

**JOHN WESLEY AND EASTERN ORTHODOXY:
Influences, Convergences, and Differences**

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John Wesley's overall theological orientation has proven to be surprisingly hard to classify. The debate about his "place" in the Christian tradition began during his lifetime and has continued through the whole of Wesley scholarship.

Given his Western Christian location, this debate has generally focused on whether Wesley is more "Protestant" or more "Catholic." Early studies generally assumed that he was Protestant, but differed over which branch of Protestantism he more nearly resembled or depended upon. Some argued strongly that he was best construed in terms of the Lutheran tradition. Others advocated a more Reformed Wesley. Most assumed that such general designations must be further refined. Thus, there were readings of Wesley in terms of Lutheran Pietism or Moravianism, English (Reformed) Puritanism, and the Arminian revision of the Reformed tradition.

Dominantly Protestant readings of Wesley proved to be inadequate. There were clearly typical "catholic" themes in his thought and practice as well. Indeed, there have been several appreciative readings of Wesley from the Roman Catholic tradition. These counter-readings of Wesley have increasingly led Wesley scholars to speak of a Protestant/Catholic synthesis in Wesley's theology.

Such a Protestant/Catholic synthesis should have been expected, given Wesley's Anglican affiliation and training—and Anglicanism's self-professed goal of being a *Via Media*. Indeed, some recent Wesley interpreters argue that he was simply an "Anglican theologian in earnest." This reading of Wesley would seem to be the most adequate so far.

At the same time, the unique nature of Anglicanism has suggested a related reading of Wesley that deserves more consideration. Early Anglican theologians did not mediate directly between contemporary Protestantism and Catholicism. Rather, they called for a recovery of the faith and practice of the first four centuries of the Christian church. Since this early tradition antedated the later divisions, they believed its recovery would provide a more authentic mediating position. In the process of this project they reintroduced an awareness of many early theologians—particularly Greek writers—who had been lost from Western Christian consciousness.

Even a cursory reading of Wesley shows that these recovered early Greek theological voices were important to him. This influence is particularly evident in some of those convictions that have been at the heart of the debate over his distinctive “place”. Since these early Greek theologians remain normative for the Eastern Orthodox tradition, the possibility that Wesley should be read in terms of this tradition, or as a bridge between Eastern and Western Christianity has begun to receive scattered attention.² The goal of this essay is to collect and summarize the suggestions of those contributing to this investigation; thereby, increasing general awareness of this perspective on Wesley’s theology. Hopefully, it will also deepen the self-awareness of and suggest future research agendas for this discussion.

WESLEY AND GREEK/EASTERN ORTHODOX THEOLOGIANS

It is generally recognized that the first four centuries of Christian tradition played a significant role in Wesley’s theology. What is not as often noted is that he tended to value the Greek representatives over the Latin.³ It was a preference he inherited from his father. It deepened during his Oxford years as he studied newly available editions of patristic writings with his fellow “Methodist” John Clayton.

As such, it is not surprising that Greek theologians predominate when Wesley gives lists of those he admires or recommends for study. Frequently cited were Basil, Chrysostom, Clement of Alexandria, Clement of Rome, Ephraem Syrus, Ignatius, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Origen, Polycarp and (Pseudo-)Macarius. By contrast, references to Augustine, Cyprian and Tertullian were relatively rare.⁴

Obviously, one important means for assessing Wesley’s indebtedness to and/or congeniality with the Eastern Orthodox tradition would be detailed studies of his use of and agreement with these early Greek fathers. A few such studies have appeared.

For example, K. Steve McCormick has studied Wesley’s use of John Chrysostom and argued that it was primarily through Chrysostom that Wesley came to his distinctive assessment of the Christian life as “faith filled with the energy of love.”⁵ Likewise, Francis Young has drawn attention to the way Chrysostom’s and Wesley’s preaching both balance *grace* and *demand*; thereby, suggesting parallels in their soteriology.⁶

Again, several scholars have suggested that Wesley modeled his tract *The Character of a Methodist* on Clement of Alexandria’s description of the perfect Christian in the seventh book of his *Stromateis*, though a detailed comparison has not yet been made.⁷

Macarius was clearly influential on Wesley, being cited by him in such crucial contexts as the issue of sin remaining in believers.⁸ Thus, it is no surprise that there have been fruitful comparative studies here—though fewer than one might expect. These studies have focused on two basic areas. First, there have been brief positive analyses of the shared synergistic implications of Wesley’s doctrine of prevenient grace and Macarius’ general soteriology.⁹ Second, there have been more detailed—and strikingly contrasting—comparisons of Macarius and Wesley on the issue of Christian maturity or “perfection.” David Ford has emphasized the *differences* between Wesley and Macarius, arguing that Wesley understood perfection primarily as an identifiable, instantaneously-achieved state, while Macarius emphasized the tenacious entrenchment of sin in even the most mature Christian and the constant need to seek God through prayer, etc.¹⁰ Most other studies, while admitting differences of emphasis, have stressed the *similarities* between Macarius and Wesley.¹¹ Overall, the similarities are much stonger than the differences, particularly when one deals with the thought of the *mature* Wesley (which Outler has emphasized) and with the full range of Macarius’ work (as the best secondary study has exemplified).¹²

If Macarius has received less attention from Wesley scholars than we might expect, it may be partly due to a suggested relationship between him and Gregory of Nyssa—one of the most important early Greek fathers. In 1954 Werner Jaeger argued that Macarius’s “Great Letter” was dependent upon Gregory’s *De Instituto Christiano*.¹³ If this were true, then it could be argued that when Wesley read Macarius he was really coming in touch with Gregory,¹⁴ of whom we have little other evidence that Wesley read. However, more recent scholarship has argued convincingly that the relationship is really the reverse. Gregory took up Macarius’s “Great Letter” and edited it to correct its messalian tendencies, in order to lead those attracted to messalianism back into the orthodox fold.¹⁵

As such, we have little clear evidence of direct historical connection between Wesley and Gregory. Nonetheless, comparative study of the two remains appropriate since Gregory is such a key figure in early Greek tradition and shares the general outlook of others Wesley did read. Paul Bassett has suggested some comparisons between the two on the specific issue of Christian perfection, as has John Merritt.¹⁶ Robert Brightman has undertaken a broader comparative study, stressing common themes rather than historical connection.¹⁷ Unfortunately, Brightman tends to “Westernize” Gregory too much in his exposition. Future general studies would be well advised to draw on Gregory scholarship which presents a more authentic (*and* more amenable!) understanding of Gregory for comparison with Wesley.¹⁸

While suggestions of comparisons between Wesley and other early Greek writers occasionally surface in Wesley scholarship, there are no extended studies. This lack is particularly striking—and regrettable—in the case of Ephraem Syrus, who was Wesley’s favorite such author.¹⁹

While Wesley conceivably could have been familiar with the writings of John of Damascus, the works of later Byzantine writers like Symeon the New Theologian, Nicholas Cabasilas and Gregory Palamas would not have been available to

him. Again, however, thematic comparisons with these later writers would be appropriate and could cast further light on Wesley's relationship to the general Eastern theological temperament. Examples of such studies include A.M. Allchin's comparison of Wesley's spirituality and theological approach with that of Symeon the New Theologian and Craig Blaising's comparison of Wesley's view of the graciously empowered human will with the Eastern understanding of divine energies and uncreated grace, first fully articulated by Gregory Palamas.²⁰

Finally, it must be admitted that Wesley had little first-hand contact with or knowledge of contemporaneous Eastern Orthodox traditions. Indeed, the best claim to direct contact is the perplexing interaction with the purported Greek bishop Erasmus.²¹ As a result, despite his sympathies with early Greek theologians, Wesley offered generally negative judgements concerning contemporary Eastern Orthodox life and thought—in keeping with most Western Protestantism, though perhaps less nuanced than some Anglicans of his day.²²

WESLEY AND EASTERN ORTHODOX THEOLOGY

The focus of the preceding section was primarily historical, suggesting possible contacts between Wesley and Eastern Orthodoxy. We turn now to a more thematic approach. Recently, a fledgling discussion comparing Methodism and Orthodoxy has emerged. It began as a subsidiary of the ongoing dialogue between Anglicanism and Orthodoxy and, to date, has largely remained in that setting.²³ Some Methodist participants harbor doubts about the prospects of the comparison.²⁴ However, A.M. Allchin and Brian Frost have demonstrated important similarities of the spirituality and theology of John and Charles Wesley to that of Orthodoxy; thereby, suggesting that Methodists are closer to Orthodoxy than they usually suspect.

It would be misleading to term this discussion a “dialogue” between Methodism and Orthodoxy. Nearly all the extant contributions have been from the side of Methodism (or Anglicans sympathetic to Methodism). Other than an occasional passing reference, there has been only one study of Wesley by an Orthodox representative—a Master's thesis by Harold Mayo.²⁵

For Wesley scholars, the specific importance of this discussion is the light it throws on his distinctive theological vision. A summary of some similarities and differences between Wesley and Orthodoxy revealed by this comparative study should suggest the impact of his study of early Greek theologians upon Wesley's overall theology.²⁶

The Nature of Theological Activity per se

In general, Christian theology is the attempt to understand, contemplate and live out the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. One of its most basic questions is where one locates that revelation. Western Christian traditions have generally debated the relative priority of Scripture or Tradition. The starting point for understanding the Eastern Orthodox style of theology is to note that they reject any understanding of

Scripture and tradition as items that can be so separated and contrasted in authority claims. They hold that Tradition and Scripture are in perfect unity.²⁷

Thus, for Orthodoxy, the question of the sources of theology becomes essentially that of the sources of *Tradition*. Typically, four such sources are emphasized: Scripture, the definitions of the Ecumenical Councils, the liturgical texts, and the writings of the Fathers.²⁸ From a Western perspective, the most notable aspect of this description of tradition is the inclusion of liturgical texts. Western theology has emphasized the Councils and endorsed theologians more than liturgies, because the former can be more easily used as juridical sources than the latter.

Here, however, is a key area where Anglicanism has differed from the rest of the West. From the beginning, it viewed the doctrinal authority of the Book of Common Prayer as equal to, if not higher than, its Articles of Religion. Wesley clearly embraced this belief in the normative value of liturgy.²⁹ As such, Wesley's understanding of the sources of theology was closer to that of Orthodoxy than most Western traditions. However, there were key differences. First, Wesley joined the West in affirming more explicitly than the East a role for reason and experience in theological activity.³⁰ Second, Wesley restricted the authority of tradition to the first four centuries of the Christian Church (and contemporary Anglican standards) in a way that Orthodoxy would never accept.³¹

Liturgy's importance in Orthodox theology is not limited to its role as a source of Tradition. It is also valued as the most authentic form of *present* theological expression. For Eastern Orthodoxy, the model theologian is one who constructs or interprets liturgy!³² While such a role is not usually as valued in the West, Wesley is an important exception. He was very concerned to provide his revival movement with prayer books, liturgies, and collections of hymns—all theologically crafted or edited.³³

This specific emphasis on liturgy is actually an expression of a larger characteristic of Eastern Orthodox theology. In general, it has maintained the early Christian understanding of theology *per se* as a practical endeavor, while the Western traditions have largely adopted the model of theology as a theoretical science.³⁴ One result of this is that Eastern Orthodox theology has typically maintained a closer unity between theological learning and spiritual life than the West. A second result is that they have involved laity more in theological education than the West.³⁵

It is no accident that John Wesley has also often been praised for maintaining the relationship between spiritual life and theology, and for involving laity in theological education. For, his general theological practice can best be described as a return to the early Christian approach of theology *per se* as practical.³⁶

Thus, it would appear that Wesley's understanding of the nature of theology and the style of his own theological activity had strong resemblances to those of Eastern Orthodoxy—with corresponding contrasts to the dominant Western model. This obviously raises the question whether the resemblance carried over into specific doctrinal commitments.³⁷

Anthropology

At least since Augustine, the Western and Eastern Christian traditions have operated with significantly different understandings of human nature and the human problem.³⁸

Western Christians have generally assumed that humans were created in a complete and perfect state—the epitome of all that God wanted them to be. God’s original will was simply that they retain this perfection. However, humans were created in the Image of God, which included—in particular—an ability for self-determination. Unexplainably, Adam and Eve used this self-determining power to turn away from God. Thus, came the Fall with its devastating effects: 1) the loss of self-determination (we are free now only to sin), and 2) the inheritance of the *guilt* of this original sin by all human posterity. Since this fallen condition is universal, the West has a tendency to talk of it as the “natural” state of human existence; i.e., they base their anthropology primarily on the Fall, emphasizing the guilt and powerlessness of humans apart from God’s grace.

Eastern anthropology differs from the West on nearly every point. First, Eastern theologians have generally assumed that humanity was originally innocent, but not complete. We were created with a dynamic nature destined to progress in communion with God.³⁹ This conviction lies behind their typical distinction between the “Image of God” and the “Likeness of God.” The “Image of God” denoted the universal human potentiality for life in God. The “Likeness of God” was the *realization* of that potentiality. Such realization (often called *deification*) is only possible by *participation* in divine life and grace. Moreover, it is neither inevitable nor automatic. Thus, the Image of God necessarily includes the aspect of human freedom, though it centers in the larger category of capacity for communion with God.⁴⁰

Like the West, Eastern theology sees the Fall as a result of the human preference to compete with God as God’s equal instead of participating in the divine gifts. However, they understand the results of the Fall differently. First, they reject the idea of human posterity inheriting the guilt of the Fall, we become guilty only when we imitate Adam’s sin.⁴¹ Second, they argue that the primary result of the Fall was the introduction of death and corruption into human life and its subsequent dominion over humanity.⁴² Finally, while Orthodoxy clearly believes that the death and disease thus introduced have so weakened the human intellect and will that we can no longer hope to attain the Likeness of God, they do not hold that the Fall deprived us of all grace, or of the responsibility for responding to God’s offer of restored communion in Christ.⁴³ That is, the distinctive Orthodox affirmation of co-operation in Divine/human interactions remains even after the Fall.⁴⁴ In this sense, the East ultimately bases its anthropology more on Creation than on the Fall.

When we turn to Wesley, we find an intriguing blend of elements from Eastern and Western anthropology. To begin with, Wesley assumed the Western view that humanity was originally in a state of complete perfection.⁴⁵ Indeed, he argued that this had been the universal Christian position.⁴⁶ And yet, Wesley scholars have also discerned a deep-seated conviction in Wesley that humans are beings “in

process” and that God does not implant holiness in us instantaneously.⁴⁷ The latter conviction is clearly present in Wesley, but relates to growth in godliness and holiness *after* the Fall. He frequently stressed that such growth is gradual and life-long, even if there are important instantaneous changes as part of it.⁴⁸ He even suggested that growth in grace will continue through all eternity.⁴⁹ Importantly, he drew on Eastern sources to warrant this stress of gradual growth.⁵⁰

In this light, it is not surprising that Wesley’s discussion of the Image of God shows strong resemblances to that of the Eastern tradition. In particular, he made a distinction between the “natural Image of God” and the “moral Image of God” that functioned analogously to that between the Image and the Likeness of God.⁵¹ The natural Image of God is essentially the capacity for knowing, loving and obeying God. Those who do so love and obey God express the true holiness characteristic of the moral Image.⁵²

When we turn to his understanding of the effects of the Fall, the mixed influences on Wesley are most evident. On the one hand, he affirmed that all human posterity inherit the guilt of Adam’s sin.⁵³ On the other hand, his primary concern was how the Fall introduced spiritual corruption into human life. He suggested ties between the introduction of human mortality at the Fall and this spiritual corruption; thereby, approaching the Eastern understanding of the Fall.⁵⁴

Again, Wesley adopted the Western proclivity to term the guilty, powerless condition of fallen humanity our “natural” state.⁵⁵ And yet, he was quick to add that no one actually exists in a state of “mere nature,” unless they have quenched the Spirit.⁵⁶ At issue here is Wesley’s affirmation of a gift of prevenient grace to all fallen humanity. This grace removes the guilt inherited from Adam and re-empowers the human capacity to respond freely to God’s offer of forgiving and transforming grace.⁵⁷ Importantly, Wesley’s actual sources for this idea lay more in early Greek theology (especially Macarius) than in Arminius.⁵⁸ This distinctive wedding of the doctrines of original sin and prevenient grace allowed Wesley to emphasize the former as strongly as anyone in the West, yet hold an overall estimation of the human condition much like that of Eastern Orthodoxy.⁵⁹

Christology

Both Eastern and Western Christianity endorse the general christological guidelines of the early Ecumenical Councils. Within these parameters, however, they have developed distinctive emphases correlating to their differing anthropologies.

The Western understanding of the human problem was primarily juridical, emphasizing the guilt of sin and our inability to atone for ourselves. Accordingly, the focal truths about Christ became those that center around the atonement. For example, the West has generally been more concerned than the East to maintain the distinctness of the two natures (divine and human) in Christ—since contact with both “parties” is essential to the atonement. Likewise, the death of Christ has generally been viewed as the central point of his mission. Explanations of the import of this death could differ: it might satisfy God’s wrath; or, it might fulfill the law; or, it might demonstrate God’s forgiveness to us. Whatever the explanation,

Christ's death remained central.

By contrast, Eastern Orthodoxy places the emphasis more on the fact of the incarnation *per se*. This corresponds to their judgment that the essential human need is to develop the Likeness of God in our lives and that we cannot do this without the gracious assistance of God. The incarnation is seen as the condescending act by which "God became like us so that we might become like God".⁶⁰

Orthodoxy has generally assumed that the incarnation would have been necessary even if there had been no Fall. The Fall accented this need because of its introduction of mortality and corruption into human life. The Fall also necessitated the *death* of Christ. However, this was not a juridical necessity of dealing with guilt. Rather, if Christ was to identify fully with and reclaim human nature, then he must identify with human mortality. He must "recapitulate" the whole of the human state, and thereby redeem it—making it capable of "deification."⁶¹

The focus on Christ's recapitulation and deification of human nature underlies the distinctive Orthodox interpretation of the person of Christ. They affirm the creedal definition of the two natures. However, drawing on the Greek notion of "participation," they emphasize the interpenetration of the two natures. To Western observers, this interpenetration has often appeared to reach the point of Monophysitism—i.e., the divine nature "swallowing up" the human nature. Orthodox theologians have vigorously denied such an implication. However, they have admitted that Byzantine Christology has generally been uncomfortable with such apparent human properties in Christ as the lack of omniscience.⁶²

Finally, if Western Christianity has tended to emphasize the crucified Christ, Eastern Christianity has placed more emphasis on Christ as the resurrected and ascended King. In these events of resurrection and ascension are epitomized the transformation and exaltation of human nature made possible by Christ.⁶³

Like his anthropology, Wesley's christology contains a mixture of Western and Eastern elements.⁶⁴ Clearly, the dominant motif in both his and Charles's understanding of the atonement is that of satisfying Divine justice.⁶⁵ However, hints of a "recapitulation" model—with its emphasis that Christ became human so that we might be delivered from corruption and sin and restored to God-likeness—can be found in their work.⁶⁶ Indeed, there is some attempt to fuse the two understandings.⁶⁷

Likewise, while it is clear that the death of Christ has central importance to Wesley, he gave more emphasis to the Resurrected Christ as Lord and King than was typical of eighteenth century Western theology.⁶⁸

Finally, the recognition of Eastern influences on Wesley's christology may help explain his similar emphasis on the divine nature of Christ, almost to the absorption of the human nature.⁶⁹

Pneumatology and the Nature of Grace

If christology answers the question of how God has acted to provide for human need, pneumatology deals with how the provisions won by Christ are effectively communicated to fallen humanity. As such, understandings of pneumatology are closely connected with the general topic of grace. Indeed, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has, until recently, been nearly reduced to the doctrine of grace in both East-

ern and Western Christianity. There has been little independent theological reflection upon the Holy Spirit *per se* beyond the basic creedal affirmations of the Spirit's divinity and connection with the other members of the Trinity.⁷⁰

The characteristic Western concern to preserve the distinction between the divine and the human carries over into their understandings of the Holy Spirit and grace. While accepting the general assumption that the Holy Spirit's central role is that of dispensing grace, they have emphasized the difference between the Spirit as Giver and grace as gift.

Protestants have typically understood grace to be primarily God's extrinsic act of forgiveness. If they include the notion of power for obedient life, it is typically understood as a "supernatural" power that irresistibly reforms human nature. For Catholics, the role of grace bestowing power upon sinful humanity, enabling us to recover God-likeness and—thereby—God's acceptance, has been the dominant motif. They have generally assumed this power to be more co-operant than most Protestants. However, they are equally as clear that this power is a product of the Holy Spirit (created grace), not the Holy Spirit, *per se*.⁷¹

Characteristically, Orthodoxy has rejected the antinomy between "grace" and "nature" common in the West. They understand grace as empowering capacities already resident (though corrupted) in human life. While grace enables a realization of God-likeness that we could not achieve on our own, it does not act irresistibly or extrinsic of our cooperation. In contrast with the Western distinction between the Spirit and grace, Orthodoxy views grace as the actual—though not exhaustive—presence of God's Spirit (uncreated grace), rejuvenating human life.⁷²

Overall, Orthodoxy has retained a more dynamic understanding of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's work in human life than that which developed in the West. This Eastern understanding of the Spirit has received favorable attention in the renewed consideration of pneumatology in the West.⁷³ Among the important stimuli for this renewed consideration are the holiness and pentecostal movements. Since these movements trace their roots back to Wesley, the possibility of similarities with Orthodoxy is again suggested. There is good warrant for such a suggestion.

The similarity of Wesley's understanding of responsible grace⁷⁴ with Orthodoxy's affirmation of the co-operant nature of grace is frequently noted.⁷⁵ Actually, the commonality is much broader. Wesley clearly believed that grace involved more than mere pardon. It was the transforming *power* of God in human life.⁷⁶ Moreover, he connected grace closely with the presence of the Holy Spirit in human life.⁷⁷ This explains why recent Wesley scholarship has found the Eastern notion of "uncreated grace" uniquely amenable to Wesley's understanding of grace.⁷⁸

The Trinity and the Spirit

The more dynamic understanding of the Spirit in Eastern Orthodoxy is mirrored in the widely recognized distinction between Eastern and Western approaches to the doctrine of the Trinity. While both traditions stand within the basic confessional boundaries, the Eastern tradition has emphasized the *distinctness* of the "persons" of the Trinity, while the West has emphasized the *unity*. Thereby, the East has verged on tri-theism while the West has stood in danger of Unitarianism

or Sabellianism.⁷⁹

This difference between East and West has found its most controversial expression in the West's unilateral addition of the *filioque* to the Nicene Creed. Obviously, issues of papal authority are involved in this debate. However, pneumatological issues are also at stake. The East has charged that the *filioque* expresses a characteristic Western domestication and subordination of the Spirit, while the West has feared that the rejection of the *filioque* renders the Spirit overly independent from the definitive revelation of Christ. It is doubtful that either charge is fully justified. Hopefully, an ecumenical affirmation that *both* preserves the distinctness and importance of the Holy Spirit *and* makes clear that the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ will emerge from current dialogues.⁸⁰

On the surface, Wesley would appear to stand with the West in these debates. While he never discussed the *filioque*, he clearly ascribed to it—including the relevant Anglican article (IV) in the Methodist Articles of Faith.⁸¹ On the other hand, his understanding of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's relation to Christ was somewhat more dynamic than Western precedents. Thus, one could plausibly argue that Wesley was closer to the Eastern tradition on this point than he realized.⁸² Likewise, Wesley's interest in the distinct operations of the "persons" could be viewed as sympathetic to the Eastern approach to understanding the Trinity.⁸³

General Soteriology

The characteristic emphases distinguishing East and West naturally carry over into their general understandings of soteriology. The West focuses on the issue of forgiveness for guilt. Thus, its most central soteriological images are juridical. By contrast, the East focuses on the issue of healing the corruption of human nature resulting from sin. Its most central images are therapeutic. The two approaches are not mutually exclusive. However, the emphases are determinative. The concern of the other tradition is subsumed under each's dominant approach.⁸⁴

The West's focus on forgiveness results in the doctrine of justification assuming primary importance. This is not to say that Western traditions totally ignore growth in Christ-likeness (sanctification); only, that such growth is expected or appealed to within the context of justification. A good example is the traditional Catholic emphasis on infused grace. It may appear to overthrow the doctrine of justification. However, its purpose was to explain *how* a just God could declare sinners justified. Thus, the major distinctions in Western soteriology are not over the centrality of the issue of justification, but over how best to understand the conditions, process, and implications of justification. Different emphases in answering these questions naturally lead to differing degrees of tension with the alternative approach of Eastern Christianity.⁸⁵

The East's answer to the question of how God could accept fallen humanity is simple—by condescending love. They have not felt it necessary to elaborate this point.⁸⁶ Rather, they have dealt with the question of how fallen humanity can recover their spiritual health and the Likeness of God. Their answer to this question has centered on the need for responsible human participation in the divine life, through the means that God has graciously provided.⁸⁷ Western observers have characteristically con-

strued this answer as a form of works-righteousness. However, Eastern theologians insist that the question of *meriting* God's acceptance is not at issue. They are simply recognizing that participation in God's freely bestowed grace empowers humans for responsible cooperation.⁸⁸

On the issues of soteriology, Wesley once again offers an intriguing blend of Eastern and Western emphases. On the one hand, after 1738, he consistently advocated the doctrine of justification by faith, often by appeals to the Anglican standards of doctrine.⁸⁹ On the other hand, therapeutic metaphors and emphases pervade his works—arguably outweighing forensic ones.⁹⁰ Indeed, his characteristic definition of salvation has a remarkably “Eastern” tone:

By salvation, I mean, not barely (according to the vulgar notion) deliverance from hell, or going to heaven, but a present deliverance from sin, a restoration of the soul to its primitive health, its original purity; a recovery of the divine nature; the renewal of our souls after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness, in justice, mercy, and truth.⁹¹

Wesley's dominant therapeutic interest ultimately led him to center soteriology on sanctification rather than justification.⁹² However, he did not totally abandon the Western concern for justification. Indeed, he argued that we cannot be delivered from the power of sin until we are first delivered from the guilt of sin.⁹³ This attempt to unite the “pardon” and “participation” motifs has been judged by some as Wesley's greatest contribution to ecumenical dialogue.⁹⁴ A similar blending has been praised in his brother Charles.⁹⁵ As might be expected, it has also be judged by some Western observers as dangerously close to the type of works-righteousness they fear in Orthodoxy.⁹⁶

Sanctification / Deification

Perhaps the closest resemblance between Orthodoxy and Wesley lies in the articulation of their respective doctrines of deification and sanctification. The Orthodox doctrine of deification has often been misunderstood by the West.⁹⁷ It is not an affirmation of pantheistic identity between God and humanity, but of a participation—through grace—in the divine life. This participation renews humanity and progressively transfigures us into the image of Christ.⁹⁸ Analogously, Wesley's affirmation of entire sanctification is not a claim that humans can embody the faultless perfection of God in this life, but a confidence that God's grace can progressively deliver us from the power of sin—if not from creatureliness.⁹⁹ For both Wesley and Orthodoxy, the transformation desired is more than external conformity to law. It is a renewal of the heart in love—love of God *and* love of others.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, they agree that such transformation is for all Christians, not merely a monastic or spiritual elite.¹⁰¹

What is most characteristic of and common between Wesley and Orthodoxy is their conviction that Christ-likeness is not simply infused in believers instantaneously. It is developed progressively through a responsible appropriation of the grace which God provides.¹⁰² Spiritual disciplines are essential to this process of

growth. There is no room for quietism.¹⁰³

As a corollary of the progressive nature of salvation, both Orthodoxy and Wesley construe Christian life as a continuum of stages, from novice to the mature (*teleioi!*).¹⁰⁴ Not only can Christians experience a beginning transformation in this life, they can hope to attain a perfect expression of Christ-likeness. However, this is a distinctly Greek “perfection” (*teleios*). While available to all, it is not quickly or easily attained. Moreover, it is not a static absolute perfection, but one appropriate to the present human situation and continually open to more growth.¹⁰⁵ As such, while clearly affirming its possible attainment, a *primary* concern is to insure that neither despair over lack of attainment nor presumption due to believed attainment will undercut the continual responsibility for further growth. Indeed, even the claim of possible attainment is justified by the incentive it gives for further growth.¹⁰⁶

The extensive commonalities between Wesley and Orthodoxy on issues of sanctification surely warrant the claim that the final form of Wesley’s doctrine is heavily indebted to the early Greek theologians that he read.¹⁰⁷ This is not to deny that other Western voices echo some of these points and also contributed to Wesley. Nor is it to deny that Wesley differs from some aspects of the Orthodox understanding of deification.

For example, without lessening the moral aspects of deification, Orthodoxy also stressed the mystical aspects of the “vision of divine light.”¹⁰⁸ John Wesley had become increasingly uncomfortable with any such mystical emphasis. However, his brother Charles was more open, and bears a stronger resemblance to the East on this matter.¹⁰⁹ Again, the Eastern association of mortality with spiritual corruption inclined them to view deification as including not just spiritual but *bodily* transformation in this life. Wesley clearly assumed that the latter would be available only in the next life.¹¹⁰

Sacramental Spirituality

One further characteristic of the Eastern understanding of deification through the uncreated grace of God is that this grace is mediated sacramentally. Indeed, it is not uncommon for them to orient their discussion of sanctification around the major sacraments.¹¹¹

Western Christian traditions divide over the issue of the centrality or indispensability of sacraments to spirituality. The Anglican tradition was among the more sacramental. Even so, Wesley’s stress on the importance of the eucharist for Christian life was uncharacteristically strong.¹¹² That this emphasis owed something to Eastern influence is suggested by issues of sacramental doctrine where he resembles Orthodoxy, against the West.

Wesley agreed with those Western traditions that believed the faithful communicant actually received grace through the Eucharist. However, like the East, he rejected philosophical attempts to explain this reality. Rather, he stressed the role of the Spirit, retrieving the Eastern practice of an invocation of the Spirit upon the elements and the congregation.¹¹³

The Eastern understanding of baptism differed significantly from that of the

West. While they practiced infant baptism, they obviously rejected the Western assumption that the purpose of such was forgiveness of inherited guilt. Rather, they stressed that infant baptism restores a power of life to the baptized, who then commences the growth in Christ-likeness. It does not immediately remove all corruption, but restores the participation in God's grace through which progressive deliverance can come. Like all grace, the grace of baptism is co-operant. As such, baptism alone is not a guarantee of salvation.¹¹⁴

The subject of Wesley's understanding of baptism is complex and controversial.¹¹⁵ Early on, he strongly defended infant baptism. Over time, he became increasingly uncomfortable with the popular presumption that one's baptism as an infant absolved all future guilt. In addition, his mature conviction that prevenient grace removes the guilt of original sin undercut the traditional Western rationale for infant baptism.¹¹⁶ As such, in his later writing and editing, he appears to abandon the idea that infant baptism is concerned with forgiveness of sins. He does not surrender, however, the conviction that baptism conveys spiritual vitality to the infant; nor the belief that this grace can be "sinned away."

Wesley's mature convictions about baptism are hardly formalized into a "position." Still, their similarity to the Eastern understanding of baptism is striking. Likewise, his eventual rejection of the Anglican practice of a separate rite of confirmation approximated—intentionally or not—the Orthodox pattern of initiation.¹¹⁷ While significant differences remain and conscious imitation is doubtful, Wesley's exposure to the Eastern alternative through study of early Greek theologians must again be taken into account.

Nature of the Church

On first reflection, similarities between Wesley and Orthodoxy regarding the nature of the Church seem doubtful. Orthodoxy is known for its emphasis on the normativity and importance of the traditional form of the Church, while Wesley was willing—when necessary—to adapt or ignore traditional forms for the sake of witness and mission.¹¹⁸

However, Orthodoxy is also known for its encouragement of lay ministries and for defining the *essence* of the Church as *sobornost* (community, togetherness). Both of these emphases were also characteristic of Wesley's practice and teaching about the Church, as has been frequently noted in the recent discussions.¹¹⁹

IMPLICATIONS

Hopefully the preceding survey has demonstrated that Wesley's appreciation for early Greek theologians resulted in his appropriation of several distinctive Eastern Orthodox theological convictions. The presence of these convictions—and their tension with corresponding Western views—helps explain why the various attempts to "locate" or explain Wesley solely within the Western theological spectrum have lacked consensus and persuasion. It also raises an important question: "How should Wesley's resulting theological blend be judged?" Answers to this question will depend largely on one's assumptions about the compatibility of the general Eastern and Western viewpoints.

If one views East and West as incompatible competitors, Wesley's fortunes are dim. His Western defenders would either 1) have to argue that the resemblances to Orthodoxy are only accidental, or 2) try to accommodate them to the Western perspective.¹²⁰ By contrast, Orthodox theologians would see him as one imperfectly converted to the true faith.¹²¹

If one adopts the recently suggested notion of the "complementarity" of East and West,¹²² the results are no better. This model assumes that there are equally legitimate alternative ways of explaining the same phenomena, which neither conflict with nor overlap each other because they function on different levels. On this assumption, Wesley made a fatal mistake in trying to integrate them. He should have left each with its own integrity.

The other possible major assumption is that both the Eastern and Western theological traditions embody important—but partial—truths. From such a perspective, Wesley's theological program might be judged more positively. At the least, he could be honored as an eclectic who gathered disparate truths wherever he found them. More ambitiously, some have advanced the claim that he has forged a unique *synthesis* of these two major Christian traditions.¹²³ If this latter claim is true, then Wesley's theology holds truly ecumenical promise. Such a possibility surely warrants continuing the current discussion.

Notes

Abbreviations

<i>John Wesley</i>	<i>John Wesley</i> , edited by Albert C. Outler. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).
<i>Letters</i> (Telford)	<i>The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.</i> , edited by John Telford, 8 vols. (London: Epworth, 1931) [NB: Use only for letters dated after 1755].
<i>NT Notes</i>	<i>Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament</i> , 3rd corrected edition (Bristol: Graham and Pine, 1760–62; many later reprints).
<i>Poet. Works</i>	<i>The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley</i> , ed. George Osborn, 13 vols. (London: Wesleyan-Methodist Conference, 1868–72).
<i>Works</i>	<i>The Works of John Wesley</i> ; begun as “The Oxford Edition of The Works of John Wesley” (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975–1983); continued as “The Bicentennial Edition of The Works of John Wesley” (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984—); 16 of 35 vols. published to date.
<i>Works</i> (Jackson)	<i>The Works of John Wesley</i> , ed. Thomas Jackson, 14 vols. (London, 1872; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958).

1. This paper is dedicated to Albert C. Outler in honor of his eightieth birthday and in appreciation for his notable contributions to Wesley scholarship.
2. Isolated early suggestions can be found in Alexander Knox, *Remains of Alexander Knox, esq.* (London: Duncan & Malcolm 1844), 3:483; and Richard Denny Urlin, *John Wesley’s Place in Church History* (London: Rivington’s, 1870), 10, 59–86. The one responsible for recovering this agenda in contemporary Wesley studies is Albert Outler. Cf. *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), viii–ix; and “John Wesley’s Interests in the Early Fathers of the Church.” *Bulletin of the United Church of Canada Committee on Archives and History* 29 (1980–2): 5–17. For a similar suggestion in regards to Charles Wesley, see Brian Frost, “The Idea of Fullness in the Hymns of Charles Wesley,” *Sobornost* Ser. 4, No. 7 (1962): 373–82.
3. The best study of Wesley’s appeal to tradition is Ted Campbell, *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity: Religious Vision and Cultural Change* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1991). However, Campbell does not focus on the Greek fathers. For this see: Albert Outler in *Works* 1:74.
4. For three typical listings, see *Plain Account of Genuine Christianity*, §III.11, *John Wesley*, 195; “An Address to the Clergy,” §§I.2 & II.1, *Works* (Jackson) 10:484, 492; and Sermon 112, “On Laying the Foundation of the New Chape,l” §II.3, *Works* 3:586. Note also that Wesley included excerpts for Clement, Ignatius, Macarius and Polycarp in Volume 1 of his *Christian Library*.

5. "John Wesley's Use of John Chrysostom on the Christian Life: Faith Filled with the Energy of Love" (Drew University Ph.D. thesis, 1983).
6. "Grace and Demand – The Heart of Preaching." *Epworth Review* 12.2 (1985): 46–55.
7. Cf. Harald Lindström, *Wesley and Sanctification* (Stockholm: Nya Bokförlags Aktiebolaget, 1946), 159; and Outler, "Wesley's Interest in the Fathers," 11.
8. Cf. Sermon 43, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," §I.7, *Works* 2:159.
9. Outler, "Wesley's Interest in the Fathers," 12; and Charles Rogers, "The Concept of Prevenient Grace in the Theology of John Wesley" (Duke University Ph.D. thesis, 1967), 29 fn1.
10. David C. Ford. "Saint Makarios of Egypt and John Wesley: Variations on the Theme of Sanctification." *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 33 (1988): 285–312. Ford appears to know Macarius much better than Wesley.
11. Cf. Paul Bassett & William Greathouse, *Exploring Christian Holiness. Vol. 2: The Historical Development* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1985), 69–79; Ernst Benz, *Die Protestantische Thebais: Zur Nachwirkung Makarios des Ägypters im Protestantismus des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts in Europa und Amerika* (Weisbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1963), 117–29; Robert G. Tuttle, Jr., "The Influence of Roman Catholic Mystics on John Wesley" (University of Bristol Ph.D. thesis, 1969), 300–10 (Note that Tuttle treats Macarius as a general "catholic" theologian); and Gordon Wakefield, "La Littérature du Désert chez John Wesley," *Irénikon* 51 (1978): 165–67.
12. Cf. Hermann Dörries, *Die Theologie des Makarios/Symeon* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978).
13. Jaeger, *Two Rediscovered Works of Ancient Christian Literature: Gregory of Nyssa and Macarius* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1954).
14. This claim was advanced first and most strongly by Albert Outler in *John Wesley*, 9 fn26.
15. See Reinhart Staats, *Gregor von Nyssa und die Messalianer* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968); and *idem*, *Makarios-Symeon Epistola Magna: Eine messalianische Mönchsregel und ihre Umschrift in Gregors von Nyssa "De instituto christiano"* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 28–30.
16. Bassett, *Exploring Christian Holiness*, 79–87; and John Merritt, "'Dialogue' Within a Tradition: John Wesley and Gregory of Nyssa Discuss Christian Perfection," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 22.2 (1987): 92–116. Overall, Bassett's presentation is the most suggestive. In particular, Merritt explicitly assumes the dependence of Macarius on Gregory and subsumes discussion of Macarius within his study.

17. Robert Brightman, "Gregory of Nyssa and John Wesley in Theological Dialogue on the Christian Life" (Boston University Ph.D. thesis, 1969). Note his appendix on the issue of Wesley's relation to Gregory (359ff).
18. To mention just two: David Balás, *Metousia Theou: Man's Participation in God's Perfections According to Saint Gregory of Nyssa* (Rome: Libreria Herder, 1966); and Verna Harrison, "Grace and Freedom According to Gregory of Nyssa" (Graduate Theological Union Ph.D. thesis, 1986).
19. Wesley repeatedly read and referred to Ephraem, calling him the "most awakening author of all the ancients," *Journal* (12 October 1736) *Works* 18:172. For records of reading see the Georgia Diary (*Works* 18:424–49); and *Journal* entries for 4 March 1747 (*Works* 20:162) and 21 May 1761 (*Works* 21:322).
20. A.M. Allchin, "Our Life in Christ: In John Wesley and the Eastern Fathers," in *We Belong to One Another*, 62–78, edited by A.M. Allchin (London: Epworth, 1965); and Craig Blaising, "John Wesley's Doctrine of Original Sin" (Dallas Theological Seminary Th.D. thesis, 1979), 242–86. Allchin is clearly aware that Wesley could not have known the works of Symeon. It is not clear that Blaising acknowledges this about the Palamite idea of divine energies.
21. For a brief summary of the questions concerning the status of Erasmus and what Wesley may or may not have requested from him, see Colin Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1960), 223–25.
22. Cf. *The Doctrine of Original Sin, Pt. I*, §II.7, *Works* (Jackson) 9:216–17; Sermon 63, "The General Spread of the Gospel," §§5–6, *Works* 2:487; Sermon 69, "The Imperfection of Human Knowledge," §II.7, *Works* 2:580–81; Sermon 122, "Cause of the Inefficiency of Christianity," §4, *Works* 4:88; and John Wesley, *A Concise Ecclesiastical History* (London: Paramore, 1781) 3:171–94 and 4:60–69 (Note that Wesley is merely abridging the comments of J.L. Mosheim here). For a survey of preceding *Anglican* views see Christopher Knight, "'People so Beset with Saints': Anglican Attitudes to Orthodoxy, 1555–1725," *Sobornost* 10.2 (1988): 25–36.
23. The ground breaking documents are Anthony Bloom, *et al.*, *Dialogue East and West* (London: Faith Press, 1963), esp. 41–44; and A.M. Allchin, ed. *We Belong to One Another: Methodist, Anglican and Orthodox* (London: Epworth, 1965). See also A.M. Allchin, *Participation in God: A Forgotten Strand in the Anglican Tradition* (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1988); Brian Frost, "Orthodoxy and Methodism," *London Quarterly & Holburn Review* 189 (1964): 13–22; Brian Frost, *Living in Tension Between East and West* (London: New World Publications, 1984); John Newton, "The Heart Strangely Warmed: Eastern Orthodoxy and the Free Church Tradition in the West," *Sobornost* 6.2 (1984): 43–54; and E. Gordon Rupp, "Methodists, Anglicans and Orthodoxy," *Sobornost* ser. 4, no. 10 (1964): 566–69.
24. Note especially Gordon Rupp's contribution to *We Belong to One Another*, 13–29.

25. Harold Mayo, "John Wesley and the Christian East: On the Subject of Christian Perfection" (St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary Master's thesis, 1980).
26. The following summary includes both claims from studies introduced above and suggestions from a comparative reading of contemporary Orthodox theology and Wesley. The use of contemporary Orthodox theology is warranted by their normative ascription to the early Greek theologians Wesley read.
27. Cf. Hieromonk Auxentios & Archimandrite Chrysostomos, "A Comparative Treatment of Scripture and Tradition in the Orthodox East and the Catholic and Protestant West," *Diakonia* 16 (1981): 212–24, esp. 217–18; Meyendorff, *Living Tradition*, 20; and Ware, *Orthodox Church*, 207.
28. Cf. A Monk of the Eastern Church, *Orthodox Spirituality* (3rd ed. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1987), ix; and Ware, *Orthodox Church*, 204.
29. Cf. J. Brian Selleck, "The Book of Common Prayer in the Theology of John Wesley" (Drew University Ph.D. thesis, 1983).
30. This is not to say Eastern theologians do not draw on reason and experience, only that they do not explicitly articulate these as sources in any way analogous to Tradition. Cf. Brightman's artificial attempt to demonstrate a "Wesleyan Quadrilateral" in Gregory of Nyssa ("Gregory of Nyssa," 31–41).
31. For an analysis of such a restriction in Wesley, see Campbell, "Wesley's Conceptions of Antiquity." For an Orthodox rejection of any such restriction, see Georges Florovsky, *Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View* (Belmont, MA: Büchervertriebsanstalt, 1987), 111.
32. Cf. Vladimir Lossky, *Orthodox Theology: An Introduction* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1978), 14; John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1974), 7, 115; A Monk, *Orthodox Spirituality*, 17; and Ware, *Orthodox Church*, 213, 271.
33. Cf. the analysis of the *forms* of Wesley's theological activity in Randy L. Maddox, "John Wesley – Practical Theologian," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 23 (1988): 122–47.
34. For a survey of these developments and recent calls for Western theology to return to a more "practical" approach see Randy L. Maddox, "Recovering Theology as a Practical Discipline: A Contemporary Agenda," *Theological Studies* 51 (1990): 650–72. For a strong argument that Eastern theology has retained this early pastoral nature see Schmemmann, *Church, World, Mission*, pp. 119ff.
35. Cf. Herbert A. Hodges, "Methodists, Anglicans and Orthodox," in *We Belong to One Another*, 39–40; Meyendorff, *Byzantine theology*, 8; and Ware, *Orthodox Church*, 56, 215.

36. Cf. Maddox, “John Wesley – Practical Theologian.”
37. We will organize the doctrinal comparison of Orthodoxy and Wesley around the pattern of Christian experience, as suggested by Meyendorff (*Byzantine Theology*, 128).
38. One of the best brief summaries of the two basic traditions is J. Patout Burns, “The Economy of Salvation: Two Patristic Traditions,” *Theological Studies* 37 (1976): 598–619. For a similar study mentioning variations from these two major positions see J. Patout Burns, “Introduction,” *Theological Anthropology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 1–22.
39. Cf. John Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought* (Washington, DC: Corpus Books, 1969), 122; and Father Kallistos (Timothy) Ware, *The Orthodox Way* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1980), 66.
40. Cf. Burns, “Introduction,” 7; Lossky, *Orthodox Theology*, 71; Georgios I. Mantzaridis, *The Deification of Man* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1984), 20; and Meyendorff, *Christ*, 95.
41. Cf. Mantzaridis, *Deification*, 25; and Meyendorff, *Catholicity*, 72.
42. This difference centers partly around a debate over the correct reading of Romans 5:12. Cf. the discussion in Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 144.
43. Cf. Meyendorff, *Christ*, 88; and Ware, *Orthodox Church*, 227–28.
44. Cf. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 138–39; Meyendorff, *Christ*, 93–95; and Ware, *Orthodox Church*, 226.
45. Cf. Sermon 60, “The General Deliverance,” §I.2, *Works* 2:439. Robin Scroggs argues that Wesley’s Note on Romans 5:21 suggests the contrary, but he appears to read too much into this one reference (Scroggs, “John Wesley as a Biblical Scholar,” *Journal of Bible and Religion* 28 [1960]: 415–22). Indeed, Wesley extended perfection to the rest of creation as well—cf. Sermon 56, “God’s Approbation of His Works,” §§I.2–6, *Works* 2:389–91.
46. Cf. his reaction to Dr. Taylor’s suggestion that Adam was not created perfect in *The Doctrine of Original Sin, Pt. II*, §III, *Works* (Jackson) 9:291–92.
47. One of the clearest examples is Mildred Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1972), 70, 81.
48. Cf. *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, §26, *Works* (Jackson) 11:442.
49. *Ibid.*, Q. 29, *Works* (Jackson) 11:426. This statement dates from 1763. In 1756 he had commented that the cure to sin must be completed at least in paradise, it cannot wait for heaven; Letter to James Hervey (15 October 1756), *Letters* (Telford) 3:380.
50. Cf. Sermon 43, “The Scripture Way of Salvation,” §I.7, *Works* 2:159.

51. Cf. Sermon 45, “The New Birth,” §I.1, *Works* 2:188. This distinction and its precedents in early Greek theologians has been explored by Egon Walter Gerdes, “John Wesley’s Lehre von der Gottesebendbildlichkeit des Menschen” (Keil University Ph.D. thesis, 1958), esp. 10–15.
52. Cf. Sermon 60, “The General Deliverance,” §I.2, *Works*, 2:439; and Sermon 62, “The End of Christ’s Coming,” §I.7, *Works* 2:475.
53. On this point compare Lindström, *Wesley and Sanctification*, 34–35; and Blaising, “Wesley’s Doctrine of Original Sin,” 206ff.
54. Though there are occasional suggestions that the death incumbent upon Adam’s sin was only spiritual death (e.g., Sermon 45, “The New Birth,” §I.3, *Works* 2:190), Wesley generally ascribes the transition to mortality and death to the Fall as well (cf. Conference Minutes [25 May 1744], *John Wesley*, 138–39; and *The Doctrine of Original Sin, Pt. II*, § I.5, *Works* [Jackson] 9:243). He even speculates about the process of this increasing mortality and resulting spiritual corruption—a type of “hardening of the arteries!” (cf. Sermon 141, “The Image of God,” §II.1, *Works* 4:246–47; rewritten as Sermon 57, “On the Fall of Man,” §II.5, *Works* 2:407–8). The main point is that he then attributes the shortcomings of even the most perfect redeemed activity to the corruptions resulting from the Fall (e.g., Sermon 129, “Heavenly Treasure in Earthly Vessels,” § II.1, *Works* 4:165).
55. Cf. Sermon 45, “The New Birth,” §II.4, *Works* 2:192; and Sermon 54, “On Eternity,” §16, *Works* 2:367.
56. Sermon 85, “On Working Out Our Own Salvation,” §III.4, *Works* 3:207.
57. Cf. John C. Cho, “Adam’s Fall and God’s Grace: John Wesley’s Theological Anthropology,” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 10 (1986): 202–13.
58. Cf. David Eaton, “Arminianism in the Theology of John Wesley” (Drew University Ph.D. thesis, 1988), 222ff; Outler, “Wesley’s Interest in Early Fathers,” 12; and Rogers, “Prevenient Grace,” 29 fn1. See also Meyendorff’s description of the same basic notion in Gregory of Nyssa (*Catholicity*, 22).
59. Cf. the judgments of Blaising, “Original Sin,” 270; and Frost, *Living in Tension*, 45.
60. Cf. Mantzaridis, *Deification*, 30; and Meyendorff, *Catholicity*, 21.
61. Cf. George Cronk, *The Message of the Bible: An Orthodox Perspective* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1982), 37; and Meyendorff, *Christ*, 88.
62. For the best extended current Orthodox treatment of these issues see Meyendorff, *Christ*, esp. 4–5, 128, 163ff.
63. Cf. Cronk, *Message*, 41; and Lossky, *Orthodox Theology*, 116.

64. This is shown most clearly in Craig B. Galloway, “The Presence of Christ with the Worshipping Community: A Study in the Hymns of John and Charles Wesley” (Emory University Ph.D. thesis, 1988), esp. 106ff.

65. Cf. John R. Renshaw, “The Atonement in the Theology of John and Charles Wesley” (Boston University Ph.D. thesis, 1965), esp. 123, 138; and John R. Tyson, “Charles Wesley’s Theology of Redemption,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 20.2 (1985): 7–28.

66. Wesley’s *NT Note* on Luke 2:43 claims “our Lord passed through and sanctified every stage of human life.” Note also how he describes Christ’s destroying of the works of the devil with a focus on present delivery from sinfulness, rather than on the Cross in Sermon 62, “The End of Christ’s Coming,” §§III.1–4, *Works* 2:480–82. This theme can be found as well in Charles’s *Hymns for the Nativity*, especially hymn #5, vs. 5 (*Poet. Works* 4:110) and hymn #8, vs. 5 (*Poet. Works* 4:114). Cf. the judgments of Renshaw, “Atonement,” 222; and Tyson, “Redemption,” 17.

67. Cf. *NT Notes*, Col. 1:14 – “The voluntary passion of our Lord appeased the Father’s wrath, obtained pardon and acceptance for us, and *consequently*, dissolved the dominion and power which Satan had over us through our sins. So that forgiveness is the beginning of redemption . . . (emphasis added).

68. Cf. Renshaw, “Atonement,” 234ff. On this point, Brian Frost would appear to go too far in claiming that Wesley relegates the crucified Christ to the background. However, his suggestion of a heightened emphasis on the resurrected Lord is on target (Frost, *Living in Tension*, 41). As such, John Deschner is correct to suggest that a deeper realization of the Eastern Orthodox roots of Wesley’s thought calls in question his previous argument that Wesley’s Christology is oriented around Christ’s priestly work (Deschner, “Foreword,” in reprint of *Wesley’s Christology: An Interpretation* [Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1985], ix)

69. Cf. Deschner, *Christology*, 28–32; and Outler’s comment in *Works* 1:470 footnote f. Note also Roberta Bondi’s conclusion that there is no necessary conflict between Wesley’s Christology and that of the non-Chalcedonian East—Bondi, “The Meeting of Oriental Orthodoxy and United Methodism,” in *Christ in East and West*, ed. P. Fries & T. Nersoyan (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 171–84.

70. The best recent survey and analysis of the development of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is: Yves M. J. Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 3 vols. (New York: Seabury, 1983).

71. For a dialogue between Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox on the subject of grace see C. Moeller & G. Philips, *The Theology of Grace and the Oecumenical Movement* (London: A.R. Mowbray & Co, 1961). This book is summarized extensively in E.L. Mascall, “Grace and Nature in East and West,” *Church Quarterly Review* 164 (1963): 181–98. An older, but still helpful, collection is N.P. Williams, *The Grace of God* (London: Longmans, 1930).

72. For Orthodox reflections on grace and the related Palamite distinction between God’s essence and God’s energies see Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern*

Church (London: James Clark & Co, 1957), 162ff; Meyendorff, *Catholicity*, 73; Meyendorff, *Christ*, 87; and Meyendorff, *Living Tradition*, 172. Cf. Roland Zimany, “Grace, Deification and Sanctification: East and West,” *Diakonia* 12 (1977): 121–44.

73. For an analysis of one example—Karl Rahner—see: Gerry Russo, “Rahner and Palamas: A Unity of Grace,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 32 (1988): 157-80.

74. On this term and its characterization of Wesley’s thought in general see Randy L. Maddox, “Responsible Grace: The Systematic Perspective of Wesleyan Theology,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 19.2 (1984): 7–22.

75. Cf. Frost, *Living in Tension*, 18; Mayo, “Wesley and the Christian East,” 20; and Outler, “Wesley’s Interest in the Early Fathers,” 15.

76. This has been demonstrated (in contrast with Calvin!) by Robert J. Hillman, “Grace in the Preaching of Calvin and Wesley: A Comparative Study” (Fuller Theological Seminary Ph.D. thesis, 1978). See also Robert Rakestraw, “The Concept of Grace in the Ethics of John Wesley” (Drew University Ph.D. thesis, 1985). Rakestraw emphasizes the Eastern roots of Wesley’s understanding of grace (88ff).

77. Cf. Thomas Lessman, *Rolle und Bedeutung des Heiligen Geistes in der Theologie John Wesleys* (Stuttgart: Christliches Verlaghaus, 1987), 11ff. Rakestraw points to Macarius as an important source of this equation in Wesley (“Concept of Grace,” 102).

78. The most extended discussions are Blaising, “Wesley’s Doctrine of Original Sin,” 242ff; and Luby, “Perceptibility of Grace,” 129ff.

79. For a general reflection on the two orientations, see Congar, *Holy Spirit*, 3:xvff. For a particularly striking Orthodox reflection, stressing the communal nature of God, see John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Press, 1985), 17.

80. The strongest Eastern critique of the *filioque* has come from Vladimir Lossky (cf. *Mystical Theology*, 67ff). For a response to Lossky and a survey of the current discussions see Congar, *Holy Spirit*, Vol. 3.

81. See also his *NT Note* on John 15:16.

82. Cf. the argument of Donald Dayton, “Pneumatological Issues in the Holiness Movement,” in *Spirit of Truth: Ecumenical Perspectives on the Holy Spirit*, edited by Th. Stylianopoulos and S. Mark Heim (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1986), 131–57, esp. p. 139. The contrary argument of Cannon (*Theology of Wesley*, 441–42) appears to confuse the positions of the East and West!

83. Cf. Lycurgus Starkey, *The Work of the Holy Spirit: A Study in Wesleyan Theology* (New York: Abingdon, 1962), 31. Contrast: Thomas W. Pillow, “John Wesley’s Doctrine of the Trinity,” *The Cumberland Seminarian* 24 (1986): 1–10, esp. p. 7. In Starkey’s favor would be Wesley’s strong denial of the attempt to define the Trinity as a matter of offices rather than persons in his Letter to Miss March (3 August 1771), *Letters* (Telford) 5:270.
84. For further characterization of the two approaches see Albert Outler, “The Place of Wesley in the Christian Tradition,” in *The Place of Wesley in the Christian Tradition*, edited by K. A. Rowe (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1976), 11–38, esp. pp. 29–30.
85. Lutheranism, with its strong emphasis on justification *by faith* (and resulting suspicions about talk of growth in holiness) has found the Eastern emphasis most foreign. However there are still possible points of contact; cf. Jouko Martikainen, “Man’s Salvation: Deification or Justification?” *Sobornost* ser. 7, no. 3 (1976): 180–92.
86. For one of the most developed Eastern treatments of the issue of justification see Dumitru Staniloae, *Orthodoxe Dogmatik* (Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1985), 233ff.
87. Cf. the graphic distinction between East and West in Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 146.
88. Cf. especially Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 197–98.
89. Note particularly “Some Remarks on ‘A Defense of the Preface to the Edinburgh Edition of Aspasio Vindicated’,” §3, *Works* (Jackson) 10:349; and *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Pt. I*, §II.4, *Works* 11:111.
90. Cf. the judgment of Dayton, “Pneumatological Issues,” 251; and Outler in *Works* 1:80. For some representative examples see Sermon 44, “Original Sin,” §III.3, *Works* 2:184; Sermon 48, “Self-Denial,” §I.10, *Works* 2:244–45; and Sermon 95, “On the Education of Children,” §4ff, *Works* 3:349ff.
91. *A Farther Appeal, Pt. I*, §I.3, *Works* 11:106. See also the Conference minutes for 25 June 1744, Q. 16, *John Wesley*, 139. Cf. the affirmation of Wesley’s essentially Eastern soteriology by Luby, “Perceptible Grace,” 143 fn194; and Outler, “Wesley’s Interest in Early Fathers,” 10.
92. Cf. Deschner, *Christology*, 185; and Williams, *Wesley’s Theology*, 100.
93. *NT Notes*, 1 Peter 2:24. Cf. Sermon 57, “On the Fall of Man,” §II.8, *Works* 2:410.
94. E.g., Outler, “Place of Wesley,” 30
95. Cf. Allchin, *Participation*, 33; Frost, *Living in Tension*, 38ff; and John Tyson, *Charles Wesley on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 57–70.

96. For example, George Tavard, *Justification : An Ecumenical Study* (New York: Paulist, 1983), 84ff. For a defense of Wesley (and Orthodoxy) see McCormick, “Wesley’s Use of Chrysostom,” 280.
97. For a typical example of such misunderstanding see Ben Drewery, “Deification,” in *Christian Spirituality: Essays in Honour of Gordon Rupp* (London: SCM, 1975), 35–62. Two particularly helpful articulations of deification are Maurice F. Himmerich, “Deification in John of Damascus” (Marquette University Ph.D. thesis, 1985); and Robert G. Stephanopoulos, “The Orthodox Doctrine of Theosis,” in *The New Man*, edited by J. Meyendorff and J. McLelland (New York: Agora Books, 1973), 149–61.
98. See: A Monk, *Orthodox Spirituality*, 22; and Stephanopoulos, “Theosis,” 151–52.
99. The best general analysis of Wesley’s doctrine of perfection is Lindström, *Wesley and Sanctification*.
100. Cf. Mayo, “Wesley and the Christian East,” 34; and Ware, *Orthodox Church*, 241. For the centrality of love in Wesley’s understanding of sanctification, see Wynkoop, *Theology of Love*.
101. Cf. Allchin, “Our Life in Christ,” 65; and Ware, *Orthodox Church*, 240.
102. Cf. Mayo, “Wesley and the Christian East,” 38; and Outler, *John Wesley*, 30–31.
103. Cf. Stephanopoulos, “Theosis,” esp. 150, 159; and Ware, *Orthodox Church*, 241. The best analysis of Wesley’s emphasis on spiritual disciplines for growth in Christ-likeness is Henry H. Knight, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life: John Wesley and the Means of Grace* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1992).
104. Cf. Outler, “Wesley’s Interest in Early Fathers,” 14–15. Compare the stages of a Monk of the Eastern Church (*Orthodox Spirituality*, 36) to those of Wesley (Sermon 40, “Christian Perfection,” §II.1, *Works* 2:105; and Letter to William Law [6 January 1756], *Letters* [Telford] 3:360).
105. Cf. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 176; Albert Outler, “Towards a Re-appraisal of John Wesley as a Theologian,” *Perkins Journal* 14 (1961): 5–14, esp. 12–13; and Ware, *Orthodox Church*, 240.
106. For Wesley note Sermon 42, “On Satan’s Devices,” §II.5, *Works* 2:150; Sermon 43, “The Scripture Way of Salvation,” §III.12, *Works* 2:167; Letter to ‘John Smith’ (25 June 1746), *Works* 26:202; and Letter to John Mason (10 January 1774), *Letters* (Telford) 6:66. Compare with: Simon Tugwell, “Evagrius and Macarius,” in *The Study of Spirituality*, edited by C. Jones and G. Wainwright (London: SPCK, 1986), 168–75, here pp. 173–74.
107. E.g., D. Marselle Moore, “Development in Wesley’s Thought on Sanctification and Perfection,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 20.2 (1985): 29–53, esp. pp. 33–34.
108. Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 209; and Mantzaridis, *Deification*, 87.

109. Cf. Wakefield, "Littérature du Désert," 165–67.
110. Cf. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 68; Ware, *Orthodox Church*, 239; and the Conference minutes for 25 June 1744, Q. 16, *John Wesley*, 139.
111. Cf. Mantzaridis, *Deification*, 41; and A Monk, *Orthodox Spirituality*, 37.
112. Cf. A. M. Allchin, *Participation in God* (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1988), 50; and Selleck, "Book of Common Prayer," 282–83.
113. For an analysis of this "double *epiclesis*" and its Eastern precedents see A. M. Allchin, "Introduction," in *A Rapture of Praise: Hymns of John and Charles Wesley*, edited by H.A. Hodges & A.M. Allchin (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1966), 9–50, p. 39.
114. Cf. Mantzaridis, *Deification*, 41–46; Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 194; and Tugwell, "Macarius," 173.
115. For a good summary and analysis of the various issues see Bernard Holland, *Baptism in Early Methodism* (London: Epworth, 1970).
116. Cf. Sermon 18, "The Marks of the New Birth," §§IV.2–5, *Works* 1:428–30; and Letter to John Mason (21 November 1776), *Letters* (Telford) 6:239–40.
117. For a discussion of Wesley on confirmation see Ole Borgen, "Baptism, Confirmation, and Church Membership in the Methodist Church Before the Union of 1968," *Methodist History* 27 (1989): 89–109, esp. pp. 101ff.
118. Cf. Mayo, "Wesley and Christian East," 49.
119. Cf. Frost, "Orthodoxy and Methodism"; and Rupp, "Methodists, Anglicans and Orthodox," 24.
120. For the first option see Rupp, "Methodists, Anglican and Orthodox," 15. The second option is widely evident in Wesley scholarship.
121. E.g., Mayo, "Wesley and Christian East," 57.
122. Cf. Yves Congar, *Diversity and Communion* (London: SCM, 1984), 70–76 (focusing on the *filioque*).
123. Especially Outler (e.g., *John Wesley*, 14; and *Works* 2:171). See also Bassett, *Christian Holiness*, 108; and Dayton, "Pneumatological Issues," 141.