immanuel; or, A discovery of true religion as it imports a living principle in the minds of men . . . being the latter clause of The Voice Crying in a Wilderness; or, a continuation of the angelical life*. London: s.n., 1667.
“C. Wesley”
- 10 Simpson, Christopher (d. 1669). *A Compendium of Practical Musick in Five Parts*. London: Henry Brome, 1667.
“C. Wesley. The Gift of Mrs. Didsbury. 1761”
- 11 Wotton, Henry (1568-1639). *Reliquiae Wottonianae; or, a collection of lives, letters, poems*. 3rd edition. London: R. Marriot, F. Tyton, et al., 1672.
“C. Wesley 1777”
- 12 Simpson, Christopher (d. 1669). *A Compendium of Practical Musick in Five Parts*. 3rd edition. London: Henry Brome, 1678.
- 13 Stillingfleet, Edward (1635-99). *The Unreasonableness of Separation; or, an impartial account of the history, nature and pleas of the present separation from the communion of the Church of England*. London: Henry Mortlock, 1681.
“C. Wesley Jan. 7, 1759” “Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
- 14 Hale, Matthew (1609-76). *Contemplations moral and divine, in two parts*. 2 vols. in 1. London: William Shrowsbury & John Leigh, 1682.
“C. Wesley 1764”
- 15 Virgil. *Opera*. With notes by Thomas Farnaby. Amsterdam: Janson-Waesberg, 1685.
“C. Wesley Aug. 12, 1754”
- 16 Bouhours, Dominique (1628-1702). *The Life of St. Ignatius, founder of the Society of Jesus*. London: Henry Hills, 1686.
“C. Wesley 1750” “Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”

- [17] Collection of books/tracts bound together.
 "C. Wesley 1753" on title page of first
 "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776" on cover of binding
- 17.1 Ponet, John (1516?-56). *Diallacticon viri Boni et Literati, de veritate, natura, atque substantia Corporis et Sanguinis Christi in Eucharistia*. London: B. Griffin & Samuel Keble, 1688.
- 17.2 Lloyd, William (1627-1717). *A Reasonable Defense of the Seasonable Discourse . . . in opposition to Popery*. London: H. Brome, 1674.
- 17.3 Gother, John (d. 1704). *Reflections upon the Answer to the Papist Mis-Represented*. London: sn, 1686.
- 17.4 Freke, William. *A Dialogue by Way of Question and Answer Concerning the Deity*. [London: sn, 1693.]
- 17.5 Elys, Edmund (ca. 1643- ca. 1707). *Dei Incarnati Vindiciae, contra varias execrabilis, Fausti Socini*. London: Samuel Smith, 1693.
- 17.6 *Reflections on Dr. Sacheverell's Answer to Impeachment*. London: B. Bragge, 1710.
- 17.7 Seller, Abednego (1649?-1705). *The History of Passive Obedience Since the Reformation*. Amsterdam: Theodore Johnson, 1689.
- 17.8 Walker, George (1645?-90). *A True Account of the Siege of London-Derry*. London: Robert Clavel & Ralph Simpson, 1689.
- 18 Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *De Officiis libri tres; Cato Major sive de senectute*. Amsterdam: Henricum Westenum, 1689.
 "Libris Caroli Wesley 1723" "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1775"
- 19 Temple, William (1628-99). *Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands*. 5th edition. London: Jacob Tonson & Awncsham Churchill, 1690.
 "C. Wesley 1755" "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"
- 20 Hopkins, Exekiel (1634-90). *Brotherly Admonition; in several sermons on Leviticus 19:17*. London: Nathaniel Ranew, et al., 1691.
 "C. Wesley Dec. 18, 1734" "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"
- 21 Esprit, Jacques (1611-78). *The Falsehood of Human Virtue, a moral essay*. London: Timothy Child, 1691.
 "C. Wesley Nov. 22, 1760" "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"

- 22 Marshall, Walter (1628-80). *The Gospel-Mystery of Sanctification, opened in sundry practical directions*. 4th edition. London: John Marshall, et al., 1700.
“C. Wesley 1755” “Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
- 23 Refuge, Eustache du (d. 1617). *Arcana Aulica; or, Walsingham’s manual of prudential maxims, for the statesman and courtier*. Translated by Edward Walsingham. London: Matthew Gillyflower, et al., 1694. (rebound, no sign of signature)
- 24 Bull, George (1634-1710). *Judicium ecclesiae Catholicae trium primorum seculorum, de necessitate crede*. Oxford: Sheldonian Theatre, 1694.
“C. Wesley 1758” “Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
- 25 Tillotson, John (1630-94). *Of Sincerity and Constancy in the Faith and Profession of the True Religion, in several admirable sermons*. London: Richard Chiswell, 1695.
“C. Wesley”
- 26 South, Robert (1634-1716). *Twelve Sermons upon Several Subjects and Occasions*. Vol. 3. London: Thomas Bennet, 1698.
“C. Wesley Xt Ch. Oxon”
- 27 South, Robert (1634-1716). *Twelve Sermons upon Several Subjects and Occasions*. Vol. 4. London: Jonah Bowyer, 1715.
“Charles Wesley”
- 28 South, Robert (1634-1716). *Twelve Sermons upon Several Subjects and Occasions*. Vol. 6. London: Jonah Bowyer, 1717.
“Cha. Wesley Xt. Ch., Oxon”
- 29 Collier, Jeremy (1650-1726). *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage; Together with the Sense of Antiquity upon this Argument*. 3rd edition. London: S. Keble, 1698.
“C. Wesley Feb. 1, 1759” “Charles Wesley Jun^r 1775”
- 30 Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de (1547-1616). *Histoire de l’admirable Don Quixotte de la Manche*. Vol. 1. Amsterdam: Pierre Mortier, 1699.
“Ch. Wesley [Jr.]”
- 31 Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de (1547-1616). *Histoire de l’admirable Don Quixotte de la Manche*. Vol. 2. Amsterdam: Pierre Mortier, 1700.
“Ch. Wesley [Jr.]”

COLLECTION OF BOOKS OWNED BY THE CHARLES WESLEY FAMILY

- 32 Sherlock, Richard (1612-89). *The practical Christian; or, the devout penitent. A Book of devotions.* 5th edition. London Luke Meredith, 1699.
 “Charles Wesley”
- 33 Quesnel, Pasquier (1634-1719). *Le Nouveau Testament en françois.* Volume 5: *Abrégé de la morale des Actes des apostres, et des epistres de S. Paul.* Brussels: Henry Fricx, 1700.
 “C. Wesley July 1, 1762” “Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
- 34 Wesley, Samuel Sr. (1662-1735). *The Pious Communicant Rightly Prepared; or a Discourse concerning the Blessed Sacrament: wherein the Nature of it is described, our obligation to frequent communion enforced, and directions given for due preparation for it, behaviour at and after it. With Prayers and Hymns suited to the several parts of that Holy Office. To which is added, A Short Discourse of Baptism.* London: Charles Harper, 1700.
 “C. Wesley Aug. 12, 1754”
- 35 Floyer, John (1649-1734). *The Ancient Psychrolousia Revived; or, an essay to prove cold bathing both safe and useful . . . also a letter of Dr. [Edward] Baynard’s containing an account of many eminent cures done by the cold baths in England.* London: Samuel Smith & Benjamin Walford, 1702.
 “C. Wesley Aug. 12, 1754” “Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
- 36.1 Fabricius, Johann Albert (1668-1736). *Bibliotheca Latina; sive notitia autorum veterum Latinum.* London: T. Leigh & D. Midwinter, 1703.
 “C. Wesley 1756” “Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
- 36.2 Marinus (5th cent.). *Procli philosophi Platonici vita, scriptore Marino Neapolitano.* London: T. Leigh & D. Midwinter, 1703.
 (original binding with preceding)
- 37 Fuller, Francis (1670-1706). *Medicina gymnastica; or, A Treatise concerning the Power of Exercise with respect to the Animal Economy, and the Great Necessity of it in the Cure of several Distempers.* London: Knaplock, 1705.
 “Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
- 38 Mather, Samuel (1626-1671). *The Figures of Types of the Old Testament, by which Christ and the heavenly things of the gospel were preached and shadowed to the people of God of old;*

- explained and improved in sundry sermons.* 2nd edition. London: N. Hillier, 1705.
 “C. Wesley 1764” “Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
- 39 Beveridge, William (1637-1708). *The Great Necessity and Advantage of Public Prayer and Frequent Communion; Designed to Revive Primitive Piety.* London: R. Smith, 1709.
- 40 Homer. *Homerou Ilias. Ek theatrou en Oxonia.* (Latin). London: J. Bowyer & H. Clements, 1714.
 “C. Wesley Aug. 12, 1754” “Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
- 41.1 Hale, Matthew (1609-76). *The History of the Common Law of England; divided into twelve chapters.* 2nd edition. London: John Walthoe, et al., 1716.
 “C. Wesley”
- 41.2 Hale, Matthew (1609-76). *The Analysis of the Law; being a scheme or abstract of the several titles and partitions of the law of England.* 2nd edition. London: D. Browne, J. Tonson, G. Strahan et al., 1716.
 (original binding with preceding)
- 42 Sclater, William (1638-1717?). *An Original Draught of the Primitive Church: in answer to a discourse [by Peter King] entitled, An Enquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, Unity, and Worship of the Primitive Church.* London: George Strahan & J. Bowyer, 1717.
 “Ca. Wesley, E. A. P. J., 1782” (with notes)
- 43 Church of England. *The Book of Common Prayer / Le livre des prieres communes.* Oxford: John Basket, 1717. (French/English edition)
 “C. Wesley Oct. 27, 1766” “Samuel Wesley Oct. 1, 1782”
- 44 Fénelon, François De Salignac de la Mothe (1651-1715). *Dialogues sur l’eloquence en general, et sur celle de la chaire en particulier.* Amsterdam: J. F. Bernard, 1718.
 “C. Wesley 1765” “Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
- 45 Epictetus. *Epictetus, his morals, with Simplicius, his comment.* Translated by George Stanhope. 4th edition. London: R. Sare, 1721.
 “C. Wesley 1756” “Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”

COLLECTION OF BOOKS OWNED BY THE CHARLES WESLEY FAMILY

- 46 Knight, James (1672-1735). *Eight Sermons preached at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul . . . at the Lecture founded by the honored Lady Moyer*. London: Bonwicke, 1721.
 "Samuel Wesley [Jr.], E. A. P. J. 1726" "C. Wesley, ad Xti. oxon alumni, 1732" "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"
- 47.1 Homer. *Omerou Ilias*. (Greek and Latin). London: Jacob Tonson & John Watts, 1722.
 "C. Wesley 1759" "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"
- 47.2 Homer. *Homeri Iliadis interpretatio Latina*. London: Jacob Tonson & John Watts, 1721.
 "C. Wesley 1725 col. T. Petri Westmon." "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"
- 48-49 Atterbury, Francis (1662-1732). *Sermons and Discourses on Several Subjects and Occasions*. 2 vols. London: J. Bowyer, 1723.
 "C. Wesley 1725 col. T. Petri Westmon." "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"
- 50 Leslie, Charles (1650-1722). *A Short and Easy Method with the Deists, wherein the Certainty of the Christian Religion is Demonstrated by Infallible proof from Four Rules*. 8th edition. London: J. Applebee, 1723.
 "C. Wesley 1747" "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"
- 51 Wright, Samuel (1683-1746). *A Treatise of that Being Born Again without which No Man can be Saved*. 10th edition. London: J. Clark, R. Hett & E. Matthews, 1727.
 "C. Wesley"
- 52 Ramsay, Andrew Michael (1686-1743). *Les Voyages de Cyrus, avec un discours sur la Mythologie*. 2 vols. as 1. Luxembourg: Andre Chevalier, 1728.
 "C. Wesley Feb. 22, 1762" "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"
- 53 Fénelon, François De Salignac de la Mothe (1651-1715). *Histoire de la vie et des ouvrages de messire François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fenelon*. Amsterdam: L=Honore, 1729.
 "Revd. Charles Wesley 1762"(not in Charles's hand)
 "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"
- 54 Vida, Marco Girolamo (ca. 1485-1566). *Marci Hieronymi Vidae, cremonensis, albae episcopi, Christiados libri sex*. London: Lawton Gulliver & Johannis Nourse, 1732.
 "Libris Car. Wesley ad Xti Oxon alumni ex dono fratris, Aug. 3, 1732"

- 55 Bengel, Johann Albrecht (1687-1752). *Ordo temporum a principio per periodos oeconomiae divinae*. Stuttgart: Christoph Erhard, 1741.
“C. Wesley Mar. 10, 1750”
- 56 Law, William (1686-1761). *A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection*. 4th edition. London: William Innys, 1741.
“Reb[ecca]. Gwynne, May 1754” “C. Wesley [Jr.]. Left by his good aunt”
Note: Rebecca was Mrs. Wesley’s unmarried sister, and lived for several years with Charles and Sarah
- [57] Wesley, John (1703-91) & Charles Wesley (1707-88). *Collected Publications*, vol. 11.
“Charles Wesley [Jr.], March 1788”
- 57.1 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection, extracted from [William Law]*. Newcastle upon Tyne: R. Akenhead, 1743.
- 57.2 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Serious Call to a Holy Life, extracted from [William Law]*. Newcastle on Tyne: John Gooding, 1744.
- 58 Reynolds, George (1699?-1769). *An Historical Essay upon the Government of the Church of England*. London: Thomas Osborne, 1743.
“C. Wesley Nov. 25, 1755. The Gift of Rev. Mr. Castle”
- 59-61 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Collection of Moral and Sacred Poems*. 3 vols. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1744.
“C. Wesley”
- [62] Wesley, John (1703-91) & Charles Wesley (1707-88). *Collected Publications*, vol. 8 and part of vol. 9 bound together.
“C. Wesley”
- 62.1 Wesley, John (1703-91). *An Answer to the Rev. Mr. Church’s Remarks*. 2nd edition. London: W. Strahan, 1745.
- 62.2 Wesley, John (1703-91). *The Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained*. London: W. Strahan, 1746.
- 62.3 Wesley, John (1703-91). *The Character of a Methodist*. 6th edition. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1747.
- 62.4 Wesley, John (1703-91). *The Principles of a Methodist*. 2nd edition. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1746.

- 62.5 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies*. 4th edition. London: William Strahan, 1744.
- 62.6 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Advice to the People Called Methodists*. Newcastle upon Tyne: John Gooding, 1745.
- 62.7 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Christian Perfection; a sermon*. 2nd edition. Newcastle upon Tyne: John Gooding, 1743.
- 62.8 Wesley, John (1703-91). *The Doctrine of Salvation, Faith and Good Works; extracted from the homilies*. 9th edition. Bristol: S. & F. Farley, 1748.
- 62.8 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Swear not at All: saith the Lord God*. London: Strahan, 1744.
- 62.8 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Word to a Drunkard*. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1748.
- 62.8 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Remember the Sabbath Day, to Keep it Holy*. London: Strahan, 1750.
- 62.8 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Word to a Freeholder*. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1748.
- 62.8 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Word to a Street-Walker*. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1748.
- 62.8 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Word in Season; or, advice to a soldier*. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1748.
- 62.9 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Word to a Protestant*. 8th edition. London: W. Strahan, 1745.
- 62.10 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Word in Season; or, advice to an Englishman*. 8th edition. London: W. Strahan, 1745.
- 62.11 Wesley, John (1703-91). *The Life of God in the Soul of Man [by Henry Scougal]*. 2nd edition. Bristol: Farley, 1748.
- 63.1 Patten, Robert (fl. 1715). *The History of the Rebellion in the year 1715*. 4th edition. London: J. Roberts, 1745.
- 63.2 Comber, Thomas (d. 1778). *Vindication of the Great Revolution in England in A.D. 1688*. London: J. Robinson, 1758.
- 63.3 Whitefield, George (1714-79). *A Letter from a Clergyman at London to the Remaining Disconsolate Inhabitants of Lisbon*. 4th edition. London: R. Griffiths, 1756.
- 63.4 Blacow, Richard (1723 or 4-1760). *A Letter to William King . . . Principal of St. Mary Hall in Oxford*. London: R. Griffiths, 1755.

- 63.5 Watson, John (1725-83). *The Apology of the Reverend John Watson*. London: R. Whitworth, 1755.
- 63.6 Foster, James (1697-1753). *An Account of the Behaviour of the late Earl of Kilmarnock*. London: J. Noon & A. Millar, 1746.
- 63.7 Sykes, Arthur Ashley (1683 or 4-1756). *An Enquiry How Far Papists Ought to be treated here as Good Subjects*. London: J. & P. Knapton, 1746.
- 64 Leighton, Robert (1611-84). *Select Works*. Edinburgh: David Wilson, 1746.
 “Duke [i.e., Marmaduke] Gwynne” “Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
 Note: Marmaduke was a brother of Sarah Gwynne Wesley
- 65 Aurelius, Marcus (121-180). *The Commentaries of the Emperor Marcus Antonius, containing his maxims of science, and rules of life*. Translated by James Thomson. London: T. Parker, 1747.
 “C. Wesley 1756” “Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
- 66-67 Hartley, David (1731?-1813). *Observations on Man: His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations*. 2 vols. London: Charles Hitch & Stephen Austen, 1749.
 “C. Wesley 1753” “To the Rev. Charles Wesley from the author. June 26, 1753”
- 68-69 Hervey, James (1714-58). *Meditations and Contemplations*. 7th edition. 2 vols.. London: John & James Rivington, 1750.
 “C. Wesley 1750” “Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
- 70 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Sermons on Several Occasions, in three volumes*. Vol. 3. London: W. Strahan, 1750.
- 71 Avison, Charles (1710-70). *An Essay on Musical Expression*. 2nd ed. London: C. Davis, 1753.
 “C. Wesley Feb. 1769”
- 72 Gillies, John (1712-96). *Historical Collections Relating to Remarkable Periods of the Success of the Gospel, and Eminent Instruments employed in promoting It*. Glasgow: Robert and Andrew Foulis, 1754.
 “C. Wesley 1754” “Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
- 73 Hartley, Thomas (1708-84). *Sermons on Various Subjects; with a prefatory discourse on mistakes concerning religion, enthusiasm, experiences, etc.* London: R. Manby et al., 1754.
 “C. Wesley Apr. 5, 1754” “Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”

COLLECTION OF BOOKS OWNED BY THE CHARLES WESLEY FAMILY

- 74 Young, Edward (1683-1765). *The Centaur not Fabulous; in five letters to a friend, on the life in vogue*. London: A. Millar & R. and J. Dodsley, 1755.
 "C. Wesley Jan. 29, 1756. The Gift of Miss Matty Hotham"
 "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"
- 75 Adam, Thomas (1701-84). *Practical Lectures on the Church Catechism*. London: C. Hitch & L. Hawes, 1755.
 "C. Wesley 1756" "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"
- 76 Wesley, John (1703-91) and Charles Wesley. *Hymns and Sacred Poems*. 3rd edition. London: s.n., 1756.
 "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"
- 77 Wesley, John (1703-91) and Charles Wesley. *Hymns and Sacred Poems*. 3rd edition. London: s.n., 1756.
- 78 [Lefevre, Mrs. (d. 1756)]. *Letters upon Sacred Subjects, by a person lately deceased*. London: s.n., 1757.
 "C. Wesley 1757"
 Note: includes four pages of a ms. poem on death of Mrs. Lefevre dated July 6, 1756 (for published form, see Osborn, *Poetical Works* 6:263-5)
- 79-98 Rapin de Thoyras, Paul (1661-1725). *The History of England, as well ecclesiastical as civil*. 4th edition. 20 vols. London: T. Osborne, 1757-63.
 "C. Wesley 1758" "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"
- 99-108 Rollin, Charles (1661-1741). *The Ancient History of the Egyptians, Carthaginians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes and Persians, Macedonians and Grecians*. 10 vols. Edinburgh: Hamilton & Balfour, Kincaid & Donaldson, et al. 1758-63.
 "C. Wesley July 26, 1763" "Sally Wesley Nov. 1788"
- 109 Robe, James (1688-1753). *A Second Volume of Sermons*. Edinburgh: R. Fleming, 1750.
 "C. Wesley 1750. The Gift of my much respected and beloved friend. James Erskine Esq." "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"
- 110-13 Rollin, Charles (1661-1741). *The Method of Teaching and Studying the Belles-Lettres*. 5th edition. 4 vols. Edinburgh: A. Kincaid & J. Bell, 1759.
 "C. Wesley 1753" "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"

- 114-17 Homer. *The Iliad of Homer*. Translated by Alexander Pope. 4 vols. London: A. Horace, P. Virgil, et al., 1759.
“C. Wesley Sept. 24, 1765”
- 118-20 Homer. *The Odyssey of Homer*. Translated by Alexander Pope. 4 vols. London: A. Horace, P. Virgil, et al., 1760. (missing vol. 1)
“C. Wesley Sept. 24, 1765”
- 121-24 Keyssler, Johann Georg (1693-1743). *Travels through Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, Switzerland, Italy, and Lorrain*. 3rd edition. 4 vols. London: G. Keith, A. Linde, et al., 1760.
“The gift of the Rev. Charles Wesley to Charles Wesley Junior”
“Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
- 125-26 Robertson, William (1721-93). *The History of Scotland during the Reigns of Queen Mary and of King James VI till his Accession to the Crown of England*. 4th edition. 2 vols. London: A. Millar, 1761.
“Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
- 127 Law, William (1686-1761). *An Humble, Earnest, and Affectionate Address to the Clergy*. London: J. Richardson, 1761.
“C. Wesley 1761” “Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
- 128-29 Buchanan, George (1506-1582). *The History of Scotland; from the earliest accounts of that nation, to the reign of King James VI*. 2 vols. 5th edition. Edinburgh: Alexander Donaldson, 1762.
“Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
- 130 Wesley, Charles (1707-88). *Short Hymns on Select Passages of Holy Scriptures*. Volume 2. Bristol: E. Farley, 1762.
“Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
- 131-33 Virgil. *The Works of Virgil in English Verse*. 4 vols. Translated by Christopher Pitt and Joseph Warton. London: R. & J. Dodsley, 1763. (volumes 1, 2, 4)
“Charles Wesley [Jr.]”
- 134 Hartley, Thomas (1709?-84). *Paradise Restored; or, A Testimony to the Doctrine of the Blessed Millennium. . . . To which is added, A Short Defense of the Mystical Writers against a late work entitled, The Doctrine of Grace, or, The Office and Operations of the Holy Spirit vindicated*. London: Richardson, 1764.
“Reb[ecca]. Gwynne” “Ch. Wesley [Jr.]. The gift of his worthy aunt”

Note: Rebecca was Mrs. Wesley's unmarried sister, and lived for several years with Charles and Sarah

- 135 Phaedrus. *A Poetical Translation of the Fables of Phaedrus*. London: J. Dodsley, 1765.
 "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1772" (never belonged to Charles Sr.)
- 136 Jones, William (1726-1800). *The Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity Proved*. 3rd edition. London: J. Rivington, Robinson & Roberts, et al., 1767.
 "Charles Wesley [Jr.]"
- 137 *An Introduction to the Latin Tongue, for the use of youth*. New edition, revised. Eton: J. Pote, 1769.
 "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1771"
- 138-41 Pope, Alexander (1688-1744). *The Works of Alexander Pope esq in four volumes complete*. Edinburgh: s.n., 1764.
 "C. Wesley 1764" "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776" (in vol. 2)
- 142.1 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Primitive Physick*. 15th edition. London: Robert Hawes, 1772.
 "Charles Wesley [Jr.]. The gift of his uncle the Rev. John Wesley"
- 142.2 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Advices with Respect to Health. Extracted from [S.A.D. Tissot]*. Bristol: William Pine, 1769.
 original binding with above
- [143] Wesley, John (1703-91) & Charles Wesley (1707-88). Collection of hymn pamphlets
 "C. Wesley 1777"
- 143.1 Wesley, Charles (1707-88). *Hymns for the Nativity of Our Lord*. 6th edition. [London: Robert Hawes], 1776.
- 143.2 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Hymns for New Year's Day*. London: Robert Hawes, 1777.
- 143.3 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Hymns for Our Lord's Resurrection*. 6th edition. London: Robert Hawes, 1777.
- 143.4 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Hymns for Ascension-Day*. 3rd edition. London: R. Hawes, 1775.
- 143.5 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Hymns of Petition and Thanksgiving for the Promise of the Father*. 3rd edition. London: Robert Hawes, 1775.

- 143.6 Wesley, Charles (1707-88). *Gloria Patri, etc.,; or, Hymns to the Trinity*. 6th edition. London: Robert Hawes, 1775.
- 143.7 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Graces, before Meat*. [London: Robert Hawes], 1776.
- 143.8 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Hymns for Those that Seek and Those that have Redemption*. 9th edition. London: Robert Hawes, 1776.
- 143.9 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Collection of Forms of Prayer for Every Day of the Week*. 6th edition. London: Robert Hawes, 1775.
- 143.10 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Prayers for Children*. London: Robert Hawes, 1777.
- 143.11 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Collection of Prayers for Families*. (Imperfect copy, edition unclear.)
- 144-45 Robertson, William (1721-93). *The History of America*. 2 vols. Dublin: Whitestone, Watson, et al., 1777.
 “The gift of my dear father to C. Wesley [Jr.]”
- 146-82 Wesley, John (1703-91). *The Christian Library*. 50 volumes. 1751-55. (missing volumes 1, 6, 10, 13, 19, 26, 31, 33,35, 38, 40, 44, 45)
 “Charles and Sarah Wesley” (in a third-party hand) in vol. 2
- [183] Book of Common Prayer, bound with Greek NT and Book of Psalms
 “C. Wesley” “Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776”
 Note: Wrongly labeled on new binding
- 183.1 *The Book of Common Prayer*. (Charles II). [S.l.: s.n.,] 1658.
- 183.2 *Novi Testamenti libri omen*. London: Roger Daniels, 1653.
- 183.3 Sternhold, Thomas (d. 1549). *The Whole Book of Psalms*. London: Stationers. 1663.
- 184 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Collection of Moral and Sacred Poems*. Volume 2. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1744.
 “C. Wesley”
 Note: Wrongly labeled on new binding

COLLECTION OF BOOKS OWNED BY THE CHARLES WESLEY FAMILY

- 185 Allestree, Richard (1619-81). *The Whole Duty of Receiving Worthily the Blessed Sacrament*. 10th edition. London: C. Ware, C. Hitch & L. Hawes, 1758.
 "C. Wesley"
- 186 *Sefer Tehilim; Psalterii Davidis*. Editio nova. Leiden: Joannis Maire, 1650.
 "C. Wesley 1733"
- 187 South, Robert (1634-1716). *Twelve Sermons Preached Upon Several Occasions*. Vol. 2. London: Thomas Bennet, 1694. [Note: missing pages 1-62].
 "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"
- 188 Nottingham, Heneage Finch, Earl of (1621-82). *An Exact and Most Impartial Account of the Trial and Judgment of Nine and Twenty Regicides; the murderers of His late sacred Majesty*. London: Andrew Crook, 1660.
 "C. Wesley 1755" "Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"
- 189 *The Royal Kalendar; or, complete and correct annual register for England, Scotland, Ireland, and America*. London: John Stockdale, 1806.
 "Charles Wesley [Jr.]"
- 190.1 *The London Kalendar; or, court and city register for England, Scotland, Ireland, and the colonies*. London: John Stockdale, 1814.
 "Ch. Wesley [Jr.]"
- 190.2 *The Royal Kalendar; or, complete and correct annual register for England, Scotland, Ireland, and America*. London: John Stockdale, 1814.
 (bound with preceding)
- 190.3 *The New Companion to the London and Royal Kalendar*. London: John Stockdale, 1814.
 (bound with preceding)
- 191 Wesley, Charles, B.A. Cambridge (fl. 1830). *A Guide to Syllogism; or, a manual of logic*. London: Henry Bohn, 1832.
 "To His Brother, from the Author" "[Thomas] Jackson, Jr. - The Gift of His Obliging Friend, John Wesley Jan. 7, 1835"
 Note: This Charles and John are grandchildren of Charles Wesley Sr., through Samuel

- 192 Horace. *Q. Horatius Flaccus: Scholiis sive annotationibus*. Amsterdam: Ioannis Blaeu, 1650.
“C. Wesley” with “S” written over the “C” (possibly given to his daughter)
- 193 Horneck, Anthony (1641-97). *The Crucified Jesus*. 3rd edition. London: Samuel Lowndes, 1695.
“Sr. Wesley”
- 194-97 Raleigh, Walter (1552?-1618). *The General History of the World, being an abridgment*. . . . 4 vols. London: A. Bell, R. Smith & J. Round, 1708.
“S. Wesley. Gift of Rev. and Mrs. Dickinson. 1787”
- 198-202 Addison, Joseph (1672-1719) & Richard Steele (1672-1729). *The Spectator; with notes, and a general index, the eight volumes comprised in one*. London: Sharpe & Hailes, 1711-14. (missing vols. 1, 4, 8)
“S. Wesley 1775”
- 203 Arndt, Johann (1555-1621). *The Garden of Paradise, or, Holy Prayers and Exercises; whereby the Christian graces and virtues may be planted and improved in man, the Divine Image renewed, true Christianity promoted, the Kingdom of God established, and a heavenly life raised up in the Spirit; pursuing the design of the famous treatise of True Christianity*. Translated by Anton Wilhelm Böhm. London: Joseph Downing, 1716.
“Sarah Wesley. Apr. 4, 17” (remainder cut off)
- 204 Ken, Thomas (1637-1711). *The Practice of Divine Love Revised; being an exposition of the church catechism*. London: A. Bettesworth & Charles Rivington, 1718.
“Sarah Gwynne.” “Sr. Wesley”
- 205 Bisse, Thomas (d. 1731). *The Beauty of Holiness in the Common Prayer*. 7th edition. London: W. Taylor, 1720.
“Sarah Gwynne”
- 206 *A Companion for the Grand Festival of the Christian Church or the Lord’s Day*. London: T. Bickerton, J. Wilford, & C. Rivington, 1721.
“Sr. Wesley”
- 207.1 Syngé, Edward (1659-1741). *Some Short and Plain Directions for the Spending of One Day Well; by which . . . a man may be much enabled (through God’s grace) to spend his whole life well*. 5th edition. London: R. Sare, 1722.
“Sarah Gwynne 1741”

COLLECTION OF BOOKS OWNED BY THE CHARLES WESLEY FAMILY

- 207.2 Syngé, Edward (1659-1741). *An Answer to all the Excuses and Pretenses which Men ordinarily make for their not coming to Communion*. 12th edition. London: R. Sare, 1726.
 (bound with above)
- 208 Ramsay, Andrew Michael (1686-1743). *The Life of François de Salignac de la Mothe Fenelon*. London: Paul Vaillant, 1723.
 “C. Wesley” “[Miss] Sarah Wesley”
- 209 Goodman, John (1626?-90). *The Penitent Pardoned; or a Discourse of the Nature of Sin and the Efficacy of Repentance, under the Parable of the Prodigal Son*. 8th edition. London: J. Knapton, D. Midwinter, et al., 1724.
 “Sarah Gwynne 1744”
- 210 Delaune, William (1659-1728). *Twelve Sermons upon Several Subjects and Occasions*. London: R. Williamson, 1728.
 “Mrs. Wesley. The Gift of Dr. Turner. Dec. 8, 1782”
 “From the Library of the Rev. John Fletcher”
- 211.1 Nelson, Robert (1656-1715). *The Great Duty of Frequenting the Christian Sacrifice, and the Nature of the Preparation Required; with Suitable Devotions*. 10th edition. London: W. Bowyer et al., 1734.
 “Sr. Wesley”
- 211.2 Church of England. *Order for the Administration of the Lord’s Supper, or Holy Communion*. [Cambridge: W. Fenner, 1734.]
 (bound with preceding)
- 212 Addison, Joseph (1672-1719) & Richard Steele (1672-1729). *The Spectator, Volume 1*. 12th edition. London: J. & R. Tonson, 1738.
 “Mrs. Wesley” (not in Sarah’s hand)
- [213] Wesley, John (1703-91) & Charles Wesley (1707-88). Collected publications, vol. 15.
 “Sarah Wesley Oct. 12, 1749”
- 213.1 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Free Grace; A sermon*. 2nd edition. London: W. Strahan, 1740.
- 213.2 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Dialogue Between a Predestinarian and His Friend*. 2nd edition. London: William Strahan, 1741.
- 213.3 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Serious Considerations on Absolute Predestination; extracted from [Robert Barclay]*. Bristol: S. & F. Farley, 1741.

- 213.4 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Serious Considerations concerning the Doctrines of Election and Reprobation [from Isaac Watts]*. London: [Strahan], 1740.
- 213.5 Wesley, John (1703-91). *The Scripture Doctrine Concerning Predestination, Election, and Reprobation [extracted from Henry Haggar]*. London: William Strahan, 1741.
- 213.6 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Thoughts on Marriage and a Single Life*. 2nd edition. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1743.
- 213.7 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Short View of the Difference Between the Moravian Brethren . . .* 2nd edition. Bristol: Felix Farley. 1748.
- 213.8 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Dialogue Between and Antinomian and His Friend*. London: William Strahan, 1745.
- 213.9 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Second Dialogue Between an Antinomian and His Friend*. London: William Strahan, 1745.
- 213.10 Wesley, John (1703-91). *An Extract of Mr. Richard Baxter's Aphorisms of Justification*. Newcastle upon Tyne: John Gooding, 1745.
- 213.11 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Primitive Physick*. London: Thomas Trye, 1747.
- 214 Addison, Joseph (1672-1719) & Richard Steele (1672-1729). *The Guardian*. 7th edition. Volume 2. London: J. & R. Tonson, 1740.
"Sarah Gwynne July 20, 1747"
- 215 Watts, Isaac (1674-1748). *Reliquiae Juveniles. Miscellaneous Thoughts in Prose and Verse on Natural, Moral and Divine Subjects; written chiefly in younger years*. 3rd edition. London: James Brackstone, 1742.
"Sally Gwynne 1747"
- 216 Whitefield, George (1714-70). *Nine Sermons*. London: Samuel Mason & Gabriel Harris, 1742.
"Sarah Gwynne 1742"
- [217] Wesley, John (1703-91) & Charles Wesley (1707-88). *Collected Publications*, vol. 10.
"Sarah Wesley Oct. 12, 1749"

- 217.1 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Treatise on Christian Prudence. Extracted from [John Norris]*. 2nd edition. London: William Strahan, 1742.
- 217.2 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Reflections upon the Conduct of Human Life. Extracted from [John Norris]*. 2nd edition. London: William Strahan, 1741.
- 217.3 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Instructions for Children*. 3rd edition. London: M. Cooper, 1747.
- 217.4 Wesley, John (1703-91). *An Extract of the Christian's Pattern; or, a treatise of the imitation of Christ*. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1746.
- 217.5 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Extract of Count Zinzendorf's Discourses on the Redemption of Man*. Newcastle on Tyne: John Gooding, 1744.
- [218] Wesley, John (1703-91) & Charles Wesley (1707-88). *Collected Publications*, vol. 11.
 "Sarah Wesley Oct. 12, 1749"
- 218.1 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection, extracted from [William Law]*. Newcastle upon Tyne: R. Akenhead, 1743.
- 218.2 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Serious Call to a Holy Life, extracted from [William Law]*. Newcastle on Tyne: John Gooding, 1744.
- 219 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Hymns and Sacred Poems*. Vol. 1. 4th edition. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1743.
 "Sarah Wesley Oct. 12, 1749"
- 220 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Hymns and Sacred Poems*. Vol. 2. 2nd edition. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1745.
 "Sarah Wesley Oct. 12, 1749"
- 221 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Collection of Moral and Sacred Poems*. Volume 3. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1744.
 "Sarah Wesley Apr. 1, 1769"
- [222] Wesley, John (1703-91) & Charles Wesley (1707-88). *Collected Publications*, vol. 14.
 "Sarah Wesley Oct. 12, 1749"
- 222.1 Wesley, John (1703-91). *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*. 3rd edition. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1744.

- 222.2 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*. London: William Strahan, 1745.
- 222.3 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Part II*. London: William Strahan, 1746.
- [223] Wesley, John (1703-91) & Charles Wesley (1707-88). *Collected Publications*, variation of vol. 8.
“Sarah Wesley Oct. 12, 1749”
- 223.1 Wesley, John (1703-91). *An Extract from the Reverend Mr. John Wesley’s Journal, from Sept. 3, 1741. . .* Bristol: Felix Farley, 1749.
- 223.2 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Letter to the Reverend Doctor Conyers Middleton*. 2nd edition. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1749.
- 223.3 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London*. London: William Strahan, 1747.
- 223.4 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists*. 2nd edition. London: William Strahan, 1749.
- 223.5 Wesley, John (1703-91). *The Manners of the Antient Christians; extracted from [Claude Fleury]*. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1749.
- 224 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Collection of Moral and Sacred Poems*. Volume 3 vols. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1744.
“S. G.”
- 225 Arndt, Johann (1555-1621). *Of True Christianity: four books, wherein is contained the whole economy of God towards man, and the whole duty of man towards God*. 2nd ed. Volume 2. London: Joseph Downing, 1720.
“Sarah Wesley April 9, 1751”
- 226 Bailey, Nathan (d. 1742). *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary*. London: R. Ware, A. Ward, et al., 1747.
“S.G.” “Sarah Wesley”
- 227 Gauden, John (1605-62). *Eikon Basilike: The Portraiture of His Sacred Majesty in his solitudes*. London: H. Hills, 1649.
“I borrow’d this book from Mrs. James of Earl’s Mead, 1757” (appears to be in Mrs. Sarah Wesley’s hand)

COLLECTION OF BOOKS OWNED BY THE CHARLES WESLEY FAMILY

- 228 Law, William (1686-1761). *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life; adapted to the State and Condition of all Orders of Christians*. 5th edition. London: William Innys, 1750.
 “Sarah Wesley”
- 229 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Sermons on Several Occasions, in three volumes*. Vol. 3. London: William Strahan, 1750.
- [230] Wesley, John (1703-91) & Charles Wesley (1707-88). Collected hymns and tracts.
 “Sr. Wesley 1750”
 Note: Last two now bound separately because came loose
- 230.1 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Hymns for the Nativity of Our Lord*. London: [Strahan], 1744.
- 230.2 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Hymns of Our Lord’s Resurrection*. 3rd edition. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1748.
- 230.3 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Hymns for Ascension-Day*. 2nd edition. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1747.
- 230.4 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Hymns of Petition and Thanksgiving for the Promise of the Father*. 2nd edition. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1747.
- 230.5 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Hymns for Those that Seek and Those that Have Redemption in the Blood of Jesus*. 3rd edition. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1751.
- 230.6 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Funeral Hymns*. 2nd edition. London: Strahan, 1746.
- 230.7 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Graces, before meat*. [London: Robert Hawes, 1777].
- 230.8 Wesley, Charles (1707-88). *Gloria Patri, etc.; or, Hymns to the Trinity*. 2nd ed. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1749.
- 230.9 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Hymns for Times of Trouble and Persecution*. 2nd edition. London, 1745.
- 230.10 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Hymns for Times of Trouble*. London: [Strahan], 1745.
- 230.11 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Hymns for the Public Thanksgiving-Day, October 9, 1746*. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1746.
- 230.12 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Hymns for New-Year’s Day*. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1750.

- 230.13 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Hymns Occasioned by the Earthquake, March 8, 1750*. London: [Strahan], 1750.
- 231 Ken, Thomas (1637-1711). *The Retired Christian Exercised in Divine Thoughts, and Heavenly Meditations*. 6th edition. London: R. Baldwin, 1750.
“Sarah Wesley”
- 232.1 Rimius, Henry (d. 1756?). *A Candid Narrative of the Rise and Progress of the Herrnhuters, Commonly Called Moravians, or Unitas Fratrum*. London: A. Linde, 1753.
“C. Wesley 1753”
- 232.2 Rimius, Henry (d. 1756?). *A Solemn Call on Count Zinzendorf*. London: A. Linde, 1754.
(bound with preceding)
- 232.3 Rimius, Henry (d. 1756?). *A Supplement to the Candid Narrative of the Rise and Progress of the Herrnhuters*. London: A. Linde, 1755.
(bound with above)
- 233-35 Hervey, James (1714-58). *Theron and Aspasio*. 3 vols., London: John & James Rivington, 1755.
“Sarah Wesley”
- 236 Whitefield, George (1714-70). *A Communion Morning’s Companion*. London: G. Keith, T. Field, & E. Dilly, 1755.
“Sr. Wesley”
- 237 Romaine, William (1714-95). *Twelve Discourses upon some Practical Parts of Solomon’s Song*. London: J. Worrall & E. Withers, 1758.
“Sr. Wesley July 1758”
- 238 Romaine, William (1714-95). *Twelve Discourses upon the Law and the Gospel*. London: J. Worrall & E. Withers, 1760.
“Sarah Wesley. The Gift of Miss Gidson. Aug 6, 1763”
- 239 Church of England. *The Book of Common Prayer, together with the Psalms*. London: Thomas Baskett, 1763.
“[Miss] Sarah Wesley Nov. 2, 1795”
- 240 Allestree, Richard (1619-81). *The Ladies Calling*. 5th impression. Oxford: Sheldonian Theatre, 1677.
“S. Wesley Sept. 1787”
- 241 Beaulieu, Luke de (1644?-1723). *Claustrum animae; the reformed monastery; or, the love of Jesus*. London: Henry Brome, 1677.
“Sr. Wesley”

COLLECTION OF BOOKS OWNED BY THE CHARLES WESLEY FAMILY

- 242-43 Cennick, John (1718-55). *Twenty Discourses*. 2 vols. London: H. Trapp, 1777.
 “Sr. Wesley 1787”
- 244-66 Wesley, John (1703-91). *The Arminian Magazine*. Volumes. 1-24 (1778-1801), missing volume 10.
 “[Miss] Sarah Wesley” “The Gift of Her Father, as confirmed by Charles Wesley Jr.” (latter written in by third party)
- 267 Duché, Jacob (1738-98). *Discourses on Several Subjects*. 2nd edition. London: T. Cadell, H. Payne, et al., 1780.
 “Sarah Wesley”
- 268-71 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Concise Ecclesiastical History [from Johann Mosheim]*. 4 vols. London: J. Paramore, 1781.
 “S. Wesley. The Gift of the Rev. John Wesley, 1786”
- 272 Berkeley, Ann (18th century). *The Contrast; or, an antidote against the pernicious principle disseminated in the letters of the late Earl of Chesterfield*. London: J. Stockdale, 1791.
 “S. Wesley. The Gift of its Worthy Author. Sept. 27, 1793”
- 273 Hunter, Henry (1741-1802). *Sermons, and other miscellaneous pieces*. 2 vols. London: J. Murray et al., 1804.
 “S. Wesley. The Gift of her Invaluable Friend [illegible] Jan. 1805”
- 274 Quesnel, Pasquier (1634-1719). *Le Nouveau Testament en françois; avec des reflexions morales*. 8 vols. in 4. Brussels: Henry Fricx, 1700. (volumes 3 & 4)
 “Charles Wesley Junr 1776” “[Miss] Sally Wesley. The Gift of Charles Wesley Jr.”
- 275-76 Terence. *Les Comédies de Terence; avec la traduction et les remarques de Madame Dacier*. New edition. 3 vols. Hamburg: A. Vandenhoeck, 1732. (missing vol. 2)
 “Miss Wesley 1780”
- 277 Wesley, Charles (1707-88). *Hymns and Sacred Poems Volume 2*. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1749.
 “Marg[aret]. & Elis[abeth]. Gwynne. Sept. 1, 1745”
 “Left to Miss S. Wesley. Aug. 28, 1789”
 Note: Margaret and Elisabeth were younger sisters of Sarah Gwynne Wesley

- 278 *An Introduction to the Latin Tongue, for the use of youth.* New edition, revised. Eton: J. Pote, 1771.
“Charles Wesley to [Miss] S. Wesley. June 17, 1774”
- 279 Terence. *Publius Terentius Afer* [his comedies]. Saumur: René Pean, 1671.
“Samuel Wesley” “Rev. C. Wesley. Xt. Ch. Oxon”
“Charles Wesley Junr 1776” “[Miss] Sarah Wesley. The gift of her brother”
- 280 Cumberland, Richard (1732-1811). *The Observer*. London: C. Dilly, 1785.
- 281 Matthews, William (fl. 1785). *The Miscellaneous Companions*. Bath: R. Cruttwell, 1786.
“Miss Wesley. From the Author”
- 282 Plutarch. *Plutarch’s Morals*. 3rd edition. London: Thomas Brad-dyll, 1694.
“Miss Wesley. The Gift of the Worthy Rev. Fountains”
- 283 Lowell, Samuel (1759-1823). *Sermons, on Evangelical and Practical Subjects*. Bristol: for the author, 1801.
“Miss Wesley. The Gift of (?)”
- 284 Foster, John (fl. 1800-1805). *Essays in a Series of Letters to a Friend*. London: Longman, 1805.
“S. Wesley. June 1806”
- 285 Myles, William (1756-1828). *A Chronological History of the People Called Methodists*. 4th edition. London: Thomas Cordeux, 1813.
“S. Wesley. The Gift of It’s Respected Author. 1814”
- 286 Vincent, John (fl. 1810-1815). *Sermons on Practical Subjects*. London: F.C. & J. Rivington, 1814.
“Mr. Charles [Jr.] and Miss Sarah Wesley” (in a third-party hand)
- 287 Simon, Richard (1638-1712). *The Critical History of the Old Testament*. London: Jacob Tonson, 1782.
“Thomas Saunders”
- 288 Burnet, Gilbert (1643-1715). *A Collection of Eighteen Papers, relating to the Affairs of Church and State*. London: John Starkey & Richard Chilwell, 1689.

COLLECTION OF BOOKS OWNED BY THE CHARLES WESLEY FAMILY

- 289 Baxter, Richard (1615-91). *A Treatise of Knowledge and Love Compared*. London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1689.
- 290 Plutarch. *Plutarch's Morals*. 3rd edition. London: Thomas Brad-dyll, 1694.
- 291 Bentley, Richard (1662-1742). *The Folly and Unreasonableness of Atheism*. London: H. Mortlock, 1699.
 "E Libris Samuelis Wesley. J.R.W.A. 1711"
- 292 Welwood, James (1652-1727). *Memoirs of the Most Material Transactions in England for the Last Hundred Years*. London: Timothy Goodwin, 1700.
- 293 Jurieu, Pierre (1637-1713). *A Critical History of the Doctrines and Worships (both good and evil) of the Church from Adam to our Savior Jesus Christ; giving an account of the origin of all the idolatries of the ancient pagans, as far as they relate to the Jewish worship*. 2 vols. London: J. Taylor & G. Sawbridge, 1705.
- 294-99 Clarendon, Edward Hyde, Earl of (1609-74). *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England*. 6 vols. Oxford: Sheldonian Theatre, 1707.
- 300.1 Sacheverell, Henry (1674-1724). *The Trial of Dr. Henry Sacheve-rell, before the House of Peers*. London: Jacob Tonson, 1710.
- 300.2 Burnet, Gilbert (1634-1715) et al. *The Bishop of Salisbury and Bishop of Oxford Speeches . . . impeachment of Dr. Henry Sacheverell; also the Bishop of Lincoln's and Bishop of Nor-wich's Speeches*. London: John Morphew, 1710.
- 301 King, Peter (1669-1734). *An Enquiry into the Constitution, Dis-cipline, Unity, and Worship of the Primitive Church*. London: s.n., 1712.
- 302 Church of England. *A Collection of Articles, Canons, Injunc-tions, etc.*. London: J. Baskett, 1713.
 "E Libris Samuelis Wesley. Christi Oxon alumn 1716"
- 303-5 Bull, George (1634-1710). *Some Important Points of Primitive Christianity Maintained and Defended; in several sermons and other discourses*. 3 vols. London: Richard Smith, 1714.
 "E Libris Samuelis Wesley. Christi Oxon alumn 1719"
- 306 Nelson, Robert (1656-1715). *The Life of Dr. George Bull, late Lord Bishop of St. David's*. 2nd edition. London: Richard Smith, 1714.
 "E Libris Samuelis Wesley. Christi Oxon alumn 1719"

- 307 Saunders, Richard (d. 1692). *Angelographia; sive Pneumata leityrgika. Pneumatologia; or, A discourse of angels*. London: T. Parkhurst, 1701.
- 308 Ward, Edward (1667-1731). *The Lord Clarendon's History of the Grand Rebellion completed*. 3rd edition. Dublin: J. Leathley & P. Dugan, 1720.
- 309 Steele, Richard (1672-1729). *The Christian Hero*. 8th edition. London: Jacob Tonson, 1727.
“Roderick Gwynne 1749”
Note: Roderick was Sarah Gwynne Wesley’s youngest brother
- 310 Berkeley, George (1685-1753). *Alciphron; or, The Minute Philosopher*. London: Jacob Tonson, 1732.
“Patty Wesley. Gift of Matthew Wesley”
Note: Matthew is Samuel Wesley Sr.’s brother; “Patty” was the family name for Martha Wesley, sister of John and Charles
- 311 Lake, Edward (1641-1704). *Officium Eucharisticum; A preparatory Service to a devout and worthy reception of the Lord's Supper*. 28th edition. London: T. Ward & E. Wicksteed, 1732.
“Sarah Gwynne 1741”
- 312 Freylinghausen, Johann Anastasius (1670-1739). *Geistriches Gesangbuch den Kern alter und neuer Lieder ... Nebst ... I. Theil*. 17th edition. Halle: Wäysenhausen, 1734.
- 313 H., D., presbyter of the Church of England. *A Father's Advices to His Children*. London: for the author, 1740.
- [314] Wesley, John (1703-91) & Charles Wesley (1707-88). Assorted publications
Note: Do not follow order of “Collected Publications”
- 314.1 Wesley, John (1703-91). *An Extract of the Revd. Mr. John Wesley's Journal from August 12, 1738*. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1742.
- 314.2 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Scriptural Christianity, a sermon*. 5th edition. London: W. Strahan, 1744.
- 314.3 Wesley, Charles (1707-88). *A Sermon Preached on Sunday, April 4, 1742*. 7th edition. London: William Strahan, 1744.

- 314.4 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Sermon on Salvation by Faith*. 8th edition. London; William Strahan, 1747.
- 314.5 Wesley, John (1703-91). *The Almost Christian, a sermon*. 7th edition. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1748.
- 314.6 Wesley, John (1703-91). *Christian Perfection, a sermon*. 2nd edition. Newcastle upon Tyne: John Gooding, 1743.
- 314.7 Perronet, Vincent (1693-1785). *Some Remarks on ... The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared*. London: J. Roberts, 1749.
- 314.8 Wesley, John (1703-91). *An Extract of the Life and Death of Mr. John Janeway, Fellow of King's College in Cambridge*. London: s.n., 1749.
- 314.9 Wesley, John (1703-91). *The Manners of Antient Christians, extracted from [Claude Fleury]*. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1749.
- 314.10 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Narrative of the Late Work of God . . . in New England. Extracted from Mr. Edwards*. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1744.
- 314.11 Wesley, John (1703-91). *The Doctrine of Salvation, Faith and Good Work; extracted from the Homilies*. 9th edition. Bristol: S. & F. Farley, 1748.
- 314.12 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Letter to a Friend, concerning Tea*. London: William Strahan, 1748.
- 314.13 Wesley, John (1703-91). *The Nature and Design of Christianity. Extracted from [William Law]*. 5th edition. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1746.
- 314.14 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists*. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1749.
- 314.15 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Short View of the Difference Between the Moravian Brethren. . . .* London: William Strahan, 1745.
- 314.16 Wesley, John (1703-91). *An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal from his embarking for Georgia*. 2nd edition. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1743.
- 314.17 Wesley, John (1703-91). *An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal from February 1, 1737-8 to his return to England*. 2nd edition. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1743.

- [315] A collection of sermon pamphlets
“M. Annesley”
- 315.1 Comber, Thomas (1645-99). *The Nature and Usefulness of Solemn Judicial Swearing . . .* London: Robert Clavell, 1682.
- 315.2 Dove, Henry (1640-95). *A Sermon Preached before the Right Honorable, The Lord Mayor of the City of London.* London: Benjamin Tooke, 1682.
- 315.3 Bruce, Titus (b. 1654). *Monarchy Maintained, in a sermon.* London: Fincham Gardiner, 1682.
- 315.4 Lloyd, William (1627-1717). *A Sermon Preached Before Their Majesties at Whitehall on the fifth day of November 1689.* London: Robert Clavell, 1689.
- 315.5 Staynoe, Thomas (d. 1708). *A Sermon Preached before the Queen at White-Hall.* London: Joseph Hindmarsh, 1690.
- 315.6 Moore, John (1646-1714). *Of the Wisdom and Goodness of Providence. Two Sermons Preached before the Queen at White-Hall.* London: W. Rogers, 1690.
- 315.7 Lynford, Thomas (1650-1724). *A Sermon Concerning the Worship of God in Private; preached before the Queen at White-Hall.* London: James Adamson, 1691.
- 315.8 Meggott, Richard (d. 1692). *A Sermon Preached before the Queen at White-Hall.* London: Thomas Bennett, 1692.
- 315.9 Lloyd, William (1627-1717). *A Sermon Preached before her Majesty, on May 29, being the Anniversary of the Restauration of the King and Royal Family.* London: Thomas Jones, 1692.
- 315.10 Atterbury, Francis (1662-1732). *A Sermon Preached Before the Queen at White-Hall.* London: Thomas Bennet, 1692.
- 315.11 Gee, Edward (1657-1730). *Of the Improvement of Time; a sermon preached before the Queen at White-Hall.* London: Brab. Aylmer & Samuel Smith, 1692.
- 315.12 Resbury, Nathanael (1643-1711). *A Sermon Preached Before the Queen at White-Hall on August 29, 1692.* London: Thomas Bennet, 1692.

- 315.13 Sherlock, William (1641?-1707). *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of the Reverend Richard Meggot*. London: W. Rogers, 1693.
- 315.14 Young, Edward (1641?-1705). *A Sermon concerning the Wisdom of Fearing God*. London: Walter Kettilby, 1693.
- 315.15 Warly, Jonas (d. 1722). *A Sermon Preached before the Right Houourable the Lord Mayor of the City of London*. London: Walter Kettilby, 1693.
- 315.16 Stephens, William (d. 1718). *A Sermon Preached before the Right Houourable the Lord Mayor . . . of the City of London*. London: John Lawrence, 1694.
- 315.17 Stratford, Nicholas (1633-1707). *Of the Reverence Due to God in his Public Worship; a sermon preached before the King and Queen at White-Hall*. London: Thomas Bennet, 1694.
- 315.18 Talbot, William (1658?-1730). *The Unreasonableness and Mischief of Atheism; a sermon preached before the Queen at White-Hall*. London: Thomas Bennet, 1694.
- 315.19 Moore, John (1646-1714). *Of the Immortality of the Soul; a sermon preached before the King and Queen at White-Hall*. London: William Rogers, 1694.
- 315.20 Tillotson, John (1630-94). *A Sermon Preached before the King and Queen at White-Hall*. London: Randal Taylor, 1694.
- 315.21 Young, Edward (1641?-1705). *The Great Advertisement: That a Religious Life is the Best Way to Present Happiness; in two sermons preached at White-Hall*. London: Walter Kettilby, 1694.
- 315.22 MannIngham, Thomas (1651?-1722). *Of Religious Prudence; a sermon preached before the Queen at White-Hall*. London: William Croke, 1694.
- 315.23 Tenison, Thomas (1636-1715). *A Sermon preached at the Funeral of Her late Majesty Queen Mary* . London: Chiswell, 1695.
- 315.24 Beveridge, William (1637-1708). *A Sermon Concerning the Excellency and Usefulness of the Common Prayer*. London: Richard Northcott, 1682.

- 315.25 Gilbert, John (d. 1722). *A Sermon Preached at St. Andrew's Plymouth . . . with a preface defending King Charles the Martyr*. London: Thomas Bennett, 1699.
- 315.26 Bradford, Samuel (1652-1731). *The Qualifications Requisite towards the Receiving of a Divine Revelation; A sermon . . . being the first, for this year, of the lecture founded by the honourable Robert Boyle*. London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1699.
- 315.27 Bradford Samuel (1652-1731). *Apostate Men fit Objects of Divine Care and Compassion; a sermon . . . being the second*. London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1699.
- 315.28 Bradford, Samuel (1652-1731). *The Nature of that Salvation which the Gospel offereth, and the Method of obtaining it, by a Mediator; a sermon . . . being the third*. London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1699.
- 315.29 Bradford, Samuel (1652-1731). *The Excellency of the Christian Revelation, as it Removes the Guilty Fear of Sinners, and their Ignorance of God; a sermon . . . being the fourth*. London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1699.
- 315.30 Bradford, Samuel (1652-1731). *The Excellency of the Christian Revelation, as it Proposeth to us a Perfect Example; a sermon . . . being the fifth*. London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1699.
- 316 Bingham, Joseph (1668-1723). *The Works of the Learned Joseph Bingham*. 2 vols. London: Robert Knaplock, 1726.
"E Libris Samuelis Wesley E.A.P.J. 1725"
- 317 Downname, George (d. 1634). *A Treatise of Justification; wherein is first set down the true doctrine in the causes, effects, fruits . . . then all objections and cavils . . . are answered . . . especially of Robert Bellarmine*. London: Nicolas Bourne, 1633.
"C. Wesley 1740"
- 318 Hooker, Richard (1553?-1600). *The Works of . . . Richard Hooker . . . in Eight Books of Ecclesiastical Polity*. London: Andrew Crook, 1666.
"Charles Wesley Jun^r 1776"
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- 416 Wesley, John (1703-91). *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists*. London: Joseph Paramore, 1780.
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“C. Wesley 1755”

SANCTIFICATION AND THE CHRISTUS VICTOR MOTIF IN WESLEYAN THEOLOGY

by

William M. Greathouse

Gustaf Aulen's *Christus Victor*¹ ranks as one of the most influential works on the atonement to appear in our time. Aulen calls for a thorough revision of the traditional account of the history of the idea of the atonement to give fresh emphasis to a view of Christ's work which he describes as the "dramatic" motif. Its central theme is the idea of the atonement as a divine conflict and victory in which Christ—Christus Victor—enlists and vanquishes Satan, sin, and death.² He insists that this dramatic understanding of Christ's work is a true doctrine of atonement because in this act God reconciles the world to himself.³ Although Christ's death is at the heart of redemption, the Cross presupposes the Incarnation, for it was the Son of God in the flesh who met and vanquished evil.⁴ It also embraces the resurrection and ascension, for by raising his Son from the dead to his own right hand God fulfilled the conditions for the promised gift of the Spirit by which Christ's historic victory is mediated to believers.⁵ The Cross also envisions the consummation of redemption when God will send his Son a second time to raise and glorify us with him.⁶

¹Gustaf Aulen, *Christus Victor* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1951), translated by A. G. Hebert.

²*Ibid.*, 1-4.

³*Ibid.*, 5.

⁴*Ibid.*, 20-21, 41-44.

⁵*Ibid.*, 22, 31-32, 44.

⁶*Ibid.*, 22.

The “Classic” Idea of Atonement

The Christus Victor view of Christ’s work Aulen calls “the classic idea” of the atonement. He sees it as the dominant idea of the New Testament.⁷ Thus it did not spring into being in the early church or arrive as an importation from some outside source. It was, in fact, the ruling idea of the atonement for the first thousand years of Christian history. In the Middle Ages it was gradually ousted from its place in the theological teaching of the church, but it survived still in her devotional language and art. It confronts us again, more vigorously and profoundly expressed than ever before, in Martin Luther, and it constituted an important part of his expression of the Christian faith. It has, therefore, every right to claim the title of the classic idea of the atonement.⁸

Aulen has done the church a service in rescuing the dramatic view of Christ’s work and restoring it to its rightful place as a New Testament account of the atonement. In the traditional understanding of the history of the idea of the atonement the Christus Victor teaching has been slighted, if not rejected outright, along with the ransom theory which grew out of it.⁹ Aulen shows how the New Testament does indeed see Christ’s work as a divine conquest of evil. Moreover, he seems to have successfully demonstrated that this is a view of atonement and not merely a doctrine of salvation. Furthermore, this representation of Christ’s redemptive work preserves the biblical teaching that the atonement is from beginning to end the work of God.¹⁰ It also dynamically fuses the objective and subjective features of this work. Such a viewpoint provides a sound basis for pointing up weaknesses in both the Anselmic and Abelardian theories.

It may be questioned, however, whether any one view of the atonement can be rightly titled “classic.” The New Testament regards Christ’s work in at least three ways: as propitiation, as redemption, and as reconciliation. As sinners we are guilty and exposed to the wrath of God; in Christ God propitiates his wrath and expiates our guilt. As sinners we are in bondage to Satan and sin; Christ’s redemptive act delivers us from bondage and sets us at liberty. As sinners we are alienated and estranged

⁷Ibid., 61-80.

⁸Ibid., 6-7.

⁹It was Origen (185-254 A.D.) who converted the Christus Victor idea into a theory of a ransom paid to Satan.

¹⁰2 Cor. 5:18.

from God; we are reconciled to God by the death of his Son. The Christus Victor motif elucidates the second representation of the atonement. While Aulen maintains that the other two ideas may be fully subsumed under this one view,¹¹ it may be questioned that the dramatic motif adequately embraces the notions of propitiation and reconciliation. Strong biblical and experiential reasons seem to have given rise to the emphases of Anselm and Abelard. A truly classic doctrine of atonement includes both the ideas of satisfaction and of revelation as well as of that of redemption. Whatever weaknesses we may find in the Anselmic and Abelardian theories, we cannot deny that they voice two distinct scriptural perspectives. It is a question whether these viewpoints can be fully expressed in the Christus Victor doctrine.

In spite of these questions, Christus Victor is a view of Christ's work that highlights the atonement as the destruction of sin that makes possible true sanctification and perfection. While it may be too much to claim that it provides the entire framework for explaining Christ's work, it does give Wesleyan theology a significant biblical and historical basis for developing a thoroughgoing Christological doctrine of sanctification. The Christus Victor idea "directs attention not primarily to the punishment and the other consequences of sin, but to sin itself. It is sin itself which is overcome by Christ, and annihilated; it is from the power of sin itself that man is set free."¹² In Christ God has sanctified the race; this sanctification is accomplished within us as Christ comes to indwell us in the Spirit. "The classic idea of salvation is that the victory which Christ gained once for all is continued in the work of the Holy Spirit, and its fruits reaped."¹³

Christ's Victory For Us

The atonement has several facets. Viewed from the standpoint of human guilt and our deep need for pardon and acceptance, Christ crucified is God's perfect oblation making possible our justification (Romans 3:21-26; 1 Corinthians 1:30b). Seen from the perspective of our enmity toward God and our profound yearning for restored fellowship, Christ provides reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Ephesians 2:11-22). Again, perceived from the angle of humankind's bondage to evil, Christ

¹¹*Christus Victor*, 71-73.

¹²*Ibid.*, footnote on 148; cf. pages 22-25.

¹³*Ibid.*, 50.

crucified is the conqueror of Satan, sin, and death. It is this third point of view—Christus Victor—which Aulen sees as dominant until Anselm, and it is this understanding of Christ's work that furnishes the most solid basis for a dynamic biblical doctrine of sanctification.

This view presupposes that it was only by meeting the forces of evil on their own ground, only, that is, by getting into history where they were entrenched, that Christ could break their power.¹⁴ He partook of flesh and blood that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil (Hebrews 2:13-14). In his final effort to destroy the Prince of Life (Jesus Christ), the devil overextended and thus defeated himself (John 12:31; cf. 16:11; 1 Corinthians 2:6 and 1 John 2:8). God the Father "disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over him in him [Christ]" (Colossians 2:15 RSV).

Christus Victor, moreover, not only defeated Satan; he destroyed sin itself. "The reason the Son of God was manifested was to destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8 RSV). John means that Christ came to destroy the principle of lawlessness (*anomia*—1 John 3:4), which was the devil's chief work in humankind.

Paul gives the fullest treatment of sanctification within the context of Romans 5:12—8:39. Particularly critical to this idea are Romans 6:6 and 8:3. First, Romans 6:6—"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (KJV). Knowing what? This, that in and with the death of Jesus on Calvary we were provisionally crucified also, so that we might be delivered from sin for a life of love-service to God. Paul puts the same idea slightly differently in 2 Corinthians—"For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who for their sakes died and was raised" (5:14-15 RSV).

Two definitions are in order with reference to Romans 6:6: "our old man" (*ho palaios hemen anthropos*) and "the body of sin" (*to soma tes hamartias*). The first expression must be understood in the light of Romans 5:12-14; the second, of Romans 7:14-25. Both must be defined in terms of these two contexts. Here are two concepts that describe differ-

¹⁴James S. Stewart, *A Faith to Proclaim* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 94.

ent aspects of human sinfulness. "Our old man" is therefore "Adam, and ourselves in Adam."¹⁵ "The body of sin" should be taken as the possessive genitive: "sin's body," or "the body of which sin has taken possession, 'the body that is so apt to be the instrument of its own carnal impulses.'"¹⁶ Indwelt by sin (*he hamartia*),¹⁷ I am hopelessly divided against myself and reduced to moral impotence (Romans 7:14-25). Paul's other term for this sin-dominated body is "flesh" (*sarx*—Romans 7:18; cf. 8:8).¹⁸

Now, Paul says, "Our old man was crucified with Christ, so that sin's body (i.e., *sarx*, the flesh) might be destroyed, that henceforth we might not be enslaved by sin." Karl Barth has vividly paraphrased Paul:

This is our knowledge of Jesus Christ on which our faith is founded—that the "old man," i.e., we ourselves as God's enemies, have been crucified and killed in and with the crucifixion of the man Jesus at Golgotha, so that the "body" (i.e., the subject, the person needed for the doing) of sin, the man who can sin and will sin and shall sin has been removed, destroyed, done away with, is simply no longer there (and has therefore not merely been "made powerless").¹⁹

Whatever Barth may allow by this, his words give true expression of Paul's declaration. As a new man in Christ, I am to hear the gospel saying to me that my old self in Adam has been crucified with Christ in order that my total person may be liberated from sin, so that I may serve God in "righteousness for sanctification" (Romans 6:19 RSV). This is the whole meaning of Romans 6.

Romans 8:3 relates this to the incarnation. Christ's victory could be won only in the flesh. But there, where sin had established its rule, Christus Victor routed it decisively. "For God has done what the law, weakened

¹⁵C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), 125.

¹⁶Sanday and Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1929), 158.

¹⁷The key term for sin in Romans 5:12—8:10, literally "the sin" principle, which occurs at least 28 times.

¹⁸As "body" (*soma*) is my total self concretely expressed, so "flesh" (*sarx*) is my whole person alienated from God and therefore subjected to my own creaturehood and sin.

¹⁹Karl Barth, *A Shorter Commentary on Romans* (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1959), 69.

by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh (“sin’s flesh” or “sin-dominated flesh”), and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh” (NRSV). “Condemned” means more than to register disapproval; the law does that. Christ pronounced the doom of sin. Sin was henceforth “deposed from its autocratic power.”²⁰ “By his life of perfect obedience, and his victorious death and resurrection,” C. H. Dodd comments, “the reign of sin over human nature has been broken.”²¹ The Son of God “‘condemned’ that ‘sin’ which was ‘in’ our ‘flesh.’” Wesley

²⁰C. Anderson Scott, “Romans,” *The Abingdon Bible Commentary* (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1929), 1153.

²¹C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932), 93. “As Origen noted, we human beings have ‘the flesh of sin,’ but the Son had the ‘likeness of sinful flesh.’ He came in a form like us in that he became a member of the sin-oriented human race; he experienced the effects of sin and suffered death, the result of sin, as one ‘cursed’ by the law (Gal. 3:12). Thus in his own person he coped with the power of sin. Paul’s use of the phrase *sarx hamartias* denoted not the guilty human condition, but the proneness of humanity made of flesh that is oriented to sin” (Fitzmyer, “Romans” in *Anchor Bible*, 33:485). “Those who believe that it was fallen human nature which was assumed have even more cause than had the authors of the Heidelberg Catechism to see the whole of Christ’s life on earth as having redemptive significance; for, in this view [which was espoused by the early church fathers], Christ’s life before His actual ministry and death was not just a standing where unfallen Adam had stood without yielding to the temptation to which Adam succumbed, but a matter of starting from where we start, subjected to all the evil pressures which we inherit and using the altogether unpromising and unsuitable material of our corrupt nature to work out a perfect sinless obedience” (C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:383, footnote 2). Colin Gunton concurs: “To bear fallen flesh is necessary if Jesus is to complete the work to which he was called. What is important soteriologically was that Jesus was enabled to resist temptation, not by some immanent conditioning, but by virtue of his obedience to the guidance of the Spirit” (*Christ and Creation*, [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992], 54). For us, gaining mastery over fallen flesh requires that we be born again, Jesus needed no second birth—his conception and birth by the Spirit enabled him to live without sinning. “[God] with the view to the destruction of sin,” Gregory of Nyssa wrote, “was blended with human nature, like a sun as it were making his dwelling in a murky cave and by His presence dissipating the darkness by means of His light. For though He took our filth upon Himself, yet He is not Himself defiled by the pollution, but in His own self He purifies the filth” (*Antirrhetic adv. Apollinaris*, 26). Jesus’ assumption of our fallen flesh was the *sine qua non* of our redemption, for “He could heal only what he assumed” (Gregory of Nazianzus). *He became what we are that we might become what he is*. Such was the dominating theme of the Christology of the Orthodox Fathers who fashioned the ecumenical creeds.

asserts, “gave sentence that sin should be destroyed and the believer wholly delivered from it” (Romans 8:3, *Explanatory Notes*). On the very ground where sin had established itself—in human flesh—the Son of God has vanquished sin and potentially sanctified our human existence!

Christ’s Victory In Us

Christ’s victory *for* us becomes his victory *in* us by the indwelling Spirit (Romans 8:1-11). Christ’s victory is reproduced in us. In the Holy Spirit, Christ for us becomes Christ in us, recapitulating in our history his triumph over sin. This is the meaning of Christus Victor for sanctification.²²

Every demon we meet is foredoomed in Christ. Sin itself has lost its power for the believer in whom Christ dwells. “Little children, you are of God, and have overcome them; for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world . . . and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith. . . . We know that anyone born of God does not sin, but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him” (1 John 4:4; 5:4, 18 RSV).

This victory is given to us in three stages—in conversion, in entire sanctification, and in glorification. Victory over sin begins in conversion. This is the clear teaching of Romans 6:1-11. This is our knowledge of the gospel—that we ourselves have been crucified in the person of Christ crucified. Paul insists that we grasp the truth that this has already happened to us “in principle” in our justification and regeneration. “For he who has died is freed from sin” (6:6). But in order to reap the full benefits of God’s provision we must furnish what Godet calls “moral cooperation.” The believer understands that “the final object which God has in view in crucifying the old man (v. 6) is to realize the life of the Risen One (vv. 8, 9), and he enters actively into the divine thought.”²³

²²The first Adam disobeyed God and died; the last Adam died rather than disobey him, becoming “obedient unto death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him” (Philippians 2:8-9 NRSV). And “being. . .exalted at the right hand of the God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit,” he has poured out the Spirit upon yielded believers, *reproducing in us the very holiness of Christ!* (Acts 2:33). Thus the glorified Christ, through the gift of the Pentecostal Spirit, fulfills the New Covenant promise of entire sanctification (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:24-27).

²³ F. Godet, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1883), 244.

To “enter actively into the divine thought” and thereby realize true sanctification involves: (1) A faith-knowledge that God has actually accomplished the destruction of sin in Christ crucified and resurrected and that in my conversion I have embraced his death to sin and with him have been raised to “newness of life” in which I am no longer sin’s slave, and (2) A complete break with sin (Romans 6:12-13a) and a putting of myself absolutely at God’s disposal in a critical act of consecration (6:13a, 19) so that I may begin to realize the full life of the Risen Lord in me.

We have already provisionally died with Christ through our participation in his crucifixion; now we must permit that death to reach to the very depths of our being as we cease from self and begin to live wholly to God. The death of the “old man” is thus a process initiated by conversion and realized in entire sanctification. “In principle” we die with Christ in justification; in full reality we die with him when we yield up ourselves to God as Jesus gave up his spirit to the Father on the cross. Here John Wesley has a guiding word:

A man may be dying for some time; yet he does not, properly speaking, die, till the soul is separated from the body; and in that instant, he lives the life of eternity. In like manner, he may be dying to sin for some time; yet he is not dead to sin till it is separated from his soul; and in that instant, he lives the full life of love. So the change wrought when the soul died to sin is of a different kind and infinitely greater than any before, and than he can conceive, till he experiences it. Yet he still grows in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ, in the love and image of God; and will do so, not only till death, but to all eternity.²⁴

Christ’s victory thus becomes blessed reality in entire sanctification, in the perfecting of our love. This separation of the soul from sin to God is the final object God has in mind in crucifying the old man (Romans 6). Viewed positively, this act of God is life in the Spirit (Romans 8). Christ re-enacts in us the sanctification he accomplished in the atonement. By his perfect obedience and victorious death and resurrection he provisionally expelled sin from human experience; now he comes in the Spirit to

²⁴ John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, reprint), 62.

dwell and reign in us and thereby work in us the loving obedience which fulfills the “just requirement” of the law (Romans 8:4—Gr. *dikaïoma*). Thus, Christ himself becomes our sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:30c). “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness of life in him” (Colossians 2:9-10 RSV). This fullness, however, is not a private, mystical, quietistic union with Christ. It is social; it is life in the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 2:21—2:7; 4:4-16; Colossians 3:1-4, 11-17; cf. Hebrews 2:10-13). In the Body of Christ—the *koinonia* of the Spirit—we discover the full meaning of “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:21-29).

To put the matter in fullest perspective we must add one further word. Christ’s victory is complete but not final. We have been “saved in hope”—the hope of resurrection and glorification with Christ (Romans 8:17-15; 1 Corinthians 15:22-28; Philippians 3:12-21). Meanwhile our sanctification has the character of spiritual warfare in which our victory over sin is assured as we permit Christ to live moment-by-moment in us (John 15:1-6; Ephesians 6:10-15; Philippians 1:6; Colossians 1:18-23; Romans 8:12-13, 26-39; Romans 13:11-14; Hebrews 7:25). This is the practical meaning of Christus Victor for a theology of holiness. “Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”—over the dominion of sin in conversion, over sin itself in sanctification, over the racial consequences of sin in glorification.

Wesley and Christus Victor

John Deschner has pointed out the relevance of Christus Victor for Wesley’s doctrine of sanctification:

The grand theme of Wesleyan Atonement is Christ’s bearing our guilt and punishment on the cross. This atonement is Wesley’s ground for man’s entire salvation, his sanctification as well as his justification. But alongside this judicial scheme of thought there is also in Wesley a pervasive tendency to view Christ’s work on Good Friday and Easter, but also today and in the future, in terms of a military victory for us over sin and evil. Much attention has been given to the power of the Holy Spirit in Wesley’s doctrine of sanctification. It needs to be more clearly recognized that the sanctifying Spirit is the Spirit of the victorious as well as the suffering Christ.²⁵

²⁵ John Deschner, *Wesley’s Christology* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1960), 116.

Wesley's *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* make it abundantly clear that he both knew and appreciated the Christus Victor idea, and three of his Standard Sermons deal with this theme.²⁶ However, Wesley does not take full advantage of the implications of this view for his doctrine of holiness. "It may well be that this is a weakness in his doctrine of sanctification," Colin Williams observes. "There is a stress on a conscious individual relationship with Christ, and little emphasis is given to the need for the repetition of Christ's victory in us."²⁷ Such a view of sanctification, however, is present in Wesley, although it is not consistently pressed. Other elements of Wesley's thought rival this idea and thereby rob Wesley's doctrine of the Christocentricity that marks the New Testament teaching of sanctification. A clarification of Wesleyan theology at this point should give new power and relevance to its holiness teaching.

In his *Notes* Wesley affirms, as we have seen, that God has given sentence "that sin should be destroyed, and the believer wholly delivered

²⁶He speaks of the devil as "the first sinner of the universe" (*Notes*, 1 John 3:18), who "transfused" his own self-will and pride into our first parents (Sermon CXXIII, I, 2; Sermon LXX, I, 9-10), thus becoming the "origin of evil" in the world (*Notes*, Matthew 13:28; John 8:44; Sermon LXX, I, 8). By sin and death Satan gained possession of the world, so that it was "Satan's house" (*Notes*, Matthew 12:29; John 12:31). Man's guilt gave him over to Satan's power, and man's corruption takes Satan's side in temptation. Satan thus enjoyed a right, a claim, and a power over man (*Notes*, John 13:39; Romans 6:14). Christ's ministry was an assault upon Satan (*Notes*, Matthew 12:29), but his decisive encounter with Satan, sin, and death was in the cross and resurrection (*Notes*, Matthew 27:52-53; Luke 12:50; 1 Corinthians 15:26; Ephesians 4:8; Hebrews 2:14). The resurrection, which is victory over death, is the inauguration of Christ's kingdom (*Notes*, Luke 22:16; Acts 2:31; 1 Corinthians 15:26), and its power will raise men to new life in regeneration and eternal life in the general resurrection (*Notes*, Romans 6:5; Ephesians 1:19; 1 Corinthians 15:20). The ascension signifies Christ's exaltation to the Father's right hand (Acts 2:33; Ephesians 1:21-22) until he returns to judge the world (*Notes*, Revelation 1:7; Hebrews 9:28). After the judgment Christ will return the mediatorial kingdom to the Father, but will continue to reign eternally with him (*Notes*, 1 Corinthians 15:24). Here, indeed, are the essential elements of a full Christus Victor doctrine. See Deschner, *Wesley's Christology*, Chapter 5, "The Kingly Work of Christ," and William M Greathouse, "John Wesley's View of the Last Things," *The Second Coming: a Wesleyan Approach to the Doctrine of the Last Things* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1995), 142-148.

²⁷Colin Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville: The Abingdon Press, 1960), 88.

from it” (on Romans 8:3).²⁸ “The Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil—all sin. And will he not perform this in all who trust in him?” (1 John 3:8). In his sermon on this latter text, however, Wesley limits the manifestation of Christ to the “inward manifestation of himself.”²⁹ Not once in this entire sermon does he refer to Christ’s objective victory on the cross, although he makes passing reference to Christ’s final victory in the last day. By ignoring the objective victory of Christ, Wesley opens the door to a subjective, individualistic type of holiness. The message of sanctification would have been more vigorously positive and biblical if he had sounded with clarity the note of Christ’s historic conquest of sin.

Moreover, because Wesley does not seem to see clearly that sanctification is the repetition of Christ’s victory in us, Deschner thinks, it is “not primarily a participation in Christ who, as Paul says, is also our sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:30), but rather such a relation to Christ as allows His Spirit to establish in us a ‘temper,’ a more abstract stylized kind of holiness.” In the light of recent studies of Wesley’s psychology, with the attendant emphasis on the importance of the means of grace in the development of holy character, Deschner’s criticism of Wesley may be too strong.³⁰ What it appears he is pointing out is that holiness is only *secondarily* a “habitus”—a psychological habit-pattern; it is *primarily* the indwelling of Christ within, a position Wesley would endorse. And what is “righteousness,” Wesley asks, “but the life of God in the soul; the mind that was in Christ Jesus; the image of God stamped upon the heart, now renewed after the image of him that created it?”³¹ The latter pages of his *Plain Account* suggest that Wesley had indeed come to see the sanctifying Spirit as the Spirit of the victorious as well as the suffering Christ, in Christ’s role as Prophet, Priest, and King. Listen to the mature Wesley:

²⁸Scripture references hereafter are all to Wesley’s *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*.

²⁹Sermon LXX, “The End of Christ’s Coming” (II. 7; III. 1, 1).

³⁰Randy L. Maddox, “Reconnecting the Means to the End: A Wesleyan Prescription for the Holiness Movement,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, Volume 33 (Fall, 1988): 29-66; Henry H. Knight III, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life: John Wesley and the Means of Grace* (Metuchen, N.J. & London: The Scarecrow Press, 1992).

³¹ Sermon XXI, Discourse I, “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount’ (I. 11).

The holiest of man still need Christ, as their Prophet, as “the light of the world.” For he does not give them light, but from moment to moment; the instant he withdraws, all is darkness. They still need Christ as their King; for God does not give them a stock of holiness. But unless they receive a supply every moment, nothing but unholiness would remain. They still need Christ as their Priest, to make atonement for their holy things. Even perfect holiness is acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ. . . . The best of men may therefore say, “Thou art my light, my holiness, my heaven. Through my union with Thee, I am full of light, of holiness, and happiness. But if I were left to myself I should be nothing but sin, darkness, hell.”³²

This is Wesley at his best. Here he means by perfection, not simply any “temper,” “intention,” or “affection” inherent in man himself, but a participation in the being of Christ’s love. Christ is both the content and source of this perfection. On the ground of Christ’s priestly work, the prophetic and kingly offices can also be understood as grace.

We can only regret that Wesley, having suggested such an exalted view of Christ’s intercession, did not fully articulate this in his doctrine of sanctification. We are not “holy in Christ” (as Wesley abhorred), but “in Christ” we are actually made holy. Here he could have found his sound defense against antinomianism (Hebrews 7:25). And it can be argued that this was, in the band societies, Wesley’s pastoral answer to antinomianism. There his Methodists found their place in the Body of Christ with its worship, exhortation, admonition, encouragement, and service. There they experienced the presence and power of Christ who had won for them the victory. Though Wesley may not have done so, must we not develop this doctrine’s implication that we participate in Christ’s active righteousness, through the Holy Spirit, in the church which is his Body? Perhaps we are being called upon to restore Wesley’s insistence upon the means of grace *as an essential ingredient of the doctrine of sanctification*.

For believers awaiting God’s promise of “entire renewal in the image of God,” it is necessary that they wait for this fulfillment, says Wesley:

Not in careless indifference, or indolent inactivity; but in vigorous, universal obedience, in a zealous keeping of all the commandments, in watchfulness and painfulness, in denying

³²A *Plain Account*, 81, 83.

ourselves, and taking up our cross daily; as well as in earnest prayer and fasting, and a close attendance on all the ordinances of God. And if any man dream of attaining it any other way (yea, or of keeping it when it is attained, when he has received it even in the largest measure), he deceiveth his own soul. It is true, we receive it by simple faith: But God does not, will not, give that faith, unless we seek it with all diligence, in the way which he hath ordained.³³

Fallen creatures, lifted up by God's grace, can remain in that grace, Wesley was convinced, only when they appropriate it in obedience to his commandments. And we can grow in that grace, he insisted, only by constant attendance upon the means of grace, which if we neglect leads to that falling away which is the occasion of sin. "By 'means of grace,' " he explained, "I understand outward signs, words, or actions, ordained by God, and appointed for this end, to be the ordinary channels whereby He might convey to men, preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace."³⁴ Whatever deficiency we may find in John Wesley's appropriation of the Christus Victor idea in his theological formulation of the doctrine of sanctification, we still have much to learn from his practical theology if we are to keep the message of holiness pertinent and alive in these times. In the final analysis, Christian perfection is the *worship* of God in the beauty of holiness. The challenge we face is the development of a full-orbed formulation of Wesley's theology that does justice to the Christus Victor idea, as at the same time we reconnect the means of grace to the end for which we were created—to be holy, even as God is holy.

³³A *Plain Account*, 62.

³⁴Sermon, "The Means of Grace," *Wesley's Standard Sermons*, 1:238. By the instituted means of grace Wesley understood (1) Prayer, (2) Searching the Scriptures, (3) Fasting, (4) Christian Conference (Colin Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today*, 132-136). The private means of grace he subdivided as (1) works of piety and (2) works of mercy (Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998], 106-107).

A DAY OF NEW BEGINNINGS: WESLEYAN THEOLOGIES OF THE NEW BIRTH, 1780 AND 1989

by

E. Byron Anderson¹

It is now commonplace in Methodist understanding to talk about its hymnals as books of practical or experiential divinity. It has also become commonplace to claim these books as primary and, given the disciplinary status of the hymnals, normative expressions of Methodist theology and belief.² If these claims are in fact true, then it is appropriate to put a Methodist hymnal to the test by exploring what a particular hymnal claims about a theological theme in light of other normative documents of the Methodist tradition. The test I undertake in the following is to compare and contrast the ways in which *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists* (hereafter *1780*) and *The United Methodist Hymnal* (1989, hereafter *UMH*) address the theme of “new creation.” I give particular emphasis to the ways in which each hymnal uses the language and imagery of “new birth” to describe the transformation of person and world.

¹An earlier version of this article was presented at the eleventh Oxford Institute that convened at Christ Church College, Oxford, England, August, 2002.

²As Randy Maddox notes in *Responsible Grace* (Nashville: Kingswood, 1994, 208), Wesley assumed “that hymns both empower and shape Christian discipleship.” One of the most comprehensive recent arguments for the theological role of hymnody remains Teresa Berger’s *Theology in Hymns?* trans. Timothy E. Kimbrough (Nashville: Kingswood, 1995).

New Birth of the Person

Recent discussions of John Wesley's understanding of new birth or regeneration (in John Wesley's theological writings, "new birth" and "regeneration" are often used interchangeably) have emphasized, in part, what new birth is not. Kenneth Collins has perhaps written the most strongly about this. Drawing on Wesley's analogy between physical and spiritual birth, Collins argues that, for Wesley, new birth is not an incremental change brought about through practices of Christian nurture, education, or the means of grace.³ The church's emphasis on nurture (at least since the time of Horace Bushnell in the mid-1800s) and on spiritual formation (as is emphasized today) has confused new birth—an event—with sanctification—a process.⁴ At the end of his sermon "The New Birth," Wesley makes this distinction clear. New birth "is not the same as sanctification. . . . When we are born again, then our sanctification, our inward and outward holiness begins; and thenceforward we are gradually to grow up into Him who is our Head."⁵

Collins and other recent interpreters of John Wesley emphasize the way in which new birth is an event of qualitative change in the life of the

³Kenneth Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997) 112-114.

⁴Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, 115. Collins also writes, "the totality of the change of the new birth refers not to the entirety of the process of sanctification, but to the integrity, the thoroughness of its beginning" (Collins, "John Wesley's Doctrine of the New Birth," *Wesley Theological Journal* 32.1, Spring 1997, 58). It is not clear, however, if Collins agrees with John Cobb's assessment that the new birth need not be "a dramatic event or one that can be singled out in the memory of the Christian" (John Cobb, *Grace and Responsibility*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1995, 99).

⁵"The New Birth" in *The Works of John Wesley*, II, *Sermons*, ed. Albert Outler (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984) (IV.2). Nevertheless, in "A letter to the Rev. Mr. Downes," John Wesley responds to Downes' questioning of sudden and miraculous conversion: "We believe regeneration, or in plain English, the new birth, to be a miraculous or supernatural work now as it was seventeen hundred years ago. We likewise believe that the spiritual life which commences when we are born again must, in the nature of the thing, have a first moment, as well as natural. But we say again and again, We are concerned for the *substance* of the work, not the *circumstance*. Let it be wrought at all and *we will not contend whether it be wrought gradually or instantaneously* [my emphasis]." *The Works of John Wesley*, IX, *The Methodist Societies, History, Nature, Design*, ed. Rupert Davies (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989) 360.

person. This qualitative change is followed by the ongoing cooperative work between the person and God in being made “perfect in love.” As Theodore Runyon argues, new birth is both relative (in the sense of being relational) and real. New birth is *relative* in that it brings about a change in our relationship to God and one another. New birth is *real* in that it brings about a change in our creaturehood. It is “the beginning of the new creaturehood, the *telos* toward which salvation is directed.”⁶ Or, as Randy Maddox writes, the relative change is “the restored pardoning Presence of God in our lives,” the real change the “rejuvenation of our human faculties.”⁷ Or, as Collins writes, “God’s justifying grace restores humanity to divine favor, changing our relationship to God. Regeneration changes the inward nature of people such that they are restored, at least in part, to the image of God.”⁸

All of these writers agree that, for John Wesley, the new birth is not an event initiated by the person; new birth is God’s work of grace in the person. Human activity—including the use of the means of grace—may prepare the way for God’s work and make one receptive to grace; but human activity also is required in response to God’s work as one seeks to conform one’s heart and life to Christ. The work of making a person holy, of bringing a person to birth, belongs to the Triune God. By analogy to physical birth, we do not give birth to ourselves nor, by analogy to the raising of Lazarus, do we raise ourselves from the dead. As Charles Wesley wrote,

At last I own it cannot be
that I should fit myself for thee;
Here then to thee I all resign—
Thine is the work, and only thine [my emphasis].⁹
(1780, Hymn 128, st. 5.)

This birth, Ted Runyon argues, is “midwifed by the Spirit, quickening and enlivening the spiritual sense that makes the image of God opera-

⁶Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley’s Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 71.

⁷Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 159.

⁸Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, 105.

⁹Citations from 1780 will include the hymn number, first line, and stanza quoted.

ble.”¹⁰ As John Wesley writes in “Marks of the New Birth,” it is characterized by the disposition of faith in God, assurance by the mutual testimony of our spirit and the Holy Spirit, and full obedience to the command to love God and neighbor.

When we compare the work and theology of John Wesley with that of Charles Wesley we discover that, although they share a commitment to the necessity of new birth,¹¹ there are some differences between their understandings of when this new birth occurs and the consequences of that birth. J. Ernest Rattenbury argues that Charles used “‘born of God’ at least once to describe the entirely new life into which he entered at his conversion, but almost invariably he uses the term ‘new birth’ for an experience which is to be sought in the future.”¹² Rattenbury further describes the contrasting views of John and Charles on the new birth:

What seems to be Charles’ view is that the experience of a new relation to God or a newly realized relation was productive of a new order of life; life for him was re-orientated by experience of present salvation. John claimed that this was the change of a man’s nature; Charles believed in the possibility of that change, but looked for its accomplishment in the future, only when sin was extirpated and love dominated the whole man. The new birth he sought after was the complete reconstruction of original unfallen human nature; the attainment of the earthly paradise.¹³

John and Charles agree on the necessity of the new birth as well as on the characteristics of that birth—renewal in the moral image of God, power over inward as well as outward sin, peace with God, and being made perfect in love. But John insists that the new birth initiates the process of sanctification, Charles that new birth and sanctification coincide in a

¹⁰Runyon, *The New Creation*, 89. Also see Collins, “John Wesley’s Doctrine of the New Birth,” 64.

¹¹In the sermon Charles borrows from John, “One thing is needful,” Charles or John writes, “Our one business is to rase [sic] out of our souls the likeness of our destroyer, and to be born again, to be formed anew after the likeness of our Creator.” [Sermon 21, Luke 10.42 in *The Sermons of Charles Wesley*, ed. Kenneth G. C. Newport (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2001), 363 (I.5).]

¹²J. Ernest Rattenbury, *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley’s Hymns* (London: Epworth Press, 1941), 260.

¹³*Ibid.*, 263.

“total reconstruction of character” in the future.¹⁴ If we return to John Wesley’s description of the new birth as both relative and real, he seems to emphasize the simultaneity of the relational and real change, although the real change only initiates the process of sanctification. Charles seems to separate the relational and real, anticipating the real change as (and at) the completion of the Christian life.

As we will see, these differences between John and Charles are not only made visible in the language and structure of the 1780 hymnal but also continue in the 1989 hymnal. *1780* is arranged, as John Wesley indicates in his preface, “under proper heads, according to the experience of real Christians. So that this book is in effect a little body of experimental and practical divinity.”¹⁵ In Wesley’s organization of the hymnal, three sections address directly the theme of new creation of the person: “For Mourners brought to the Birth” (containing thirty-eight hymns), “Groaning for full Redemption” (containing forty-nine hymns), and “For Believers Brought to the Birth” (containing twenty-six hymns). A fourth section, “Describing Judgment” (containing twelve hymns), also includes hymns that address the new creation of the cosmos. In regard to the 1780 hymnal, Rattenbury notes that

not only does [John] entitle hymns for mourners “brought to birth” to be sung by those seeking salvation, but also classifies a group of hymns for believers “brought to birth” as suitable for those who are “groaning” for full redemption. *Does this mean that, notwithstanding his corrections of the early hymns of Charles which equated the new birth with full redemption, he came to the conclusion in 1780 that Charles was right after all, or does he mean that there were two new births?*¹⁶ [my emphasis]

¹⁴Ibid., 261.

¹⁵*The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 7, *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists*, ed. Franz Hildebrandt and Oliver A. Beckerlegge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 74.

¹⁶Ibid., 262. We need not wait until 1780 to see this tension played out in John Wesley. In “The Principles of a Methodist” (1742), Wesley approves of the following summary of Methodist principles, adding his comments in parens and brackets: “The moment a man comes to Christ (by faith) he is justified, and born again; that is, he is born to dwell again in the imperfect sense (for there are two [if not more] degrees of regeneration). And he has power over all the stirrings and

If John had shaped the 1780 hymnal in a manner consistent with his emphasis on the simultaneity of the relative and real new birth, we would expect one section in the hymnal devoted to those being brought to the birth. To the extent that John was working from his *ordo salutis*, we would expect the primary division to be between mourners seeking new birth and believers seeking sanctification. But, as we also see in the structure of the hymnal, John did preserve a close relationship between new birth and sanctification by ordering the climactic sections of the hymnal as he does: “Groaning for full Redemption,” “For Believers brought to the Birth,” and “For Believers Saved.” Yet the questions remain. Does new birth initiate the process of sanctification (John) or is it delayed until the completion of sanctification (Charles)? If “full redemption” is achieved in the new birth, what remains to be accomplished after this?

When we review Charles’ hymns in these sections, we discover that little thematically distinguishes the mourner from the believer seeking the new birth. There is, nevertheless, a shift in emphasis: while both mourner and believer are seeking a transformation or renewing of the heart, the mourner is seeking transformation of a “heart of stone” into a “heart of flesh;” the believer seeks purity of heart and freedom from sin. Under “For Mourners brought to the Birth,” we find the following:

Lord, I despair myself to heal;
 I see my sin, but cannot feel...
’Tis thine a heart of flesh to give;
 Thy gifts I only can receive; . . .
 (1780, Hymn 127, “Lord, I despair
 myself to heal,” sts. 1 and 2.)

. . . *Turn into flesh my heart of stone;*
 Such power belongs to thee alone—
Turn into flesh my heart!
 (1780, Hymn 139, “O Jesus, let
 me bless thy name!” st. 1.)

motions of sin, but not a total freedom from them. He has Christ *with* him, but not Christ *in* him. [ed. note: This sentence is omitted in 1772.] Therefore he hath not yet, in the full and proper sense, a *new* and *clean* heart, or the indwelling of the Spirit [ed. note: this last phrase is omitted in 1772.]. But being exposed to various temptations he may and will fall again from this condition, if he doth not attain to a more excellent gift.” *Works*, IX, 64.

. . . *The stony from my heart remove,*
And give me, Lord, O give me love,
Or at thy feet I die.

(1780, Hymn 140, "Still, Lord, I
languish for thy grace," st. 2.)

God only knows the love of God;
O that it now were shed abroad
In this poor stony heart! . . .

(1780, Hymn 141, "O love divine,
how sweet thou art!" st. 3.)

In contrast, only one hymn under "For Believers brought to the Birth" develops this image:

. . . Now, Father, let the gracious shower
Descend, and make me pure from sin.

O take this heart of stone away!

Thy sway it doth not, cannot own:

In me no longer let it stay;

O take away this heart of stone!

(1780, Hymn 380, "God of all power,
and truth, and grace," sts. 3 and 4.)

This last hymn introduces a dominant theme of the section for believers, the new creature purified of sin. The transformation of the heart from stone to flesh leads to a life in which sin no longer occurs.

O cut short the work, *and make*

Me now a creature new!

For thy truth and mercy's sake

The gracious wonder show.

Call me forth thy witness, Lord!

Let my life declare thy power;

To thy perfect love restored,

O let me sin no more.

(1780, Hymn 390, "O might I
this moment cease," st. 2.)

What is *our calling's glorious hope*

But inward holiness!

For this to Jesus I look up
I calmly wait for this.
I wait, till he shall touch me clean,
Shall life and power impart;
*Give me the faith that casts out sin
And purifies the heart.*

(1780, Hymn 394, “What is our
calling’s glorious hope,” sts. 1-2.)

Father, I dare believe
Thee merciful and true;
Thou wilt my guilty soul forgive,
My fallen soul renew.
Come then for Jesus’ sake,
And bid my heart be clean;
An end of all my troubles make,
An end of all my sin.

(1780, Hymn 398, “Father, I dare
believe,” sts. 1-2.)

When we turn to the section “Groaning for full Redemption,” these themes continue, although the emphasis shifts. These hymns provide explicit petitions for the “second birth,” stronger emphasis on the sinless character of the newborn Christian, and expectation that the newly “enfleshed” heart be filled with the presence and love of Christ. This section seems to most clearly represent Charles’ perspective on new birth. As we will see, it is also primarily from this section that *UMH* draws those hymns that emphasize the new birth.

The thing my God doth hate
That I not more may do,
Thy creature, Lord, again create,
And all my soul renew;
My soul then, like thine,
Abhor the thing unclean,
*And sanctified by love divine
Forever cease from sin.”*

(1780, “The thing my God
doth hate,” 331, st. 1.)

*A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of love divine,
Perfect, and right, and pure, and good—
A copy, Lord, of thine! . . .
My heart, thou know'st, can never rest
Till thou create my peace,
Till, of my Eden repossessed,
From every sin I cease."*

(1780, "O for a heart to praise my
God," 334, sts. 4 and 6.)¹⁷

Hasten the joyful day
Which shall my sins consume,
*When old things shall be passed away,
And all things new become.
Th'original offence
Out of my soul erase;
Enter thyself, and drive it hence,
And take up all the place."*

(1780, "O come, and dwell in me,"
356, st. 2.)

Lord, *if I on thee believe,
The second gift impart;
With th'indwelling Spirit give
A new, a contrite heart. . . .
(1780, "Ever fainting with desire,"
344, st. 3.)*¹⁸

I all thy holy will shall prove;
I, a weak, sinful worm,
When thee with all my heart I love,
Shall all thy law perform.
*The graces of my second birth
To me shall all be given,
And I shall do thy will on earth
As angels do in heaven."*
1780, "Jesu, the Life, the Truth, the
Way," 347, sts. 7-8.)

¹⁷UMH omits sts. 5 and 6 as given in 1780.

¹⁸Each stanza ends with "And perfect me in love."

Let me, according to thy word,
A tender, contrite heart receive,
 Which grieves at having grieved its Lord,
 And never can itself forgive;
A heart, thy joys and griefs to feel,
A heart, that cannot faithless prove,
A heart, where Christ alone may dwell,
 All praise, all meekness, and all love.”
 (1780, “O Jesus, let thy dying cry,”
 332, sts. 3-4.)

In *UMH*, two sections address directly the theme of new creation—“Rebirth and the New Creature” (containing eleven hymns) and “A New Heaven and a New Earth—The Completion of Creation” (containing twelve hymns). These divisions, as with the shape of the hymnal as whole, reflect the theological trajectory created by its editors as they attempted to order the hymnal around a Wesleyan *ordo salutis*. If the new creation is a significant theme in contemporary Methodist theology, we might expect the hymnal to provide significant and specific attention to it. Yet of the twenty-three hymns presented in these two sections, only four speak directly of God’s present action in the new creation of person and cosmos. Two of these four are by Brian Wren: “This is a day of new beginnings” (*UMH* 383) and “Arise, shine out, your light has come” (*UMH* 725). Two are by Charles Wesley: “Love Divine, all loves excelling” (*UMH* 384) and “O come and dwell with me” (*UMH* 388). A fifth hymn, R. B. Y. Scott’s “O day of God draw nigh” (*UMH* 730), offers a plea that God return to act “as at creation’s birth.”

When we compare *UMH* with *1780*, we discover that seven of Wesley hymns included in *UMH* which address the theme of new birth or new creation also appear in *1780*:¹⁹

¹⁹*UMH* includes two other Wesley hymns under “Rebirth and the New Creation”: “Let us plead for faith alone” (*UMH* 385, *1780* 507) and “Come, O Thou Traveler unknown” (*UMH* 386, *1780* 136). The first is an excerpt from Part III of “The Love-feast,” which John assigns “For the Society, Praying.” Theologically, it seems misplaced; it is perhaps more appropriate in its current form to “Strength and Tribulation.” The second John assigns “For mourners brought to the birth.” Its placement in *UMH* is consistent with its placement in *1780* and seems appropriate; however, as an allegory of the new birth it warrants separate and more extended treatment than is possible here.

- “Sinners, turn, why will you die?” (*UMH* 346, 1780 6);
“How can we sinners know” (*UMH* 372, 1780 93);
“Love Divine, all loves excelling” (*UMH* 384, 1780 374);
“O come and dwell in me” (*UMH* 388, 1780 356);
“I want a principle within” (*UMH* 410, 1780 299);
“O for a heart to praise my God” (*UMH* 417, 1780 334); and
“Jesus, thine all-victorious love” (*UMH* 422, 1780 351 sts. 4,
7-9 of the hymn “My God, I know, I feel thee mine”).

In *UMH*, these hymns are categorized under “Prevenient Grace—Invitation” (346), “Justifying Grace—Assurance” (372), “Sanctifying and Perfecting Grace—Rebirth and the New Creature” (384, 388), and “Sanctifying and Perfecting Grace—Personal Holiness” (410, 417, 422). In 1780, these seven hymns (using the *UMH* page numbers) appear under “Exhorting and Beseeking (346),” “Describing Inward Religion” (372), “Groaning for full redemption” (384, 388, 417, 422), and “For believers watching” (410). The first two hymns seem to have the same theological function in *UMH* as in 1780 (assurance being a mark of the new birth or inward religion for John Wesley).²⁰ But the organization of the other five hymns in *UMH* represent a shift away from John Wesley’s clear association between justification and new birth and of new birth as the initiation of sanctification. The organization of these hymns in *UMH* suggests a movement toward Charles Wesley’s understanding of new birth as the completion of the process of sanctification, separate from and subsequent to justification.²¹

I have already cited the relevant stanzas from *UMH* 388 and 417. The following are the relevant stanzas from the other five Wesley hymns in *UMH*.

²⁰Structurally, *UMH* warrants close scrutiny. On the one hand, *UMH* models John Wesley’s own ambivalence about the relationship between baptism and regeneration. Of the rather few hymns for baptism, only John Geyer’s 1969 paraphrase of Romans 6 directly addresses the question of new birth: “A new creation come to life and grows as Christ’s new body takes on flesh and blood” (*UMH* 610). Ruth Duck’s “Wash, O God, our sons and daughters” briefly alludes to the community “water-washed and Spirit-born” (*UMH* 605). On the other hand, the structure of *UMH* suggests a shift away from the means of grace as practices of “outward holiness” through which the Christian seeks sanctifying and perfecting grace.

²¹Randy Maddox suggests a similar trajectory when he writes “our responsiveness to God’s offer of restored pardoning relationship (justification). . . induces the gracious further regeneration of our human faculties in the new birth” (Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 170).

You, whom he ordained to be
transcripts of the Trinity,
you, whom he in life doth hold,
you, for whom himself was sold,
you, on whom he still doth wait,
whom he would again create;
made by him, and purchased, why,
why will you forever die?
(UMH 346, "Sinners, Turn, why
will you die?" st. 5.)

Our nature's turned, our mind
transformed in all its powers,
and both the witnesses are joined,
the Spirit of God with ours.
(UMH 372, "How can we sin-
ners know," st. 6.)

Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit
into every troubled breast!
Let us all in thee inherit;
let us find that second rest.
Take away our bent to sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning,
set our hearts at liberty. . . .
Finish, then, thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be.
Let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.
(UMH 384, "Love Divine, all
loves excelling," sts. 2 and 4. ²²)

²²John Wesley omits st. 2 in 1780.

Almighty God of truth and love,
to me thy power impart
*the mountain from my soul remove,
the hardness from my heart.*

(*UMH* 410, "I want a principle
within," st. 3.)

Refining fire, go through my heart,
illuminate my soul;
scatter thy life through every part
and sanctify the whole.

(*UMH* 422, "Jesus, Thine all-
victorious love," st. 4.)

What is distinctive about these stanzas is that they represent the only points of continuity between the theology of new birth in *1780* and *UMH*. Through these hymns, the Christian person seeks removal of the hardness of heart, the transformation of mind and nature, purity of heart, and freedom from sin. The other hymns intended to address "Rebirth and the New Creature" in *UMH* are notable for their lack of concern for the transformed heart, cessation of sin, and restoration of perfect love. With the exception of "O for a heart to praise my God" (*UMH* 417) and Edwin Hatch's "Breathe on me, Breath of God" (*UMH* 420), we are hard pressed to find any clear description of what the person seeks when seeking new birth or what the newborn should look like. Even less visible is the expectation that the newborn Christian seeks a life without sin.

There are three other hymns in *UMH* that address or at least explicitly name the theme of new birth. In contrast to the Wesley hymns in which the language of "I" and "me" are dominant, all three of these hymns focus on the life of the community. Two of these focus on the renewing work of the Holy Spirit and one on the redemptive work of Christ. Brian Foley's "Holy Spirit, come confirm us" (*UMH* 331), strangely separated from other hymns on baptism and confirmation, asks that the Spirit "renew us" and "make us live." In Bessie Porter Head's "O Breath of Life" (*UMH* 543), a petition for the renewing presence of the Spirit in the church, the church prays, "Then in your tenderness remake us; revive, restore, for this we plead. O Breath of Love, come, breathe within us, renewing thought and will and heart. . . ." Colin Thompson's joyful eucharistic hymn "Christian people, raise your song" (*UMH* 636)

celebrates eucharist as a means of our restoration in Christ, names Christ as the pioneer of the new creation, and compares our joy to that of a new spring:

. . . Nature's gifts of wheat and vine now are set before us;
as we offer bread and wine, Christ comes to restore us.

Come to welcome Christ today, God's great revelation,
who has pioneered the way of the new creation.
Greet the Christ, our risen King, gladly recognizing,
as with joy we greet the spring out of winter rising.

There is no groaning toward birth here, only celebration of the new creation accomplished. There is also a sense in some of these hymns that new birth comes without gestation or the travail of the birth itself.

New Birth of Creation

What relationship is there between the new birth of the person and of the cosmos? A relationship of correlation between the new birth of the individual and the new creation of the cosmos is largely absent from the Wesleys' sermons and hymns. Nevertheless, there is in their work a sense that repentance and the new creation of the person are steps toward the renewing of creation. In his sermon "Scriptural Christianity," John Wesley describes the new creation as follows:

Suppose now the fullness of time to be come, and the prophecies to be accomplished—what a prospect is this! All is "peace, quietness, and assurance for ever." Here is no din of arms, no "confused noise," no "garments rolled in blood." "Destructions are come to a perpetual end:" wars are ceased from the earth. . . . Civil discord is at an end for evermore, and none is left either to destroy or hurt his neighbour.²³

John Cobb, drawing on Theodore Runyon's discussion of this quote, suggests that the quote serves to point to liberation themes in John Wesley's theology. Cobb notes Runyon pointing out that Wesley's God "pours himself into the world to renew the creature after his image and the creation after his will. The 'design of the great Author' is that love 'shine forth in

²³*Works, I, Sermons*, 170.

action' until all things in the created order are restored to their glorious estate."²⁴

Charles Wesley, in contrast to John, seems to see primarily the destruction that comes with God's judgment rather than the promised day of peace. Such is the case in Charles' sermon on the occasion on the London earthquakes of 1750. Kenneth Newport describes Charles' theology:

This world, thinks Charles, is destined not to get better, but worse. And then the end will come. Humankind and society at large will not be transformed into the image of God through the general and gradual spread of the gospel, but through the drama of the eschaton. . . . Society will continue to slide downwards into a moral and spiritual abyss until the great eschaton, the coming of Christ, sets all things right. The wicked are finally destroyed and the good rewarded.²⁵

John does not temper such thoughts in the shaping of *1780* where he seems to give them his editorial stamp of approval. Drawing especially on Charles' work in *Hymns for the Year 1756*, perhaps best described as Charles' "earthquake" hymns, John places hymns on the new creation of the cosmos under the section "Describing Judgment." The first two stanzas quoted below clearly draw on Charles' experience of the earthquakes.

Every fresh alarming token
More confirms the faithful word;
Nature (for its Lord hath spoken)
Must be suddenly restored;
From this national confusion,
From this ruined earth and skies,
See the times of restitution,
See the new creation rise!

Vanish then this world of shadows,
Pass the former things away;
Lord! appear, appear to glad us
With the dawn of endless day.

²⁴John Cobb, *Grace and Responsibility* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 30. Cobb is citing Theodore Runyon, "Introduction: Wesley and the Theologies of Liberation" in Theodore Runyon, ed., *Sanctification and Liberation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), 46.

²⁵Newport, *The Sermons of Charles Wesley*, 63.

O conclude this mortal story!
Throw this universe aside!
Come, eternal King of glory,
Now descend, and take thy bride.

(1780, "Righteous God, whose
vengeful phials," 59, sts. 3-4.)

Nothing hath the just to lose
By worlds on worlds destroyed;
Far beneath his feet he views,
With smiles, the flaming void;
Sees this universe renewed,
The grand millennial reign begun,
Shouts with all the sons of God
Around th'eternal throne!

(1780, "Stand th'omnipotent
decree!" 60, st. 3.)

Yet still the Lord, the Saviour, reigns
When nature is destroyed,
And no created thing remains
Throughout the flaming void.

Sublime upon his azure throne,
He speaks th'almighty word;
His fiat is obeyed! 'tis done,
And paradise restored.

So be it! Let this system end!
This ruinous earth and skies!
The New Jerusalem descend,
The new creation rise!

(1780, "By faith we find the
place above," 63, sts. 5-7.)

According to his word,
His oath to sinners given,
We look to see restored
The ruined earth and heaven,

In a new world his truth to prove,
A world of righteousness and love.
(1780, "Jesus, accept the
praise," 522, st. 7.)

Where the individual is summoned to repentance and new birth lest she or he be destroyed, as we hear in the repeated plea "Sinners, turn, why will you die?", the new creation of the cosmos comes only after its destruction. Nature and all created things are destroyed before the inbreaking of the new Jerusalem. The Christian person, however, is spared destruction; the Christian is taken up to view the destruction "far beneath his feet." Yet, as the new heart is restored with love, so too is creation restored to that love.

Contemporary Methodists do not have the earthquakes of 1750 shaping our images of God's judgment and recreation. Nor is there, as hymnal editors had in the 1960s, strong memories of world war which, by the time that *UMH* was being developed in the 1980s were inscribed less in living memory and more in textbooks. In their place, especially in North America, we have the images of New York and Washington on September 11, 2001, as well as images of Afghanistan in the months following. We do not yet know if these memories will shape the next Methodist hymnal.

How then does *UMH* help us understand that the new creation is not only for the individual but also for the whole of creation? Structurally, the physical and theological distance between "Rebirth and the New Creature" and "The Completion of Creation" in *UMH* mark the church's lack of understanding of the connection between personal and cosmic recreation. The title of the latter section is revealing: the theme of new heaven and earth is addressed under the *completion* of creation rather than the *recreation* of the cosmos as we find imaged in Isaiah 40 and Revelation 21. This separation between the personal and cosmic reflects contemporary Western cultural assumptions that new birth or the recreation of the self is primarily a private and personal event unrelated to other persons, communities, or traditions. It also creates problems for the church. As Manfred Marquardt suggests in a discussion of conversion and salvation, a faithful understanding of new birth requires more than this. "Salvation . . . is a process of the renewal of human beings as images of God. This 'new creation' is presented in scripture as encompassing not only persons as individuals but also their essential relationships with God, other human

beings, themselves, and the whole created world.”²⁶ And, as Theodore Runyon argues in his description of *orthopathic* Christian experience, “any genuine experience of God has cosmic dimensions. It incorporates us into the divine enterprise of renewing the world, and we know God as Creator as God becomes our Re-Creator.”²⁷

A number of hymns in *UMH* anticipate the heavenly city and point toward the “day of peace” when the lion lies down with the lamb. As I indicated earlier in this paper, only two hymns assigned to “A New Heaven and a New Earth—The Completion of Creation” directly address the new creation of the cosmos. A third hymn, Carl Daw’s “O day of peace” (*UMH* 729), provides an image of the day of peace when the lion lies down with the lamb. It also echoes John Wesley’s vision of that day when there is “no din of arms, no confused noise, no ‘garments rolled in blood.’”

The first of the two hymns that directly address the new creation of the cosmos is R. B. Y. Scott’s “O day of God, draw nigh.” Scott’s hymn provides a concise petition for “the quiet of a steadfast faith, calm of a call obeyed,” justice, enduring foundations, peace, and the end of desolation that Israel and the church anticipate when reading Isaiah 40 and 60. Scott concludes the hymn with the petition that God’s light again be present “as at creation’s birth.”²⁸

The second hymn, by Brian Wren, more directly paraphrases Isaiah 60 and leads us to a vision of the heavenly city as described in Revelation 21. The hymn begins with an announcement of the new creation:

Arise, shine out, your light has come,
unfolding city of our dreams.
On distant hills a glory gleams:
the new creation has begun.
(*UMH* 725, “Arise, shine out,
your light has come,” st. 1.)

Wren, more like John than Charles Wesley, sees and hears a new creation already begun, even as its completion is anticipated.

²⁶Manfred Marquardt, “Christian Conversion: Connecting our Lives with God,” in Randy Maddox, ed., *Rethinking Wesley’s Theology for Contemporary Methodism* (Nashville: Kingswood, 1998) 99.

²⁷Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley’s Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998) 165.

²⁸*UMH* 730.

Two other Wren hymns, not part of this section of *UMH*, are relevant to our discussion here. “This is a day of new beginnings” (*UMH* 383), the one contemporary hymn that speaks directly of the new creation assigned to “Rebirth and the New Creature,” is, on the one hand, misplaced. It provides an interpretation of the new creation anticipated in Revelation 21 (“God making all things new”) rather than the new birth of the Christian person. On the other hand, the hymn so clearly focuses on the transformation of the individual, naming pain, guilt, and disappointment as those things left behind in the new creation, that it suggests a contemporary psychology of renewal rather than a theology of conversion. Wren’s “Lord God, your love has called us here” seems an apt companion to Wesley’s “Come, O Thou traveler unknown”; both express the active work of God’s love (or of God as love):

. . . show how grandly love intends
to work till all creation sings,
to fill all worlds, to crown all things.

Lord God, in Christ, you set us free
your life to live, your joy to share;
give us your Spirit’s liberty
to turn from guilt and full despair,
and offer all that faith can do,
while love is making all things new.
(*UMH* 579, “Lord God, your love
has called us here,” sts. 4 and 5.)

Situated within the section of the hymnal emphasizing the church’s call to participate in God’s mission, this hymn develops a link between God’s work of human transformation and God’s renewing of the cosmos. It also begins to describe the nature of human collaboration in God’s transforming mission.

Cesareo Gabaraín’s “Camina, pueblo de Dios” (*UMH* 305) describes the work of the resurrection as providing a new law, a new alliance, and a new creation. For Gabaraín, the resurrection of Christ is the renewing of creation and the beginning of a new world. Unfortunately, the need for a metrical translation results in a modest slight of hand in the English translation. George Lockwood inserts the word “reborn” in the refrain and obscures the sense that it is in the new creation that new worlds are opened to us: “*Hay nuevos mundos abiertos en la nueva creación*” becomes “Christ’s resurrection has freed us. There are new worlds to

explore” (st. 3). As a colleague noted in her review of this translation, Lockwood shifts the action away from God, who opens new worlds through the resurrection to us as the explorers of these new worlds.

Finally, in “Behold a broken world” (*UMH* 426) Bishop Timothy Dudley-Smith draws on the promises of peace described in Isaiah 2.1-4 and Micah 4.1-4 to develop a prayer for the redemption of the world. Dudley-Smith’s petition concludes:

Bring, Lord, your better world to birth,
your kingdom, love’s domain,
where peace with God, and peace on earth,
and peace eternal reign.

As with the hymns by Scott and Daw, Dudley-Smith’s description of the new creation seems to be more compatible with John Wesley’s hope for the days of peace that follow the new creation than it is with Charles Wesley’s emphasis on God’s judgment which inaugurates that new creation.

Conclusion

On the one hand, this comparison of *1780* and *UMH* reveals a general continuity of images for the new birth of the person. Both hymnals express a concern for the transformation of the mind and nature, purity of heart, and freedom from sin. On the other hand, exploration of *UMH* reveals diminished attention to these themes as well as an increasing lack of clarity about what this new life looks like. *1780* gives sustained attention to the experience of and desire for God’s justifying grace, accompanied by an expectation that such will be provided in the present. In contrast, *UMH* hints at this experience as something that God has yet to provide. This hymnological separation of justification and new birth seems to continue Charles Wesley’s emphasis on new birth as a future event for the justified Christian person. Although both hymnals attempt to describe Christian experience, *UMH* more often provides a theology (or psychology) of renewal and assurance rather than of conversion or transformation. When *UMH* does attend to the themes of personal transformation, it minimizes any expectation of new birth as a qualitative event.

Concerning the new creation of the cosmos, this comparison reveals a discontinuity between the two hymnals. *1780*, dependent as it is on Charles Wesley’s “earthquake” hymns, focuses primarily on the way in which God’s judgment of the world will lead to its recreation. There is little connection made between the new birth of the person and the new

birth of the world. *UMH*, more in continuity with John Wesley's eschatological vision as expressed in his sermons and letters, emphasizes the ongoing transformation of creation as humanity cooperates with God to renew the world as a place of justice and peace. But in contrast to *1780*, *UMH* seems to be less interested in judging the world and more interested in imagining it in its renewed shape. Although the connection between the rebirth of the person and of the world is no more explicit in *UMH* than in *1780*, the structure of *UMH*—moving from “Rebirth of the Creature” to “Personal Holiness” and then to “Social Holiness”—does set up some expectation of relationship between them.

Although subjected to modest revision over the course of its life, *1780* served as the standard collection of hymnody for Methodists for almost fifty years. *UMH* is now approaching its fifteenth year of service to the church but has already been joined by a supplement. Some have argued that fixed collections of hymnody intended for a denomination are seeing their last days. The musical and liturgical implications of these arguments require, and are receiving, separate treatment.

In this comparative reading of two Methodist hymnals I have tried to point to some theological implications of such arguments. When, as an ecclesial movement, Methodists claim their hymnals as theological standards for the church, we must attend to the “practical divinity” we are shaping through congregational song. John Witvliet argues that “the more our minds live into the pictorial language of the texts we sing, the more the images in these texts will shape our souls.”²⁹ In some of our churches today, we see many persons willing to give themselves in various forms of missional service for the transformation of the world. But in these same churches, it is uncommon to hear any expectation that these same persons participate in their own transformation through the birthing, converting, and sanctifying work of God. In other churches, we hear significant calls to personal transformation as new persons in Christ. But in these churches it is uncommon to hear any connection between such personal transformation and the transformation of the world. What we sing of itself will not and cannot remedy these disconnections between the personal and cosmic. But if the church through its hymnals does not provide us with imagery and language to shape and interpret our experience as Christian people, who or what will?

²⁹John Witvliet, “Soul Food for the People of God: Ritual Song, Spiritual Nourishment, and the Communal Worship of God,” *Liturgical Ministry* 10.2 (Spring 2001), 103.

FAITH WORKING THROUGH LOVE: THE WESLEYAN TRADITIONS TODAY

**The Wesleyan Theological Society and
Bahamas Wesleyan Fellowship Celebrate the
Tri-Centenary of John Wesley's Birth, 8-10 January, 2003¹**

by

David Bundy

From 8-10 January 2003, scholars, pastors, church executives and laity gathered in Nassau, The Bahamas, for an International Conference in celebration of the 300th anniversary of the birth of the Reverend John Wesley. The event was hosted by the Bahamas Wesleyan Fellowship and co-sponsored by the Wesleyan Theological Society. Planning was led by the Reverend Carl Campbell, longtime WTS member and pastor of the Nassau Methodist Church, Nassau, The Bahamas, in cooperation with Dr. Barry L. Callen of Anderson University and Editor of the *Wesleyan Theological Journal*. The Conference met at the Bahamian owned and managed Nassau Beach Hotel, just a few minutes from the center of Nassau.

¹A number of important essays were presented in the extensive program of the conference, with the theme *Faith Working Through Love: Wesleyan Traditions Today. An International Christian Conference*. The essays included: "Reflections on WTS" [p.27], "Understanding the Wesleyan Theological Society" [pp. 29-31], and, "Bahamians Who Have Attended the Wesleyan Theological Society Since 1991" [p. 48]. See also Mavis A. Holmes-Hanek, "Reflections on WTS Influences," *Ibid.*, 48, and E. Brian Seymour, "The Wesleyan Theological Society: My Experience," *Faith Working Through Love* [Conference Program], 54. Several members of WTS accepted invitations to the Bahamas during the past decade: "W.T.S. Visitors to the Bahamas," *Faith Working Through Love* [Conference Program], 50.

This was the first international conference of the U.S.-based Wesleyan Theological Society.

Arguably, the high point of the conference was an ecumenical church service at Ebenezer Methodist Church, the oldest Methodist church building in The Bahamas (built 1802). Gathered under the theme “Born to Serve the Lord,” it was perhaps the most ecumenical gathering of the Methodist family ever held. At this service were representatives of the Anglican Church, the Methodist Church of the Bahamas, Methodist Church of the Caribbean and the Americas, independent Methodist congregations, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Church of the Nazarene, the Free Methodist Church, the Wesleyan Church, the Church of God (Cleveland) and Church of God of Prophecy, Church of the Brethren, Church of God (Anderson), the Baptists, the United Church of Belgium, the Methodist Church of Mexico, and the United Methodist Church (U.S.A.). This historic and unprecedented diversity and participation of Wesley’s children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren united in worship of God, honoring Wesley, singing Methodist hymns, all auguring well for the future of the tradition. Dr. Leslie Anderson, Superintendent of the Methodist Church of the Caribbean and the Americas, came from Panama to participate in the conference and to preach at the worship service. A number of the representatives served as chairs and moderators of the conference lectures.

The main body of the conference was devoted to a series of lectures by WTS and Bahamas Wesleyan Fellowship members. The first lecture, by Dr. Gail Saunders, Director of the Archives of the Bahamas, commented on the development of Methodism in the Bahamas from its beginnings until the present.² She highlighted the missionary origins of the tradition and the role of the Methodist Church in the development of education, primarily for the elite, in the Islands before the advent of Majority Rule in 1967.³

²Well known scholar and archivist of The Bahamas, Gail Saunders, has published: *Slavery in the Bahamas, 1648-1838* (Nassau: n.p., 1985); *Social Life in the Bahamas, 1880s-1920s* (Nassau: Rosebud, 1996); *Bahamian Loyalists and Their Slaves* (London: Macmillan, 1983).

³See also, Colbert Williams, *The Methodist Contribution to Education in the Bahamas (circa 1790-1975)* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1982). A different, and very important perspective is found in Nadeen Beneby, “A Brief History of Methodism in the Bahamas. From Joseph Paul to Autonomy,” in *Faith Working Through Love* [Conference Program], 38-40.

This was followed by a lecture entitled “Thomas Coke, the Bahamas and the Beginnings of Methodist Mission” by Dr. David Bundy, President of the Wesleyan Theological Society. He argued that while Wesley and Coke created cultural space for Methodist mission and developed a tradition of self-supporting mission,⁴ Methodist mission in the Bahamas (and in many other places in the Caribbean) was, in the early period, initiated, led, guided and funded by persons of African descent. Special attention was given to Joseph and Sussanah Paul from New York who had recently purchased their freedom, and Anthony Wallace. African-American missionaries to the Bahamas from South Carolina, sent by William Hammett who had become estranged from Thomas Coke, failed miserably and publicly. The Pauls and their three children arrived at Abaco Island, the Bahamas, on 30 November 1783, served a year as indentured servants to pay their fare, and moved to Nassau sometime after 1788. They began the first Methodist services in Nassau. African-American missionaries to the Bahamas from South Carolina sent by William Hammett, who had become estranged from Thomas Coke, failed miserably.

By 1800, there were 160 Methodists in the Society, all Black. For more than a decade, the Methodist revival in the Bahamas had been undertaken without assistance from any missionary society. In the sources it is clear that it was African-Bahamian, self-supporting, self-governing and self-perpetuating. After the arrival on 22 October 1800 of the first Methodist missionary, William Turton, little changed until he and later arriving missionaries established worship centers primarily for Whites both on Eleuthera (1805) and in Nassau (1811). The development of congregations among the Whites and the increased ease of travel for missionaries from the British Isles led to the segregation of the Methodist Church, the exclusion of Black Methodists from educational opportunities, and to other compromises on racial and class issues.

Dr. Randy Maddox, Seattle Pacific University, lectured on “John Wesley as Holistic Healer: Reclaiming a Strand of the Wesleyan Tradition.” He emphasized Wesley’s concern that Christ might “heal body and soul together. He wants to give you . . . both inward and outward health [Letter to A. Knox, 26/10/78, *Letters* (Telford) 6:327]. Wesley recognized

⁴See also, D. Bundy, “Pauline Missions: The Wesleyan Holiness Vision,” in Charles Yrigoyen, ed. *The Global Impact of the Wesleyan Traditions and Their Related Movements* (Pietist and Wesleyan Studies, 14; Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2002).

the connection between the physical and the spiritual, understood the need for communal support for achieving and maintaining health, advocated using the best science of the day, and was concerned about the professionalization and increasing costs of medical care. The increasing cost of access to medical advice prevented the poor and middle classes from having information that was available in the public domain. Wesley used the most recent texts to access medical treatments and procedures, organized them in his *Primitive Physick*, and then took his medical expertise to the poor and members of his societies. Maddox gave particular attention to Wesley's *Primitive Physick* and its sources.

Dr. J. Emmette Weir, a Bahamian and much-published minister of the Methodist Church of the Caribbean and the Americas, contributed a lecture entitled "Concern for the Poor in Wesleyan and Liberation Theology."⁵ Weir described the concern for the poor in the early Methodist revival and suggested that the concern for the poor of liberation theology is parallel and analogous. Wesley and Gutierrez, suggested Weir, were making similar arguments about exploitation of the poor, the structural evil imbedded in the culture, and the need to change the structures of society to enfranchise the poor.

Professor Jean-Pierre Van Noppen, Free University of Brussels, is a specialist in English language and literature and has pioneered the use of computer technologies for analyzing language and texts.⁶ A Belgian member of the United Church, from a long time Methodist family, Van Noppen lectured on "Reading Wesley Today: With the Computer and With the Heart." Using the Works of Wesley on CD-ROM and OxUP WordSmith to perform word and frequency counts, Van Noppen was able to establish the first forty key words in the Jackson edition of Wesley's works, in the *Sermons*, and in John Wesley's *Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists*. The most frequently used terms revealed the central theological themes and hermeneutical processes of the Wesley texts. These were found to be in radical discontinuity with a corpus of other standard and popular eighteenth century literary texts, including contributions by both American and British authors. Using the

⁵J. Emmette Weir, *Sow Seeds of Hope* (Nassau: Executive Printers, 1984); *idem*, *March on Bahamaland* (Nassau: Media Publishing, 1998).

⁶Jean-Pierre Van Noppen, *Transforming Words: The Early Methodist Revival from a Discourse Perspective* (Religions and Discourse, 3; Bern, Berlin, Frankfurt a/M: Peter Lang, 1999).

results of this research, Van Noppen went on to discuss central questions posed in international Methodist research. He responded to claims that Methodist discourse was manipulative and that it was politically and socially reactionary. These are central questions that must be addressed if Wesley is to have a continuing influence in the evolution of Christian thought. Van Noppen provided innovative methodological and theoretical approaches for responding to critics of the Methodist revivals.

Dr. Patrick Roberts, M.D., a Methodist layperson and medical doctor for the Bahamian Olympic Sports Program, lectured on "Sports in the Bahamas: Influence of Religion on Sports Performance." He insisted that there is a close relationship between sports and religion, on both personal and performance levels. This is seen in the use of prayer as a tool to prepare for competition and to readjust after competition. It is also seen as a major factor in developing solidarity on the sports teams. In a nation where Christianity is not marginalized as in the U.S.A. and Europe, the role of religion can be and is more overt and less restricted by social structures and court decisions. This has afforded the athletes freedom of expression of religion and Roberts the ability to pursue his research that would not be available in the other contexts.

Dr. Clark Pinnock, McMaster Divinity College, presented a lecture entitled "The Beauty of God: John Wesley's Reform and its Aftermath." Pinnock expressed gratitude to Wesley for "his revivalism and his advocacy of Holiness." He asserted that Wesley provides "a better way to read the Bible . . . following a personalistic (biblical) rather than an absolutist (philosophical) conception of God." Wesley's approach and contribution were framed in the context of the evolution of the debate about "freedom" in the church. It was noted that, except for Augustine (who adopted Manichaeian understandings of predestination), the early church considered theories of determinism to be heretical. The Augustinian bent of the magisterial reformation meant that it did not arrive at new paradigms. Wesley's contribution was "a truly relational model" of God and humans. He confessed that his own search for God and a paradigm for Christian living might have been facilitated by an earlier encounter with the theology and praxis of John Wesley.

Professor M. William Ury, Wesley Biblical Seminary, contributed "A Wesleyan Concept of 'Person.'"⁷ Ury explored the structures of Wesley's

⁷M. William Ury, *Trinitarian Personhood: Investigating the Implications of a Relational Definition* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, Publishers, 2002).

assertion, “I want, I value, I preach, the love of God and man.”[*Works*, XII: 62-63]. He noted the need for a clear understanding of “person” in Wesley if one is to understand the nature of God, of humans and of their interaction. Ury demonstrated that Wesley did not clearly distinguish between attribute and essence, but insisted on a “logic” of “trinity, holiness, love.” The concept of “trinity” is central to Ury’s analysis of Wesleyan theology and spirituality. Significantly, Ury insists that Wesley’s understanding of God and of divine relationality cannot be grounded alone in either the Eastern Christian or Latin traditions.

Professor Thomas J. Oord, Northwest Nazarene University, spoke to those assembled for the closing luncheon banquet on the subject, “Thy Nature and Thy Name is Love.”⁸ Taking as central to Wesleyan theology a concept of “love,” Oord reflected on the efficaciousness of the values of the Enlightenment and Post-Modernity as tools for articulating Wesley’s concerns. Many of the values of the enlightenment, he insisted, facilitated the Wesleyan revivals. The Enlightenment provided a base for the Wesleyan insistence on individual responsibility before humans and God, individual salvation, and the experience of holiness in community. The optimism of the Enlightenment provided a basis for calling for social transformation and redemption of the world.

There was an organ recital at Trinity Methodist Church. At the luncheon, a painting commissioned for the Conference was unveiled. The world-renowned Bahamian painter and sculptor Antonius Roberts produced the work. The painting will be shown at various Methodist gatherings and conferences during the tri-centenary year.⁹

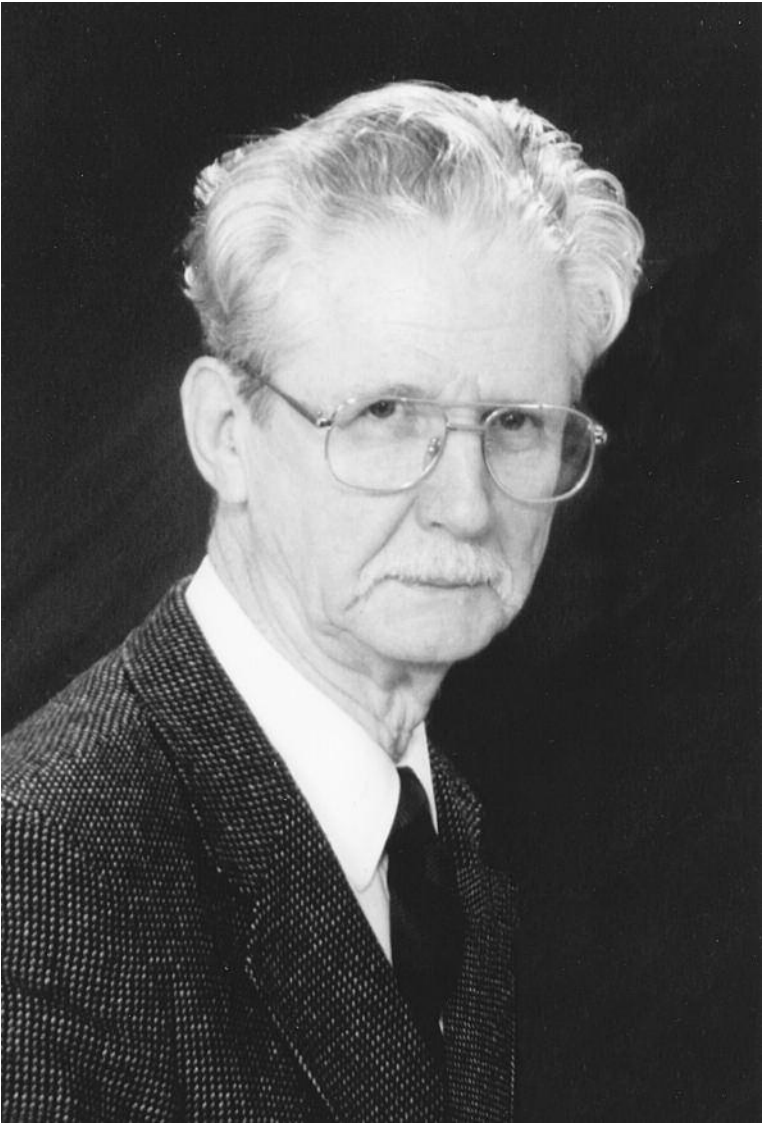
The final colloquy was led by Professor Donald W. Dayton, Azusa Pacific University. Dayton reflected on the ecumenical nature of the event, and identified ten visions of Wesley available in the secondary literature. He noted that each of these understandings of Wesley has a certain validity, in that each can be defended in the life and work of Wesley. However, it was Wesley’s ability to hold all of these realities in living tension that made possible his multi-faceted ministry. Dayton urged those

⁸Thomas J. Oord and Bryan P. Stone, *Thy Nature and Thy Name is Love: Wesleyan and Process Theologies in Dialogue* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2001)

⁹ “The Antonius Roberts Painting,” *Faith Working Through Love* [Conference Program], 15.

present to develop a vision of Wesley that is sufficiently complicated to be true to Wesley and sufficiently complex to address the needs of the world.

It is anticipated that the papers of this Conference will be published. It will also be important for the Wesleyan Theological Society and the Bahamas Wesleyan Fellowship to nurture this newly collaborative relationship and to explore together other forms of discussion with the larger Wesleyan world.



Charles Edwin Jones
Lifetime Achievement Award, 2003

BOOK REVIEWS

John Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans, Religion and Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: University Press, 2002). Pages vi + 229. ISBN 052145532 4, hardback; ISBN 052145553, paperback.

Reviewed by W. Stephen Gunter, Candler School of Theology, Emory University.

John Kent provocatively promises more than most would dare in slightly more than 200 pages. As the jacket cover notes, he “challenges the cherished myth that at the moment when the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution were threatening the soul of eighteenth-century England, an evangelical revival—led by the Wesleys—saved it.” This is the primary claim that Kent sets forth in a first fundamental conclusion that he asserts to be warranted from his research: “There was no large-scale eighteenth-century evangelical revival which saved the soul of the British nation through the miraculous gift of the Spirit” (p. 187). He is not asserting that the Wesleys, Whitefield, and with them a few Evangelical Anglicans were of no significant religious import, but he does contend, “There was no Church of the Industrial Revolution.” What did happen under their influence was “confined largely to the middle sectors of the population,” a geographical reference rather than a socio-economic one.

All of this is very intriguing, but it is important to keep in mind the definitions that are at work in Kent’s argumentation of his thesis. Also of fundamental importance for understanding how quickly and straightforwardly Kent draws sweeping conclusions and generalizations (at times from scant historical analysis) is his understanding of religion and “social control theory” [John Rule, *The Labouring Classes in Early Industrial England* (1986)], when he concludes: “From my point of view the Wes-

leyanism of the 1740s and 1750s was very much an Anglican experiment in ‘social control’ ” (p. 202). Kent is not asserting that Wesleyanism became less socially controlling after the 1750s, but rather that it became less Anglican, more enthusiastic and perfectionistic in tone, and hence actually more controlling under John Wesley’s idiosyncratic influence.

Kent’s definitions of his ruling religious concepts are equally crucial to his argument. By “Evangelical Revival” he means an expression of the Christian religion that purports to recover a more pristine, primitive form of the gospel. Although he asserts that such did not actually happen on any significant scale, he willingly concedes that what did occur from the late 1730s to the early 1760s were some interesting examples of “primary religion,” which he understands to be the normal search for ways of drawing supernatural power into the private life of the individual: “The primary religious impulse is to seek some kind of extra-human power, either for personal protection, including the cure of diseases, or for the sake of ecstatic experience, and possibly prophetic guidance. The individual’s test of a religious system is how far it can supply this ‘supernatural force’ ” (pp. 1-2).

This conception of “primary religion” is normative, and it seems for Kent that it can cut across all religious expressions, organized and individual. It is applicable to Protestant, Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox, as well as to the Eastern religions of Buddha and Confucius, etc. In that primary religion is normative, it is also a constant. It may be found in various expressions under differently defined historical and cultural circumstances, but it does not, according to Kent’s view, increase or decrease. It is normative. It is also constant in the sense that its intent is to provide humanity with a sense of connection to the divine. This is by definition intensely significant for the groups or individuals who experience it, but Kent assumes for both the individual as well as for the group that the phenomenology of connections with the divine does not increase or decrease. Definitionally then, there can not be a “revival” of that which is a constant; there can at most be a recent or past set of socially and culturally defined circumstances in which primary religion finds expression and outlet.

So when Kent asserts that there was not an Evangelical Revival in the eighteenth-century, he is saying several things simultaneously: 1. There was not a religious movement that recovered ancient, primitive Christianity. 2. There were also not any significant religious occurrences

that suddenly or markedly altered the religious, much less the social and cultural landscape of Britain. On definitional grounds, Kent is asserting at least this much, but he in fact wants to say more than this about Wesley's Methodism. Refracting what historical analysis he does offer through the lens of religion as social control, Kent portrays both Wesley and the Wesleyans in minatory shades. Wesley is the autocratic controller and his followers are largely an unsophisticated and unsuspecting class of the controlled, manipulated by a retentive Oxford-educated "revivalist" who is almost without exception their intellectual and cultural superior. Wesley knows no better and neither do they. If the reader has a sense of déjà vu in reading some of this narrative, then perhaps you read E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1964).

Chapter four, "Women in Wesleyanism," is the best chapter in the book. By "best" I mean two things. There is a commendable level of historical research here (perhaps some doctoral dissertations in the background?!), and there is also a degree to which Kent concedes that Wesleyanism was, at least mildly, beneficial to eighteenth-century women. In his conclusions, however, Kent manages to avoid the temptation to let rest even marginal improvement to the status of women: "Wesleyan preaching and writing attached a new value to women within the societies, not as creatures of feeling but as vehicles of the Spirit [cf. J. Barker-Benefield, *The Culture of Sensibility* (Chicago: 1992)]. This did not extend their freedom intellectually and the social change was marginal" (p. 203). This conclusion, and others, he draws without any comparative social or cultural analysis. The most that the author is able to concede to Wesley and the Wesleyans flows from Kent's own suppositions connected to religion as socially controlling: "Within a group bound together by an austere code of morals . . . rather disagreeably rigorous and unsocial, [the individual] could recover himself. This was what eighteenth-century Wesleyanism, adding its own style of religious sensibility, achieved for a large number of men and women" (p. 207).

John Kent's thesis is plausible, even likely: "One of the persistent myths of modern British history is the myth of the so-called evangelical revival: "From about 1730 (it is said) a dramatic, divinely inspired return to true Christianity balanced the moral budget of the British people. . . . The instruments of this divine intervention were John Wesley and his followers, the Wesleyans or Methodists" (p. 1). It is now commonplace among historians to recognize this myth for what it is and to affirm that

Methodism did not save Britain from a French-styled revolution. The paths that Kent traverses in order to make his case for this are historically very thin, especially with regard to any theological centering in Wesley. The Protestant and Puritan concerns with soteriology (sin, grace and salvation) are dismissively alluded to as superstitions to be superceded by enlightened frames of reference: “Christian views of human nature were increasingly seen as a repulsive denial of the self and of the enlightened man’s or woman’s capacity to transform city and country, agriculture and industry, thought and letters” (p. 143). So Kent can assert, “Wesley was not stupid, but he was steeped in an inadequate tradition . . .” (p. 142). One can but wonder whether Kent has transported Wesley into another century since the eighteenth. To be sure, the enlightenment senses are present, but where is the historical warrant for such a comprehensively transformed “modern” worldview?

In the final analysis the historian must come away from this book provocatively teased but deeply unsatisfied. The hagiographic vision of Wesley saving England is not on target. On this point John Kent is quite correct; but much more social and historical analysis is needed to define the contours of a more plausible story of the impact of Wesley and the Wesleyans in the eighteenth-century than we find between the covers of this provocative essay. If there is a signal contribution here, it is potentially in the meaning of “primary religion.” What Kent means by this is almost exclusively social and psychological. He does not attend to this at all, but if the reference is to connecting with “the divine,” should primary religion not also be explored in its theological dimensions? Or perhaps there is no transcendent dimension with which to connect, and even Kent’s “primary religion” is no more than an opiate for the unsuspecting masses.

Henry Church, *Theological Education that Makes a Difference: Church Growth in the Free Methodist Church in Malawi and Zimbabwe* (Kachere Series, 5; Blantyre, Malawi: Christian Literature Association in Malawi, 2002).

Reviewed by David Bundy, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA.

Only on occasion does a book appear that seeks to analyze any aspect of Free Methodist mission (or that of other Holiness or Pentecostal churches) in a precisely defined region. This volume is a welcome addition to that corpus. The volume discussed here is Church's Ph.D. dissertation that was successfully submitted to the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Malawi. The thesis is "that the specific type of theological education programme used by the Free Methodists in Malawi does have an impact on the growth of the Free Methodist Church (p. 10)." This specific educational approach is named the "Chilinde Approach" although the reason for that name and a description of the program that might allow it to be clearly differentiated from other programs of instruction (such as ICI University) are not given. The essence of the program appears to be the use of short-term residence courses (modules) undertaken in the context of supervised church planting and ministry. In many ways it appears identical to the approach of the Free Methodist Pentecost Bands especially at the Vanguard Mission in St. Louis before the turn of the twentieth century as well as the educational paradigm of Scandinavian Pentecostal missions.

This lacuna and other issues mentioned below do not diminish the contribution of this book. It is extremely important both as a history of the Free Methodist Church in Zimbabwe and as a chapter in the history of Free Methodist missions. Nowhere else can one find this information, much of it based on the writer's personal experience and notes. It will be a contribution to future generations of Malawi Free Methodists and it is hoped that some of the pastors discussed will follow their mentor into the University of Malawi in order to write additional volumes from other perspectives. It is also an introduction to Free Methodist mission from the perspective of a particular mission field. The narrative rolls fulsomely through more than a decade of that relationship. The book is about a lot of good earnest people, both from Malawi and outside, seeking to serve God in Malawi. It is a gripping tale, full of narratives that can be read and reread, interpreted and reinterpreted, as missiological vignettes.

The volume begins with a survey of Free Methodist history (pp. 16-42). This was essential in the context of the University of Malawi, but appears to have been written without access to many sources and is quite uncritical. In the next chapter, which may too quickly suggest “the advent of ‘New Mission’ at the end of Missions (p.43),” the author describes the founding of the church in Malawi. Free Methodism was brought to Malawi from Zimbabwe by Moses Phiri, an expatriate Malawian plantation worker, who, while in Zimbabwe was graduated from the Lundi Bible School. Being instructed in a dream to return to Malawi, he did so and petitioned the Malawi government to begin a Free Methodist Church. By December 1973, he had started a legal congregation. In June 1974, the first Free Methodist missionaries, Tilman and Gwen Hauser visited his congregation and officially inaugurated the church as a Free Methodist mission. Phiri established most of the pre-1982 churches in Malawi and appointed clergy before his ouster as Church leader over allegations of financial mismanagement (not proven), abuse of power and adultery (a charge dismissed as groundless without a trial) all of which were lodged after he came into conflict with an American Free Methodist missionary. He was defrocked in November 1981. One of his most vocal accusers was later discovered to have embezzled \$20,000 from the mission resources.

The main part of this book is about what has happened since. In order to establish a traditional Free Methodist system of governance, a permanent missionary presence was established, centered at the Bible School in Lilongwe. Over the period of a few years, the missionary became the controller of mission funds, principal of the Bible School, the chief admissions officer, the primary educator, director of church planting, director of student ministry work, and a deciding voice in the decision of whether to admit the graduate into the ministry of the Free Methodist Church. Students were required to plant three churches during their five-year Bible School training. Through this process, the Free Methodist Church in Malawi grew at the rate of 15% per year, the fastest growth rate of any Free Methodist Church anywhere in the world. Chapter Four (pp. 72-81) provided a social profile of Malawi Free Methodists (rural poor); the next chapter (pps. 81-103) again addressed the development of theological education by the Free Methodist missionaries. The sixth chapter provides a summary of the presentation. Nothing is said of the congregations that died, the students who did not succeed, or the conversion networks.

In the title of the seventh chapter (pp. 109-170), the question is put, "Why does the Free Methodist Church grow?" The answers are surprising given the thesis of the tome! All thirteen reasons are taken (with proper credit) from George W. Peters, *A Theology of Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981). These are illustrated with vignettes from the Malawi Free Methodist Church experience (many of which could be differently interpreted). One reads for a long time before one comes to a discussion of educational programs. The following reasons are given: At the end of the chapter, it is briefly noted that growth may be attributed to the requirement that prospective pastors found three churches as a requirement for graduation and ordination (pp. 165-168). In the end, it is clear that, given the missionary principal's control of admission to the Bible School, given the control of entrance into the ranks of the clergy, and given the requirement of church planting (at three times the rate of graduating leadership for the churches), the Bible School has had an influence on the churches and on their growth.

Chapter eight (pps. 171-177) discusses problems related to ministerial education in Zimbabwe despite the presence of two institutions, Lundi Bible School and Wesley Bible College. There experiments are being undertaken in the modular educational paradigm used in Malawi.

There are a number of questions that arise in reading the text. Raising these is not intended to cast aspersion on the text, but to suggest avenues for further enquiry. First, no questions asked about the impact of the pastors being taught by persons who are either missionaries of the Free Methodist Church in other countries, or persons who have become well known in North America, but are without significant African, experience, if one discounts "missionary tourism." It would appear from the list of teachers (p.210) that only two are Black African. This after more than 100 years of Free Methodist mission in Africa? For only two (of 46 + 15 TEE) of the courses is there an indication that the curriculum might have been developed in ways that might introduce students to the history of Christianity in Africa or of Free Methodism in Africa. Second, the teaching of all courses in English raises interesting problems; granted teaching in tribal languages might raise others! However, a significant corpus of research indicates that if learning is not done in one's own language, it is easily compartmentalized, with the information not becoming personally significant.

Third, there is no discussion of the regional African religious context. What was happening in other churches in Malawi during the same

period? Which were growing; which were not? How fast? Did the discussion of “holiness” in the East African Revival (going on at the same time) have any impact. Clearly these persons, albeit poor and without formal education, had traveled extensively. They had both received from Christian traditions in other countries (that is how the Free Methodist Church in Malawi started) or exported it to other countries in new ways (for example through refugees from and returning to Angola and Mozambique. Fourth, although the course in “cults” discusses “Traditional African Religions,” one wonders how this is negotiated in the daily life of the family and villages, especially at the times of traditional rites of passage. Research in other areas, as well as the films of James Ault, would suggest that there have been accommodations that assist the church to grow according to the principles promulgated in Church Growth literature. Fifth, with regard to sources, there was minimal access to the literature about Free Methodist mission and no access to the archives of the Free Methodist mission was indicated in the bibliography. Sixth, will it ever be possible for a Malawi educator to have the financial power and de-facto ecclesial power that the missionary has? Would they, as Phiri earlier, be considered to have abused their power? One wonders.

Despite, or really because of these questions, this is a significant book. It is an important contribution to African Christian history, to the history of Free Methodist mission and specifically to the study of the culture and religious life of Malawi. It is hoped that similar studies will be forthcoming, written both by missionaries and their African colleagues.

Susie C. Stanley, *Holy Boldness: Women Preachers' Autobiographies and the Sanctified Self*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2002. ISBN 1-57233-199-2.

Reviewed by William Kostlevy, Asbury Theological Seminary and Gari-Anne Patzwald, University of Kentucky.

In the nearly thirty years since the publication of Donald W. Dayton's groundbreaking essay "The Evangelical Roots of Feminism," later republished in *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (1976), scholars have sought to recover and understand the female holiness experience and the emergence and decline of female leadership in the Holiness Movement. Building on the work of Dayton, scholars such as Nancy Hardesty, Harold Raser, Stanley Ingersol, David Bundy, Kathryn Long, William Kostlevy, Diane Leclerc, and Priscilla Pope-Levison have sought to explore the nature and meaning of the female holiness experience. Among those who have worked most tirelessly in building on the foundation laid by Dayton is Susie C. Stanley of Messiah College.

Holy Boldness, her latest and most significant publication to date, is an analysis of the autobiographies of thirty-four holiness women whose ministries flourished from the 1840s to the 1960s. Utilizing feminist and autobiographical theory, Stanley argues that the experience of entire sanctification enabled these women to transcend sexual stereotypes, such as the cult of domesticity, and engage in public ministry.

Stanley is keenly aware that holiness women were products of a distinct spiritual heritage with its own tradition of female autobiographical reflection. In two helpful chapters, she explores the impact of French quietist Madame Guyon and two earlier saints of British Methodism whose published religious experiences were widely circulated on both sides of the Atlantic, Mary Bosanquet Fletcher and Hester Ann Roe Rogers. Her choice of which women's autobiographies to analyze reflects the racial and denominational diversity of the Holiness Movement. Likewise, she includes women engaged in widely varying ministries that range from public preaching, founding of denominations, church planting, and pursuit of a variety of social service and reform ministries. Her decision not to include women from the radical social purity (sexual abstinence within marriage) wing of the Holiness Movement, such as Auntie (Harriet) Coon, is understandable given her goal of presenting these figures as models for contemporary women in ministry, but it obscures the complex-

ity of the holiness experience, to say nothing of why many men (and women) believed that holiness experience was a short-cut to fanaticism.

Unlike many male students of the holiness tradition, Stanley understands and underscores the authoritative role of subjective religious experience in holiness spirituality. As she quotes from Phoebe Palmer, “that which is learned by experience is much more deeply written upon the heart than what is learned by mere precept.” For holiness women there was no Wesleyan Quadrilateral, but only two sources of authority, scripture and religious experience. Given the role of testimonies and spiritual biography in the Holiness Movement, it is clear that Scripture was often read in the light of one’s experience and not as an independent, external authority.

By focusing on the role of the experience of entire sanctification and giving little consideration to the women’s life experience, Stanley neglects the possibility that there were other factors that empowered Wesleyan/Holiness women’s public ministries. For example, in the case of Julia Arnold Shellhamer, it would be appropriate to consider the influence on her ministry of her father, I. R. B. Arnold, who arranged for his daughter’s participation in his ministry, and her mother, Adele Arnold, who preached and conducted her own mission.

Although an important book that deserves serious attention and reflection, it has its controversial features. By insisting that gender, and not, for instance, class or race, is the only substantive lens through which to view these autobiographies, Stanley can ignore the differing contexts of Phoebe Palmer’s parlor piety from such Free Methodist inner-city and inter-racial missionaries as Jane Dunning and Julia Arnold Shellhamer. For an exploration of these radically differed worlds, see the important essay by Kathryn Long in Nathan O. Hatch and John Wigger, eds., *Methodism and the Shaping of American Culture* (2001). Finally, as products and creators of what historian Ann Douglas has aptly titled “the feminization of American culture,” nineteenth-century holiness women not only transcended the cult of domesticity but paradoxically embodied and exploited those same cultural stereotypes. It was not incidental that Methodist and Evangelical Protestant women gained great social power in the late Victorian period as protectors of the home through movements deeply influenced by nineteenth-century holiness currents such as the WCTU. One of the weaknesses of this book is that it does not help us to understand why the Holiness Movement can embrace both self-pro-

claimed feminists and James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family, one of the more important contemporary critics of feminism.

Regardless of the weaknesses noted above, this important book introduces us to women who refused to be victims, but instead and often in difficult circumstances became, for better and for worse, creators of the world we seek to understand. It is a significant addition to the literature on Wesleyan women and will, hopefully, encourage scholars to pursue many other aspects of the subject yet to be explored.

Tilman A. Hauser, *Free Methodist and Other Missions in Zimbabwe* (Harare: Priority Projects Publishing, 2000). ISBN: 0 7974 2067-3.

Reviewed by David Bundy, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA .

This volume is a detailed history of the development of Christianity in one part of Africa. It tells in detail the history of the Free Methodist mission in what is now Zimbabwe. It is also an important contribution to Zimbabwean history because it describes carefully the interaction between Zimbabweans and the West and the development of Zimbabwean culture during the last two-thirds of the twentieth century.

Free Methodist mission in Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) began in 1939, eleven years after Paramount Chief Sengwe of the Hlengue people issued an invitation to the Free Methodists. Immigrant workers had told him of the Free Methodist work in Mozambique. He wanted schools, medical clinics, and churches in his area. It is clear that part of the motivation was economic based; another may have been as part of an effort to stave off White European encroachment on his lands. Indeed, the lands were soon taken from the Hlengue by the British and the Hlengue were relegated to unproductive areas to serve as cheap labor for the ranchers who received traditional Hlengue lands as grants from the British imperial government.

When the Free Methodists became involved in Zimbabwe, they established schools and clinics on land assigned by the government. The British colonial government followed the missionary tradition of comity agreements, assigning specific areas to different missions so as to avoid as much competition as possible. The missionary control of the church and the institutions went unchallenged until the revolution began against the colonial regime and the White controlled government that followed. Despite the denominational name, the majority of the Free Methodist missionaries were against allowing participation of the Black Africans in church governance and even more against turning over control of institutions to the Africans. This book tells the story of how that finally happened.

The book is an improvement over most missionary books. It is critically reflective of the events and policies under review. Despite the lack of a scholarly apparatus, it is a scholarly book. It is to be hoped that someone will work with Hauser to produce an academic edition of the volume.

The present work is enhanced by a number of charts, graphs, and especially photographs. Unfortunately, the volume was written without adequate access to the Free Methodist mission archives and to Free Methodist mission literature. It is, however, an important memoir by a long term Free Methodist Africa missionary.

The last segment of the book, Section Two, "Other Missions in Zimbabwe," contains short histories of a variety of missions at work in the country during the past decades. It was taken from a collection edited by Paul S. King, *Missions in Southern Rhodesia; on the Occasion of the Inyati Centenary, 1859-1959* (n.p.: Citadel Press, 1959). Among the vignettes reprinted are those that dealt with: the London Missionary Society, the Dutch Reformed Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, Wesleyan Methodist Church (U.K.), Salvation Army, ABCFM, Seventh Day Adventists, Brethren in Christ, Churches of Christ (New Zealand), Presbyterian Church, African Methodist Episcopal Church, The Church of Sweden, The Church of Central Africa—Presbyterian, and the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The statistical page (123) showed the Free Methodists holding their own with 39 churches, 1,374 in Sunday schools, and another 10,000 having been served in the medical clinics.

The book does not provide comparable data for the next forty years, limiting itself (appropriately) to the Free Methodist mission experience. The high point of Free Methodist "full membership" was during the years 1967-1968 at the beginning of the fight for freedom. With no trained African Free Methodist leaders (and violence all about), the Free Methodist church declined to about 1,000 members by about 1970 (see graph, p. xv). Evangelism was also hindered because almost all Free Methodist missionaries refused to train African converts for leadership positions, surrender any of their power, and sided with the colonial and later the "apartheid" White government of Ian Smith.

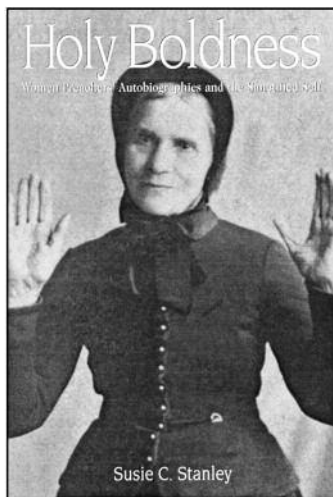
During the last few decades, membership has fluctuated wildly. Demographer David B. Barrett and colleagues, *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions In the Modern World* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) have attempted to estimate the growth in "affiliation" to the various churches. Affiliation is often a better indication of influence than membership. They ascertained that many churches in Zimbabwe grew at phenomenal rates. During the period 1970-1995, the African Apostolic Church of Johane Maranke grew

from 420,000 to 910,000. The Anglican Church of Zimbabwe doubled from 153,000 to 300,000. The Church of the Nazarene grew from 2,000 to 3,962. The Churches of Christ (New Zealand) grew from about 10,000 to about 40,300. The Free Methodist Church grew (in affiliation, not membership) from about 6,000 to about 8,250. The question immediately arises: what is it about the mission theory and practice of the Free Methodist Church that has led to this limited growth in a time of extraordinary Christian revival? Was it the racism of the missionaries or the lack of attention to developing Zimbabwean leadership? Or was it an accident of location? This and other missiological questions beg for answers. Hauser is suggestive, but inconclusive about the issues.

The fact that the volume raises questions that are not answered does not detract from its significance. Hauser's work will long be a standard work in the field of African Christian studies.

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Holy Boldness
Women Preachers' Autobiographies
and the Sanctified Self
SUSIE C. STANLEY

From its inception in the nineteenth century, the Wesleyan/Holiness religious tradition has offered an alternative construction of gender and supported the equality of the sexes. In *Holy Boldness*, Susie C. Stanley provides a comprehensive analysis of spiritual autobiographies by thirty-four American Wesleyan/Holiness women preachers, published between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. While a few of these women, primarily African Americans, have been added to the canon of American women's autobiography, Stanley argues for the expansion of the canon to incorporate the majority of the women in her study. She reveals how these empowered women carried out public ministries on behalf of evangelism and social justice.

The defining doctrine of the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition is the belief in sanctification, or experiencing a state of holiness. Stanley's analysis illuminates how the concept of

the sanctified self inspired women to break out of the narrow confines of the traditional "women's sphere" and engage in public ministries, from preaching at camp meetings and revivals to ministering in prisons and tenements. Moreover, as a result of the Wesleyan/Holiness emphasis on experience as a valid source of theology, many women preachers turned to autobiography as a way to share their spiritual quest and religiously motivated activities with others.

In such writings, these preachers focused on the events that shaped their spiritual growth and their calling to ministry, often giving only the barest details of their personal lives. Thus, *Holy Boldness* is not a collective biography of these women but rather an exploration of how sanctification influenced their evangelistic and social ministries.

SUSIE C. STANLEY is professor of historical theology at Messiah College. She is the author of *Feminist Pillar of Fire: The Life of Alma White*.

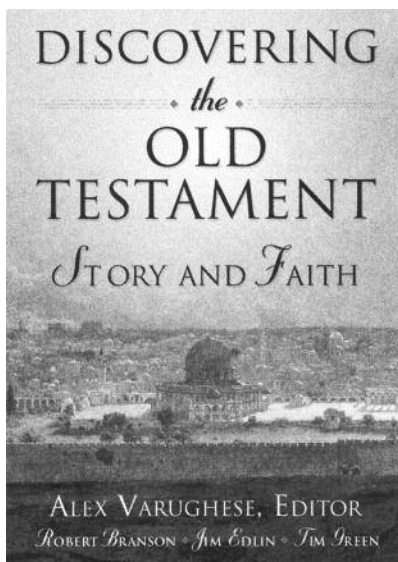
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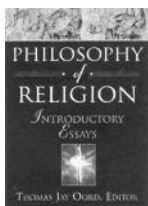
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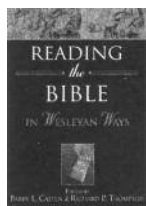
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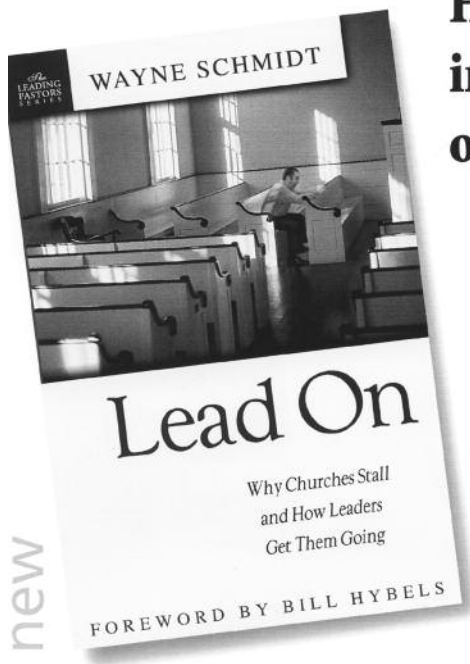
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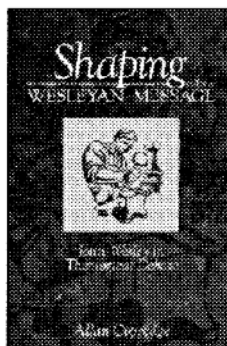
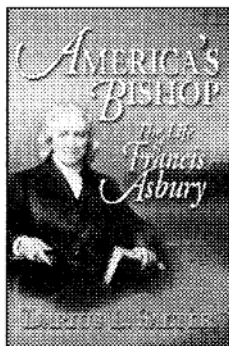
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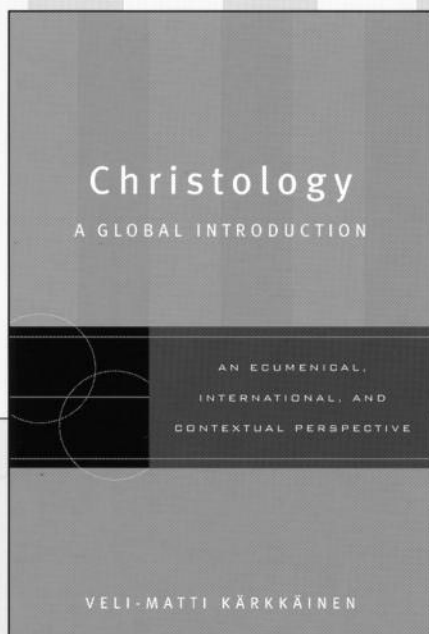


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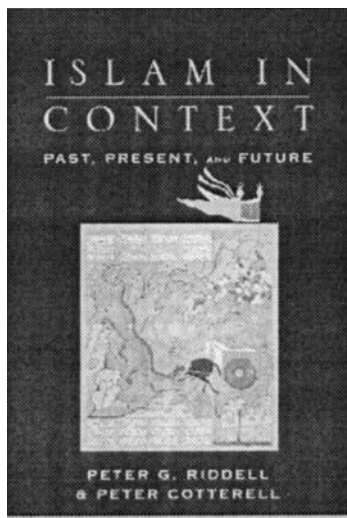
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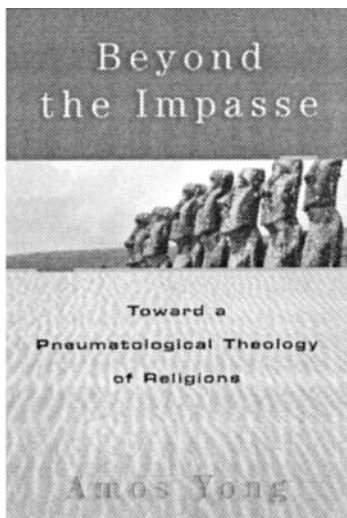
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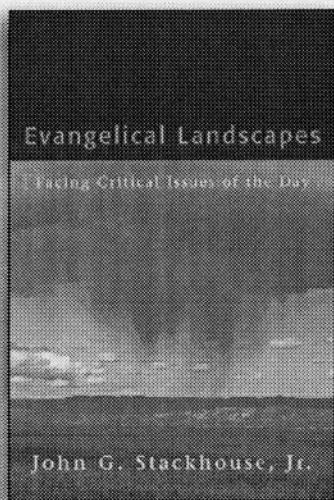
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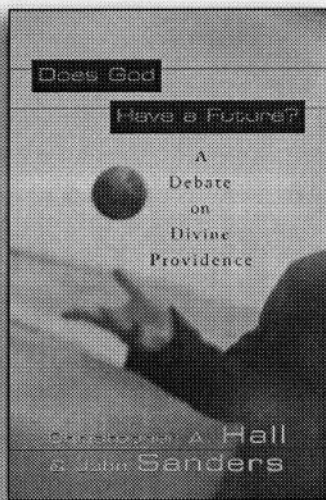
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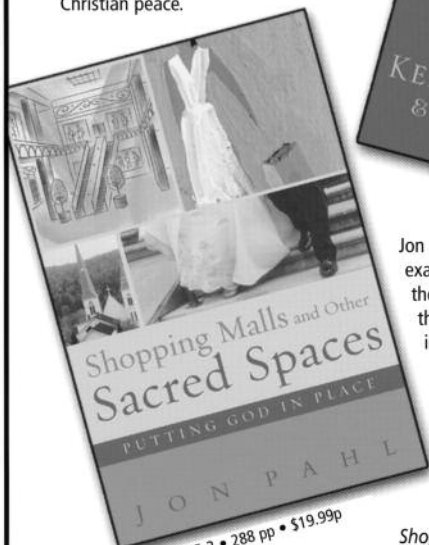
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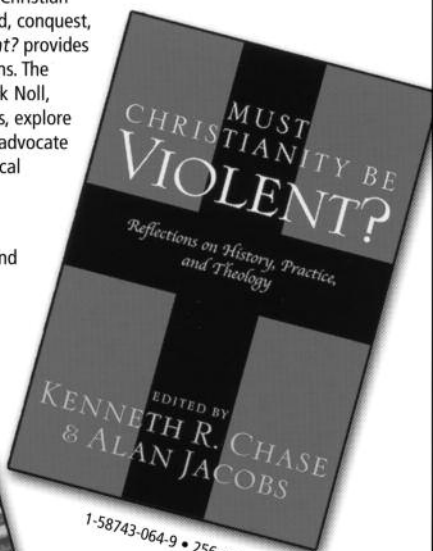
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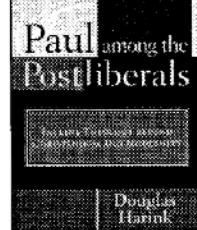


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