

The Arminian

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WHAT IS AN ARMINIAN?

Vincent Artese

What is an Arminian? This is perhaps one of the most difficult and confusing questions in the history of Protestant theology. In 1770 John Wesley himself asked this question in his work, “The Question ‘What Is an Arminian?’ Answered by a Lover of Free Grace.” In his introduction Wesley gives three possible answers. First, an Arminian is “a Mad Dog.” Second, an Arminian is “something very bad.” Or third, an Arminian is “all that is bad.” There is no doubt that many within the evangelical community today would agree with Wesley’s suggested an-

swers, especially among those who identify as “New Calvinists” or the “Young, Restless, and Reformed.” But although I am a Wesleyan-Arminian myself, I would not fault them for doing so. Often I would actually agree with them. Because honestly there is much within what is called “Arminianism” today that is “very bad” and frankly not Arminian at all. This problem is not new. It is the same problem John Wesley faced in his lifetime. In fact, Wesley did not even publicly identify as an Arminian until 1778. And when he finally did, his intention in doing so was only to distinguish his arm of the English revival movement from that of the “Calvinian Methodists.”

At first glance it might be strange to think that Wesley was hesitant to adopt the Arminian label. After all he was the most faithful theologian to the thought of Arminius since the death of the Dutch Reformer in 1609. Keith Stanglin and Thomas McCall write that Wesley was “closer than the later Remonstrants to the evangelical thought of Arminius himself, who rejected all Pelagianism, insisted on salvation by grace alone through faith alone and the total inability of humanity to be saved.”

So why was Wesley hesitant to adopt the Arminian label? He was hesitant because of what went as “Arminianism” in England at the time. W. Stephen Gunter writes, “Wesley’s reticence to appropriate the label may be understood when we remember that in the eighteenth century, English Arminianism was comprehensively rationalistic and had become a vague enough designation to refer to any anti-Calvinistic theological position from a mild Latitudinarianism

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It is the task of this generation of Arminians to define Arminian theology for what it is rather than what it is not.

to full-blown Socinianism.” This was not unique to England because this mischaracterization had spread into New England as well. George Marsden writes that in New England Arminianism “had become a catch-all term for most challenges to strict Calvinist teaching” or a term for “almost any anti-Calvinist teaching.” Simply stated, “Arminianism” in England and in New England was not Arminian at all. It was a catch-all term for any anti-Calvinist theological position. Over

time the term had degenerated into a designation for full-blown theological liberalism, and John Wesley wanted nothing to do with that after his conversion in 1738.

The strange irony to all of this is that almost every polemic attack on “Arminianism” in the 17th and 18th centuries in both England and New England were not attacks on Arminianism at all. In fact, most people that were opposed to “Arminianism” had no idea what the actual contents of the Dutch theologian’s writings were. So while the presses were ablaze with “Anti-Arminian” writings, all of them missed the mark; and practically no one actually wrote anything against the actual theology of Arminius.

The English had a long history with “Arminianism” before the time of Wesley. King James I actually sent English delegates to the Synod of Dort (1618-1619) and Hugo Grotius visited England back in 1613. But W. Stephen Gunter points out that in England “it was the Latitudinarian concept of a tolerant, non-judging God that carried the day, not Arminius’s theology itself.” Gunter goes on, “England apparently imbibed the optimistic anthropology of Episcopius’s Arminianism more than the Augustinian/Calvinist anthropology of Arminius.” Over time “Arminianism” in England became nothing more than a cesspool of any theologically liberal idea that was “not Calvinist.” In the English theological scene, when an idea was deemed “not Calvinist” it was labeled “Arminian,” even if it had nothing in common with the evangelical theology of Arminius. Gunter concludes that by the time of Wesley’s birth “it is clear that neither Arminius as an important per-

sona, nor his distinctive theological emphases, played a significant role in English Arminianism.” So what did Wesley think of this English version of “Arminianism” and these English “Arminians”? According to George Croft Cell the Wesleyan Revival was in fact “a powerful reaction against Arminian Anglicanism” and “a return to the faith of the first Reformers.” Wesley makes very clear his opinions regarding English “Arminians” in his 1741 sermon “True Christianity Defended.” In the sermon he calls them “betrayers of the Church, sappers of the foundations of the faith and miserable corrupters of the Gospel of Christ” and that he saw their teaching as apostasy from “the fundamental doctrine of all Reformed Churches; viz., justification by faith alone.”

Another telling quote by Wesley comes from the Minutes from August 2nd of 1745. Here he writes that the truth of the gospel lies very close to Calvinism, “within a hair’s breadth,” and goes on to write “that it is altogether foolish and sinful, because we do not quite agree, to run from them as far as ever we can.” Wesley saw the English “Arminians” running as far from Calvinism as ever they could but in the process they were running right into liberal and dangerous theology. Wesley said doing this was *foolish* and *sinful*. Cell concludes that Wesley had a “closer doctrinal affiliation with the Calvinists than with the Anglican Arminians.” And while Wesley was only “within a hair’s breadth” from Calvinism, a great gulf was fixed between him and the liberal English “Arminians” of his time.

I would argue that Wesley’s time is very similar to our own. Wesley lived during a defining moment for evangelicalism when there was a significant resurgence of Calvinist theology in reaction to the theological liberalism that had made its way into the church. On one side of Wesley stood this Calvinist resurgence, and on the other side stood a theologically anemic and liberal “Arminianism” that was not really Arminian. “Arminianism” in England during Wesley’s time was anything that was “not Calvinist”; and therefore Latitudinarianism, Socinianism, and even Arianism were all considered “Arminian.” I fear this same danger exists in Arminianism today. Perhaps the clearest modern example of

this is when people claim that Open Theism is Arminian. John Mark Hicks masterfully and definitively overthrows this claim, yet myths such as these still persist in the American theological landscape. Even if it has been proven that both Arminius and Wesley held to meticulous providence, many “Arminians” today would rather be open theists because meticulous providence is “too Calvinist” for them.

One problem is that many Arminians are too focused on telling everyone what they are *not* instead of what they *are*. If you were to ask the average American Evangelical today “what is an Arminian?” most would simply answer, “not Calvinist.” But this is not even a definition. Arminians need to be clearer about what Arminianism actually *is* rather than what Arminianism is *not*. If steps are not taken in this direction then Arminian theology will never move out of the shadow of Calvinism to take its place as a respected theological position in its own right. Also, every theological idea that is “not Calvinist” cannot be labeled “Arminian.” If this were the case then every doctrine that Calvinists hold to would have to be rejected, including the Trinity. Arminians should listen to Wesley’s advice and not run as far from Calvinism as ever they can. Yet many already are. Those who claim to be “Arminian” are denying critically important

doctrines of the Christian faith in an attempt to distance themselves from Calvinists. Doctrines such as justification by faith alone, inerrancy of Scripture, meticulous providence, and penal substitution are considered anathema by many so called “Arminians” because these doctrines are “too Calvinist” even if they were not “too Calvinist” for Arminius, Wesley, or early Methodists such as Richard Watson or William Burt Pope.

So what is an Arminian? An Arminian is one who is faithful to the theology of Arminius. John Wesley was an Arminian and was faithful to the theology of Arminius in a way that neither the Dutch Remonstrants nor English Arminians were. Early Methodists such as Richard Watson, Thomas Ralston, Luther Lee, Samuel Wakefield, and William Burt Pope were Arminian as well. It is the task of this generation of Arminians to define Arminian theology for what it *is* rather than what it is *not*. Arminians need to start reading *Arminians* just as Calvinists read *Calvinists*. Arminians need to stop focusing so much on polemics against Calvinists and begin to articulate a winsome and constructive Arminian theology to share with others. I fear that if we do not do so then Arminianism will degenerate into a cesspool of any theologically liberal idea that is “not Calvinist.” And if we allow this to happen it will cease being Arminian altogether.

A CHARGE TO MINISTERS

William Burt Pope

Cultivate habitually the consciousness of the Inquisition of the Holy Eye of the Supreme, witnessing, marking, judging every thought, every word, every impulse, and every act: especially measuring the quality and entireness of your devotion.... But I must not forget, you must not forget, that the real secret which enables us to endure this inquisition, and to dare this Omniscient scrutiny, is the habitual revelation in the soul of the Fatherly love of God in Christ: that which enables you to say always, as the apostle says here, “My God.”...

The terms used are liturgical, for St. Paul never forgot the ancient temple; they give us a

glimpse, and a most beautiful one, into the secret sanctuary of the apostle’s devotion. He does not, indeed, say, “in the temple of my spirit,” but we may say it for him, and then appropriate it to ourselves. The regenerate soul is regenerate because inhabited by God, the Triune God, through the Holy Spirit. Where He dwells must be a temple; and all the glorious things spoken of the ancient dwelling-place of Jehovah may be transferred to the spirit of the regenerate believer in Christ....

The apostle lived in the flesh of his bodily life as in a temple: “an earthly house,” indeed, which should be dissolved, but then be built again. He lived in his spirit, however, as in a temple which

should never be dissolved, and from which his God should never for a moment depart. And he lived in hope of a better day and a more glorious service, when spirit and body should be reunited and glorified as the eternal dwelling-place of God in Christ. His experience and expectation must be ours....

We may pause upon the word, "Whom I serve in my spirit." The apostle never left the altar; before it he transacted his whole life; the "order of his course" never was fulfilled or interrupted or came to its end. In a certain sense

he was a solitary worshiper, always adoring, always praising God, always praying, always interceding.... Habituate yourself to an interior life, hid with Christ in God; to sink into your own nature, where the Holy Trinity dwells, and,

shutting all else out, hold communion with Him. Let your heart be the temple where no other Lord is present, and from which all is excluded that He cannot tolerate.... Happy, indeed, will you be if you learn early this heavenly lesson. You shall become a man in God as well as a man of God; a man in Christ as well as a servant of Christ....

There is no exhortation which you more need on this solemn day. There is no duty which you will be more in danger of neglecting. There is none on the observance of which your peace and prosperity more mainly depend....

In the temple of his spirit, or in his closet of private devotion—for these two are one—he offered a systematic, persevering, never-weary, priestly intercession, with thanksgiving, for the churches of Christ.... Into his most secret communion with God all whom he loved entered with him, so that when he was most alone with His Savior he was least alone. That temple of his spirit was a house of prayer for all nations. He was a priest representing all the tribes of Israel, and all the families of man, all the kingdom of the earth, and all the churches of the Lord....

Cultivate also the priceless habit of mixing what may be called mental prayer with all your duties and engagements. It seems to me that we none of us value aright this unspeakable privi-

lege: that of commending to the good Spirit of God every action of our life with the assurance that the very lifting up of our heart has all the value of a formal entrance into the Holiest to consult the oracle and receive the light of His countenance on our enterprise....

Never rest until you have acquired the habit of invoking the Divine blessing on everything you do: the light of His Spirit on the book you read, the secret guidance of His wisdom on the sermon you write, His presence with you on your errands of mercy, His retraining and strengthening grace when you enter social company, His benediction everywhere and on all that makes up your life!...

Those who pray for their charge, and for every society in it, will never be found wanting in devotion to its best prosperity. Those who pray much over their sermons, writing them before the altar—why may I not say on it?—delivering them in the spirit of believing intercession, and following them by their fervent outpouring of heart, will never preach without doing their hearers good, whether the good be always apparent or not.... The secret of being much with God cannot be hid....

I can promise you by the apostle's example that, so long as you can appeal to God with confidence, He will never fail to stand by you.... Go hence to your future ministry, with all its cares and burdens and responsibilities, cheered by the strong assurance that you need never spend a day or an hour without the tokens, secret and inestimably precious, that He whose approval is the very light of earth and dawn of heaven counts you faithful. Let this be always your rejoicing.... We have thought much of the apostle. Let us end all by thinking of a Higher than the apostle.... He is the True and Faithful Witness.... His final testimony concerning you, "Well done, good and faithful servant," you must expect with confident and sacred joy. He will give you the earnest of it every day, and in His own day confirm it to eternity.

—W. B. Pope, *Sermons, Addresses and Charges*, "St. Paul's Appeal to God," Sermon #10, pp. 175-194. A charge delivered to four young ministers ordained in Dublin in 1878.

You need never spend a day or an hour without the tokens that He counts you faithful.

SPIRITUAL DIAGNOSIS

Mark Horton

From John Wesley's sermons "The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption" and "The New Birth," here are signs that indicate a person's spiritual condition.

Signs of a Person Who Is Lost

- He is spiritually dead in trespasses and sin.
- He has no spiritual senses. He has eyes but does not see. He has ears but does not hear.
- He lacks understanding about himself and his true standing before God.
- He is content in his false sense of peace and joy. Because he feels no alarm he believes he is in no danger.
- He is satisfied in his sins.
- He feels only stabs of guilt which he quickly dismisses.
- The wrath of God is upon him.
- He may enjoy a form of religion, but not one with power.
- He neither fears nor loves God.
- He has no faith.

Signs of a Person Who Is Awakened

- He has a restlessness with life; a lack of peace.
- He has a lack of purpose in life.
- There are attempts at life reform, restitution, and change of habits.
- There is sorrow for sin.
- He wrestles with outward sin, but a sense of powerlessness prevails and he walks after the flesh.

- He fears God and judgment.
- He has no faith.

Signs of a Person in Christ

- Peace with God.
- A deep sense of purpose.
- No condemnation.
- He has victory over outward sin.
- He discerns the leading of the Spirit and walks after the Spirit.
- He loves God imperfectly.
- He loves people imperfectly.
- He has the fruit of the Spirit in a degree
- He has faith.
- He has victory over willful sin.

Signs of a Person Growing in Christ

- There is a disciplined use of the means of grace.
- There is an increasing awareness of the Spirit versus the flesh battle.
- He wrestles with inward sin — self-will, anger, hatred toward enemies, ill-will, pride, love of the world, irritability, evil passions.
- There is an increasing love, faith, and hope.
- There is a sorrow over inward sin.
- He cries to God to be made perfect in love.
- He desires all the mind that was in Christ.
- He has a ministry.
- He is involved in accountability fellowship with other Christians.

CALVINISTIC ASSUMPTIONS (Part 4)

Gil VanOrder, Jr.

Assumption #4: Calvinists assume that God has two kinds of love.

Given that God loves everyone, how does one explain a theology which teaches God treats people differently when it comes to salvation? The answer is by assuming God has two kinds

of love. According to Calvinism, God has a general kind of love that includes sinners, expressed through what Calvinists call *common grace*. At the same time, God has another, more exclusive kind of love that is only for the elect, expressed through what is termed *effectual grace*. Thus, Cal-

vinists believe God has perfect agape love as well as some other less than perfect (semi-agape?) love. Yes, God is both agape love and another less effective kind of love (less effective because it is not enough to save the non-elect).

Imagine a father who says he loves all five of his children but gives an allowance to only two of them. The explanation he gives them is that he has a different kind of love for the two who are given special treatment. All five are equally behaved but only two are selected to receive an allowance. Even worse, the father tells the other three to ask for an allowance knowing full well he never intends to give them one. Furthermore, he informs them that when he dies he will leave all his wealth only for the two chosen to receive an allowance. Again, he gives no explanation as to why. How is it possible to view such a father as loving?

A Calvinist once told me this analogy fails because God is not the father of the non-elect. That thought is even worse because it means God brings children into the world with absolutely no intention of fathering them.

Calvinists try to justify this belief in two kinds of love by using the analogy of a man who loves all women but has a special kind of love only for his wife. This analogy makes sense only if the man's love for other women means he has a desire for their well-being and good. As Austin Fischer points out in his book *Young, Restless, No Longer Reformed*, if the man really loves other women, at the very least, "We would expect him to be kind and help them out. And we would certainly expect him to help them avoid some sort of terrible pain and suffering if at all pos-

sible. But this is an exceedingly misleading way to speak of God's 'love' for the reprobate, for far from helping them avoid terrible pain and suffering, he brings the most terrible pain and suffering upon them (hell).

"As such, it would be more truthful to say something along the lines of, 'I love my wife by being kind, compassionate, and sacrificial towards her, but I love all other women by doing something far worse than raping, torturing, or murdering them – I ordain their eternal damnation in hell.'"

How can anyone trust a God who claims to love people, but treats them so horrifically? Jesus told us to "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:44-45). According to Calvinism, however, God himself does not do this even though he commands his children to do so. He may say he loves his enemies, but his actions speak louder than his words. Honesty demands one admit he really loves only his family members. It is not unlike a mafia boss who takes care of his own but kills off those who go against him. No sane person would believe the mafia boss if he said he loved his enemies despite treating them the way he does. Anything can be called love if you totally redefine the word. Try as they will to sugar coat it, the universal love Calvinists believe in isn't really love at all. It's far more like anti-love.

The Bible tells us that God is love. Calvinists, however, assume that he is actually two kinds of love.

A Word From Francis Asbury's Journal

Amos 3:3 asks the question, "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" The obvious answer is no. On May 8, 1775, Francis Asbury wrote:

At four o'clock I preached from Isaiah 41:13, with great enlargement, and to a large concourse of people. But was confined in the evening to the company of men who were destitute of religion, and full of sin and politics. My brethren and myself were glad to have prayer in the morning and leave them. If there were no other hell than the company of wicked men, I would say, from such a hell, good Lord, deliver me!"

May we yearn to walk with the wise and avoid fools (Proverbs 13:20). —*David Martinez*

TRIBUTES

Robert L. Brush

July 20, 1930-May 17, 2018

Rev. Robert L. Brush, a stalwart proponent of fundamental Wesleyan theology, passed from this life into the eternal presence of God on May 17, 2018. His walk with God was a testimony of truth as it is in Jesus. His brother Ben often remarked that their mother prayed more for “Bobby” than any of the rest of her children. That being true, those prayers were answered in perhaps ways that she never dreamed. God answers prayers in ways we are not able to understand.

The Brush brothers, Bobby and Norman, were introduced to the holiness movement through the influence of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Alabama and Georgia. They often mentioned G. I. Norman as an influence that pointed them toward Calvary. Bobby, as he was affectionately known, recalls of a Wesleyan Methodist evangelist Glenn Stewart who asserted from the pulpit that he had walked with God for fifty years and had not grieved God one time. He stated that God knew it, the devil knew it and his wife knows it. When questioned he insisted on calling his wife to confirm it. She gave testimony that Bro. Stewart had indeed led a life of total surrender before God and his fellow men! Testimonies such as these whetted his appetite for an outpouring of God’s Spirit on him and his Church. His prayers were answered as God did just that while he was pastoring at Stanton, Alabama. This outpouring of God’s Spirit charted the course for the remainder of his life. He devoured the scriptures and Wesley’s *52 Standard Sermons* became the signposts that governed his preaching and his life for the remainder of his sojourn.

His powers of recall, logic and reasoning were unmatched. Although not highly educated, he was a man with a God given intellect, coupled with an honest heart that made him a champion in any controversy. His preaching was not eloquent, but it was Spirit-filled and Spirit-led. He

was the embodiment of Wesley’s observation, “The melancholy remark of an excellent man, that he who now preaches the most essential duties of Christianity, runs the hazard of being esteemed, by a great part of his hearers, ‘a setter forth of new doctrines.’”

Persecution arose over the issue of saving faith as the gift of God, Pentecost as the birth of the New Testament Church, not its perfection, and the title ascribed was “Pentecostal Regeneration.” This title he wore without a murmur.

There is no doubt that he received, “Well done thou good and faithful servant, thou has been faithful over a few things.” In the years following a double stroke he would listen to the New Testament on tape and follow along with his finger the passages spoken.

He was my dear friend, the one God used to bring light to my soul. I sorely miss him, but would not call him back for a million worlds. Good bye, my brother, By God’s grace I’ll meet you in the morning! —*Marion Brown*

Jim Jones

May 1, 1953-February 5, 2018

I first met Jim and Barbara in May 2006 when I made my first trip to speak at First Southern Methodist Church in Nashville as president of Southern Methodist College. Jim and I instantly clicked and Jim and Barbara have become very close friends to Debi and me. A twelve year friendship has seemed as close as a lifelong friendship.

During our twelve year friendship, I was often on the road traveling to meet with pastors and churches either for Southern Methodist College or The Association of Independent Methodists. I would often pick up the phone while driving and call Jim, often just to say hello and see what he had going on, sometimes to share an idea with him to get his input, and sometimes just to share some good news that I may have had that day. On a few occasions, it was to talk with

him just to keep awake. Talking with him always woke me up, often because of his teasing or jokes we would tell. We had a two-way street when it came to teasing each other. At least two or three times after his home-going I have reached for the phone only to remind myself that cell service won't reach heaven.

At our first meeting over that May 2006 weekend, Jim began to talk of his vision of discipleship. It was a bold vision that called for development of curriculum specifically designed to be used in Wesleyan/Arminian circles and designed to be used by and taught to laymen and pastors alike.

From that vision came Light of Life Ministry. Within two years, I saw that it was something that Southern Methodist College and LOLM could unite in and help the people we were both trying to reach. From those discussions came the idea of incorporating The Wesley Institute with the extension program of SMC and the course of study for Southern Methodist pastors. From that time until 2012, Jim and I worked together from our respective ministries to spread the program. It has also been found useful in other groups for discipleship training, doctrinal instruction, practical aspects of ministry, and service for Christ.

When I became Executive Director of the Association of Independent Methodists in 2012, I introduced Jim and Light of Life Ministry to AIM. They quickly embraced Jim, his vision, and his ministry. Some instituted the Wesley Institute as part of their ministry and discipleship program.

They appreciated and loved Jim. They were touched deeply when they learned how sick he was. They were troubled when they thought that LOLM and the Wesley Institute might not go on. They sent me several texts and phone calls to have me let Barbara and the family know that

they were praying for them at his funeral service. Jim touched a younger generation of preachers with his message and ministry in more than one group.

When I asked Barbara if Jim had a favorite text, she said that he had so many that he loved that she could not think of just one. Later that day, she sent a text and called saying that 1 Corinthians 13 was one of his favorite passages and "That is Jim to me." And it is! 1 Corinthians 13 is a description of Jesus *and* of someone who knows his perfect love. That does fit Jim.

The nurse who took care of Jim as he was awaking from anesthesia after his brain surgery came to Barbara to tell her that he was praying as he was awakening and that he was calling people by name and praying for specific needs.

After Jim came home he told her that he had an experience with the Lord during that time – that he knew what John Wesley was talking about when he described God's perfect love and entire sanctification. He said he knew beforehand that he was saved, cleansed, and forgiven but now he had a deeper love for Christ. He remembered that Wesley said that this experience could happen at or after conversion or just before death. Jim believed that he was experiencing it as he was approaching death. I believe he was too. 1 Corinthians 13 describes the result of this experience in the believer's life. It was the prayer of Paul for the believers in Thessalonica, recorded in 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, that is seen in 1 Corinthians 13. To know his perfect love and to be conformed to the image of Christ in this life is what God desires for each of us.

Jim always wanted to go deep into the Word and digest the simple and deep truths of Scripture into his heart, mind, and soul. He was solid in his faith and yet very practical in his approach and ministry. He was all of this, and full of fun too. —Gary Briden

We are delighted that Lexham Press has reprinted Richard Watson's *Theological Institutes*, with a new introduction by Ben Witherington III. Originally printed in 1831, this was the first Methodist systematic theology. For more information, call 800-875-6467 or go to <https://lexhampress.com>.

AN URBAN LEGEND ABOUT WESLEY: “Preach 10% Grace and 90% Law”

Vic Reasoner

On page 7 of Ray Comfort’s transcript, “Hell’s Best Kept Secret,” he said, “John Wesley said to a friend, in writing to a young evangelist, ‘Preach 90 percent law and 10 percent grace.’” (<http://www.livingwaters.com/pdf/HellsBestKeptSecret.pdf>)

This quote has been picked up by many writers, including John MacArthur. While I agree with Comfort’s overarching point, I do not think he has given an accurate description of Wesley’s theology. Comfort’s big point is that the law convicts of sin. Modern evangelism tends to bypass the preliminary function of the law and start with the good news. Thus, we are trying to get people to accept the good news, when they have not yet been confronted by the bad news. The urgency of salvation is blunted when people do not realize they are lost.

Yet to simply advocate preaching 90% law and 10% grace might imply that salvation is mostly a matter of keeping the law. But the purpose of the law is to reveal to us that we cannot save ourselves through our works. Properly understood, the purpose of the law is to reveal that we cannot keep it and are thus displeasing to God. The law, then, should drive us to the point of desperation when we trust in Christ completely.

On October 30, 2015, I received an email from John Roberts, a Nazerene pastor, asking me to help him locate where in Wesley’s writing Comfort found his Wesley quote. After some research, I responded that the closest statement I could find was in a letter from Wesley to Ebenezer Blackwell on December 20, 1751, in which Wesley explained:

I think the right method of preaching is this. At our first beginning to preach at any place, after a general declaration of the love of God to sinners

and His willingness that they should be saved, to preach the law in the strongest, the closest, the most searching manner possible; only intermixing the gospel here and there, and showing it, as it were, afar off.

After more and more persons are convinced of sin, we may mix more and more of the gospel, in order to beget faith, to raise into spiritual life those whom the law hath slain; but this is not to be done too hastily neither. Therefore it is not expedient wholly to omit the law; not only because we may well suppose that many of our hearers are still unconvinced, but because otherwise there is danger that many who are convinced will heal their own wounds slightly: therefore it is only in private converse with a thoroughly convinced sinner that we should preach nothing but the gospel.

If, indeed, we could suppose an whole congregation to be thus convinced, we should need to preach only the gospel.

On November 7, 2015, John Roberts contacted Ray Comfort asking where he got the quote. Comfort replied two days later that in 1982 he was sharing a conference in Brisbane, Australia.

After I had finished, a tall American gentleman came up to me and excitedly said, “Did you know that John Wesley told a young evangelist, ‘Preach 90% Law and 10% grace?’” I wrote it into my notes, and never worried about the source. So that’s all I can tell you. Sorry about that.

REVIEWS

The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley. Vol. 32. "Medical and Health Writings." Abingdon, 2018. 788 pages. ISBN 9781501859014

The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley are a projected 35-volume set that was launched in 1960. At this point 21 volumes are available. This is an annotated, critical edition which is the new standard in Wesley studies.

Most of Wesley's medical advice in this volume is obsolete, including his enthusiasm for electric shock treatment, yet his *Primitive Physic* went through twenty editions before his death. It sold 40,000 copies.

However, many of the early Methodists living in rural areas did not have access to professional physicians. And many who were poor could not afford their treatment. However, he did not advise his people to avoid doctors or medicine. Rather, he encouraged them to pray as well for God's healing touch. While Wesley would be arrested for practicing medicine without a license if he attempted any such thing in our day, most of his self-help medical advice involved natural remedies, diet, exercise, cleanliness, and rest.

Because of the shortage of trained professional physicians, the country parson was encouraged to provide medical advice in his own parish. John Wesley's grandfather did so, as did his father. Beginning in 1750 we see in his *Journal* where Wesley started recommending specific medicines as he visited the sick. He pushed back against the growing specialization that separated care for the body from care for the soul.

Of the 225 remedies in the first edition of *Primitive Physic*, 184 were made from plants, 17 were derived from animals, and 24 were naturally-occurring minerals. He preferred simple medicines to the compounds made in apothecaries, believing that God had infused nature with medicines to heal injuries and illnesses after sin and death were introduced into creation.

All this illustrates the fact that Wesley was not just interested in spiritual matters. This would also be true of Adam Clarke, in particular. They were interested in all of life. Wesley consulted a number of medical works and was aware of the major developments in the field and extracted freely from them.

As Henry Knight III explained in his book, *Anticipating Heaven Below*:

The *Primitive Physic* was characterized by plain language, cheap and safe remedies, and empirical method. Whereas, Wesley notes, physic in the ancient world "was wholly founded on experiment," that is what actually worked, in the modern world persons "of learning began to set experience aside, to build physic upon hypothesis, to form theories of diseases and their cure and to substitute these in place of experiments." As the language became more technical, the remedies more complex, and the theories more speculative, "physic became abstruse science, quite out of the reach of ordinary men."

While some of the Calvinists tended to regard suffering as punishment for our sins, Wesley did not advocate an attitude of resignation. *Primitive Physic* opens by rehearsing human rebellion in Eden and the suffering and death which followed. But Wesley asserted that God neither abandoned us to infirmity nor rendered us completely passive in its treatment.

Over time he grew more convinced that God's ultimate healing work extended to both soul and body. He encouraged his followers to expect both dimensions of healing in the present life. But Wesley put more emphasis on the ordinary means of maintaining and restoring health than he did on supernatural healing. In his *Journal* for 1746 Wesley recorded that he was not feeling well nor was his horse. "Cannot God heal either man or beast, by any means, or without any?" Immediately my weariness and headache ceased, and my horse's lameness in the same instant. Nor did he halt any more either that day or the next."

However, Wesley could not be categorized as a faith healer. He put more emphasis on human responsibility. Here again we see the moderation between the two polar opposites. While Calvinism tends to assert that the age of miracles is over and the charismatic movement purports to cast out the demon of gluttony, Wesley advised his people to take responsibility for their health *and* trust God for healing.

While he even published medical advice in the *Arminian Magazine* (a practice we will not duplicate), he advocated horseback riding and exercise equipment (a practice most of us should emulate). He owned a wooden horse, an aerobic device used indoors to simulate riding a horse. He also mentioned what he called a dumbbell, but that was not a set of weights known by this term today. It was an upper-body aerobic exercise machine which could be used at home.

The real value of this volume, in my opinion, is not Wesley's medical advice but the extensive introductions written by James Donat, who completed a PhD on the history of medicine and worked with Randy Maddox.

While all of this material I have discussed is of historic interest, liberal theologians would regard all of Wesley's writings as having little practical value today, since their theology continues to evolve. However, we value Wesley's doctrinal writings because they accurately expound upon the unchanging Word of God. But we must distinguish between his theology and his political and medical opinions. To quote a statement in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* in 1845, "We had rather to sit at the feet of the venerable Wesley as a divine than as a teacher of physic." —*Vic Reasoner*

Johan Tredoux, *Mildred Bangs Wynkoop: Her Life and Thought*. The Foundry Publishing, 2017. 248 pages. ISBN 9780834136519

Mildred grew up in a second-generation 1930s Nazarene context, where Christian experience had been replaced by a predictable theological formula. Altar calls were given so that believers could receive the second work of grace, which came instantaneously by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

She had been through Northwest Nazarene College in Nampa and followed Dr. Wiley to Pasadena where she graduated with two degrees. While in college she met her husband, and they spent most of the 1930s and 1940s as evangelists and pastors of small Nazarene churches.

Mildred remembers seekers at the altar being surrounded by people shouting slogans like "pray loud," "lift your head," "take it by faith," and "are you willing to be a missionary?" She wrote, "If I could count the number of times I have poured tears on some worn altar rail seeking for holiness, I would be ashamed of it." Yet she observed that no one ever followed up with her to find out how she was doing spiritually. For several years she continued to go forward, each time seeking that which she already professed. She had a page in her Bible on which she entered the dates and places that she went to the altar to seek entire sanctification. She wanted to be able to testify the day she was sanctified, but she had so many entries that she could never decide which one of them to use at any given time. At last count, she had forty entries in her Bible when she finally tore that page out of her Bible.

During this struggle, her health broke and she became tubercular. At 29 she was left in California while

her husband took a new church in Oregon. She began to attend an Episcopalian church who disciplined her and helped her regain her faith.

At the age of 44 she decided to go back to school for graduate studies, culminating with a doctorate of theology in 1955. Her life's work was an attempt to answer the practical problems arising from the tension between the doctrine and life of holiness. What we have of that struggle is primarily found in *A Theology of Love*, published in 1972.

A second edition was published in 2015 containing a previously unpublished chapter. Tredoux mentions two unpublished chapters left out of the first edition. Both were on the Holy Spirit and she withheld them because she was unsure of herself [pp. 151-152].

She came across to me as a timid, insecure personality who was often unsure of herself. However, this is my observation and not a criticism. I have been around plenty of "theologians" who were frequently in error, but never in doubt. Humility is a virtue, not a vice.

In her quest for theology, her methodology was sometimes suspect. Her attempt to do "word studies" led her to the conclusion that a distinction should be made between "image" and "likeness." She seemed almost to adopt a semi-Pelagian view that the human will was not completely fallen. And it seems that the status-quo-Phoebe-Palmer-holiness-theology with which she was raised somehow got labeled as "fundamentalism." As a result, she was dangerously open to existential and process theology. But along the way, she did discover that the writings

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of John Wesley were more authentic than the American holiness movement. In that sense, her spiritual journey paralleled the quest of the founders of the Fundamental Wesleyan Society, including A. J. Smith and Elmer Long, even before the Brush brothers. The major difference is that our men found their moorings within the writings of early Methodism without the influences of more liberal theology.

I wanted to read this book because some within the holiness movement have accused Wynkoop of corrupting the holiness movement. My own assessment is that the holiness movement had already been corrupted through

the influences of Charles Finney and Phoebe Palmer. Wynkoop was able to work through much of that error, but perhaps her openness to process theology left the door open for the pendulum to swing too far the other way. This “biography” opens with the sentence, “Theology does not stand still.” I can appreciate the fact that we must be always reforming by continually returning to Scripture, but process theology is in danger of always trying to say something new without being certain of anything. To the degree that Wynkoop introduced John Wesley to the holiness movement, she made a positive contribution.

—*Vic Reasoner*

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