

In “*Heart Religion*” in *the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements*, 3–31.  
Edited by Richard Steele. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 2001.  
(This .pdf version reproduces pagination of printed form)

**A Change of Affections:  
The Development, Dynamics, and Dethronement  
of John Wesley’s “Heart Religion”**

Randy L. Maddox

This is the religion we long to see established in the world, a religion of love and joy and peace, having its seat in the heart, in the inmost soul, but ever showing itself by its fruits, continually springing forth, not only in all innocence ... but likewise in every kind of beneficence, in spreading virtue and happiness all around it.<sup>1</sup>

Is there a more appropriate longing for the church as Christians stand at the outset of a new millennium than this one voiced over a quarter of a millennium ago? Or have the conflicts and disappointments of the last century left us so brazened that it appears hopelessly idealistic? John Wesley clearly did not consider it unrealistic when he articulated this as the driving vision of Methodism. If his current descendants do, it might be because we have lost touch with Wesley’s emphasis on how this religion must find its seat *in the heart* in order for it to be manifest in spreading virtue and happiness in the world. This emphasis was definitive of Wesley’s mature conception of the Christian life, a conception that he often labeled simply “heart religion.”

The quote above comes from the introduction of *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, a tract Wesley issued in response to early critics of his movement. He discerned misunderstandings and caricatures of his model of heart religion behind many of these critiques. The care he took to rebut these misunderstandings reveals how central heart religion was to his vision of the mission of Methodism. Thus one can imagine how troubled he would be by the misunderstandings and caricatures reflected in debates about and (often reactionary) neglect of heart religion among his theological descendants. The purpose of this book is to invite Wesley's current heirs to engage in a renewed dialogue with his convictions about heart religion as we ponder our mission and needs in confronting the new millennium.

This chapter provides initial background for such a dialogue, seeking to clarify Wesley's convictions in their own right. The first section contends that Wesley's emphasis on heart religion was neither accidental nor merely rote, it developed as part of a conscious transition in his valuation of the role of the affections in Christian life. The second section traces the dynamics of Wesley's heart religion, focusing on how it involves a change of one's affections. The final section suggests how a philosophical "change of affections" among his early heirs has played a part in the eventual dethroning of Wesley's conception of heart religion in many Methodist/Wesleyan circles.

### **The Development of Wesley's Heart Religion: A Change of *Affections***

The opening quote speaks of benevolent actions *springing* from a heart of love. While this might seem a mere poetic image, Wesley's choice of terms reflects his mature stance on the issues of moral psychology, issues central to his heart religion. "Moral psychology" is the technical title for proposed accounts of the dynamics involved in moral choice and action. At issue here are such questions as: Are our options really open at the juncture of moral choices or acts? If the option is open in some meaningful sense, what most hinders us from choosing as we ought? And, what would most effectively "free" us to choose differently? Competing responses to these questions populate the history of philosophical debate, and have direct corollaries in Christian theological accounts of spiritual/moral life. The range of differing responses is too broad to be rehearsed

here.<sup>2</sup> Suffice it to say that they differentiate in terms of: 1) whether they see human choice as totally determined or retaining some element of authentic self-determination, and 2) what they value as the most positive dynamic (e.g., reason, habit, emotion, etc.) in human willing.

### *The Moral Psychology in which Wesley was Nurtured*

The best way to clarify the moral psychology embedded in Wesley's mature heart religion is to start with the stance in which he was nurtured, and which he came to consider less than fully adequate. The most influential voices in Anglicanism at the beginning of the eighteenth century assumed a moral psychology with roots running back to Plato.<sup>3</sup> Plato's central emphases were appropriated early in Christian spirituality and the resulting model became quite prominent in the tradition. This model emphasizes our ability to reason as what provides humans with some capacity for self-determination. By contrast, it identifies the greatest obstacle to moral rectitude as the passionate dimension of human life—i.e., those emotional reactions, instincts, and the like that are not a product of our rational initiative or under fully conscious control. The normative corollary is that truly moral choice and action require subjecting this distracting passionate dimension of life to rational control. This is admittedly not an easy task, but the central stream of this Christian tradition has assumed that through regular practice—empowered by grace—we can habituate an increased aptitude for maintaining moral rectitude.

A richer sense of this “habituated rational control” model of spirituality can be gained by watching the moral/spiritual advice issued by one who assumes it. The most relevant candidate for such illustration is Wesley's mother! As one who was of necessity self-taught, Susanna Wesley was remarkably well-read in Anglican theological and spiritual writings (where this model was broadly taken for granted). She was also remarkably committed to the spiritual and theological formation of her children. While much of this formation was oral, we have available written examples in letters she sent to her sons when they left home to study and in catechisms she prepared for her children when they were temporarily dispersed by the burning of the rectory in Epworth.

Letters sent to her eldest son, Samuel Jr., give an initial sense of what John would have imbibed in his earliest years under her tutelage.

In the first letter to which we have access (less than a year after John's birth) Susanna instructs Samuel Jr. that moral law conforms to reason, and that as "rational voluntary agents" humans are virtuous only when we conform our behavior to moral law.<sup>4</sup> In a subsequent letter she posits the obvious corruption of the human passions as evidenced by their being "so easily and strongly excited by the sensitive appetite," and warns Samuel Jr. that these corrupt passions and appetites are the place where "Satan draws all his auxiliary forces and fights us with our own weapons."<sup>5</sup> This assumption stands behind her later exhortation to "moralize all your thoughts, words, and actions, which will bring you to such a steadiness and constancy as becomes a reasonable being and a good Christian."<sup>6</sup>

The theological framework of the convictions about moral psychology reflected in this advice to Samuel Jr. is evident in other materials. In the catechetical letter prepared—when John was 6 years old—for her daughter Suky (Susanna Jr.), Susanna portrays the original "test" of Adam and Eve in the Garden as "whether they would deny their sensual appetites and keep the body in a due subjection to the mind, or whether they would prefer the pleasures of sense and thereby dethrone their reason," and says that their option for sensuality led not only to their ruin but to the depravity of all subsequent humanity.<sup>7</sup> She reflects on the practical embodiment of this depravity in her journal:

How is it that [the mind's] convictions have so little effect? Whence proceeds this constant perverseness in the affections that they do not immediately follow the dictates of the understanding and judgment? In the order of nature the understanding should direct the judgment, that the will, and that should excite the affections ... but in things of a moral nature 'tis often quite otherwise, and by a stronger corrupt reverse of the action of the soul the order of nature is inverted and the passions gain the ascendant over the superior powers.<sup>8</sup>

How can this corruption be overcome? Susanna is clear that mere human effort will not suffice; we need divine aid, but she focuses this need in intellectual terms:

The philosophy of the whole world hath not sufficient force to conquer the propensions of corrupt nature. Appetites and passions will bear sway [despite] all our fine speculations, till our minds be enlightened by some higher principle by virtue of which light it discerns the moral turpitude of those things in which before it placed its supreme happi-

ness, and the beauty of that virtue and holiness that it was accustomed to despise.<sup>9</sup>

Susanna credits the source of this higher principle as the Holy Spirit, who “enlightens and enlarges the understanding and purifies the affections,” all with a goal to “inclining or disposing to, strengthening, and confirming the will in the paths of virtue.”<sup>10</sup> But the Spirit does not work in a unilateral manner, we have an active role to play. As she exhorts herself in her journal: “We must preserve the government of reason and not suffer our passions to get the ascendant over us. ... If our affections are but purified, the work is done. ... Therefore, be sure to be very hearty and earnest in praying to God for strength to govern and regulate your affections.”<sup>11</sup>

Susanna’s advice continued in a similar vein to John as he undertook his own theological study at Oxford. For example, in a 1725 letter she admonishes him to remember that true human happiness consists in a due subordination of our “inferior” powers (like passions and bodily appetites) to the “superior” powers of our rational nature.<sup>12</sup> Her response later that year to John’s inquiry whether religious zeal is ever inappropriate is of particular interest. This response begins with love as an *affection* that “moves” human behavior and shifts to love as a *moral principle* for controlling the movements of the affections. After affirming that zeal is a natural and legitimate effect of love, Susanna’s letter turns to an exhortation that any visible expressions of zeal be under due restriction, “always according to knowledge, and strictly guarded by prudence and Christian charity [i.e., love].” As she expounds the latter consideration: “Love to God and love to our neighbour ... is, or ought to be, the principle and rule of all our thoughts, words and actions with respect to either. And whatever we do for God or [neighbour] that flows not from this principle, and is not squared by this rule is wrong.”<sup>13</sup> The moral role or contribution of love is clearly focused more on its status as a rational principle or rule than on its status as an affection!

This comparative valuation is typical of a habituated rational control moral psychology. Plato deemed the affections/passions to be indispensable to moral life inasmuch as they are the *generators* of motive power for human action. At the same time, he viewed this as essentially *raw* power, with no inherent moral orientation. While he suggests some differing resistance to taming among the sources of motive power, with the “appetites” (the dark horse) being more resistant than the “spirited element” (the white horse), it is finally reason (the charioteer) that he

portrays as assuring that either type of motive power is used for moral good rather than ill.<sup>14</sup> Christian appropriations of Plato generally retained his portrayal of the passions/affections as generators of motive power. They also carried over his assumption that this power lacks inherent orientation toward morally appropriate ends. Indeed the Christian conviction that humans are presently “fallen” has led many of these appropriations to suggest that at least some of our motive inclinations are inherently *negatively* oriented. A few make this a constitutive difference by gathering the more recalcitrant motive powers under the label “passions” (Plato’s dark horse) while designating the more neutral or innocent powers the “affections” (Plato’s white horse).<sup>15</sup> Most use “affections” and “passions” interchangeably, arguing that the negative orientation is a corruption of originally neutral powers.<sup>16</sup> Either way, the emphasis remains on the need to direct these motive powers to moral ends by asserting rational guidance and control over them.

This emphasis stands behind Susanna’s comparative valuation of the role of love in the Christian life. She clearly values the motive power generated by love as a native human affection. Indeed, she can praise love as the strongest of the human affections, suggesting it is the source of the power of all other affections. But she immediately adds that the target of this affection is not inherently normed, it can be either well or ill-placed. This, she argues, is why the primary rational duty laid upon humanity is to direct our love fully to God—to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength.<sup>17</sup> She reminded John often of this duty in the years of his nurture.

### ***Wesley’s Initial Appropriation of a “Habituated Rational Control” Moral Psychology***

The early (i.e., pre-Aldersgate) Wesley’s personal appropriation of the moral psychology in which he was nurtured is evident in manuscript sermons and letters that we have from this period. When he considers the pre-fallen state of humanity, he describes it as a situation where Adam’s will naturally followed the dictates of his understanding and his affections were “rational, even, and regular.”<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, his prescribed model for winning fallen souls is first to instruct and strengthen the understanding, then to “regulate” the affections.<sup>19</sup> And if one looks for the role of love (or the “heart”) in all this, the primary emphasis remains

that seen in Susanna—on our duty to control our passions by instilling a rational principle of love. As John summarized his understanding in a 1731 letter:

To love God I must be like Him, holy as He is holy; which implies both the being pure from vicious and foolish passions and the being confirmed in those virtues and rational affections which God comprises in the word charity. In order to root those out of my soul and plant these in their stead I must use, (1) such means as are ordered by God, (2) such as are recommended by experience and reason.<sup>20</sup>

What means did Wesley have in mind for this transformation? The best indication is his earliest publications. For example, Wesley resonated with the moral advice of the Cambridge Platonist John Norris that he read during his Oxford years to the point that he self-published (as his second and third publications) extracts of two of Norris's works.<sup>21</sup> The *Treatise Concerning Christian Prudence* particularly reflected Norris's Platonic moral psychology. Its general theme is that Christians should follow God's commandments—not so much out of a motivation of love or fear as for the prudential reason that God has designed it that this will bring us happiness.<sup>22</sup> The background assumption in the book is that all who seek to do this must battle the passions. The latter are described as powerful, yet deaf and blind, therefore truly prudent Christians are advised to begin regulating the passions in their earliest years.<sup>23</sup> Dutiful obedience of the commandments is the chief means to this regulation, but Norris also details a set of “subordinate” means that aid in this effort. Primary emphasis is placed on prayer, reading Scripture, and hearing the Word preached—as settings that directly address reason, building resolve to exercise its executive role. While receiving sacraments and attending corporate worship are also briefly mentioned, it is under the tone that these are bounden duties because they encourage Christian practice.<sup>24</sup> The nearly exclusive rational focus of the means of grace for Norris (and the early Wesley) is clear.

Against this background, and in retrospect of later developments, the most suggestive expression of the early Wesley's moral psychology is in his first publication. In 1733 Wesley drew from several sources to produce a *Collection of Forms of Prayer*. The first prayer (for Sunday morning) centers on the duty of love:

I know, O Lord, that thou hast commanded me, and therefore it is my duty, to love thee with all my heart, and with all my strength. I know thou art infinitely holy and overflowing in all perfection; and therefore it is my duty so to love thee. ... Give thy strength unto thy servant, that thy love may fill my heart, and be the motive of all the use I make of my understanding, my affections, my senses, my health, my time, and whatever other talents I have received from thee.... O let me fulfil this great duty. Permit me not to be in any delusion here; let me not trust in words, or sighs, or tears, but love thee even as thou hast commanded. Let me feel, and then I shall know, what it is to love thee with all my heart.<sup>25</sup>

What is the assumed motivating source of our love of God and neighbor reflected in this prayer? The stress is clearly on the rational recognition that it is our duty: we should develop a habit of loving simply because it is right. But note the desire to “feel” mentioned in the last line. In this context the request is for an empirical validation of *our* love for God; and its primary purpose appears to be assuring us that we are indeed fulfilling our duty. Even so, there is the suggestion that Wesley had some doubt about the sufficiency of intellectual conviction alone to motivate the life of Christ-like love.

### ***Questioning the Adequacy of Platonic Moral Psychology***

He would soon find that others shared this doubt. While a Platonic moral psychology was widely valued in eighteenth-century Anglicanism (in significant part because of its defense of self-determination), there were alternative voices that branded its stress on duty, rational control, and habit formation as “Pelagian.” In this judgment they echoed the challenge that St. Augustine had raised to appropriations of Plato’s moral psychology in the early church. In his spiritual pilgrimage Augustine had struggled and failed to gain habituated rational control over his passions. He drew two conclusions from this failure: 1) that such attempts trust in ineffective human efforts rather than in divine gracious intervention; and 2) that reason is more the slave than the master of the passions. The alternative moral psychology that Augustine developed remains one of the clearest examples of deterministic “voluntarism” in Christian thought.<sup>26</sup> He argued that all human moral choices and actions flow from our ruling affections; reason cannot thwart this flow, and there is no other source of volition. As a result of the fall, all humans are born with



bent affections that can give rise only to sinful actions. Nothing we attempt in our own power can successfully suppress or remove these bent affections. However, in regeneration God graciously implants—in the elect—new affections that then naturally manifest themselves in holy living (to the degree allowed within the constraints of our present conflicted situation).

Wesley's deeper encounter with this Augustinian stream of Christian spirituality (via the English Moravians) in 1738, at the climax of a period of his own spiritual struggle, sensitized him to the subtle tendency of preoccupation with human habit formation to eclipse the conviction of God's gracious prevenience in salvation.<sup>27</sup> The encounter also reenforced his growing doubts about the ability of rational conviction alone to effectuate human action.

### *A New Role for the Affections in Wesley's Mature Moral Psychology*

But what more was needed? In the interactions leading up to Aldersgate Wesley's focus sharpened on the importance of "feeling" the love of God. But this time it was not so much *his* love for God that he longed to feel, it was *God's* reconciling love for him—an experience which he described in the biblical terms of "having the love of God shed abroad in his heart, through the Holy Ghost which is given unto him."<sup>28</sup> This is what he received that night at Aldersgate Street, as he *felt* his heart "strangely warmed" and found that he could now trust that he was pardoned.<sup>29</sup>

From that point on in his preaching Wesley consistently encouraged his hearers to expect and pray that they might experience the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, and his detractors immediately began charging that he was fostering "enthusiasm."<sup>30</sup> Some of Wesley's sharpest rebuttals concentrate on the importance of keeping emotions like joy, peace, and love central to religion, lest it degenerate into a "dry, dead carcass."<sup>31</sup> His broader treatments make clear that his interest is not simply in such emotions for their own sake but in the invaluable role that he was now convinced they play in moral psychology. In contrast to earlier suggestions, the background assumption of Wesley's mature moral psychology became: "all that can be said of the beauty and advantage of virtue and the deformity and ill effect of vice [i.e., rational persua-

sion] alone cannot resist, much less overcome and heal, one irregular appetite or passion.”<sup>32</sup> It is only when we are personally convinced of God’s pardoning love for us that “heavenly, healing light” breaks in upon our souls and we are freed/enabled to love God and our neighbors as we ought (and as we have so unsuccessfully longed to do).<sup>33</sup>

What is the source or basis of this “healing” conviction? Most often Wesley speaks simply of “feeling” the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. In one more explicit treatment he insists that it cannot be based on a chain of reasoning but must be known “by a kind of intuition.”<sup>34</sup> His choice of this term is not accidental, it placed him within a debate among eighteenth century British empiricists who were developing an alternative to rationalist models of human knowing. Reigning rationalist epistemology emphasized the fallibility of human empirical experience and attributed our access to truth to the contribution of reason—often in the form of innate ideas. The empiricists countered that reason is a purely formal category, it can organize experience but it contributes no real ideas of its own. They contended that almost all foundational truths are gained receptively by our intellect—under the motto that there is “no idea in the mind that is not first in the senses.” The only exception to this maxim that they allowed was a small set of self-evident truths, such as geometrical axioms, that they attributed to “intuition.” Empiricism was the epistemology most broadly defended at Oxford when Wesley came as a student. He became a self-conscious adherent, and sorted out the implications of this for his understanding of the Christian life over the next few decades.<sup>35</sup>

One of the things that Wesley struggled with following Aldersgate was the implications of empiricism for our knowledge of God and of God’s activity in our lives. Since it is clear that this knowledge does not come through our physical senses as directly as does our knowledge of the world, prominent empiricists like John Locke concluded that knowledge of God is based on subsequent reasoning about our physical experience. But this meant, as Locke made clear, that such conclusions were inherently tentative and probabilistic. Here was Wesley’s problem: he did not see how tentative conviction about God embracing us in pardoning love could provide the “freeing” effect that we need, and that he had experienced. This led him to propose that God provides the primal assurance of pardon by a more direct route—intuition. To account for this possibility he posited (in direct contrast with Locke) that we have “spiritual senses” that connect us with divine reality, on analogy with how our physical senses connect us with physical reality.<sup>36</sup>

By contrast with his need to work out a distinctive stance within empiricist epistemology, Wesley had available already in his Oxford years a clear articulation of the central implication of empiricism for moral psychology in the growing stream of empiricist moral thought.<sup>37</sup> In direct contrast to the Platonic model of moral psychology which had dominated prior Anglican theology, this stream argued that while reason can clarify the conditions and consequences of a proposed course of action it was not capable of effecting our engagement in that action. On analogy with empiricist claims in epistemology, they insisted that humans are *moved* to action only as we are experientially *affected*. To put it in a practical example: rational persuasion of the rightness of loving others is not sufficient of itself to move us to do so; we are ultimately inclined and enabled to love others only as we experience being loved ourselves. To drive home this point empiricist moral thought increasingly called for a redefinition of the human “will.” They criticized prior moral psychologies for either reducing the will to being a mere cipher for intellectual conviction, or assuming it was an innate store of power for spontaneous acts of volition. They argued that the will is instead properly equated with the set of *affections* that all humans possess, and that these affections are best understood as *responsive* in nature. The affections are not self-generating springs of motive power, they incite us to action only when they are affected.

Wesley’s exposure to this empiricist emphasis on the responsive nature of the affections likely contributed to his growing sense of need to “feel” the love of God prior to Aldersgate.<sup>38</sup> His experience there, and continuing observation of the healing benefits of spiritual affect among his Methodist people, confirmed him in this empiricist stance. His mature model of heart religion was framed in terms of this *changed* sense of the nature and importance of the *affections*.

### **The Dynamics of Wesley’s Heart Religion: A *Change* of Affections**

While the early Wesley operated initially within his received “habituated rational control” moral psychology, the transitions just traced explain the consistency with which his writings after Aldersgate reflect a self-conscious commitment to an empiricist-inspired “affectional” moral psychology.<sup>39</sup> This commitment took formal expression in his typical list of the

faculties that constitute the Image of God in humanity: understanding, will, liberty, and conscience. Note the conjunction of will and liberty on this list. Why did he need both of these? The key reason is that Wesley (in good empiricist form) rejected the conception of the will as a faculty that generates rational self-determination. He used “will” instead simply as an inclusive term for the various affections—the *responsive* motivating inclinations behind all human action.

This grounding of moral volition in affections suggests some similarities with Augustine. It may also call to mind the radical empiricism of David Hume, who portrayed the “will” as simply our automatic responses to whatever affects us. Wesley could not accept the deterministic implications of either Augustine or Hume. He did not judge them to be true to our experience, reason, Christian tradition, or the teachings of Scripture. This led him to insist that in addition to the will humans have a distinct faculty of “liberty.” While the will (i.e., the responsive affections) provides our various actual *inclinations* to action, liberty is our limited autonomous capacity to *refuse* to enact any particular inclination. Though we cannot self-generate love, we do have the liberty to stifle responsive loving! This insistence distanced Wesley’s mature moral psychology from both philosophical and theological forms of determinism.

### ***The Nature of the “Heart” in Wesley’s Anthropology***

You may have noticed that “heart” does not appear on Wesley’s list of the human faculties that constitute the image of God. Early Christian thought had given the heart at least an indirect place on their list of moral faculties. Plato’s moral psychology included the suggestion that reason was located in the brain, the “spirited element” in the heart, and the passions in the liver. This tri-part location of our morally relevant faculties—with its clear hierarchy—was part of the package appropriated from Plato by early Christian moral thought. As the actual physiological functions of the liver and heart were later clarified these faculties (often packaged as the “mind”) all came to be associated primarily with the brain. Wesley assumed this association.

While he recognized that literally the heart was just an organ for pumping blood, Wesley often used “heart” in a metaphorical sense when discussing human volition. These uses reflect his standard practice of speaking in biblical terminology. But careful consideration suggests that

he also turned to the metaphor of the heart as a way of articulating a more holistic model of human volition, countering to some degree the dualism of reason versus passion inherited from Plato's moral psychology. In one of his most explicit accounts Wesley correlates biblical language of the heart with our "inmost soul," and then stresses how this inner orientation of a Christian properly manifests itself in outward "branches" like works of love and mercy.<sup>40</sup> This would appear to make the heart the seat of the inner springs of our outward words and actions, a suggestion confirmed by the frequency with which Wesley uses the terms "heart" and "affections" interchangeably.<sup>41</sup> Given his mature emphasis on the responsive nature of the affections, Wesley could also relate the heart to the "spiritual sense" through which we intuit God's love.<sup>42</sup> The uses noted so far could imply that Wesley used "heart" simply as the metaphorical equivalent of the will. But at times he also equates heart with our inner "thoughts" (as compared to outward words and actions).<sup>43</sup> This latter usage hints that Wesley viewed the motivations behind human action as ideally integrating the rational and emotional dimensions of human life into holistic inclinations toward action. Such hints fit Wesley's parallel rejection of any suggestion that faith is barely a "speculative, rational thing," insisting instead that it is a holistic "disposition of the heart."<sup>44</sup>

The language of disposition brings us to one other common association in Wesley's references to the heart in relation to Christian life. He frequently equates the heart with one's "tempers."<sup>45</sup> These passages puzzle modern readers who think of "tempers" almost exclusively in terms of emotional outbursts. Wesley is using the term in a much broader sense that was common in the eighteenth century, where "temper" referred to any enduring character disposition. The remnant of this earlier meaning comes through when we speak today of tempered metal, which has been strengthened and given a characteristic shape. Wesley used the term in specific reference to the human affections. While our affections are responsive, he was convinced that they need not be simply transitory, they can be focused and strengthened into enduring dispositions. Thus, in his terminology the capacity for simple responsive love is an affection, while a developed enduring disposition to love (or to reject love!) is a temper.<sup>46</sup> And the heart is the seat of the tempers.

### ***The Mature Focus of Wesley's Heart Religion – Transforming Tempers***

The preceding discussion of the “heart” allows us finally to characterize Wesley’s mature moral psychology: he transformed his inherited “habituated rational control” model into one that stressed “habituated holistic affections” (i.e. tempers). In traditional terms this placed him close to Aquinas, who had appropriated the “virtue ethic” of Aristotle. Thus recent interpreters have often spoken of Wesley’s mature model as a virtue ethic.<sup>47</sup> This is a helpful description, but it does not highlight the *responsive* aspect of Wesley’s moral psychology as clearly as does using his own more typical language of the affections.

If “heart” refers to our inner motivating inclinations, then a “heart religion” must highlight the importance of these inclinations to proper outward religious/moral activity. Wesley credited his deeper recognition of the role of the heart within religious life to reading Thomas a’ Kempis in 1725. In keeping with his early moral psychology assumptions, this reading mainly impressed upon him that “God’s law extends to all our thoughts as well as words and actions.”<sup>48</sup> At this stage Wesley’s focus on heart religion was on sincere efforts to maintain a *holy heart*.

We noted earlier Wesley’s growing sense of the need to feel God’s pardoning love in the period leading up to Aldersgate. In the afterglow of his experience there his focus broadened to include the vital role of the *warmed heart* in heart religion.

But Wesley was always clear following Aldersgate that he was not interested in promoting atypical emotional experiences for their own sake. What warms our heart so strangely is an encounter with God that convinces us at the core of our being that “Thy nature and Thy name is Love.”<sup>49</sup> As we experience this sense of God’s pardoning love we find to our delight that we are enabled to love God and our neighbor, and we are filled with love, peace, and joy.<sup>50</sup> The key value of the strange warming of our heart in Wesley’s mature heart religion was that it created the possibility of a *responsive heart*.

Wesley was also clear from the beginning that God’s purpose in warming our heart is not simply to awaken momentary responsiveness, God is providing the possibility for a change in our enduring dispositions. That is why Wesley’s standard inquiry of those claiming authentic Christian life became: “Is their religion the religion of the heart; a renewal of soul in the image of God? ... Are they free from pride, from

vanity, from malice and envy; from ambition and avarice; from passion and lust; from every uneasy and unlovely temper?”<sup>51</sup> Put in positive terms, his standard description of those enjoying the religion of the heart became that their hearts were “filled with ‘long-suffering, gentleness, fidelity, goodness, meekness, temperance,’ and all the other fruits of the [Holy] Spirit; in a word, with whatever dispositions are holy, are heavenly, or divine.”<sup>52</sup> The defining goal of Wesley’s heart religion was clearly this *change of affections*.

This goal reflects the centrality of the tempers to Wesley’s mature understanding of both sin and holiness. In the case of sin, he came to insist that the issue was more than individual wrong actions. He frequently discussed sin in terms of a threefold division: sinful nature or tempers, sinful words, and sinful actions. The point of this division was that sinful actions and words *flow from* corrupted tempers, so the problem of sin must ultimately be addressed at this affectional level.<sup>53</sup> Correspondingly, Wesley’s mature definition of Christian life placed primary emphasis on this inward dimension, “the renewal of our heart after the image of [God who] created us.”<sup>54</sup> This renewal involves both the quickening of our affections in response to the affect of God’s love poured in our hearts and the tempering of these affections into holy dispositions. Since holiness of thought, word, and action would flow from such renewal, Wesley identified the essential goal of all true religion as the recovery of holy tempers.<sup>55</sup> His heart religion was ultimately a religion of the *tempered heart*.

### ***The Framework of Wesley’s Heart Religion – The Means of Grace***

There are obviously strong continuities between the Wesley’s early focus on the holy heart and his mature focus on the heart of tempered affections. The crucial differences lie in matters of emphasis concerning the dynamics and means of seeking heart religion.<sup>56</sup> To begin with, it is clear in Wesley’s early writings that his earnest pursuit of holiness was driven by a desire for assurance of God’s justifying acceptance. Central to Aldersgate was Wesley’s deep recognition that existing holiness is not a precondition of God’s gracious acceptance; rather, it is the assurance of that acceptance that makes holiness of heart and life a possibility for us. In marked contrast to our prior quote from a 1731 letter, the mature

Wesley repeatedly insisted:

We must be holy of heart, and holy in life.... But we must love God, before we can be holy at all; this being the root of all holiness. Now we cannot love God, till we know he loves us. "We love him, because he first loved us." And we cannot know his pardoning love to us, till his Spirit witnesses it to our spirit.<sup>57</sup>

There are indications surrounding Aldersgate that Wesley initially assumed (drawing on suggestions of the English Moravians) that our corrupt tempers would be immediately and completely transformed into holy tempers when we embraced God's pardoning love. It was not long before he admitted that corrupt tempers remain in the new believer, inclining them to sinful acts. But he quickly added that the Spirit's restored presence in our lives does have the immediate enlivening affect of enabling us to assert our "liberty" in preventing these tempers from reigning over our actions. The Spirit's goal is to bring even greater freedom by transforming our tempers, so that our deepest inclinations are to acts of love for God and neighbor. But the mature Wesley became convinced that God does not typically infuse holy tempers instantaneously. Rather, God's regenerating grace awakens in believers the "seeds" of such virtues.<sup>58</sup> These seeds then strengthen and take shape as we "grow in grace."

Why did Wesley assume that God would work in this gradual way? Because he believed that the One whom we know in Jesus Christ is a God of *responsible grace*.<sup>59</sup> This God loves humanity too much to withhold from anyone the gracious affect that makes us *response-able*. And this God loves us too much to deprive us of an authentic role in *responsible* appropriation of this gracious affect. Saving relationship with such a God is inherently a co-operant relationship. As Wesley once described it:

[T]he life of God in the soul of a believer ... immediately and necessarily implies the continual inspiration of God's Holy Spirit; God's breathing into the soul, and the soul's breathing back what it first receives from God; a continual action of God upon the soul, and a re-action of the soul upon God; an unceasing presence of God, the loving, pardoning God, manifested to the heart, and perceived by faith; and an unceasing return of love, praise, and prayer, offering up all the thoughts of our hearts, all the words of our tongues, all the works of our hands, all our body, soul, and spirit, to be a holy sacrifice, acceptable unto God in Christ Jesus.<sup>60</sup>

This description clearly involves more than the "passive" cooperation of trusting God's offer of pardon. It is not faith alone, but *faith*



*working by love*, that Wesley often identifies as the essence of heart religion.<sup>61</sup> Of course, he would immediately remind us that the possibility of our “working” is grounded in God’s prevenient gracious empowering affect. That is why the mature Wesley warned his followers of the folly of seeking the end of holy tempers apart from the means that God has graciously provided.<sup>62</sup> True heart religion is undergirded and framed by the means of grace.

What means of grace were central to Wesley’s mature heart religion? We noted above that the most prominent means that he turned to in his early pursuit of holiness were ones that strengthened his rational resolve to obey God’s commands. Contrast the broader range and role of the means of grace in this typical account of the mature Wesley:

In a Christian believer love sits upon the throne which is erected in the inmost soul; namely, love of God and man, which fills the whole heart, and reigns without a rival. In a circle near the throne are all holy tempers; — longsuffering, gentleness, meekness, fidelity, temperance; and if any other were comprised in “the mind which was in Christ Jesus.” In an exterior circle are all the works of mercy, whether to the souls or bodies of men. By these we exercise all holy tempers; by these we continually improve them, so that all these are real means of grace, although this is not commonly adverted to. Next to these are those that are usually termed works of piety; — reading and hearing the word, public, family, private prayer, receiving the Lord’s Supper, fasting or abstinence. Lastly, that his followers may the more effectually provoke one another to love, holy tempers, and good works, our blessed Lord has united them together in one body, the Church.<sup>63</sup>

Notice how this account relates the means of grace directly to the goal of forming holy tempers. It also reflects Wesley’s hard-won conviction (against other one-sided perspectives in the Christian tradition) that the means of grace serve not only as avenues by which God conveys gracious empowerment, they are also formative disciplines by which we strengthen and shape our character into Christ-likeness.<sup>64</sup> Wesley made the means of grace central to heart religion because within the various means we are exposed to the ever-deeper empowering affect of the Spirit and we are prodded to exercise our affections, shaping them into holy tempers.

Concern for providing his followers with this twofold benefit is evident in the specific set of means of grace that Wesley developed as the framework of Methodist life.<sup>65</sup> In addition to regular use of such valued

traditional means as prayer, liturgy, and eucharist, Wesley enjoined those serious about heart religion to live within the rhythms of less common means like class meetings, love feasts, and works of mercy. Some of these other means were adopted by Wesley primarily for their tendency to open us to God's empowering affect while others were incorporated more for their role in habituating (tempering) our affections. As a case in point, Wesley's stress on works of mercy in the preceding quote focuses on the second benefit, though he valued as well the empowering affect of visiting the poor.<sup>66</sup>

Wesley's mature set of recommended means of grace also reflects the holism that emerged in his moral psychology. While he naturally retained the classic means that are particularly suited for rational enlightenment and challenge—Scripture reading, sermon, and prayer—he protected against suggestions that these are uniquely privileged or sufficient by themselves for nurturing Christian life. He did this in part by his repeated emphasis on more *affective* means like love feast and eucharist. Equally significant was his insistence on *communal* means like the class meeting and society worship.

The mature Wesley's concern for a holistic approach to forming holy tempers can be discerned in his practical-theological editing of devotional materials for his Methodist people. Consider the example of his publication of "An Account of the Passions, or Natural Affections: extracted from Dr. [Isaac] Watts" in the *Arminian Magazine* in 1782–3.<sup>67</sup> Wesley clearly valued Watts's work, repeating such advice as: "Whenever you feel the more kindly [i.e., loving] sort of passions working in you, encourage and promote them that they may fix in your heart more firmly the principles of goodness and form your very nature and temper to virtue and religion."<sup>68</sup> But Wesley's extract omits a central section where Watts provides general recommendations for controlling and forming the affections.<sup>69</sup> The most likely reason is that Watts deals exclusively with the need to form right judgments—reflecting his assumption that wrong affections arise from mistakes of judgment. His recommendations for correcting pride, as one sample, include such exhortations as: consider who your are and what you shall be, think on the condescension of Jesus and imitate this pattern, and think of the damage that pride has done.<sup>70</sup> Wesley would have seen such exhortations, while well meant, as ineffective in dealing with pride unless conjoined with the affectional benefits of visiting the poor and exercising self-denial.<sup>71</sup> The well-tempered heart requires a well-rounded set of the means of grace.

### *The Goal of Wesley's Heart Religion – Christian Perfection*

How close did Wesley hope that his people could come, through responsive participation in the recommended means of grace, to the end of recovered holy tempers in this life? His famous, and controversial, claim was that they could reach entire sanctification or “Christian Perfection.” The place to begin unpacking this claim is to stress that entire sanctification is not an isolated reality for Wesley; it is a dynamic level of maturity within the overall process of sanctification, the level characteristic of *adult* Christian life. Since he considered love to be the essence of Christian life he could define Christian Perfection as “the humble, gentle, patient love of God, and our neighbor, ruling our tempers, words, and actions.”<sup>72</sup> Notice that love is not only said to be present, it is *ruling*. God’s love is shed abroad in the lives of all Christians, awakening their responsive love for God and others. But this responsive love is often weak, sporadic, and contested by contrary affections in new believers. They have sufficient grace to prevent these contrary affections from reigning, but they still remain. In the lives of the entirely sanctified Wesley maintained that responsive love is strengthened and patterned “to the point that there is no mixture of any contrary affections—all is peace and harmony.”<sup>73</sup>

It is important to remember that Wesley’s focus on affections in describing Christian Perfection was not intended as an alternative to actions. He assumed that acts of love would flow from a temper of love. Yet, he also recognized that ignorance, mistakes, and other human frailties often distort the passage from affection to action. It was in this sense that he tired of the debate over whether Christian Perfection was “sinless.” He did indeed believe that it consisted in holy tempers, but not that it was characterized by infallible expression of those tempers in actions.

Perhaps the best way to capture Wesley’s affectional view of entire sanctification is to say that he was convinced that the Christian life did not have to remain a life of perpetual struggle. He believed that our sin-distorted human lives can be responsibly transformed through God’s loving grace to the point where we are truly freed to love God and others consistently. Christians can aspire to take on the disposition of Christ, and live out that disposition within the constraints of our human infirmities.<sup>74</sup> To deny this possibility would be to deny the sufficiency of God’s

empowering grace—to make the power of sin greater than that of grace. And it would be to revise Wesley’s mature heart religion.

### **The Dethronement of Wesley’s Heart Religion: A “Change of Affections”**

When one surveys Wesley’s present ecclesiastical and theological descendants it does not take long to sense that his conception of heart religion has been widely dethroned and replaced by models with varying degrees of revision. Few retain his confidence in the possibility of Christian Perfection. Central elements of his balanced set of the means of grace (such as class meetings, love feasts, and visiting the poor) have been broadly abandoned. The importance of *forming* holy tempers is seldom mentioned. Stress on *feeling* the love of God is often suspect. And some are uncomfortable with very language of *heart* religion. What can account for such broad changes? Subsequent chapters will probe several major factors that have been involved. I will restrict myself to suggesting how a philosophical “change of affections” on the topic of moral psychology among Wesley’s heirs has contributed to their (conscious and unconscious) revisions of his model.<sup>75</sup>

The more one appreciates how integrally Wesley’s mature conception of heart religion was framed by his moral psychology the easier it is to understand how difficult it would be to maintain this precise conception if one rejects his moral psychology. This is exactly the situation in which Wesley’s theological descendants rapidly placed themselves, particularly in the North American context. By the beginning of the nineteenth century an affectional moral psychology had come to be equated in popular culture with determinism, due to the broad influence of the forms of this psychology championed by David Hume and Jonathan Edwards. As a result Wesley’s heirs increasingly found it hard to recognize his characteristic moral psychology, let alone defend it. The aversion to determinism that they inherited from Wesley ironically led them to rally instead behind those who were reasserting that our hope for authentic moral/spiritual action lies in our innate power of rational choice.

It is equally ironic that Wesley helped pave the way for this switch. As deterministic models of affectional moral psychology proliferated in the latter part of the eighteenth century Wesley found it increasingly necessary to stress how his model avoided this implication. He addressed

this point most directly—in dialogue with Edwards, Hume, and others—in his 1775 *Thoughts Upon Necessity*.<sup>76</sup> He also kept a sharp eye for any allies he could call to his support. In 1790 he extracted and prepared for the *Arminian Magazine* “An Essay on the Liberty of Moral Agents” that he averred was the strongest and most beautiful treatise on the subject that he had ever seen.<sup>77</sup> This essay was actually a short excerpt from near the end of Thomas Reid’s *Essays on the Active Powers of Man* (1788).<sup>78</sup> In this section of his *Essays* Reid argues that motives to action are not invincible in truly moral agents, they must have some liberty to will or not to will in accordance with their motives. If one read only this section Reid would appear to be defending a position quite close to Wesley. There are only passing hints in the excerpted material that Reid’s overall model of moral psychology developed in the rest of the book had a different thrust.<sup>79</sup> Wesley’s careful selection from Reid proved to be too subtle for his progeny to pick up. Having been pointed to Reid, Methodists on both sides of the Atlantic were soon appropriating his overall moral psychology. American Methodists in particular gave Reid and his disciples an authoritative status by republishing their works and making them required reading in the “course of study” for traveling elders.

How did Reid’s overall moral psychology differ from Wesley’s emphasis on habituated holistic affections?<sup>80</sup> In reaction to Hume’s deterministic model of the affections Reid championed the need to assert rational control over the passions or affections. Central to his argument was the insistence that the “will” had been wrongly identified with the affections; it is instead our inherent rational ability to choose between (or suppress) the various stimuli that motivate action. In this distinction Reid was excluding any holistic intentionality from the affections—leaving them arational at best, and perhaps as inherently irrational. Through these moves he reclaimed elements of the earlier rational control moral psychology, but Reid added a distinctive twist. He asserted that only *intentional* acts have moral status. This led him to depict habituated tendencies (like Wesley’s “tempers”) as strictly amoral—if not indeed obstacles to truly moral acts—since they operate with minimal conscious intentionality.

In other words, Reid introduced the *decisionistic rational control* moral psychology that (with the reenforcement of Immanuel Kant) has dominated the last two centuries of Western culture and moral thought. Rather than stressing the formation of enduring inclinations as vital to increasing our moral freedom, this model holds up as the ideal expres-

sion of freedom those times when we transcend our existing inclinations in the effort to achieve decisive (and fleeting!) moral autonomy. It reflects the Enlightenment tendency to equate freedom with casting off prior influences.

Reid's definition of the will—as the power for rational self-determining decisions—rapidly replaced Wesley's affectional definition in nineteenth century Methodist theology. In further consonance with Reid, Methodist theologians were soon portraying the affections as inherently irrational, needing regulation by the more primary human faculty of reason. Likewise, they typically judged habits and inclinations to have moral status only when voluntarily embraced, and were prone to depict them more as obstacles to than as facilitators of “free” decisions.

One of the things that the history of Christian thought makes clear is that the relationship between Christian life and theological convictions is reciprocal. Disenchantment with or changes in practices provoke reconsideration of theological stances, while shifts in theological convictions have a progressive impact on Christian practice. At its best this interaction is an ongoing spiral. This was not quite the case with the relatively abrupt replacement of Wesley's affectional moral psychology by later Methodist theologians. Their change was provoked more by apologetic reaction to a competing theology than by significant disenchantment with or alterations of Wesley's pattern of heart religion among Methodists of the time. But as this technical change took hold it inevitably affected related theological convictions, and eventually impacted the daily assumptions and practices of Methodist piety.

There were several affects on correlated areas of doctrine. One of the most significant was that salvation was increasingly presented in Methodist theology as more a matter of human will (portrayed as our inherent “gracious ability”) than of the regenerating work of the Spirit.<sup>81</sup> The concern of nineteenth century Methodist theologians was focused much more on how to avoid any infringements on human freedom by the emotional/intellectual dynamics of spiritual life than on Wesley's focal issue of how to awaken affectional commitment in persons who were already conventional (i.e., merely intellectual) Christians. This took pastoral expression in moves to tone down the emotional dimension of Methodist worship—for example, by converting campmeetings into Chautauqua meetings.<sup>82</sup> And it sparked the reactionary splits of the holiness movement and later pentecostalism.

The decisionistic element of Reid's moral psychology raised a particular challenge for central aspects of Wesley's notion of Christian

Perfection and his model for nurturing holiness. Nineteenth-century American Methodism splintered into several competing camps over how to reformulate this doctrine, and increasingly chose to ignore it, though it has remained as at least an annoying “pebble in the shoe” of the tradition.<sup>83</sup>

On a parallel track, the decisionist tone of their moral psychology led these Methodist theologians to treat the various means of grace more as “duties” than as formative disciplines, and it was not long before Methodist laity were debating the warrant for requiring such duties as the class meeting. This was reinforced by the rationalist element of their revised moral psychology, which inclined nineteenth century Methodist theologians to give primacy to the classic “rational” means of grace—Scripture, sermon, and prayer—effectively devaluing other means like eucharist and love feasts.<sup>84</sup>

Other possible impacts of this change in moral psychology could be mentioned. It should also be stressed how some of Wesley’s practices remained in place—at least in certain subgroups of his descendants—long after the assumptions undergirding them had been revised. I will leave it to subsequent chapters to probe these areas and draw attention to other dynamics that must be taken into consideration. I am content to suggest that a philosophical “change of affections” has played a role in the larger picture. Thus, if we are serious about recovering something like Wesley’s heart religion today it may well require our own “change of affections,” as we challenge the elements of the decisionistic rational control model that still pervade our culture and churches.

## Notes

1. *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, §4, *Works* 11:46
2. I provide a brief typological survey in “Reconnecting the Means to the End: A Wesleyan Prescription for the Holiness Movement,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 33.2 (1998): 29–66.
3. A helpful study that relates Wesley to this and other tendencies in Anglican moral psychology of his time is Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660–1780* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
4. See Letter to Samuel Wesley Jr. (11 March 1704), in *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings*, edited by Charles Wallace Jr. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 41.

5. Letter to Samuel Wesley Jr. (27 November 1707), *ibid*, 59.
6. Letter to Samuel Wesley Jr. (11 October 1709), *ibid*, 70.
7. Letter to Suky (13 January 1709/10), *ibid*, 382.
8. Journal, entry #67, *ibid*, 244. Note how she uses “passions” and “affections” interchangeably. This and following journal entries are undated, but all likely fit between 1710 and 1720.
9. Journal, entry #193, *ibid*, 322.
10. Journal, entry #209, *ibid*, 329.
11. Journal, entry #21, *ibid*, 219.
12. Letter to John (8 June 1725), *ibid*, 108 (or *Works* 25:165)
13. Letter to John (10 November 1725), *ibid*, 119–21 (or *Works* 25:184–85).
14. This image is found in *Phaedrus*, see *Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961), 246–54. See also the related discussion in *The Republic*, Book IV. Two helpful secondary studies of Plato’s moral psychology are John M. Cooper, “Plato’s Theory of Motivation,” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 1 (1984): 3–21; and Stephen Leighton, “The Value of Passions in Plato and Aristotle,” *Southwest Philosophy Review* 11 (March 1995): 41–56.
15. A good example in Wesley’s period is Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections* (Third ed., 1742; reprint, Gainesville, FL: Scholars’ Facsimilies & Reprints, 1969).
16. See this emphasis in Isaac Watts, *The Doctrine of the Passions explain’d and improv’d*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (London: J. Buckland & T. Longman, 1770 [1729 ori.]), Sec. XIV, p. 78.
17. See Journal, entries ##72–74, *ibid*, 248.
18. Sermon 140 (1730), “The Image of God,” §1.2, *Works* 4:294.
19. Sermon 142 (1731), “The Wisdom of Winning Souls,” §II, *Works* 4:311–13
20. Letter to Mrs. Pendarves (19 July 1731), *Works* 25:293–94. Note the apparent purposeful distinction between passions and affections!
21. *A Treatise on Christian Prudence; Extracted from Mr. Norris; and Reflections upon the Conduct of Human Life; Extracted from Mr. Norris* (both Oxford: n.p., 1734).
22. See John Norris, *A Treatise Concerning Christian Prudence*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition (London: Edward Park, 1722), §5.13, p. 209 [Wesley extract, §2.2, p. 14]. Cf. §4.23, pp. 183–84 [Wesley extract, §1.17, p. 11].
23. See Norris, *Treatise*, §1.6–8, pp. 13–18 [not in Wesley extract]; §5.15, p. 212 [Wesley extract, §2.4, p. 16]; §5.22–25, pp. 222–27 [Wesley extract, §2.6–7, pp. 16–18]; §8.11, p. 362 [Wesley extract, §5.2, p. 31].
24. See Norris, *Treatise*, §6.10–23, pp. 272–93 [Wesley extract, §3.2–7, pp. 20–23].
25. *Collection of Forms of Prayer*, Sunday Morning, *Works* (Jackson) 11:204–5.
26. A particularly helpful analysis of Augustine’s moral psychology is



James Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

27. What particularly struck Wesley at this time about the Moravians was their understanding of saving faith as an affective identification with the crucified Christ, although he later came to see that this position, when pushed too far could lead to quietism or “enthusiasm.” For a convenient summary of Moravian theology, see Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf, *Nine Public Lectures on Important Subjects in Religion Preached in Fetter Lane Chapel in London in the Year 1746*, trans. and ed. George W. Forell (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1973). See also such standard secondary sources as Clifford W. Towlson, *Moravian and Methodist: Relationships and Influences in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Epworth Press, 1957); and John R. Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf* (New York & Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956).

28. *Journal* (29 January 1738), *Works* 18:215–16.

29. See *Journal* (24 May 1738), *Works* 18:249–50.

30. E.g., *Journal* (25 November 1739), *Works* 19:124. Cf. *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, Pt. II, §II.27, *Works* 11:239; and Sermon 37, “The Nature of Enthusiasm,” §§1–2, *Works* 2:46–47.

31. See *Journal* (12 August 1771), *Works* 22:287.

32. Sermon 62, “The End of Christ’s Coming,” §§1–3, *Works* 2:472–73. Similar in Sermon 70, “Case of Reason Impartially Considered,” §II.8–9, *Works* 2:598.

33. See esp. Sermon 9 (1746), “Spirit of Bondage and Adoption,” §III.1–3, *Works* 1:260–61; and Sermon 77 (1780), “Spiritual Worship,” §II.5, *Works* 3:96–97.

34. Sermon 62, “The End of Christ’s Coming,” §III.1, *Works* 2:481.

35. The best study of Wesley and empiricism is Rex D. Matthews, “Religion and Reason Joined: A Study in the Theology of John Wesley” (Harvard University Th.D. thesis, 1986). For a shorter summary see Randy L. Maddox, “The Enriching Role of Experience,” in *Wesley and the Quadrilateral: Renewing the Conversation*, edited by W. Stephen Gunter (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 107–27.

36. See the discussion of Wesley’s notion of “spiritual senses” in Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1994), 27–28. Philosophers and theologians today would want to address Wesley’s legitimate concern in a way that did not require a special set of spiritual senses. For one such approach see Nancey Murphy, “A Nonreductive-Physicalist Account of Religious Experience,” in *Whatever Happened to the Soul*, edited by Warren Brown et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 143–48.

37. For a survey of this group, related to Wesley, see Robin W. Lovin, “The Physics of True Virtue,” in *Wesleyan Theology Today*, ed. Theodore H. Runyon (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1985), 264–72.

38. In addition to reading British empiricist philosophy, Wesley was engaged at this time in translating a number of hymns from the German Pietist

tradition. The deep emotional fervor of these verses, which he succeeded well in capturing in his English renderings, may also have contributed to his growing realization that the love of God must be *felt*.

39. This is amply demonstrated in Richard B. Steele, “*Gracious Affections*” and “*True Virtue*” according to Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1994); Gregory S. Clapper, *John Wesley on Religious Affections: His Views on Experience and Emotion and Their Role in the Christian Life and Theology* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1989); and Walter Lamoyne Parr, Jr., “John Wesley’s *Thoughts upon Necessity* in his Search for the Middle Verity” (University of Aberdeen Ph.D. thesis, 1994). For further discussion and documentation of the following summary of Wesley’s theological anthropology see Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 68–72.

40. Sermon 24, “Sermon on the Mount, IV,” §III.1, *Works* 1:541–42

41. E.g., Minutes (26 June 1744), Q. 4, *John Wesley* 140; *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, Pt. I, §I.6, *Works* 11:107–8; and Sermon 38, “A Caution against Bigotry,” §I.13, *Works* 2:68.

42. E.g., Sermon 19, “The Great Privilege of Those that are Born of God,” §I.6–10, *Works* 1:433–35; Sermon 45, “The New Birth,” §II.4, *Works* 2:192–93; and Sermon 130, “On Living Without God,” §§9–11, *Works* 4:172–73.

43. *Journal* (24 May 1738), *Works* 18:243; and Sermon 150, “Hypocrisy at Oxford,” §I.8, *Works* 4:398.

44. Sermon 1, “Salvation by Faith,” §I.4, *Works* 1:120. See also his comment that our theological “opinions” are not properly in the heart, Sermon 7, “The Way to the Kingdom,” §I.6, *Works* 1:220.

45. E.g., *Journal* (6 October 1738), *Works* 19:17; Sermon 9, “Spirit of Bondage and Adoption,” §I.2, *Works* 1:252; *Short Address to the Inhabitants of Ireland*, §§9–10, *Works* 9:284; Sermon 115, “Dives and Lazarus,” §III.7, *Works* 4:18; and Sermon 130, “On Living Without God,” §15, *Works* 4:175.

46. See Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 69–70; and Kenneth J. Collins, “John Wesley’s Topography of the Heart: Dispositions, Tempers and Affections,” *Methodist History* 36 (1998): 162–75.

47. Good examples are Lovin, “True Virtue”; and Steele, *Gracious Affections*.

48. *Journal* (24 May 1738), *Works* 18:243.

49. The quote comes from Charles Wesley’s famous hymn about his own assurance of God’s Love, “Wrestling Jacob” (see *Hymns*, #136, st. 7, *Works* 7:251). James Nelson has suggested that John was using “strangely” in his account of his Aldersgate experience to connote the *divine source* of the warming more than some emotional uniqueness of the warming (“The Strangeness of Wesley’s Warming,” *Journal of Theology* [United Seminary] 92 [1988]: 12–24). This would be hard to prove, but Wesley does turn to the word “strangely” often in describing the work of God in one’s heart; e.g., *Journal* (12 October 1739), *Works* 19:104; *Journal* (12 June 1770), *Works* 22:233; *Journal* (1 September 1770), *Works* 22:247; *Journal* (19 June 1783), *Works* 23:275–76; *Journal* (22 March

1785), *Works* 23:346; and Sermon 71, “On Good Angels, §II.3, *Works* 3:12. Note in this regard as well his comment in Sermon 53, “On the Death of Mr. Whitefield,” §II.4 (*Works* 2:338): “How few have we known of so kind a temper, of such large and flowing affections! Was it not principally by this, that the hearts of others were so strangely drawn and knit to him? Can anything but love beget love?”

50. See Sermon 7, “The Way to the Kingdom,” §II.12, *Works* 1:231.

51. *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, Pt. III, §I.2, *Works* 11:272–73.

52. See again Sermon 7, “The Way to the Kingdom,” §II.12, *Works* 1:231.

53. Note the description of sin as “vile affections” in Sermon 38, “A Caution against Bigotry,” §I.6, *Works* 2:66. Cf. the discussion of Wesley’s understanding of sin in Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 73–82.

54. See already in *Journal* (13 September 1739), *Works* 19:97.

55. Sermon 91, “On Charity,” §III.12, *Works* 3:306.

56. For more details and documentation of this summary, see Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 180–89.

57. Sermon 10, “The Witness of the Spirit I,” §I.8, *Works* 1:274. For a few of the other examples scattered through his mature writings see *Character of a Methodist*, §13, *Works* 9:39; *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, §61, *Works* 11:70; *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, Pt. I, §I.3, *Works* 11:106; Sermon 11, “The Witness of the Spirit, II,” §III.5, *Works* 1:289–90; Sermon 58, “On Predestination,” §12, *Works* 2:419–20; and Sermon 120, “The Unity of the Divine Being,” §17 *Works* 4:67.

58. See *Minutes* (2 August 1745), Q. 1, *John Wesley*, 152; Sermon 33, “Sermon on the Mount, XIII,” §I.4, *Works* 1:690; and *Hymns on the Trinity*, #52 (Bristol: William Pine, 1767; facsimile reprint, Madison, NJ: Charles Wesley Society, 1998), 41. Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 178–79 discusses two passages where Wesley argues that holy tempers can be implanted in a fully mature state.

59. This description of Wesley’s theology is developed at length in Maddox, *Responsible Grace*.

60. Sermon 19, “The Great Privilege of Those That are Born of God,” §III.2, *Works* 1:442.

61. Cf. *Journal* (31 July 1739), *Works* 19:84; Preface to *Sermons on Several Occasions*, §6, *Works* 1:106; and *Journal* (18 April 1760), *Works* 21:250.

62. E.g., Letter to Count Zinzendorf and the Church at Herrnhut (5–8 August 1740), *Works* 26:27; Sermon 16, “The Means of Grace,” *Works* 1:378–97; Letter to William Law (6 January 1756), *Letters* (Telford) 3:366; and *Cautions and Directions Given to the Greatest Professors in the Methodist Societies*, §II, *John Wesley*, 300.

63. Sermon 92, “On Zeal,” §II.5–6, *Works* 3:313–14.

64. Cf. Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 192–201.

65. This point is developed in Henry H. Knight III, “The Role of Faith and the Means of Grace in the Heart Religion of John Wesley” elsewhere in this volume. See also Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 201–16.

66. Cf. Randy L Maddox, “‘Visit the Poor’: Wesley, the Poor, and the Sanctification of Believers,” forthcoming.

67. “An Account of the Passions, or Natural Affections: extracted from Dr. Watts,” *Arminian Magazine*, beginning in Volume 5 (1782): 200 and scattered through to Volume 6 (1783): 90. The work extracted is Isaac Watts, *The Doctrine of the passions explain’d and improv’d, or, A brief and comprehensive scheme of the natural affections of mankind: to which are subjoined’d moral and divine rules for the regulation or government of them*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (London: J. Buckland & T. Longman, 1770) (this edition is 177 pages long and virtually identical with the 4<sup>th</sup> edition Wesley abridged in 1769; see *Journal* [17 February 1769], *Works* 22:171).

68. Watts, *Doctrine of Passions*, 163 (*Arminian Magazine* 5 [1782]: 651).

69. *Ibid*, Secs. XVI–XVIII (90–154). Compare *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 593, 648.

70. See respectively *Ibid*, 92 and 99–103.

71. Cf. Sermon 98, “On Visiting the Sick,” §I.3, *Works* 3:387; and Sermon 48, “Self-denial,” *Works* 2:238–50, esp. §I.10 (244) & §II.1 (245–46).

72. “Brief Thoughts on Christian Perfection,” *Works* (Jackson) 11:446.

73. Sermon 83, “On Patience,” §10, *Works* 3:176.

74. Note the description of Christian Perfection in terms of taking on the disposition of Christ in Sermon 76, “On Perfection,” §I.5, *Works* 3:74.

75. The following summary is drawn from my more detailed and documented analysis of this switch and its impact upon Methodist models of the spiritual life in “Social Grace: The Eclipse of the Church as a Means of Grace in American Methodism,” in *Methodism in its Cultural Milieu*, edited by Tim Macquiban (Oxford: Applied Theology Press, 1994), 131–60; and “Holiness of Heart and Life: Lessons from North American Methodism,” *Asbury Theological Journal* 51.1 (1996): 151–72.

76. *Thoughts Upon Necessity*, John Wesley, 474–91.

77. “An Essay on the Liberty of Moral Agents,” *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 3–8, 57–64, 113–17, 169–73, 225–28. Wesley’s endorsement is on p. 3.

78. Wesley extracts Chapters 1, 4, and 5 of Essay 4 “On the Liberty of Moral Agents.” Cf. Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Active Powers of Man* (Edinburgh: John Bell, 1788), 267–310.

79. Wesley retains throughout the excerpt Reid’s description of liberty as an “active power,” even though it stands in some tension with his own more limited notion of liberty. But Wesley removes the italics from Reid’s stress that a free agent is a *reasonable* agent (*Essays*, 271; cf. *Arminian Magazine*, 6). And it is significant that Wesley excerpts a section in which Reid suggests that some motives may directly address the will (*Essays*, 297; cf. *Arminian Magazine*, 63). As a later editor emphasizes, Reid argues against this close correlation of motives (affections) and will elsewhere in *Essays*; cf. *The Works of Thomas Reid*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, edited by William Hamilton (Edinburgh: Maclachlan & Steward, 1872) 2:611.

80. For the following summary see especially *Essays on the Active Powers*, Essay

II, “Of Will,” Chapters 1–4 (pp. 59–95) and *Essay III*, Part I, Chapter 3, “Of Habit” (pp. 117–21).

81. This change is traced in Robert E. Chiles, *Theological Transitions in American Methodism* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1965), 115–43.

82. The Chautauqua movement was started by prominent Methodist John Vincent; cf. Joseph E. Gould, *The Chautauqua Movement* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1961).

83. The metaphor is from Albert Outler. I discuss the competing models of Christian Perfection in “Holiness of Heart and Life,” and (among late Holiness Movement theologians) “Reconnecting the Means to the End.”

84. I consider some of these changes in “Social Grace.”