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John Wesley Remembered — And More

John R Tyson

This year (2003) marks the 300th anniversary of John Wesley's birth, and it seems particularly pertinent to ask the readers of *Churchman* to pause and remember their brother Anglican. But what should we remember about John Wesley? Certainly, many popular pictures of the man emerge: there is the evangelical and experiential John Wesley, whose heart was 'strangely warmed' at a small group meeting in a house on Aldersgate Street, London, on May 24, 1738.¹ The diminutive Oxford don soon turned mass evangelist, and his prodigious efforts at addressing people who stood at the margins of eighteenth century English society offer a second depiction of Wesley that is often measured in sermons preached (more than 40,000) or miles travelled on horseback (more than 250,000).² In this vein, Albert Outler rightly styled John Wesley a 'Folk Theologian', since Wesley described himself as one who 'spoke plain words to plain folks,' and prided himself in speaking *ad populum* ('to the common people').³ The irony of Wesley using a classical Latin phrase to describe his popular preaching style should remind us that he was a superbly educated Christian minister who used his considerable gifts to translate complicated theological discourse for the common people; it was in this sense that Outler described John Wesley as a 'popularizer' who intentionally concealed his learning.⁴ Or there is the picture of John Wesley the social activist, a depiction so firmly based in his advocacy for the 'working poor'⁵ that competent historians of the period, like Elie Halvey, have made the extravagant claim that Wesley's efforts were instrumental in sparing England the violent revolution and social disorder that convulsed France during the same period, under similar circumstances.⁶

A few, less favourable depictions of John Wesley have been produced by contemporary social historians. Henry Abelove, for example, describes Wesley as 'The Evangelist of Desire' who used his status as a gentleman to create deference,⁷ and in his ability to exact love—almost unbounded love—from his followers (many of whom were women). Hence, Abelove reports—

Wesley won and monopolized love. He eclipsed his colleagues and even

God Almighty in the hearts of his followers. Their deference might be impermanent, and their enthusiasm might decline in a naturally developing ebb of feeling, but their love kept them fixed in place. Wesley's accomplishment was unique. No other contemporary revivalists managed a pastoral stance so strangely monopolistic and seductive; no other achieved a comparable result.⁸

The influence that Abelow thinks came from Wesley's gentlemanly bearing, stemmed from Wesley's gospel message and from his willingness to do more, risk more, and to strive to be more for Jesus Christ than almost anyone else around him.

John Kent's recent *Wesley and the Wesleyans* presents the reader with an equally manipulative depiction of Wesley. It differs from that of Abelow only in-so-far as Kent's Wesley is considerably less seductive and much less lovable: 'Naturally authoritarian Wesley found in religion a means of imposing his will on some of his contemporaries, though rarely on his social equals.'⁹ Not only does Kent assert that Wesley was not the person he presented himself to be, in fact the 'so-called evangelical revival' never really happened as Wesley (and many others) described it; it is (instead) 'one of the persistent myths of modern British history'.¹⁰ Kent rightly asserts that 'Wesley could conceive of existence only within a web of intense religious feelings and beliefs'.¹¹ But this is not a world which the author saw as being authentic or valid—beyond the fact that it provided the impetus for Wesley's 'primary' and 'secondary religion'. Hence, Wesley's own views and most frequent self descriptions seem convoluted and obscurantist, and the real truth about his motives and character is to be gleaned from a melancholy and frustrated letter he wrote to his brother Charles—in which John claimed: 'I do not love God. I never did....'¹²—and from the angry charges of opponents and disenchanted former followers, like those of William Briggs. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's assessment of John Wesley, which was formed entirely from his reading Southey's *Life of Wesley*,¹³ was privileged as proof of Wesley's lack of personal feeling: 'Wesley never rose above the religion of logic and strong volition....Nothing is immediate to him.' Thus, Kent concluded—

Looked at in this way, Wesley was strong-willed and ambitious, convinced of the centrality of a religious explanation of the world, patriarchal

towards women, unimaginative and intellectually incurious, critical of his supporters and with little protection against the intrusive power of primary religion.¹⁴

While some of these assertions, such as ‘strong-willed’ and ‘convinced of the centrality of a religious explanation of the world’, are accurate assessments of Wesley’s personality and character (in as far as they go), others—such as ‘patriarchal’, ‘unimaginative’, and ‘intellectually incurious’—seem to be patently wrong when viewed in their historical context.

Ironically, Wesley’s recent detractors acknowledge his far-reaching influence and contribution, but their lack of theological reflection and spiritual insight leave them at a loss when it comes to describing the source and foundation of his remarkable impact and accomplishments. It goes without saying that John Wesley had some disagreeable aspects to his personality. He was a highly motivated, determined and sometimes domineering person, who generally had a clear idea of what needed to be done, and how to do it. When he was convinced that he or the Methodists were on ‘the right course’ (as he believed God had given him to see the ‘right’) John Wesley was very difficult to divert. His determined, autocratic style of leadership earned him the jibe ‘Pope John’, and yet Wesley was approachable enough to be called to account for his leadership style at the Methodist Conference of 1766.¹⁵ But it seems unwise to turn one of Wesley’s chief character flaws into the main lens through which one reads the whole of his contributions, or for modern commentators to pretend to understand Wesley’s true motives better than he himself did when attempting to explain them. Several contemporary biographies present the fuller view of John Wesley and an examination of them would serve the reader well.¹⁶

My purpose in this commemorative piece is not to present John Wesley as a ‘cult hero’. Nor do I intend to combine the various popular portraits of Wesley to present him as a ‘strangely warmed’ evangelist, and social saviour. Each of these ‘portraits’ of John Wesley is accurate—perhaps in the same way a caricature accurately captures a few of the prominent features of a person—and in that sense they remind us why John Wesley is worth remembering, but none of them explains why Wesley continues to be a valuable theological mentor (to me) as I go about the demanding tasks of trying to be a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. As a church historian, I agree with Albert Outler that

‘John Wesley was the most important Anglican theologian of the eighteenth century because of his distinctive, composite answer to the age-old question as to ‘the nature of the Christian life’.¹⁷

In view of his historical significance alone, John Wesley deserves to be remembered and studied. Like Tom Oden, I am a person who (to use the Wesleyan phrase) stands ‘in connection with Mr. Wesley’;¹⁸ for me, Wesley is a spiritual guide who helps me live out my Christian faith. He is a theological mentor to whom I frequently turn and from whom I occasionally learn. What follows, then, is more of personal assessment (instead of a purely historical one) of why I find John Wesley worth remembering, and more importantly—worth consulting as a partner in ministry as we move ahead into the challenges of the twenty-first century.

1. Wesley’s Optimism of Grace

There was in John Wesley a holy optimism that both challenges and encourages me because, quite frankly, optimism seems to be a scarce commodity in our world. Wesley’s optimism, however, was not based in romantic notions like the goodness of world, the goodness of humanity or the viability of human efforts; it was instead rooted in his bedrock convictions about the transforming power of God’s grace. Sometimes this sort of optimism seems in short supply, so I remind myself of John Wesley’s willingness to summarize the cutting edge of his gospel by simply saying: ‘All people can be saved.’¹⁹ All people can know that they are saved.²⁰ All people can be saved to the uttermost.²¹ This brief statement combines three of Wesley’s cardinal doctrines: the universal efficacy of the gospel, the inner witness of the Holy Spirit, and entire sanctification. Woven together these assertions not only encapsulate the cutting edge of Wesleyan theology, they form a statement that captures the mood of his theology. The Wesleyan ‘all’ reminds me of the inclusiveness of God’s mercy, the intimacy of God’s willingness to work personally within the lives of God’s people, as well as the persistence of God’s grace when it comes to dealing with the residual effects of sin in my life and the lives of those entrusted to my care. Rarely does a day go by that I do not find myself willing to call upon this sort of grace-filled optimism.

2. Wesley’s ‘Catholic Spirit’

One of the most far-reaching theological applications of John Wesley’s

optimism about the transforming power of God's grace emerged in his essentialist approach to Christian doctrine. In an age when doctrinal disputes fragmented the community of faith—perhaps even more deeply than they divide us today—Wesley preached and published “A Caution against Bigotry”²² and “A Catholic Spirit”.²³ In the former he used a contention that arose among Jesus's disciples about what to do about one who ‘cast out demons’ in Jesus's name but was ‘not following us’ (Mk. 9:38-41). Wesley likened the gospel situation to that of his contemporaries who created schism among faithful Christians by raising cries like: ‘He is not of our party...He differs from us in our religious opinions’.²⁴ He also placed the same indictment upon those who caused division in the Christian community because of differences in Christian ‘judgement’ or ‘practice’ (where they were not clearly directed by Scripture or Tradition).²⁵ Wesley saw all of this contemporary ‘bigotry’ as being ably addressed by Jesus's simple assertion—‘he that is not against us is for us’ (Mark 9:40).

In his sermon on “A Catholic Spirit”, John Wesley offered a constructive alternative to religious bigotry, a ‘Catholic’ or universal Christian attitude empowered by the love of Christ. In the KJV Bible and the Prayer Book of Wesley's day this attitude was sometimes called ‘Christian charity’; it was derived from the Latin word *charitas* which described the other-directed Christian love (Gk. *agape*) epitomized by Jesus and defined by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 13. After amply describing what he elsewhere termed ‘those grand scriptural doctrines’,²⁶ (the phrase comes from Wesley's Sermon 53, ‘On the Death of George Whitefield’),²⁷ Wesley turned his attention to the task of distinguishing essential doctrines from what he described as Christian ‘opinions’.²⁸ Under this heading he included matters like ‘modes of worship’, forms of church government, and modes of Christian baptism.²⁹ These were not matters about which Wesley was indifferent, quite the contrary. But he also believed that these were matters about which genuine Christians had genuine differences of opinion. Wesley's optimism of grace, however, urged him to believe that the Christian love that unites the community of faith should enable us to work together and fellowship together despite these kind of differences of ‘opinion.’ As he moved to the sermon's conclusion, Wesley also stressed that a ‘Catholic Spirit’ was not to be confused with ‘speculative latidinarianism’—which he described as ‘indifference to all [theological] opinions’ and hence ‘the spawn of hell’.³⁰ Nor is the ‘Catholic Spirit’ to be thought of as ‘any kind of

practical latitudinarianism’, which Wesley characterized as ‘indifference to public worship’ or ‘indifference to all congregations’.³¹ Hence, he stressed that a person motivated by the ‘Catholic Spirit’ is—

...steadily fixed in his religious principles, in what he believes to be the truth as it is in Jesus; while he firmly adheres to that worship of God which he judges to be most acceptable in His sight; and while he is united by the tenderest and closest ties to one particular congregation; his heart is enlarged toward all mankind....This is catholic or universal love. And he that has this is of a catholic spirit.³²

John Wesley had ample opportunity to demonstrate this ‘catholic spirit’, and in most (but not all) instances he practiced what he preached. Perhaps the most notable of these occurred in November, 1770, when he was called upon to preach a funeral sermon for George Whitefield in Whitefield’s own London Tabernacle. The Wesleys and Whitefield had been contemporaries at Oxford University, and close associates in the early years of the Methodist revival. But as the decades marched on the soteriological differences between the Arminian Wesleys and the staunch Calvinist Whitefield caused periods of theological conflict (without loss of personal regard) between them; among their respective followers, however, these disputes often escalated into outright warfare. Unfortunately, 1770 was one of the more explosive periods in this intra-Methodist struggle between Calvinists and Arminians. At their August annual conference the Wesleyans had adopted a doctrinal ‘Minute’ stipulating that they had ‘leaned too far towards Calvinism’. The so-called ‘Minutes controversy’ ignited a theological fire-storm that saw the Calvinistic Lady Huntingdon purge her Trevecca College of Arminians, and pamphleteers on both sides of the issue fired a succession of theological broadsides at one another.³³

In the midst of this controversy, George Whitefield had embarked upon still another evangelistic tour of America. He died suddenly in Newbury, MA., on September 30, 1770. By preaching Whitefield’s funeral sermon Wesley hoped to reconcile the warring factions of Methodism by stressing the foundational principles upon which he and Whitefield had always agreed—

let us keep close to the grand scriptural doctrines which he [Whitefield]

everywhere delivered. There are many doctrines of a less essential nature, with regard to which even the sincere children of God...are and have been divided for many ages. In these we may think and let think; we may 'agree to disagree.' But meanwhile let us hold fast to the essentials of 'the faith which was once delivered to the saints' [Jude 3], and which this champion of God [Whitefield] so strongly insisted on at all times and in all places.³⁴

I sometimes find myself wishing that my brothers and sisters in Christ could find enough 'catholic spirit' and Christian love between them to 'agree to disagree' about 'doctrines of a less essential nature' so that we could worship and work together in order to serve Christ and God's people more effectively.

3. Wesley' Conjunctive Mood

Just as the little word 'all' was indispensable to John Wesley's way of doing theology, so also (it seems) that he could not 'do' his version of the gospel without the conjunction 'and'. There is a synthetic, inclusive mood at work in Wesley's Christianity and it is evident at almost all levels; this theological mood is reminiscent of the Anglican *via media* (middle way), and it is one of the most obvious examples of Wesley's Anglican roots. In terms of his cardinal doctrines, John Wesley stressed justification and sanctification by faith;³⁵ 'holiness of heart and life' was his recurring phrase that challenges both the temptation either to personalize the gospel in a way that lacked societal expression, as well as the willingness to advocate for social change without first pursuing holy attitudes and motives within;³⁶ in a similar way, he championed 'inward and outward holiness'.³⁷

When looking to the classical resources for doing Christian theology, Wesley found himself drawn to Scripture and Tradition. In mid-career Wesley wrote an extensive reply to a thoughtful and highly critical letter penned by fellow Anglican, William Dodd.

In your last paragraph you say, 'You set aside all authority, ancient and modern.' Sir, who told you so? I never did; it never entered my thoughts. Who it was gave you that rule I know not; but my father gave it me thirty years ago (I mean concerning reverence to the ancient Church and our own), and I have endeavoured to walk by it to this day. But I try every Church and every doctrine by the Bible.³⁸

He also used the Christian tradition to develop a consensual approach to doing Christian theology³⁹ in which the Bible played the primary role, and yet the Fathers were esteemed as ‘...the most authentic commentators on Scripture, as being both nearest the fountain, and eminently endued with the Spirit by whom all Scripture was given’.⁴⁰ In a similar way, when he preached his sermon “On Laying the Foundation of the New Chapel” in 1777, John Wesley used the occasion to describe the theological foundation upon which the Methodist movement stood: ‘Methodism, so called, is the old religion, the religion of the Bible, the religion of the primitive church, the religion of the Church of England.’⁴¹

In an age that seemed dominated by religious rationalists on the one hand, and witless enthusiasts on the other, John Wesley championed reason and experience as appropriate tools for expressing and communicating the gospel. He was as impatient with those who ‘over-value reason’ as well those who cast reason aside in flights of religious experience—

Why should you run from one extreme to the other? Is not the middle way best? Let reason do all reason can; employ it as far as it will go. But at the same time, acknowledge it is utterly incapable of giving either faith, or hope, or love; and consequently of producing real virtue, or substantial happiness. Expect these from a higher Source, even from the Father of the spirits of all flesh.⁴²

In a similar way, while defending the ‘Abba-experience’ (Gal. 4:6), which Wesley called ‘the witness of the Spirit’, he acknowledged: ‘Experience is not sufficient to prove a doctrine that is not founded on Scripture.’ This is undoubtedly true; and it is an important truth; but it does not affect the present question; for it has been shown, that this doctrine is founded on Scripture: therefore experience is properly alleged to confirm it.⁴³

This conjunctive mood extended to John Wesley’s assessment of the relationship of faith and science. Far from having a negative attitude towards the developments of emergent science, John Wesley was often enamoured by them. In 1747, when professional medicine was still available only to the wealthy, he published a hand book on medicine entitled *The Primitive Physic*. It was a practical guide to health that was made up of home remedies, and new

discoveries that Wesley had read about or observed in his travels.⁴⁴ The book, however archaic it might seem today, was hugely popular in its own day and went through more than a half-dozen subsequent editions.

Wesley's fascination with electricity is another good example of his willingness to embrace faith and science. Five years before Benjamin Franklin's famous experiment with a kite, a key and a thunderstorm (1752), John Wesley read (in the Paris papers) about electrical experiments being conducted in France and purchased a small electrical generator. In his subsequent sermons and writings, electricity became a recurrent illustration of the limitations of human understanding and the powerful, but invisible operation of God.⁴⁵ And people who stopped by his parish house, next to Wesley's Chapel on London's City Road, complaining of a cold, arthritic pain, or a nervous disorder were apt to receive a prayer, a cup of tea, and a jolt from Wesley's electrode. No dualist when it came the physical world or matters of faith and science, John Wesley was convinced that electricity was a good gift from God; a perennial pragmatist, he spent several decades trying to find out what electricity was 'good for'.

In 1760 a new and improved edition of *The Primitive Physic* appeared, and Wesley's new 'Preface' proclaimed his approval of electrification—

Some of these [cures] I have found to be of uncommon virtue, equal to any of those which were before published; and one, I must aver, from personal knowledge, grounded on a thousand experiments, to be far superior to all other medicines I have known; I mean electricity....Certainly it comes the nearest to an universal medicine of any yet known in the world.⁴⁶

He recommended electrification for fifteen specific maladies, listed throughout the handbook; among these were Baldness, a Bruise (for which it is said to be 'The greatest cure of all.')

Dropsy, Blindness, Falling Sickness, 'Head Ach,' Lunacy, Old Age, Nervous Disorders and Palpitations of the Heart. Several of these were recommended with John Wesley's personal imprimatur: 'Tried.'⁴⁷ The point here is not to encourage an application of the quaint remedies prescribed by Wesley's *Primitive Physic*; it is rather to remind ourselves that Scriptural Christianity and scientific developments have too often been presented as though they are at odds with each other, John Wesley's

optimism—born of God’s grace—points to a more excellent way.

4. Wesley’s Practical Divinity

It is not especially surprising that the Wesleys are not esteemed as great theologians, and generally not appreciated as creative Christian thinkers; the efforts of Albert Outler, Tom Oden, Randy Maddox (and others) notwithstanding.⁴⁸ This lack of academic acclaim seems almost inevitable, given their ‘target audience’. One struggles to identify founders of any other major Protestant tradition who were willing to distill and shape their theological verities into a standard hymn book—which they described as a ‘little body of experimental and practical divinity’,⁴⁹ a series of ‘Standard’ Sermons,⁵⁰ and a handbook of New Testament Notes.⁵¹ In the ‘Preface’ Wesley wrote—

For many years I have had a desire of setting down and laying together what has occurred to my mind. either in reading, thinking or conversation, which might assist serious persons, who have not had the advantage of learning, in understanding the New Testament.⁵²

These were rather modest standards upon which to build a major theological edifice, but the enterprise was startlingly successful because the Wesleys’s penchant for a popular and practical version of Christianity fit the tenor of their times. Schooled and credentialed to joust with the academicians of the Enlightenment Era, they turned their attention— instead—to the plight of the working poor, unchurched, and the under-educated. They found themselves in a context in which vital Christianity was on the wane. We find ourselves in a similarly dire situation. We stand amidst of a so-called ‘Post-modern’, ‘Post-Christian’ era. The church of the twenty-first century faces genuine challenges like plummeting attendance, and social deterioration. The time for strictly academic theology is well past. John Wesley would urge us to return to ‘practical and experiential divinity’—the kind of lived theology that makes a real difference in parish life and in Christian discipleship. New theological tomes, I predict, will not stem the tide of ecclesial irrelevancy and decay in this next century but a return to solid preaching, enabled study of the Scriptures (by clergy and laity alike) and vital Christian worship—just might.

While John Wesley is often remembered chiefly as a travelling, mass evangelist the real substance of early Methodism lay elsewhere. The heart and soul of the

movement was to be found in the infra-structure of Methodist small groups, in the societies, classes and bands. The real badge of Methodism was the ‘class ticket’, that indicated a person had passed a searching interview conducted by Wesley or one of his lieutenants and was a member (in good standing) of a class. Each class was made up of ten to twelve people, living in the same geographic area, who had responded to the call to intentional Christian discipleship. The Methodist Society was the plenary meeting of all the Methodists within a particular parish. One had to be a member of a class to be a member of a Methodist Society. The Society room was the preaching, teaching, and worshipping nexus of the Methodist movement; the works of the Society were designed to supplement and enhance, but not to replace the benefits of Anglican parish life. Weekly class meetings became the locus of spiritual formation, through peer directed pastoral care and Christian accountability. Bands were small group meetings reserved for mature Christians. These sessions were segregated by gender, so not to impede frank conversations about the challenges of living an embodied Christian life; the ‘women bands’ (incidentally) also provided leadership opportunities for Methodist women, since they were led by mature Christian females.

‘The General Rules’ which guided the course of the Methodist Societies evidenced an intimate inter-connection between personal faith, Christian holiness, and social concern. Each member of a Methodist Society promised—

First, to do no harm: ‘that is, by avoiding evil in every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced....’⁵³

Secondly, to do good: ‘...by being in every kind, merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and as far as possible to all men—to their bodies;...[and] to their souls....’⁵⁴

Finally, ‘by attending upon all the ordinances of God. Such are, the public worship of God; the ministry of the Word, either read or expounded; the Supper of the Lord; family and private prayer; searching the Scriptures; fasting or abstinence.’⁵⁵

These spiritual disciplines were employed in the life of the parish, and were empowered by the function of the Methodist societies and classes. One need only recall the long standing impact of women’s foreign mission groups, or notice the impact of men’s fellowship groups (like ‘Promise Keepers’) to

recognize that people continue to hunger for intentional Christian fellowship that is set in the context of the support, encouragement, and direction of a small group. Christian practice in the twenty-first century will be significantly enhanced if we find new and creative ways to employ Wesley's small group strategy to enhance modern parish life.

John Wesley's historical significance alone makes him an Anglican churchman worth remembering. But Wesley's optimism of grace, his Catholic Spirit, and conjunctive theological mood make him a suitable theological mentor amidst the challenges of our post-modern age. Wesley's stress upon practical divinity makes him a stimulating role model, and partner in conversation as we proclaim, and embody the Christian gospel in our own rapidly changing times. Once again, Albert Outler is worth quoting—

My aim and hope is to help rescue Wesley from his status as cult-hero to the Methodists (by whom he has been revered but not carefully studied) and to exhibit him as a creative Christian thinker with a special word for these perilous times and for us, as we try to grapple with...new problems....⁵⁶

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ENDNOTES

1. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds. *The Works of John Wesley: Vol. 18, Journal and Diaries, Part I* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), p. 250.
2. Umphrey Lee, *The Lord's Horseman: John Wesley the Man* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1954), p. 91.
3. John Wesley, 'Preface' to *Sermons on Several Occasions* (Published 1746), p. 6.
4. Albert Outler, "John Wesley: Folk Theologian," *Theology Today*, 34 (July 1977) reprinted in Thomas Oden and Leicester Longden, eds. *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage: Essays of Albert C. Outler* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, pp. 111-24.
5. See for example, Theodore W. Jennings, *Good News to the Poor: John Wesley's Evangelical Economics* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990).
6. Elie Halvey, *History of the English People*, 3 Vol. (New York and London: Penguin Books, 1937), III, p. 85, John Wesley Bready, *England: Before and After Wesley*

- (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938), and Bernard Semmel, *The Methodist Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1973). This assessment is disputed by John Kent, *Wesley the Wesleyans* (CUP, 2002), pp. 100, 187 (and others).
7. Ablove, *The Evangelist of Desire: John Wesley and the Methodists* (California: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 40
 8. Ablove, *The Evangelist of Desire*: p. 40.
 9. Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, p. 194.
 10. John Telford, *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley*, 8 Vol. (London: Epworth Press, 1931), V, p. 16.
 11. Frank Baker, ed., *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 26 Letters II, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982), pp. 414-17.
 12. Baker, *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 26, Letters II, pp. 414-17.
 13. Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, p. 197.
 14. Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, p. 194.
 15. Lee, *The Lord's Horseman, 'Pope John'*, pp. 107-121, and Stanley Ayling, John Wesley (New York: Collins, 1979), p. 238. Cf. Thomas Jackson, ed., *The Works of John Wesley*, 14 Vol. (London: The Wesleyan Conference, 1872), VIII, 312-13, where Wesley responds to the comments, 'several gentlemen are offended at your having so much power' and 'this is making yourself a Pope'.
 16. Kenneth Collins, *A Real Christian: the Life of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), Richard Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), and Henry Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1989). Heitzenrater offers a readable introduction that stands on the shoulders of solid research, Collins provides a carefully nuanced record of Wesley's life and work, Ward gives a more exhaustive academic treatment.
 17. Albert Outler, "The Place of Wesley in the Christian Tradition," in Oden and Longden, eds. *Essays of Outler*, p. 78.
 18. Thomas Oden, *John Wesley's Scriptural Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), pp. 21-22.
 19. Jackson, *J.W. Works*, I: 190, 229; VI: 229, 230; X: 214, 452, 457; XI: 139, and etc.
 20. Jackson, *J.W. Works*, I: 23, 110, 160, 383; IV: 97, 180; V:50, 75, 127, 128, 131, 137, 223; VI: 49, and etc.
 21. Jackson, *J.W. Works*, I:168, 174; II: 433; III:406; IV: 425, 483; V: 165; VI: 277, 492; XI: 374, 405, 478; XII: 343. As a direct quote this three sentence summary may be apocryphal, but each separate sentence was said by Wesley, many times; it is an accurate summary of John Wesley's views.

22. Albert Outler, ed. *The Works of John Wesley: Vol. 2, Sermons, II*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), pp. 63-79.
23. Outler, *J. W.'s Sermons*, II, pp. 79-95.
24. Outler, *J. W.'s Sermons*, II, p. 69.
25. Outler, *J. W.'s Sermons*, II, p. 71.
26. Outler, *J. W.'s Sermons*, II, pp. 87-89.
27. *Ibid.*, 341.
28. Outler, *J. W.'s Sermons*, II, pp. 89-92.
29. Outler, *J. W.'s Sermons*, II, pp. 89-90.
30. Outler, *J. W.'s Sermons*, II, p. 91.
31. Outler, *J. W.'s Sermons*, II, pp. 93-94.
32. Outler, *J. W.'s Sermons*, II, p. 94.
33. Cf. W. Stephen Gunter, *The Limits of Love Divine's* (Nashville: Abingdon/Kingswood, 1989), pp. 227-79.
34. Outler, *J. W.'s Sermons*, II, p. 341.
35. *J. W.'s Sermons*, VI, pp. 44, 49, 509; VIII, p. 316; IX, pp. 303, 457; X, pp. 276, 283, 313, 330, 341, 385, 456; XI, p. 421; XII, pp. 290, 333, 429; XIV, p. 365.
36. Jackson, *J. W.'s Works*, V, pp. 67, 291, 462; VI, p. 414; VII pp. 205, 253; IX, p. 312; X, pp. 187, 331; XI: 179; XII, pp. 241, 390, 477; XIII, pp. 240, 260.
37. Jackson, *J. W.'s Works*, I, pp. 230, 239; III, pp. 161, 341; IV, pp. 9; V, pp. 134, 246, 283, 344, 454; VI, pp. 74, 76, 93, 114, 227, 261, 277, 283, 308, 360, 425, 461, 488, 598; VII, pp. 148, 185, 212, 284; VIII, pp. 56, 126, 282, 318, 349, 388; IX, pp. 116, 512, 513; X, p. 369; XI, pp. 378, 495; XII, pp. 118, 161, 297; XIII, pp. 218, 236; XIV, p. 253.
38. Telford, *Letters of John Wesley*, III, p. 172.
39. See Thomas Oden, *The Word of Life: Systematic Theology: Vol. II* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), "Preface," pp. ix-xxi for a description of this 'consensual method' for doing Christian theology. It is readily obvious that the method Oden describes is foundationally Wesleyan.
40. Jackson, *J. W.'s Works*, X, p. 484.
41. Outler, *J. W.'s Sermons*, III, p. 585.
42. Jackson, *J. W.'s Works*, VI, p. 360.
43. Jackson, *J. W.'s Works* V, p. 134.
44. John Wesley, *Primitive Physic: An Easy and Natural Method of Curing Most Diseases* (Philadelphia: Parry Hall, 1792).
45. Jackson, *J. W.'s Works*, II, p. 73; VI, pp. 340-41, 427; XI, p. 448; XIII, pp. 491-92.
46. John Wesley, *Primitive Physic*, p. xvi.

47. John Wesley, *Primitive Physic*, pp. 36, 40, 95, 107, 110, 149, 158.
48. See for example Albert Outler, "Towards a Re-Appraisal of John Wesley as a Theologian," *Perkins Journal*, Vol. 14 (Winter 1961), and "John Wesley as Theologian, Then and Now," *Methodist History*, Vol. 12 (July 1974). Thomas Oden, *John Wesley's Scriptural Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), and Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), and Randy Maddox, ed., *Rethinking Wesley's Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998).
49. Franz Hilderbrandt, and Oliver Beckerlegge, with the assistance of James Dale, eds. *The Works of John Wesley, Vol VII: A Collection of Hymns for the Use of The People Called Methodists*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), p. 74.
50. Outler, ed. *J. W.'s Sermons*, Vol. I-IV.
51. John Wesley, ed., *Explanatory Notes Upon The New Testament* (Bristol: Pine, 1754).
52. *Ibid.*, p. 5. This work is forthcoming as Volumes V, and VI in the new (Abingdon) edition of *The Works of John Wesley*.
53. Jackson, *J. W.'s Works*, VIII, p. 270.
54. Jackson, *J. W.'s Works*, VIII, p. 271
55. Jackson, *J. W.'s Works*, VIII, p. 271.
56. Albert Outler, *Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Nashville: Tidings, 1975), pp. 1-2.