

UNITED METHODIST DOCTRINE: THE EXTREME CENTER

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TO RICHARD HEITZENRATER AND TO THE MEMORIES OF
JAMESON JONES, ALBERT OUTLER, JOHN DESCHNER, AND
JOHN WESLEY, THE TEACHERS AND THEOLOGICAL FRIENDS
WHO HAVE MOST INFLUENCED MY THOUGHT

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CHAPTER FIVE

CREATION, SIN, LAW, GRACE, AND REPENTANCE

United Methodist teaching about humanity requires holding in tension four key concepts all deeply rooted in Scripture: creation, sin, grace, and law. Human beings are created in God's image, yet original sin has so corrupted that image that no person can be saved on his or her own. Original sin leads inexorably to actual sins. Yet no person is ever left alone, because God's grace is freely given to all, enabling them to fulfill the law that was intended for their salvation. First we will discuss each of the four, and then the turning of one's life toward God in repentance.

CREATION BY GRACE

The heart of United Methodist doctrine is saving grace, so, not surprisingly, grace is also the starting point of its anthropology. The opening sentence of the first of the *Sermons* makes it clear that God's creation of humankind was an act of grace:

All the blessings which God hath bestowed upon man are of his mere grace, bounty, or favour: his free, undeserved favour, favour altogether undeserved, man having no claim to the least of his mercies. It was free grace that "formed man of the dust of the

ground, and breathed into him a living soul," and stamped on that soul the image of God, and "put all things under his feet."¹

God's grace is an expression of God's essential nature, which is love. Article I and Confession I both affirm God's loving nature and creative activity. "Our Social Creed" says,

We believe in God, Creator of the world; and in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of creation. We believe in the Holy Spirit, through whom we acknowledge God's gifts, and we repent of our sin in misusing these gifts to idolatrous ends.

We affirm the natural world as God's handiwork and dedicate ourselves to its preservation, enhancement, and faithful use by humankind.²

This builds on the affirmation given earlier that "All creation is the Lord's, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it. Water, air, soil, minerals, energy resources, plants, animal life, and space are to be valued and conserved because they are God's creation and not solely because they are useful to human beings. God has granted us stewardship of creation."³

The BOR speaks about God's creation and our misuse of it.⁴ The *Sermons* articulate a clear understanding of stewardship of our bodies, souls, worldly goods, and talents.⁵ God's creation of the whole world is clearly affirmed in the *Notes*.⁶ The restoration of all things will involve the whole of creation.⁷

HUMANITY CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

Within God's creation, humanity occupies a special place. Among the "Basic Christian Affirmations" is the statement, "The created order is designed for the well-being of all creatures and as the place of human dwelling in covenant with God."⁸ When the *Sermons* and *Notes* talk about God's activity as creator, they most frequently focus on God making humankind in God's own image. Specifically, the *Sermons* note that humanity was created in God's image in three different senses of the term.⁹ Wesley says:

And, first, why must we be born again? What is the foundation of this doctrine? The foundation of it lies near as deep as the cre-

ation of the world, in the scriptural account whereof we read, "And God," the three-one God, "said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." Not barely in his *natural image*, a picture of his own immortality, a spiritual being endued with understanding, freedom of will, and various affections; nor merely in his *political image*, the governor of this lower world, having "dominion over the fishes of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth"; but chiefly in his *moral image*, which, according to the Apostle, is "righteousness and true holiness." In this image of God was man made. "God is love"; accordingly man at his creation was full of love, which was the sole principle of all his tempers, thoughts, words, and actions. God is full of justice, mercy, and truth: so was man as he came from the hands of his Creator. God is spotless purity: and so man was in the beginning pure from every sinful blot. Otherwise God could not have pronounced *him* as well as all the other works of his hands, "very good." This he could not have been had he not been pure from sin, and filled with righteousness and true holiness. For there is no medium. If we suppose an intelligent creature not to love God, not to be righteous and holy, we necessarily suppose him not to be good at all; much less to be "very good."¹⁰

Several important points should be brought out with regard to this passage.

The first sense in which we were created in the image of God is the natural image. Thus, we share God's nature in that we are immortal spirits who have various divine capacities: understanding, freedom of the will, and affections. The *Sermons* and *Notes* throughout presuppose that human beings are immortal souls temporarily joined to bodies. He says explicitly,

God has entrusted us with our *soul*, an immortal spirit made in the image of God, together with all the powers and faculties thereof—understanding, imagination, memory, will, and a train of affections either included in it or closely dependent upon it; love and hatred, joy and sorrow, respecting present good and evil; desire and aversion, hope and fear, respecting that which is to come.¹¹

Creation in God's natural image implies that each person is essentially a spirit and that death is separation from the body leading eventually to eternal judgment.¹²

Humanity was also created in God's political image. Wesley devotes very little space to the development of this idea. His note on Romans 8:19 makes a passing reference to the whole visible creation, which will benefit from the glory of the children of God. Sermon 51, "The Good Steward," talks about our care for the "worldly goods" with which God has entrusted us.¹³ But it is only as human technology has advanced sufficiently and the environmental problems associated with increasing population, pollution, and the endangerment of species have increased that United Methodists have become concerned for how well we exercise our role as "governor over this lower world." The Social Principles, with its concerns for the natural world, nurturing community, social community, economic community, political community, and world community, should be read, in part, as a witness about how this political aspect of the image of God should be exercised today.

For Wesley the most important way in which creation in the image of God should be understood concerns the moral image. For him, it is clear from 1 John 4:8 that "God is love." On that verse the *Notes* say that love is God's "reigning attribute, the attribute that sheds an amiable glory on all his other perfections." Thus, to be created in the moral image of God is to be created "full of love, which was the sole principle of all his tempers, thoughts, words, and actions."¹⁴ Justice, mercy, and truth characterize this image as well.

This understanding of creation in the moral image of God is foundational to the rest of United Methodist doctrine. It underlies the soteriology of the *Sermons* and *Notes*. The note on Romans 14:17 concisely makes a point that is echoed throughout the rest of the authoritative texts: "*For the kingdom of God—That is, true religion, does not consist in external observances. But in righteousness—The image of God stamped on the heart; the love of God and man, accompanied with the peace that passeth all understanding, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*"¹⁵ In short, the doctrines of sanctification, Christian perfection, personal holiness, and social justice all have to do with the renewal of this moral image of God. This is the first piece in United Methodist understanding of God's saving grace. Creation is by God, and human beings are created in God's image, especially like God's reigning attribute, love.

ORIGINAL SIN AND ACTUAL SINS

The anthropology of United Methodist doctrine appropriately begins with creation in the image of God, but it never rests there. The image that was God's intention has been disfigured by sin. Human nature was created good, but at its very deepest levels it is marred by sin.

The Articles and Confession talk about this as the Fall. In Article VII, it is clearly stated that a corrupt human nature is engendered in all of Adam's offspring.¹⁶ Confession VII puts forward the same point without mentioning Adam: "We believe man is fallen from righteousness and, apart from the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, is destitute of holiness and inclined to evil. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. In his own strength, without divine grace, man cannot do good works pleasing and acceptable to God."¹⁷ Wesley's sermon "The New Birth" locates the source of this corruption of human nature and destitution of holiness in Adam's disobedience. Human beings were made in God's image, but they had the freedom to disobey God's commandments. This they did, and God's promise in Genesis 2:17 was fulfilled: Adam and Eve died on that day.

Accordingly in that day he did die: he died to God, the most dreadful of all deaths. He lost the life of God: he was separated from him in union with whom his spiritual life consisted. The body dies when it is separated from the soul, the soul when it is separated from God. But this separation from God Adam sustained in the day, the hour, he ate of the forbidden fruit. And of this he gave immediate proof; presently showing by his behaviour that the love of God was extinguished in his soul, which was now "alienated from the life of God." Instead of this he was now under the power of servile fear, so that he fled from the presence of the Lord.¹⁸

This spiritual death, Wesley argues, is the "loss of the life and image of God."¹⁹ Because all of humanity were "in Adam's loins," Wesley can explain the text from 1 Corinthians 15:22 that "in Adam all died." He continues,

The natural consequence of this is that everyone descended from him comes into the world spiritually dead, dead to God, wholly

"dead in sin", entirely void of the life of God, void of the image of God, of all that "righteousness and holiness" wherein Adam was created. Instead of this every man born into the world now bears the image of the devil, in pride and self-will; the image of the beast, in sensual appetites and desires. This then is the foundation of the new birth—the entire corruption of our nature.²⁰

Thus, United Methodist doctrine teaches that there is a human problem, and that it is sin. As "Our Doctrinal Heritage" puts it, "As sinful creatures, however, we have broken that covenant, become estranged from God, wounded ourselves and one another, and wreaked havoc throughout the natural order. We stand in need of redemption."²¹ Moreover, the nature of the human problem is such that humanity cannot fix its own problem. Article VIII, "Of Free Will," says, "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will."²² This article not only makes it clear that humanity cannot save itself, but also points to the grace of God as the way in which genuine salvation comes. The word "preventing" here has the meaning of "to go before with spiritual guidance and help."²³ Thus, it is a reference to the preventent grace of God discussed later in this chapter.

Wesley understands that when Adam sinned, all of humanity was changed forever. He says in "Justification by Faith," "By the sin of the first Adam, who was not only the father but likewise the representative of us all, we all 'fell short of the favour of God,' we all became 'children of wrath,' or, as the Apostle expresses it, 'Judgment came upon all men to condemnation.'"²⁴ Adam as the father of all humankind points to a kind of biological transmission theory of original sin. Adam as the representative of humanity sinned, and thus legally brought his penalty upon all of the rest of us as well.²⁵

Thus, the *Sermons* sometimes refer to the "natural" human being. Two of the *Sermons* interpret Ephesians 5:14 "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee

light"²⁶ as applying to sinful human beings who don't know that they need God:

The poor unawakened sinner, how much knowledge soever he may have as to other things, has no knowledge of himself. In this respect "he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." He knows not that he is a fallen spirit, whose only business in the present world is to recover from his fall, to regain that image of God wherein he was created. . . .

Full of all diseases as he is, he fancies himself in perfect health.²⁷

As Wesley understands it, the natural person is so mired in sin that he or she does not even know how bad the situation is. This is true "whether he be a gross, scandalous transgressor, or a more reputable and decent sinner, having the form though not the power of godliness."²⁸ Humanity is in a difficult position after Adam's sin. Each person is a sinner, and yet unaware of his or her own need.

ORIGINAL SIN

The result of the fall is that human beings have a corrupted nature. This is first of all an explanation for the state of humanity as a whole. The sermon "Original Sin" begins with a reference to both pagan and Christian accounts of the dignity and self-sufficiency of humanity. Wesley then asks, "But in the meantime, what must we do with our Bibles? For they will never agree with this. These accounts, however pleasing to flesh and blood, are utterly irreconcilable with the scriptural."²⁹ He goes on to discuss the sermon's text, Genesis 6:5, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." His exegesis leads to the conclusion that human beings are the same now as they were back then. Yet original sin is also important as a description of each individual's condition and need for God. Wesley says that understanding oneself as a sinner is one of the first steps in the way of salvation:

Know thyself to be a sinner, and what manner of sinner thou art. Know that corruption of thy inmost nature, whereby thou art

very far gone from original righteousness, whereby "the flesh lusteth" always "contrary to the Spirit," through that "carnal mind which is enmity against God," which "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Know that thou art corrupted in every power, in every faculty of thy soul, that thou art totally corrupted in every one of these, all the foundations being out of course. The eyes of thine understanding are darkened, so that they cannot discern God or the things of God.³⁰

This view of original sin is total. The *Notes* referring to Romans 6:6 says it is "that entire depravity and corruption which by nature spreads itself over the whole man, leaving no part uninfected."³¹ The liturgy for the Baptismal Covenant I asks each person being baptized, or the parents of the infant being baptized, "Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin?"³² Similar or identical questions are asked in the other liturgies of baptism.

Moreover, three corollaries of this doctrine are brought out in the sermon "Original Sin." First, the doctrine is the foundation of the whole way of salvation. If humanity is not fallen, then there is "no occasion for this work in the heart, this 'renewal in the spirit of our mind.'"³³ Elsewhere Wesley refers to the doctrine of original sin as the "general ground of the whole doctrine of justification."³⁴

Second, original sin is one of the essential doctrines of Christianity. It differentiates Christian teaching from all sorts of heathenism:

Hence we may, secondly, learn that all who deny this—call it "original sin" or by any other title—are but heathens still in the fundamental point which differences heathenism from Christianity. They may indeed allow that men have many vices; that some are born with us; and that consequently we are not born altogether so wise or so virtuous as we should be; there being few that will roundly affirm we are born with as much propensity to good as to evil, and that every man is by nature as virtuous and wise as Adam was at his creation. But here is the shibboleth: Is man by nature filled with all manner of evil? Is he void of all good? Is he wholly fallen? Is his soul totally corrupted? Or, to come back to the text, is "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart evil continually"? Allow this, and you are so far a Christian. Deny it, and you are but an heathen still.³⁵

There is something about the doctrine of original sin that is so basic to the way of salvation that denying it means, for Wesley, denying the core of Christian teaching. Presumably, if the existence of the problem is denied, then the solution is unnecessary.

Third, original sin understood as a loss of the image of God is thus understood as a disease. Genuine religion is the healing of this sickness. Wesley says it is *therapeia psychēs*, the therapy of the soul. "Hereby the great Physician of souls applies medicine to heal *this sickness*; to restore human nature, totally corrupted in all its faculties."³⁶ God does this by giving us knowledge of himself, faith, repentance, and lowliness of heart, and by instilling in us the love of God. Thus, the great end of religion is "to renew our hearts in the image of God, to repair that total loss of righteousness and true holiness which we sustained by the sin of our first parent."³⁷

ACTUAL SINS

Wesley understands human action as arising from human tendencies, or the habitual disposition of the heart. With human nature so diseased, it is inevitable that human beings will commit actual sins. These sins are of two kinds: sins of omission, where an obligatory action was not taken, and sins of commission, where a wrong act was done. Sins of commission can be inward, relating to thoughts, feelings, tempers, and other actions not observable by others. They can also be outward, the words and deeds that can be observed. The *Sermons* have a clear definition of the word "sin": "By 'sin' I here understand outward sin, according to the plain, common acceptance of the word: an actual, voluntary 'transgression of the law'; of the revealed, written law of God; of any commandment of God acknowledged to be such at the time that it is transgressed."³⁸ This is the understanding of sin that is normally talked about in 1 John 3:9 when it says that Christians do not commit sin. However, there are a number of further distinctions that help Wesley refine his teaching.

There are involuntary sins that are really not sins "properly so called" as Wesley puts it.³⁹ Wesley calls these "sins of infirmity" or "sins of surprise" because they arise either out of our ignorance or other failings, or from our being caught unawares. In all such cases,

there is no sense of our willingly breaking God's law by either action or inaction.

Inward sins are those which affect our tempers, will, and thoughts. While Christians do not commit outward sins, this inward sin clings to us. Wesley quotes the Article IX of the Thirty-nine Articles which says that sin "remains" in the heart of the believer. He says that it does not reign there, but that the Christian life is one of struggle between the flesh and the spirit.⁴⁰ This type of sin affects our inner lives and cleaves to our actions. The sermon "Repentance of Believers" argues that there is a type of repentance and a type of faith necessary to those who have entered upon the Christian life. A number of ways in which the believer's soul is affected by sins of pride, self-will, and inordinate affection are discussed. He quotes again 1 John 2:16's threefold characterization of sin as "the desire of the flesh, or the desire of the eye, or the pride of life." He says that sin remains in their hearts, and "cleaves to their actions" since even the best deeds are sometimes done for mixed motivations.⁴¹

The problem of sin is universal. All human beings are infected by it, and it infects each and every part of them. The note on Romans 3:23 says: "*For all have sinned*—In Adam, and in their own persons; by a sinful nature, sinful tempers, and sinful actions. *And are fallen short of the glory of God*—The supreme end of man; short of his image on earth, and the enjoyment of him in heaven."⁴²

STRUCTURAL SOCIAL SIN

The contemporary statements of United Methodist doctrine make another distinction that is not explicit in the constitutional standards. One of the "Distinctive Wesleyan Emphases" is a commitment to mission and service, which says that "Scriptural holiness entails more than personal piety; love of God is always linked with love of neighbor, a passion for justice and renewal in the life of the world."⁴³

More contemporary statements of United Methodist doctrine also affirm that there is a human problem. Frequently they do not make reference to the Fall, to Adam's sin, or to original sin by name:

The perils of nuclear destruction, terrorism, war, poverty, violence, and injustice confront us. Injustices linked to race, gender, class, and age are widespread in our times. Misuse of natural resources and disregard for the fragile balances in our environment contradict our calling to care for God's creation. Secularism pervades high-technology civilizations, hindering human awareness of the spiritual depths of existence.⁴⁴

Even though these problems are not explicitly described as aspects of human sin here, the larger context of United Methodist doctrine says that such problems are directly linked to humanity's violation of God's laws and separation from the relationship God intended.

The word "sin" is used only three times in the Social Principles. It occurs first in the preamble where United Methodists "confess our many sins against God's will for us as we find it in Jesus Christ."⁴⁵ The last section, "Our Social Creed" has a similar usage.⁴⁶ But the third use is one of the most illuminating for the theology that underlies all of the Social Principles and many of the Resolutions. In the section "Rights of Racial and Ethnic Persons" it says,

Racism is the combination of the power to dominate by one race over other races and a value system that assumes that the dominant race is innately superior to the others. Racism includes both personal and institutional racism. Personal racism is manifested through the individual expressions, attitudes, and/or behaviors that accept the assumptions of a racist value system and that maintain the benefits of this system. Institutional racism is the established social pattern that supports implicitly or explicitly the racist value system. Racism plagues and cripples our growth in Christ, inasmuch as it is antithetical to the gospel itself. White people are unfairly granted privileges and benefits that are denied to persons of color. Therefore, we recognize racism as sin and affirm the ultimate and temporal worth of all persons.⁴⁷

By calling institutional racism sin, United Methodist doctrine either expands upon or contradicts the definition used in the *Sermons*. On the one hand, racism violates a known law of God, and so its character as sin is clear. However, whether institutional racism has a voluntary character or not is more difficult to determine. In this definition, it is defined as a social pattern that

embodies the "racist value system." This whole approach to sin takes advantage of the body of knowledge gathered by social scientists, philosophers, and theologians in the last two centuries. When Wesley argues for the kind of involuntary sin that cleaves to our action despite our best intention, he appears to have left significant room for this broadened understanding of sin.

GRACE

So far the picture of fallen humanity portrayed by United Methodist doctrine looks bleak. It is crucial to understand that the portrait of the natural human being given here is incomplete without also acknowledging the universal, saving grace of God, which has been given to every human being.

Article VIII, discussed above, has a crucial phrase about God's grace. Humanity is incapable of doing good works "without the grace of God by Christ preventing us."⁴⁸ Confession VII makes a similar point with the phrase "apart from the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."⁴⁹

Given this description of the human problem, it is by the grace of God that salvation is possible. The opening paragraphs of the first sermon in the *Sermons* make the point strongly:

All the blessings which God hath bestowed upon man are of his mere grace, bounty, or favour: his free, undeserved favour, favour altogether undeserved, man having no claim to the least of his mercies. It was free grace that "formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into him a living soul," and stamped on that soul the image of God, and "put all things under his feet." . . .

If then sinful man find favour with God, it is "grace upon grace" $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\iota}\ \chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\varsigma$. If God vouchsafe still to pour fresh blessings upon us—yea, the greatest of all blessings, salvation—what can we say to these things but "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!" And thus it is. Herein "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died" to save us. "By grace," then, "are ye saved through faith."⁵⁰

Wesley defines grace in the sermon "The Witness of Our Own Spirit." He says,

By "the grace of God" is sometimes to be understood that free love, that unmerited mercy, by which I, a sinner, through the merits of Christ am now reconciled to God. But in this place it rather means that power of God the Holy Ghost which "worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure." As soon as ever the grace of God (in the former sense, his pardoning love) is manifested to our soul, the grace of God (in the latter sense, the power of his Spirit) takes place therein.⁵¹

At several points in the *Notes* he refers to grace as love, as in his comment on 2 Corinthians 8:9: "The grace—The most sincere, most free, and most abundant love."⁵² Grace is thus described as being rooted in God's nature as love. It is favor given despite sin. It is a gift. It is known by its effects. It restores the knowledge of right and wrong, convinces of sin, pardons, and gives power over sin, thereby healing the disease.

Since grace is God's love, it ought to be understood in relational terms. Just as other relationships have different stages of development, so does the human being's relationship with God. At different stages God's love will take different forms. Grace is all one, but it will do different things depending on what the human being needs at particular points. Hence the distinctions between prevent, justifying, and sanctifying grace.

PREVENTIVE GRACE

Prevenient grace is the love of God at work in our lives from the very beginning. When Article VIII talks about "the grace of God by Christ preventing us" the words "prevent" and "preventive" are the verb and adjectival forms of the same root word which means "come before."⁵³ To affirm preventive grace is to say that God is actively loving all of humanity. Wesley frequently referred to the human conscience and argued that it was not "natural" but a supernatural gift of God's grace. This point along with his reference to the text of John 1:9 are included in his description of salvation as a process that starts with this gracious love of God:

If we take this in its utmost extent it will include all that is wrought in the soul by what is frequently termed "natural

conscience," but more properly, "preventing grace"; all the "drawings" of "the Father," the desires after God, which, if we yield to them, increase more and more; all that "light" wherewith the Son of God "enlighteneth everyone that cometh into the world," *showing* every man "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God."⁵⁴

Outler, suggesting the importance of this idea in Wesley's theology, notes that preventing grace allows for human involvement since Christians have affirmed, following the Second Council of Orange in 529, that the work of the Holy Spirit is resistible and that of the Father is not. Randy Maddox makes the important point that this understanding of preventient grace balances Wesley's affirmation of total depravity. Specifically, preventient grace partially restores our human faculties so that we might be able to accept or reject saving grace.⁵⁵ "Our Doctrinal Heritage" acknowledges preventient grace as "the divine love that surrounds all humanity and precedes any and all of our conscious impulses" and "prompts our first wish to please God, our first glimmer of understanding concerning God's will, and our 'first slight transient conviction' of having sinned against God."⁵⁶

This understanding of grace explains how United Methodist doctrine can affirm two important things at the same time. First, every good gift in humanity's process of salvation comes from God. It is "grace upon grace." We are saved by grace alone. At the same time, humanity is given the ability, by grace, to respond or not respond. Because God loves us, God does not coerce us.⁵⁷ This pattern of human response being given to God's preventient grace is crucial to Wesley's idea of salvation. It is God who saves, but humans must cooperate. Yet even their ability to cooperate, the faith that responds, is made possible by God's grace:

And hence we may, thirdly, infer the absolute necessity of this re-action of the soul (whatsoever it be called) in order to the continuance of the divine life therein. For it plainly appears God does not continue to act upon the soul unless the soul re-acts upon God. He prevents us indeed with the blessings of his goodness. He first loves us, and manifests himself unto us. While we are yet afar off he calls us to himself, and shines upon our hearts. But if we do not then love him who first loved us; if we will not hearken to his voice; if we turn our eye away from him, and will not

attend to the light which he pours upon us: his Spirit will not always strive; he will gradually withdraw, and leave us to the darkness of our own hearts. He will not continue to breathe into our soul unless our soul breathes toward him again; unless our love, and prayer, and thanksgiving return to him, a sacrifice wherewith he is well pleased.⁵⁸

Several Wesleyan hymns stress the universality of God's grace and its invitation into a saving relationship:

Come, sinners, to the gospel feast;
let every soul be Jesus' guest.
Ye need not one be left behind,
for God hath bid all humankind.⁵⁹

United Methodist doctrine teaches universal redemption, that is, the change in status of every human being because of the death of Christ on the cross. Christ died for everyone and not just a few. This gracious activity of God both restores the faculties that humans need in order to respond to the offer of salvation and continually woos the lost soul to return home. This is not the same as universal salvation. Tragically, some refuse God's gracious offer of salvation.

The other ways in which grace affects humanity relate to other stages in the way of salvation. Grace convicts us of sin and helps us repent. Justifying grace pardons us and restores us to right relationship with God. Sanctifying grace "breaks the power of cancelled sin [and] sets the prisoner free."⁶⁰

LAW

The law has an important role to play in the United Methodist understanding of these early stages of salvation. By "the law" it should be clear that the Articles of Religion and the *Sermons* distinguish between different parts of the body of Old Testament commandments. Article VI says:

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ. . . . Although the law given from God by Moses as

touching ceremonies and rites doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity be received in any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral.⁶¹

Sermons and Notes use the distinction at several points as well.⁶² It is such a deep assumption he regards it as common among Christians.⁶³ Thus, in all that follows, any reference to "the law" is to the moral law because that is the only one binding on Christians.

Wesley is deeply concerned with charting a middle course between two extremes. On the one hand he is seeking to avoid the moralism that reduces Christianity to a set of behaviors which characterize good persons. He criticizes such persons as having "the form of godliness without the power."⁶⁴ On the other hand, he is strongly opposed to antinomianism. He preaches salvation by faith in such a way that people understand that faith establishes the law.⁶⁵

For Wesley, the law's origin was part of God's gracious creation. It was given to the angels before the creation of humanity, and it was engraved on the hearts of the first humans.⁶⁶ Wesley refers to John 1:9 for one proof that the law continues to be given to all humanity. Wesley has a high view of the law's relationship to God. He says,

Now this law is an incorruptible picture of the high and holy One that inhabiteth eternity. It is he whom in his essence no man hath seen or can see, made visible to men and angels. It is the face of God unveiled; God manifested to his creatures as they are able to bear it; manifested to give and not to destroy life; that they may see God and live. It is the heart of God disclosed to man. Yea, in some sense we may apply to this law what the Apostle says of his Son—it is "the streaming forth" or outbeaming "of his glory, the express image of his person."⁶⁷

Later he says, "The law of God (speaking after the manner of men) is a copy of the eternal mind, a transcript of the divine nature."⁶⁸ Thus he explains the meaning of Romans 7:12, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just, and good."⁶⁹ This law is fulfilled by the great commandments. He says:

"This is the law and the prophets." Whatsoever is written in that law which God of old revealed to mankind, and whatsoever precepts God has given by "his holy prophets which have been since the world began," they are all summed up in these few words, they are all contained in this short direction. And this, rightly understood, comprises the whole of that religion which our Lord came to establish upon earth.⁷⁰

Wesley then argues that the law thus understood has three uses. First, it convinces the world of sin. Wesley told his preachers that preaching the law was a way of awakening sinners to see their spiritual condition correctly. He says that sometimes people are awakened by the message of reconciliation, such as 2 Corinthians 5:19, "but it is the ordinary method of the Spirit of God to convict sinners by the law."⁷¹ The second use of the law brings the sinner into life. While the law "drives us by force," it remains that "love is the spring of all."⁷² The third use of the law is that it acts as a guide and tutor to believers, thus keeping us alive.⁷³

Having made this clear in Sermon 34, his offering two other sermons titled "The Law Established Through Faith" is understandable. Faith thus understood does not "make void the law," but enables the law to fulfill its intended purpose of restoring persons to the perfection that God intended for them in creation. In justification one's relationship to the law changes; one begins to keep the law because one desires it.⁷⁴ Being born again means being filled with faith, hope, and love. Love brings, as one of its fruits,

universal obedience to him we love, and conformity to his will; obedience to all the commands of God, internal and external; obedience of the heart and of the life, in every temper and in all manner of conversation. And one of the tempers most obviously implied herein is the being "zealous of good works"; the hungering and thirsting to do good, in every possible kind, unto all men; the rejoicing to "spend and be spent for them," for every child of man, not looking for any recompense in this world, but only in the resurrection of the just.⁷⁵

One's relationship to the law thus changes. After the natural person is awakened by the law's commands, the legal person obeys the law because he or she is very conscious of God's wrath. The General Rules set as the only requirement for joining a Methodist

society a desire to flee from God's wrath.⁷⁶ At justification one is born again, one's heart is circumcised, and one desires to keep the law for its own sake. Sin still remains and urges us to violate God's commandments, but it does not reign. Thus, the ruling desire in our hearts is to "establish the law."

The two sermons are also clear about the ways in which Christians both establish and make void the law. Christians establish the law by preaching everything Christ has revealed, all his promises and his threatenings.⁷⁷ We have to preach Christ in all his offices. We "make void the law" if we focus on a truncated gospel that deals only with Christ's priestly office. We must also preach Christ as prophet and king.

The second way to establish the law is to preach the kind of faith that does not supersede holiness, but produces it:

In order to this we continually declare (what should be frequently and deeply considered by all who would not "make void the law through faith") that faith itself, even Christian faith, the faith of God's elect, the faith of the operation of God, still is only the handmaid of love. As glorious and honourable as it is, it is not the end of the commandment. God hath given this honour to love alone. Love is the end of all the commandments of God.⁷⁸

Similarly, we make void the law if we teach any other kind of faith.

The third way of establishing the law is to establish it in our hearts and lives. Its opposite, "the *living* as if faith was designed to excuse us from holiness,"⁷⁹ is the most common way in which humanity "makes void the law." The General Rules—do no harm, do good, and attend upon all the ordinances of God—can be construed as one formulation of how to follow in the path of holiness. Faith enables us to pursue holiness. Wesley says:

Faith alone it is which effectually answers this end, as we learn from daily experience. For so long as we walk by faith, not by sight, we go swiftly on in the way of holiness. While we steadily look, not at the things which are seen, but at those which are not seen, we are more and more crucified to the world and the world crucified to us. Let but the eye of the soul be constantly fixed, not on the things which are temporal, but on those which are eternal, and our affections are more and more loosened from earth and fixed on things above. So that faith in general is the most direct

and effectual means of promoting all righteousness and true holiness; of establishing the holy and spiritual law in the hearts of them that believe.⁸⁰

Related to this is a deep understanding of how the gospel and the law are related in Scripture. One of Wesley's rules for interpreting the Bible is that "commandments are covered promises."⁸¹ He says:

Yea, the very same words, considered in different respects, are parts both of the law and of the gospel. If they are considered as commandments, they are parts of the law: if as promises, of the gospel. Thus, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," when considered as a commandment, is a branch of the law; when regarded as a promise, is an essential part of the gospel—the gospel being no other than the commands of the law proposed by way of promises. Accordingly poverty of spirit, purity of heart, and whatever else is enjoined in the holy law of God, are no other, when viewed in a gospel light, than so many great and precious promises.

There is therefore the closest connection that can be conceived between the law and the gospel. On the one hand the law continually makes way for and points us to the gospel; on the other the gospel continually leads us to a more exact fulfilling of the law. The law, for instance, requires us to love God, to love our neighbour, to be meek, humble, or holy. We feel that we are not sufficient for these things, yea, that "with man this is impossible." But we see a promise of God to give us that love, and to make us humble, meek, and holy. We lay hold of this gospel, of these glad tidings: it is done unto us according to our faith, and "the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us" through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

We may yet farther observe that every command in Holy Writ is only a covered promise.⁸²

In one key text, Wesley's translation makes this point well. For Matthew 5:48, the KJV has "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."⁸³ Wesley's translation in the *Notes* is "Therefore ye shall be perfect, as your Father who is in heaven is perfect." The Greek text is *Esesthe oun hymeis teleioi hos ho pater hymon ho ouranos teleios estin*. The word *esesthe* can be translated either as the present imperative "you be" or as the future indicative "you shall

be." Wesley's translation is grammatically possible. Most translators for reasons of the context construe this verse as a command. Wesley's principle that commands are also promises suggests that the ambiguity of the Greek should be preserved. "You shall be perfect" could be construed as either imperative or future indicative. In his view the larger doctrinal context means that the promise aspect should be emphasized. His comment on the verse makes this clear:

And how wise and gracious is this, to sum up, and as it were seal, all his commandments with a promise; even the proper promise of the gospel, that he will "put" those "laws in our minds, and write them in our hearts!" He well knew how ready our unbelief would be to cry out, This is impossible! and therefore stakes upon it all the power, truth, and faithfulness of Him to whom all things are possible.⁸⁴

In short, United Methodist doctrine places a strong emphasis on the law. Maddox says, "Wesley's understanding of human nature and the human problem gives primacy of place to therapeutic concerns, like those more characteristic of Eastern Christianity, and integrates the more typically Western juridical concerns into this orientation."⁸⁵ This characteristic blending of both juridical and therapeutic concerns is manifest in Wesley's understanding of the uses of the law. The law both condemns us and, after our pardon, heals us. A commandment's double role as both law and gospel, obligation and promise, is possible because the lawgiver and the enabler of its fulfillment are the same Person.

REPENTANCE

In his note on Matthew 3:8, Wesley distinguishes between legal repentance and evangelical repentance: "The former, which is the same that is spoken of here, is a thorough conviction of sin. The latter is a change of heart (and consequently of life) from all sin to all holiness."⁸⁶ The first type of repentance comes as the first step in the way of salvation. Creation in the image of God, original sin, and God's preventent grace describe aspects of the universal human condition. God's grace restores the human faculties that

allow for the possibility of faith, and God uses a variety of ways to draw humanity closer to him. In legal repentance, persons become aware of their spiritual condition. God's grace convinces them of their need for him, and of their sinful state. The *Sermons* often refer to this as awaking from sleep.⁸⁷ Wesley interprets Romans 7:7-25 as giving voice to the struggle of the person "reasoning, groaning, striving, and escaping from the legal to the evangelical state."⁸⁸ There is a deep awareness that repentance is not easy and the struggle against the reign of sin in one's life is difficult. In the sermon "The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption," Wesley describes the process in great detail:

By some awful providence, or by his Word applied with the demonstration of his Spirit, God touches the heart of him that lay asleep in darkness and in the shadow of death. He is terribly shaken out of his sleep, and awakes into a consciousness of his danger. Perhaps in a moment, perhaps by degrees, the eyes of his understanding are opened, and now first (the veil being in part removed) discern the real state he is in. Horrid light breaks in upon his soul; such light as may be conceived to gleam from the bottomless pit, from the lowest deep, from a lake of fire burning with brimstone. He at last sees the loving, the merciful God is also "a consuming fire"; that he is a just God and a terrible, rendering to every man according to his works, entering into judgment with the ungodly for every idle word, yea, and for the imaginations of the heart. He now clearly perceives that the great and holy God is "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity"; that he is an avenger of everyone who rebelleth against him, and repayeth the wicked to his face; and that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."⁸⁹

Repentance is preeminently knowledge of one's own spiritual state. In "The Way to the Kingdom" he says directly, "And first, repent, that is, know yourselves."⁹⁰ But where this knowledge is really fixed in the soul, the person also experiences the affections that go along with it. He says:

If to this lively conviction of thy inward and outward sins, of thy utter guiltiness and helplessness, there be added suitable affections—sorrow of heart for having despised thy own mercies; remorse and self-condemnation, having the mouth stopped,

shame to lift up thine eyes to heaven; fear of the wrath of God abiding on thee, of his curse hanging over thy head, and of the fiery indignation ready to devour those who forget God and obey not our Lord Jesus Christ; earnest desire to escape from that indignation, to cease from evil and learn to do well—then I say unto thee, in the name of the Lord, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." One step more and thou shalt enter in. Thou dost "repent."⁹¹

Wesley's theory of human behavior is that whatever is in the mind will manifest itself in the affections and from there determine human behavior. Thus, there also should be "works meet for repentance," which will show forth in the life of the truly repentant person. The General Rules say, "wherever this [desire to flee from the wrath to come] is really fixed in the soul it will be shown by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation" by following the three rules.⁹²

Wesley's discussions of humility are rooted in this kind of self-knowledge. If the unawakened person in the natural state believes himself to be basically fine, the process of repentance is where one comes to know the truth about oneself. Convincing grace leads the person to a new self-understanding. He says,

No man has a title to the praise of God unless his heart is circumscribed by humility; unless he is little, and base, and vile in his own eyes; unless he is deeply convinced of that inbred "corruption of his nature, whereby he is very far gone from original righteousness," being prone to all evil, averse to all good, corrupt and abominable; having a "carnal mind," which "is enmity against God, and is not subject to the Law of God, nor indeed can be"; unless he continually feels in his inmost soul that without the Spirit of God resting upon him he can neither think, nor desire, nor speak, nor act, anything good or well-pleasing in his sight.⁹³

Again, Wesley's translation of a key New Testament text shows the theological approach to his understanding of it. He renders the first two of the beatitudes as "Happy *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Happy *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."⁹⁴ Wesley translates *makarioi* as "happy." The Jerusalem Bible and the Today's English Version similarly translate

the Greek. His comment emphasizes that the persons being described as happy are those who are penitent, and are thus mourning their sins or the sins of others. These persons receive the kingdom of heaven if they endure to the end.⁹⁵

Evangelical repentance is the kind that transforms the life of the believer through sanctifying grace. Because sin remains in our hearts even after justification, we know that we are guilty sinners, deserving of God's punishment. Yet, this repentance is different from what was experienced previously because persons understand themselves to be, at the same time, sinners and children of God.⁹⁶ Wesley reads Romans 7:7-25 as applying to someone in the stage of legal repentance. Nevertheless, he says that those who interpret those verses as a description of Christians struggling to root out the remaining sin in their lives have a measure of truth as well.⁹⁷

The great difference here is that evangelical repentance, whereby sin, guilt, and dependence on the grace of God are acknowledged, is knowingly conjoined to love and acceptance by God. Justification is the restoration of a relationship through pardon. Repentance after justification means a self-awareness of one's sin, guilt, and helplessness that nevertheless do not threaten the relationship. Wesley says that the antidote is faith, and that faith and repentance mirror each other in the life of the believer:

By repentance we feel the sin remaining in our hearts, and cleaving to our words and actions. By faith we receive the power of God in Christ, purifying our hearts and cleansing our hands. By repentance we are still sensible that we deserve punishment for all our tempers and words and actions. By faith we are conscious that our advocate with the Father is continually pleading for us, and thereby continually turning aside all condemnation and punishment from us. By repentance we have an abiding conviction that there is no help in us. By faith we receive not only mercy, but "grace to help in *every* time of need." Repentance disclaims the very possibility of any other help. Faith accepts all the help we stand in need of from him that hath all power in heaven and earth. Repentance says, "Without him I can do nothing"; faith says, "I can do all things through Christ strengthening me."⁹⁸

For the believer there is an underlying confidence that the disease of sin is being healed. Like a sick person receiving treatment from

a trusted physician, the sinner is confident of cure, yet still experiences the problems associated with the disease.

Wesley's view of repentance does not stress the idea of turning around one's life; rather, it stresses one's self-understanding. This change in one's mind is closely related to the Greek word for repentance, *metanoia*. However, Wesley believes that a genuine change in mind will lead to changed behavior, "works meet for repentance." If such works are not present, the change in mind was not real.

The hymn "Depth of Mercy" gives poetic voice to the person who has experienced justification and is now aware of backsliding.⁹⁹

Depth of mercy! Can there be
mercy still reserved for me?
Can my God his wrath forbear,
me, the chief of sinners, spare?

I have long withstood his grace,
long provoked him to his face,
would not hearken to his calls,
grieved him by a thousand falls.

I my Master have denied,
I afresh have crucified,
oft profaned his hallowed name,
put him to an open shame.

There for me the Savior stands,
shows his wounds and spreads his hands.
God is love! I know, I feel;
Jesus weeps and loves me still.

Now incline me to repent,
let me now my sins lament,
now my foul revolt deplore,
weep, believe, and sin no more.¹⁰⁰

Repentance is the awakening of the sinner to one's need for God, one's own guilt, and one's inability to solve it on one's own. If the

religion of Jesus Christ is the answer to the human problem, and God has chosen not to help without the cooperation of those he loves, then repentance is the stage where each person acknowledges one's problem and begins seeking the answer.

Notes

1. Sermon 1, "Salvation by Faith," SL, *Works* 1:117-18.
2. Discipline, 122.
3. Discipline, 96. See also Discipline, 83 where "Our Theological Task" refers to "our calling to care for God's creation."
4. BOR, 77-78.
5. Sermon 51, "The Good Steward," *Works* 2:282-98.
6. *Notes* Heb. 11:3, John 1:1-3.
7. *Notes* Rom. 8:19-21.
8. Discipline, 43.
9. For a discussion of these three senses of the image of God in all of Wesley's thought, see Runyon, 13-19. Maddox 1994, 65-93 discusses Wesley's anthropology in greater depth.
10. Sermon 45, "The New Birth," SL1, *Works* 2:188-89.
11. Sermon 51, "The Good Steward," SL2, *Works* 2:284.
12. See *Notes* 1 Thess. 5:23 for an explicit though parenthetical statement of this presupposition. For Wesley's understanding of the last judgment, see Sermon 15, "The Great Assize," §§2-3, *Works* 1:356, where he says that every human being will face it.
13. Sermon 51, "The Good Steward," SL7, *Works* 2:286.
14. Sermon 45, "The New Birth," SL1, *Works* 2:188.
15. *Notes* Rom. 14:17. In an analysis of the index to the Bicentennial edition of Wesley's Sermons (which covered all 151, not just the standard 53) this verse was his seventh most frequently quoted text in the whole Bible. See Jones 155-56. For this same point about the nature of "true religion," see sermon 7, "The Way to the Kingdom," §§1-13, *Works* 1:218-25.
16. Discipline, 61.
17. Discipline, 68.
18. Sermon 45, "The New Birth," SL2, *Works* 2:189.
19. *Ibid.*, SL3, *Works* 2:190.
20. *Ibid.*, SL4, *Works* 2:190.
21. Discipline, 43.
22. Discipline, 61.
23. *Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, "prevent" 14, 2:2294.
24. Sermon 5, "Justification by Faith," SL9, *Works* 1:187.
25. Maddox 1994, 73-83 offers a thoughtful and comprehensive study of Wesley's changing anthropology. He argues on p. 74 that a full understanding of Wesley's various statements requires attention to the time period of the comment, the occasion of the comment, and the internal tensions between Wesley's juridical and therapeutic concerns. Such an approach is essential to an adequate understanding of Wesley's theology. However, two changes in approach need to be

noted in considering United Methodist doctrine. First, the development over time is muted in significance, because The United Methodist Church has taken responsibility for all of these statements. Second, the Wesley scholar has the ability to consider all of Wesley's writings while the student of United Methodist doctrine must be limited to the authoritative texts. For the Church, these tensions about how the problem of original sin is transmitted are left unresolved. Wesley's leaving these side-by-side in various places as well as juxtaposed in a paragraph like this one is typical of his concern for practical doctrine rather than speculative theology. See his comment to Dr. John Robertson, "The fact I know, both by Scripture and by experience. I know it is transmitted: but *how* it is transmitted I neither know nor desire to know," 24 September 1753, *Works* 26:519. Maddox suggests that Wesley really was more concerned to know about this than he indicates here. The standards of doctrine suggest that Wesley was actually content to leave this unresolved. This is an excellent example of where theological reflection can and should consider doctrinal ambiguities in the service of the Church's witness.

26. KJV.
27. Sermon 3, "Awake, Thou That sleepest," §§1.2-3, *Works* 1:143. See also Sermon 9, "The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption," §§1.1-8, *Works* 1:251-55.
28. Sermon 9, "The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption," §1.8, *Works* 1:254-55.
29. Sermon 44, "Original Sin," §4, *Works* 2:173.
30. Sermon 7, "The Way to the Kingdom," §II.1, *Works* 1:225.
31. *Notes* Rom. 6:6.
32. UMH, 34.
33. Sermon 44, "Original Sin," §III.4, *Works* 2:184.
34. Sermon 5, "Justification by Faith," §1.9, *Works* 1:187.
35. Sermon 44, "Original Sin," §III.2, *Works* 2:183-84.
36. Sermon 44, "Original Sin," §III.3, *Works* 2:184.
37. Sermon 44, "Original Sin," §III.5, *Works* 2:185.
38. Sermon 19, "The Great Privilege of Those that are Born of God," §II.2, *Works* 1:436.
39. He says in the *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, "To explain myself a little farther on this head: (1.) Not only sin, properly so called, (that is, a voluntary transgression of a known law,) but sin, improperly so called, (that is, an involuntary transgression of a divine law, known or unknown,) needs the atoning blood. (2.) I believe there is no such perfection in this life as excludes these involuntary transgressions which I apprehend to be naturally consequent on the ignorance and mistakes inseparable from mortality. (3.) Therefore *sinless perfection* is a phrase I never use, lest I should seem to contradict myself. (4.) I believe, a person filled with the love of God is still liable to these involuntary transgressions. (5.) Such transgressions you may call sins, if you please: I do not, for the reasons above-mentioned," *Works* (I) 11:396. See also Sermon 76, "On Perfection," §II.9 *Works* 3:79 where he defends his definition of "sin" as scriptural.
40. Sermon 13, "On Sin in Believers," §§1.3, 6, III.3, *Works* 1:318-19, 322.
41. Sermon 14, "The Repentance of Believers," §1.13, *Works* 1:342-43.
42. *Notes* Rom. 3:23.

43. Discipline, 47.
44. Discipline, 83.
45. Discipline, 96.
46. Discipline, 122.
47. Discipline, 104.
48. Discipline, 61.
49. Discipline, 68.
50. Sermon 1, "Salvation by Faith," §§1.3, *Works* 1:117-18.
51. Sermon 12, "The Witness of Our Own Spirit," §15, *Works* 1:309.
52. *Notes* 2 Cor. 8:9. See also Gal. 1:15, Gal. 2:21, and Eph. 1:6.
53. *Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, "prevent" 1.4, 2:2294.
54. Sermon 43, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," §1.2, *Works* 2:156-57. The *Notes* on John 1:9 refer to Christ enlightening everyone as natural conscience.
55. Maddox 1994, 87-90.
56. Discipline, 46.

57. The most insightful of Wesley's sermons on this topic is not a part of United Methodist doctrine: Sermon 85, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation." In §III.7, *Works* 3:208-9 he says, "Secondly, God worketh in you; therefore you *must* work: you must be 'workers together with him' (they are the very words of the Apostle); otherwise he will cease working. The general rule on which his gracious dispensations invariably proceed is this: 'Unto him that hath shall be given, but from him that hath not,' that does not improve the grace already given, shall be taken away what he assuredly hath' (so the words ought to be rendered). Even St. Augustine, who is generally supposed to favour the contrary doctrine, makes that just remark. *Qui fecit nos sine nobis, non saluabit nos sine nobis*: 'he that made us without ourselves, will not save us without ourselves.' He will not save us unless we 'save ourselves from this untoward generation'; unless we ourselves 'fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life'; unless we 'agonize to enter in at the strait gate,' 'deny ourselves, and take up our cross daily,' and labour, by every possible means, to 'make our own calling and election sure.'"

58. Sermon 19, "The Great Privilege of Those that are Born of God," §III.3, *Works* 1:442.
59. UMH, 339, 616. See also *Works* 7:81. The editors of the UMH split Charles Wesley's hymn into two parts, one used for invitation and one for communion, each with the same first stanza.
60. "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing," UMH, 57, stanza 4.
61. Discipline, 61.
62. E.g., Sermon 34, "The Original, Nature, Properties and Use of the Law," §§1, II.1, *Works* 2:4, 8; Sermon 35, "The Law Established Through Faith, I," §§3, II.5, *Works* 2:21, 27; Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, V," §II.1, *Works* 2:551; *Notes* Mark 12:31, Luke 1:6, John 3:3, Rom. 3:20, Gal. 2:4, Gal. 3:19, Eph. 2:14, and 1 Tim. 1:8. For further discussion of this regarding Wesley's conception of Scripture, see Jones, 56-58.
63. *Notes* Acts 13:39.
64. *Notes* Matt. 13:28. See also Sermon 3, "Awake, Thou That Sleepest," §III.11, *Works* 1:157.

65. Sermon 35, "The Law Established Through Faith, I," §II.5, *Works* 2:27.
66. Most of the following paragraphs is a summary of Wesley's argument in sermon 34, "The Original, Nature, Properties and Use of the Law," *Works* 2:4-19. This is the most detailed exposition of this subject in United Methodist doctrine.
67. Sermon 34, "The Original, Nature, Properties and Use of the Law," *Works* §II.3, 2:9.
68. Sermon 34, "The Original, Nature, Properties and Use of the Law," *Works* §II.6, 2:10.
69. KJV.
70. Sermon 30, "Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, X," §23, *Works* 1:661.
71. Sermon 34, "The Original, Nature, Properties and Use of the Law," §IV.1, *Works* 2:15.
72. Sermon 34, "The Original, Nature, Properties and Use of the Law," §IV.2, 2:16.
73. Sermon 34, "The Original, Nature, Properties and Use of the Law," §IV.3, 2:16. In this claim, Wesley is siding with Calvin and the Reformed tradition against the Lutherans.
74. Note the phrase used in Q26 in the "Large Minutes," number 10: "And in general, do not mend our Rules, but keep them; not for wrath, but for conscience sake," *Works* (I) 8:310.
75. Sermon 18, "The Marks of the New Birth," §III.5, *Works* 1:427.
76. Discipline, 72.
77. Sermon 36, "The Law Established by Faith, II," §I.5, *Works* 2:37.
78. Sermon 36, "The Law Established by Faith, II," §II.1, *Works* 2:38.
79. Sermon 35, "The Law Established by Faith, I," §III.1, *Works* 2:29.
80. Sermon 36, "The Law Established by Faith, II," §III.2, *Works* 2:41.
81. For discussion of this see Jones, 124.
82. "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, V," §§II.2-3, *Works* 1:554-55.
83. Both the NRSV and the NIV follow the KJV at this point. They have "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."
84. *Notes* Matt. 5:48.
85. Maddox 1994, 67.
86. *Notes* Matt. 3:8.
87. Sermon 3, "Awake, Thou That sleepest," *Works* 1:142-58.
88. *Notes* Rom. 7:14.
89. Sermon 9, "The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption," §II.1, *Works* 1:255. Wesley is referring to the following biblical verses: Ps. 107:10 (Luke 1:79), Eph. 1:18, Rev. 19:20, Deut. 4:24 (Heb. 12:29), Prov. 24:12, Hab. 1:13, Deut. 7:10, and Heb. 10:31.
90. Sermon 7, "The Way to the Kingdom," §II.1, *Works* 1:225. See also Sermon 14, "The Repentance of Believers," §II.1, *Works* 1:336.
91. Sermon 7, "The Way to the Kingdom," §II.7, *Works* 1:229. The biblical references here are to Luke 18:13, Isa. 1:16-17, and Mark 12:34.
92. Discipline, 72.
93. Sermon 17, "The Circumcision of the Heart," §II.1, *Works* 1:409.
94. *Notes* Matt. 5:3-4.
95. *Notes* Matt. 5:3-4.

96. Sermon 14, "The Repentance of Believers," §I.1, *Works* 1:336.
97. Sermon 14, "The Repentance of Believers," §I.10, *Works* 1:341.
98. Sermon 14, "The Repentance of Believers," §II.6, *Works* 1:349-50.
99. In the 1780 *Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodist* it was put in the section labeled "Convinced of Backsliding." See *Works* 7:284-85.
100. UMH, 355.