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John Wesley's Theology and Education

by

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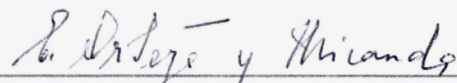
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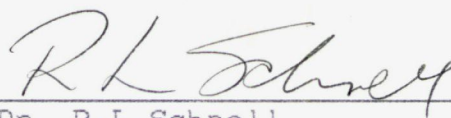
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ABSTRACT

A basic premise of this paper is that one's view of children and of how they 'ought' to grow, learn and be socialized is a reflection of one's theology. By this I mean that a person reveals what he thinks of man and of his standing before God, when he says what ought to be done in terms of child-rearing and education.

The example of this in my study is John Wesley, the eighteenth century evangelist. In his sermons, he not only 'preached the gospel,' but also advised parents on how to raise their children. In addition, he founded three schools and set out plainly how he thought they should be run and the children governed. These thoughts had particular theological assumptions and it is my contention that Wesley's assumptions shared more in common with assumptions held by members of the Dissenting Church of his parents' background than they did with Anglicanism, as expounded first by Richard Hooker. To digress briefly, Hooker spent the last years of his life defining Anglicanism, not in a vacuum, but in contradistinction to Puritanism. Though Wesley was not a Puritan in the strict historical sense, his theology of man was more in keeping with those in the eighteenth century who likewise dissented

from Anglicanism. His view of man then, and consequently of children, and his views about their upbringing and education, were not truly Anglican at all but representative of what is termed radical Protentantism.

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INTRODUCTION

Months after I had chosen the subject of John Wesley and the impact of his theology upon his ideas about education, I found myself reacting to, and resistant of, much of what I read in his sermons. In a desire to get to the bottom of my reaction, I began to do some background reading about the state of the English church in the eighteenth century.

In the eighteenth century, the Anglican Church reached both its zenith and its nadir. Abbey and Overton capture this idea describing the Church as "high and dry" during this period. (Abbey and Overton, 320) It was high in that it tended to emphasize High Church practises which appealed primarily to the upper classes, and yet it was at its zenith in that its preaching and corresponding defense of Christianity intended and succeeded in putting the challenges of Deism and Socinianism at rest. But an intellectual focus such as it had was, at best, limited in its appeal. Moreover, it tended to become dry and lifeless in the hands of men less skilled than someone like Bishop Butler. Thus, the Church also reached its nadir in that it sat content, failing to realize that while on one front it was more than well defended, on another side it was losing ground.

One of the reasons the Church was losing ground was that it made no effort to keep pace with the changes, particularly in terms of population shifts, that were the result of industrialization. Instead, it left its parochial boundaries unchanged, thus leaving thousands of the poor under no ministry at all. John Wesley took upon himself the implicit challenge these people presented to the Church and made it his life work to preach the love of God to them.

Though Wesley was an ordained Anglican priest, he was not exactly 'typical.' He loved the Church and its high church practises greatly but he felt called upon to sacrifice these, at least in terms of his own ministry. These, to him, were the inessentials; the fact that God loved all men and wanted them to come to know Him was the only essential, and it was this message then, that he took to the poor, to the outcasts, both economically and politically, in England. Where there was no church or where the local church was closed to Him, he preached in the fields or anywhere else he could get a hearing.

Perhaps the first question one might ask knowing this much about Wesley is what it was that motivated him. Why did he do the work he did and why, in this, was he not 'typical' among the Anglican clergy of his

day? My thesis is that Wesley's theological background, though in name 'Anglican' actually drew heavily from what was known then as 'nonconformity,' that is, from those Christians who dissented from the Church of England.

I have been tempted to call this influence 'Puritan' because his forebears were indeed Puritans, but this is a little misleading. What Wesley's religion shared in common with Puritanism was what Overton calls a family likeness, which is to say that there were certain leading features that were common to both. (Abbey and Overton, 314). These were "the strictness of life prescribed, the abhorrence of certain kinds of amusements, the fondness for Scriptural phraseology, and above all the importance each attached to the distinctive doctrines of Christianity" (Ibid., 314-5). Yet there were significant differences as well, as they make clear, so another name needed to be found. Following Abbey and Overton then, I will refer to this influence in Wesley that had those things in common with Puritanism, as 'evangelical.' It is true that Anglicanism embraces such evangelicalism, just as it embraces Anglo-Catholicism, but its very ability to do so is in itself a theological statement. For the more rigorous

or radical groups that came into existence tended to define themselves in contrast to the existing church rather than in continuity with it. Anglicanism differed then, in defining itself as a true reformation of the Catholic Church, as opposed to a reaction to it. This was as true for its evangelical faction as it was for the less evangelically inclined among its fold.

My point here is that Wesley, in his theology, was a radical Protestant or an 'evangelical' rather than an Anglican. True, he warned his followers that if they ever left the Church of England, that God would leave them, but the fact that they did leave underlines my point that the seeds of dissent were already planted and well-watered, however unintentionally.

Specifically though, I am saying that his views of children, their upbringing and education, which were a logical consequence of the view of man he shared with Luther and Calvin, was more compatible with the views of radical Protestantism than it was with Anglicanism. It was his evangelicalism, in part a gift from his parents, that distinguished his ministry and its goals.

My own interest in Wesley is theological. What I do not attempt to do in this paper is to discuss or evaluate his ministry, its effectiveness, nor the reasons he was led into it. I do not dispute the fact

that the thousands or millions he eventually preached to and reached, were not being 'churched' by the Anglican Church of the day. Bernard Semmel, in his book, The Methodist Revolution, argues that the revolution so called may have been the English equivalent of the democratic revolution of the eighteenth century, (Semmel, vii) and with this too, I am not about to argue. My purpose, rather, is to understand where Wesley fits on the theological spectrum. I want to understand what he believes, not in isolation but in the context of what other Christians believe.

Throughout the paper, several ideas or terms recur and it is my use of these that I want to clarify here. For instance, I use the terms 'human nature,' 'nature,' and 'grace' and what I am trying to understand is what Christians generally believe about the relationship of grace and nature/human nature.

The word 'grace' comes from the Greek word 'charis' which means unmerited favour. It can and does refer to several aspects of God's unmerited favour towards us; that is, it may be used with regard to the new birth experience, our adoption as sons and daughters, and to our becoming partakers of the divine nature. In this paper, I am using it in a wider

context to refer to "the gift by which man comes to know and love God in an intimate relationship which is totally undeserved" (Richardson,245). Richardson adds that

In this sense, Roman Catholic theology is accustomed to characterize grace as supernatural. Nevertheless grace is not extrinsic to human nature: unless God had implanted in men an affinity (emphasis mine) to or aptitude for grace, grace would be irrelevant to human nature and not a transformation of it (Richardson,245).

Where Catholics and the Reformers disagree, however, is whether or not such an 'affinity' exists. This then brings us to consideration of what is meant by the term 'human nature.' Catholics believe that this affinity is implied in saying that man retains the imago Dei. The Reformers accept no such affinity believing rather that man is totally depraved. The Catholic view, however, means that Thomas Aquinas can quote Aristotle and find no inherent contradiction between his 'human' wisdom and revelation. While revelation will and must inform human nature or wisdom, because of their common origin, i.e., God, there will be a relationship.

I call this relationship one of continuity, and what I mean by this is that though human wisdom cannot anticipate revelation, nor can it unaided reach God, still it has a capacity for recognizing what is continuous with it. It can recognize what it may not be able to define. Another way of putting this might be to say that human wisdom is limited when looked at from man's perspective but that God and His wisdom pick up where human wisdom leaves off. In this sense, there is actually from our perspective a discontinuity --we can only go so far--, but from God's perspective what is partial or limited becomes completed. To picture this, a drawing of a circle may be helpful. Half of the circle is formed by a solid line, the other half by a dotted line. The former part would stand for human wisdom, the latter for God's wisdom. There is discontinuity between the solid portion and the dotted line and yet at the same time there is continuity.

What this affirms is that there is a relationship then between human wisdom and God's wisdom. What this avoids and denies is the Calvinistic view that human wisdom, such as some would argue is evident in pagan philosophers, is illusory and not wisdom at all. This latter view is that man has no 'natural' or inherent capacity for good or wise thoughts, much less similar

actions; that he is by nature, totally depraved. While this view may be helpful in so far as it draws attention to the radical nature of evil of which man is also capable; what it falls short on is being able to account for goodness or wisdom found in those other than Christians. It is forced into saying that what people perceive as good is not really good. This is to be distinguished from the other idea which could allow that what is perceived as good may not be completely good, i.e., it may be somewhat deficient or misinformed, yet still be recognizable as good in some sense.

Another related term here is that known as common sense. It has been pointed out to me that common sense so-called is not really common after all. And this point is well taken. It is true that not many have it. But we may ask, why is this the case? Is it because man is totally depraved, i.e., because he does not have the capacity for it, or because he does not develop the capacity he has 'by nature,' as part of the remains of the *imago Dei*?

The Biblical view expressed in Proverbs favors the latter understanding. In Proverbs 9, for example, wisdom and folly are contrasted as issuing forth the same call to men, "whoever is simple, let him turn in

here, to him who is without sense, she says...." The assumption is that man is 'without sense,' at least to begin with, though he is not without the capacity for gaining it. Common sense, wisdom or insight, are not merely given in the sense that they are part of 'human nature,' but they are gifts that may be recognized as being from God and are available to those who seek for them. They have strings attached, only in so far as they require that one pursue them diligently if one is to find them.

This view is attractive in that it accounts for the question why common sense is not so common, and why pagans have some measure of wisdom. They have sought for it and therefore have insights that are not necessarily common at all. Socrates implies this in The Republic, when he applauds Adelmantus, saying there is something truly divine in being able to remain unconvinced by his own arguments in favour of injustice.

To return to the question of definitions, when I speak of 'human nature,' I will be differentiating human nature as Catholics understand it that retains a freedom to respond to God and a capacity to participate in goodness and human nature as the Reformers understood it, which recognize no such capacity for

response nor 'free' acts as such. Wesley is somewhat enigmatic, in that he denies any capacity for good in man, any good impulses being evident of God's particular working in a person, as distinct from any general working in human nature, but, he believes in free will. His key phrase is that man does not use the grace he has to respond, and yet the problem with this is naming just what it is that is supposed to enable one to make use of the grace available. If it is not a capacity, is it still something of man's rather than God's which responds? I do not think Wesley adequately answers this question.

The intention then, of the first chapter of my thesis is to look at Wesley's theology, in light of the doctrinal differences of Anglican and Catholic on the one hand, and those of the more radical Protestants, what I will call, 'evangelical' on the other. Many of these differences are vague or subtle in that they may only show themselves in tendencies or, to a greater or lesser degree. These differences are what I want to explore.

In chapters two and three I will show why I think his theology was the primary influence upon his ideas of childhood and education, respectively. My

conclusion will focus on summarizing Wesley's theology and its implications for education.

CHAPTER I

THE THEOLOGY OF JOHN WESLEY

Early Influences

John Wesley was born in 1703, the son of Samuel and Susannah Wesley. His parents were from Dissenting stock, yet both, independently, had turned from the Dissenting Church, to become members of the Church of England. Wesley's father, became an ordained priest of that church. Yet, the influence of their upbringing outside of the Church of England was not so easily left behind and thus Wesley's own upbringing had more in common with nonconformity of his day than it did with the more easy-going ways of Anglicanism. It is said, for instance, that although Susannah expressed her religion within the framework of Anglicanism, her emphases were largely those which she carried over from nonconformity (Wood,28).

Her carefully ordered timetable, her regular times set apart for meditation and self-examination before God, her keeping of a spiritual journal or day-book, her observance of the strict Puritan Sabbath --these were all part of her 'method' of life, to use the Puritan key-word which was current long before John Wesley began his work (Wood,28).

These same emphases can be seen in her son's life; moreover, in reading Wesley, one is struck by his Puritan, (specifically seventeenth century) understanding of such things as human nature, the Church, what it means to live the Christian life, etc., as distinct from the Anglican understanding of them, which of course, prevailed in the eighteenth century church which he sought to influence. While temperament may have played a part, in that Wesley was naturally an ascetic kind of personality, it is my contention that Reformed theology rather than temperament was the primary influence in his beliefs. The question now presents itself, what is meant by Reformed or evangelical or nonconformist theology as distinct from Anglican theology and how was each or either evident in the Church of England of the eighteenth century.

Eighteenth Century Anglicanism

By the eighteenth century, the Church of England finally became the 'established' church and hence its mission changed from one of mere survival to that of defending its understanding of the faith in a very rationalistically oriented day. This century was the

Age of Reason, and the Church, for good and for ill, found itself defending the truths of Christianity which the intellectuals of the day were questioning. Its preachers, therefore, sought to prove that Christianity was not only reasonable but probable and that any other position was intellectually indefensible. Its religion was one of the head rather than of the heart. It feared 'zeal,' and yet did so with good reason, for zeal was associated with Puritanism and the social upheaval of the seventeenth century.

John New, differentiating Anglicanism from Puritanism at that time, called Anglicanism a religion of 'aspiration' and Puritanism, a religion of 'perspiration' (New, 104) and this still held true a century later, in terms of the preaching that prevailed inside the Church of England and outside of it. Though these terms are not mutually exclusive, they are indicative of differing emphases in worship and practise. Thus, regarding Anglicanism, at its best, in the person of someone like Archbishop Tillotson(1), "men found exactly what suited them --their own thoughts raised to a somewhat higher level and expressed just in the manner which they would most aspire to imitate" (Abbey and Overton, 115). For instance, Tillotson made a constant appeal on all

matters of religion to reason: "that all precepts are reasonable and wise, requiring such duties of us as are suitable to the light of our nature, and (which) do approve themselves to the best reason of mankind..."(Ibid.). This emphasis on reason, however, also led Tillotson "to regard with profound distrust all assumptions of any gift of spiritual discernment distinguishable from ordinary powers of understanding"(Ibid.,119). A century later, George MacDonald(2) made the comment that "religion is nothing if it be not the deepest common sense" (Hein,180) and what both men were affirming theologically was that they believed that grace fulfilled nature or that there was some kind of continuity between the two, as opposed to the idea that the two were in tension or opposed. This was the Anglican view and also the Roman Catholic one, to some extent influenced by Thomas Aquinas, but it was certainly not the Puritan or the nonconformist view, nor was it John Wesley's.

New describes the difference this way. He argues that while Anglicans and Puritans varied minutely in their measurement of man's fall at the Fall, their answers involved different views of human nature in general.(New,6) The Anglicans believed that "though Adam's Fall had emasculated his spiritual capability,

not every faculty for good had been crushed out of him. Man was sorely wounded with sin, but not so critically as the Puritans claimed" (New,6). While original sin so limited man's understanding that he became spiritually impotent, all his efforts being insufficient for salvation, the Fall had not erased a natural ability to reason. "Anglicanism allowed man an unimpaired power of natural reason, natural reason being the capacity to judge and to perform good and evil as reckoned by a moral order in the world"(New,6-7). For example, the way in which God was seen to work in man was as Bishop Jeremy Taylor(1613-67) said, "by heightening and improving our natural faculties"(Bettenson,312). Earlier, Richard Hooker(1554-1600), in expounding the Anglican position, provided a defense of reason, arguing that while "the basis of all things is the Word of God, and that Word is supremely to be found in the Holy Scriptures, ...this is not the only Word of God to man, and to all His other words also we ought to be attentive" (Neill,122-3). Anglicans believed that reason, the Church, and Scripture " were these 'other words' and that they acted together to check and to balance one another"(M. Marshall,73). Because of this idea that God could speak through our reason, especially when

reason was in its rightful relationship to God, talk of special spiritual faculties was superfluous. It was this understanding that lay behind Tillotson's distrust of such claims.

Returning specifically to the relationship of nature and grace, the Catholic Rahner puts it this way. He says, "human nature is always summoned to grace... in which alone it finds its real goal, without which it is ipso facto in a state of wretchedness." He adds that "the naturalness of a thing increases in direct, not inverse proportion to the 'nearness' of God's creative causality" and that when a man rejects God's offer, he is not preserving his nature but corrupting it" (Rahner, 333, 332, 333). To say then that grace fulfills nature, is to say that there is a continuity between nature and grace, continuity, not in the blasphemous sense that man can reach grace through unaided nature, but in the sense that a man's deepest longings and aspirations are not completely evil but find their fulfillment in, or are sanctified by, grace. We can understand something of the goodness of God because of our own, albeit limited understanding of good and evil. Grace, operating in us through natural longings does not go against our nature but 'restores' it. By this is meant that man is reinstated with God,

given back the dignity he had prior to the Fall. In short, as Catholic theology states, God, in forgiving man, generously restores to him every gift he had lost (Smith,68). There was a measure of self-interest then in obeying the Gospel. No doubt a text such as Proverbs 11:17 would have been used to affirm this view for it says: "A man who is kind benefits himself, but a cruel man hurts himself "(RSV).

Ideas such as these, however, were anathema to Puritanism and to evangelicalism as understood by Wesley. Calvin, whom the Puritans often quoted, wrote about man and the effects of original sin in this way:

Therefore original sin is seen to be an hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, diffused into all parts of the soul.... For our nature is not merely bereft of good, but is so productive of every kind of evil that it cannot be inactive. ...Whatever is in man, from intellect to will, from the soul to the flesh, is all defiled and crammed with concupiscence (Bettenson,213).

Similarly, in the English Westminster Confession of Faith (1643), part six, concerning the Fall of Man, it is stated:

Our first parents ...so became dead in sin and wholly defiled in all the

faculties and parts of soul and body. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity... whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to evil... (Bettenson, 245).

In the Puritan understanding, the relation of grace to nature was not at all a happy one. As New puts it, "grace was locked in a struggle with nature, ultimately sure of victory but temporarily beset by powerful opposition." He adds, "as grace came to grips with nature, so Puritan ethics came to grips with the world, taking stock of its ways in order to subject them to the ways of righteousness" (New, 84).

Philip Greven, writing about the piety of such Christians also uses the imagery of warfare. Greven says:

The temperaments of evangelicals were dominated by a persistent and virtually inescapable hostility to the self and all of its manifestations. Thus evangelicals were preoccupied with ways to abase, to deny, and to annihilate their own enduring sense of self-worth and selfhood, convinced that only by destroying the self could they conform absolutely to the sovereign will of God (Greven, 12-13).

These two very different views of the relationship of grace and nature, of course led to similarly different understandings of the church and its mission. The tendency in Anglicanism, with its more approving picture of human nature, was towards maintaining the status quo, while the Puritans, and others like Wesley who shared some of their theology, were ever zealous to reform. The Anglicans, in their view of the church, were closer to the Roman Catholics, who accepted that the visible church on earth was not identical with the invisible church. It accepted that "sinners are members of the Church, so that the Church is a Church of sinners" but at the same time, it held on to the idea that the Church "is never so disfigured by sin that the Spirit animating (her) would cease to be historically perceptible in her." Moreover, the sins of the Church never disclosed the essential nature of the Church (Rahner, 213). This traditional dichotomy between the visible and the invisible church was accepted by Anglicans, and the Puritan view, that the two were the same, rejected and feared; it was feared because the Anglicans saw in the Puritan emphasis, a natural progression towards separatism (New, 43).

On the negative side, the Anglican Church in the eighteenth century, given its beliefs, was subject to

its own particular abuses. At its best, in someone like Tillotson, it provided a motivation, perhaps even a hunger after saintliness, but at its worst, it tended to reinforce a satisfaction with self. L.P. Curtis says of the clergymen that "they did not ask too much of people" (Curtis, 46). They believed and preached that "surely God's commandments were not grievous; and more, they were simple and few." "God," they tended to believe, "did not require from a man more than what he was able to perform ...any more than his best and most hearty endeavors" (Curtis, 33). Wakeman concurs, saying that

"the failure of the clergy lay in the fact that they were not superior to their times. ...They did not attempt either to be saints themselves or make saints of others. But they gave a willing and helpful hand to their parishoners, over the stiles in the path of life, and were content if they were able to preserve them from the grosser sins" (Wakeman, 435-6).

Overton completes the picture saying, "so long as moralists dwelt fondly upon self-interest and expedience, and divines descanted upon the advantages of the safe side; so long as the idea of goodness was half supplanted by that of happiness... Christianity and Christian ethics were inevitably degraded" (Abbey

and Overton, 145). This then was the state of the church and its thinking of it in the time of John Wesley.

Wesley's View of Man

In a sermon called, "Manners of the Present Times," Wesley argued that the character of the English nation was 'ungodliness' and his reasoning gives a strong hint as to his theology of nature and its relation to grace. He says,

"In the last age (meaning the last century), many ...made so large a profession of it (godliness), that the nation in general was surfeited, and at the Restoration, ran headlong from one extreme to the other. It was then that ungodliness broke in upon us as a flood, and when shall its dire waves be stayed?"

Further on, he asks his hearers, "but if the Lord of the universe is against us, ought we not to care" (Wesley, XI, 162)? It is a curious comment to say that the nation was surfeited with godliness but it is revealing in that it reflects the assumption that nature and grace are engaged in a war. Though some might see it as an example merely of reform and reaction, it seems also to reflect the view that grace

is against nature, in that it assumes that when nature has had 'enough,' it reacts, 'in a flood.' Whereas the Anglo-Catholic view would be that grace inspires or has the effect of making men aspire after it, Wesley implies that grace creates a reaction to it. To understand why this is the case, we need to look at his understanding of human nature.

Wesley believed human nature to consist of body and soul. In contrast to the Roman Catholic view, which as I stated, sees man as having a built-in or intrinsic affinity for God, Wesley believed that God creates in each man his own point of contact. Thus, when St. Paul speaks of spirit, soul and body, he takes that to mean that the Christian is trichotomous, as opposed to dichotomous. The Christian receives from outside, from God, a discernment of Him, by means of this third part, his spirit. This is then why Wesley says that the natural man cannot see God but that God needs to be spiritually discerned via a new class of spiritual senses. God, in Wesley's view, does not witness to our feelings or natural capacities (Williams, 49), which is the view that the Roman Catholics take. To picture this, we could say that the Roman Catholics believe that God works from within to

restore man's nature whereas Wesley believes God works from without.

Although this is how I picture it because of Wesley's dichotomous/trichotomous distinction, Wesley pictures it in an opposite way. Thus, in one sermon in which he discusses 'dress,' he says that

there is a direct contrariness (as little as we may suspect it) between outward, and this inward, adorning; and that, both with regard to their source, and with regard to their tendency. As to their source, all that adorning springs from nature; a meek and quiet spirit, from grace.

In this same sermon, Wesley continues, saying that "any celebration, (such as the curling of hair or the wearing of ruffles or Jewellry), is to be avoided as hurtful to one's soul" (Wesley, XI, 469-8). Here he speaks of the working of grace reflecting an inward adorning that is opposed to nature which expresses itself negatively in outward adorning. There is tension between the two within a person. This understanding differs again from the Catholic one which focuses on the integration of human nature via grace. The implication in terms of Wesley's illustration of dress then would be that the natural desire for 'celebration of nature,' i.e., curling of hair, etc,

would be balance by or held in check by grace. Natural desire of this type would not then be negated as inherently wrong or bad, as is stated by Wesley. Instead, the view affirmed would hearken back to the Incarnation, seeing it as its reference point for by it God took upon Himself human nature and affirmed its possibilities for restoration. What He did not do was to negate it or do away with it, creating as it were, 'another point of contact' with man.

In his view of human nature, Wesley was at one with the Reformers, Luther and Calvin. Their view was that human nature was totally depraved and for Wesley this meant the total loss of man's moral image, that is his ability to know God and to love Him, and the corruption of his natural image by which he meant a man's natural capacities, through which he might come to knowledge of God. Once again, this view differs from the Catholic understanding, but in degree rather than in kind. The Catholic theologian, George Smith refers to the "heresy of Luther, which ... issued in a pessimistic theology exaggerating the effects of original sin, and which presented human human nature as intrinsically corrupt." The result, as he saw it was that it left human reason powerless to know God (Smith,2). Notice the focus here. While affirming

original sin, Smith argues that man is not intrinsically corrupt, at least not totally so. He retains an affinity for God. The focus is not so much on the radical nature of his depravity nor on the radical impotence of the human mind as on the fact that man's disordered passions and the many distractions of material things, hamper and retard him in his pursuit of religious knowledge. (Smith,5) Also implied is the idea that God can be known to man through man's natural capacity for knowledge, through his ability to understand cause and effect. Wesley rejected this, and natural theology, believing that God had to create the point of contact.

While Wesley was at one with Calvin in asserting the total depravity of human nature, central to his understanding of free will was the idea of prevenient grace. This idea went back to Augustine who believed that "a man's free choice avails only to lead him to sin, if the way of truth be hidden from him" and that "the human will is divinely aided towards the doing of righteousness by the gift of the Holy Spirit, through which there arises in his heart a delight in and a love of that unchangeable Good which is God" (Bettenson,54). With these ideas, Wesley agreed, but he differed with Augustine on one crucial point. Whereas Augustine,

said regarding prevenient grace, "that it is God who makes them to will the good..."(Ibid.,55). Wesley believed that man had, and could exercise, free will with respect to whether he would respond to God's prevenient grace or not. He viewed what men commonly call 'natural conscience' as evidence of prevenient grace; it was not 'natural' at all but supernatural. He believed that "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 every one that cometh into the world"(Wesley,VI,44) were part of God's prevenient grace rather than part of man's inherent nature. In another sermon, "On Original Sin," he confirms this, saying that any evidence of "good motions found in men's hearts were the effects of God's striving with men" (Ibid.,57). While this may sound contradictory as though he is agreeing with Augustine, the key word in the former quotation is 'yield.' Yes, God is the source of all good in man, but man retains the freedom to yield. Or, more accurately, part of God's gift of grace to man is such freedom. The difference between Augustine and Wesley here is that Augustine says God makes men to will the good, which is deterministic, whereas Wesley believes that God's grace provides all

that is necessary for a positive response but that ultimately man decides whether to yield or not.

While any mention of free will, then and now, raises the spectre of Pelagius, Wesley was not a Pelagian in so far as Pelagius said, "we are begotten as well without virtue as without vice, and before the activity of our own personal will there is nothing in man but what God has stored in him" (Bettenson, 53). Wesley would have no part of this rejection of original sin; this was not what it meant to say that man was made in the image of God.

What Wesley intended by the use of this term was that man is capable of God, not in the Catholic sense that human nature has an intrinsic affinity for God but that man is so constituted that he can be changed from being dichotomous to trichotomous. When man responds to God, he becomes spirit, soul and body; what was dead in him, that is his spirit, now is made alive. The result of this parallels what Catholic theology says is the case, that is, that grace restores what was lost by the Fall. Wesley specifies that it is man's moral image that is the true image of God and that it is this then which is restored in man, making him capable of righteousness and true holiness. (Williams, 49) I will

be returning to the implications of this view further on, in the discussion of sanctification.

The other way in which he differed from Pelagius was in the latter's view that something was stored in man. Wesley argued that one of the general diseases of human nature, with which every man is born, was atheism; he rejected any notion that man somehow had an innate idea of God. This idea came from John Locke but it was equally affirmed by his observation of human nature. Wesley liked the analogy that just as there is no natural language which a child would learn if left to himself, so too was there no religion that was natural to man. All knowledge, he believed, came to man via his senses (Wesley, VIII, 13), and this included spiritual knowledge which he believed came through special spiritual senses. For example, Wesley said that "original sin was a truth of revelation known only to grace-healed eyes and that heathens were ignorant of their total depravity." Like Locke he argued that "the existence of the creatures demonstratively shows the existence of their Creator," but he believed that a "veil of flesh now hides him from any sight" and he asks "who is able to make it transparent" (Ibid., 197)? The answer for Wesley was obvious, only God could remove the veil.

Given his premise that man has no innate ideas, natural theology could not follow. But again this view stands in contrast to the Anglican and Catholic view which assumes something innate in man and from which then, natural theology follows. In discussing the definition of proof for the existence of God, Rahner brings alive the Catholic notion, saying,

its final purpose is not to convey knowledge from without with an object previously quite unknown and therefore of no interest to him, but rather to convey the reflex consciousness that always and everywhere in his spiritual existence man has dealings with God; ...it deals with what everyone has always known..." (Rahner, 416-7).
(emphasis mine)

Tillotson followed this view, from which naturally followed the distrust of special spiritual senses, that bore no relation to natural ones. This latter view, of course, was Wesley's view and it too proceeded logically from his view of human nature and grace. Wesley says:

And seeing our ideas are not innate,... It is certainly necessary that you have senses capable of discerning objects of this kind (i.e., things of God): Not those only which are called natural senses, which in this respect profit nothing, as being altogether incapable

of discerning objects of a spiritual kind; but spiritual senses, exercised to discern spiritual good and evil. It is necessary that you have the hearing ear and the seeing eye, emphatically so called; that you have a new class of senses opened in your soul, not depending on organs of flesh and blood... to be the avenues to the invisible world...(Wesley, VIII, 13).
(emphasis mine)

Because of his view of human nature, Wesley also differed from the Anglican view on the subject of 'reason.' While he held it in esteem, believing reason and religion to go hand in hand, at the same time, reason was only as good as what it had to work with; that is, unless reason were properly informed by the senses, it was not of much help, at least in so far as love of God or love of one's neighbour was concerned. This does not mean that Wesley was a rationalist because for him reason was not a source of revelation or criterion for truth but rather the faculty that ordered the data of experience.

But this was not an Anglican belief; it was more properly Puritan, deriving from their view of man. Interestingly enough, both Anglican and Puritan would attribute the source of man's love, i.e., in the form of his understanding of natural duties and obligations to his neighbour, to God. Wesley, following the

Calvinists claimed that it was God's grace in a man, adding, which the man had chosen or had made use of, that permitted him to love, or was the origin of such love' whereas Anglicans and Catholics attributed it to the image of God still existing in a man. Thomas Aquinas is very plain about this. Following Aristotle, he said, "Now it is natural to all men to love each other. The mark of this is the fact that a man, by some natural prompting, comes to the aid of any man in need, even if he does not know him. For instance, he may call him back from the wrong road, help him up from a fall and other actions like that: 'as if every man were naturally the familiar and friend of every man.'" While Aquinas may be said to overstate the case saying it is natural to 'all' men to love one another, the point still holds if we alter 'all' to 'some.' What he wants to affirm is that divine law was offered to men as an aid to natural law. (Aquinas, Pt. II, 128)

On the other hand, Wesley did allow that God had given man reason as a guide "In order to understand and to discharge our ordinary relative duties; --the duties of parents and children, of husbands and wives, and of masters and servants... and all the duties of common life" (Wesley, VI, 355). But at the same time, he argued in "The Case of Reason Considered," that "as reason

cannot produce the love of God, so neither can it produce the love of our neighbour; a calm, disinterested benevolence to every child of man. This earnest, steady good-will to our fellow-creatures never flowed from any fountain but gratitude to our Creator"(Wesley,VI,359). Wesley here distinguished between a natural knowledge of duties towards one's neighbour and love for one's neighbour. The difference between Wesley and Aquinas at this point seems to be that whereas Aquinas stresses the continuity between divine law and natural law, Wesley stresses the discontinuity.

Hooker, shedding light on the Anglican view which denied total depravity, said that there were duties and obligations that one could know as such and that God's grace served to strengthen man and make him capable of doing what the natural law of his nature made clear as his bounden duty and service.(J. Marshall,118-9). Thus, following Aquinas, there was continuity between natural obligations and love for one's neighbour. The Puritan view however, allowed for no such continuity believing that "unaided man had no insight into human duties and obligations"(Ibid.,119); only God revealed these and He did so in the Scripture. Wesley, following the Anglicans, gave a place to reason regarding a man's

knowledge of some natural duties, but following the Puritans, he saw an unbridgeable gap between such natural law and what God required of a man from the Scriptures.

Wesley on Justification and Sanctification

Regarding the doctrines of Justification and sanctification, Wesley's views again partake of elements from both Puritanism and Catholicism. According to J.S. Marshall, the Puritan view on Justification was that man was not restored to any former or true state, but that he was 'forgiven.' Alan Richardson elaborates on this, saying that the Reformers, with their doctrine of imputation, challenged the mediaeval understanding of infused grace. Instead they "stressed gratuitous pardon based on the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer" (Richardson, 289). By this they meant man was not actually made righteous but that God, rather, cancelled his punishment and treated him as if he were righteous, though in actual fact he was not a better man for God's grace and kindness. The great error was to think that even with His help a man could become righteous. (J. Marshall, 118) Not only was a man

pardoned and given peace with God, but he was "inwardly changed from the image of the devil to that image of God wherein he was created" (Wesley, VII, 206).

Similarly, Wesley believed that man's righteousness was not merely imputed, man becoming no better than before, but that justification made a man truly just. Wesley's position was that in the state of justification, sin was suspended although not destroyed, but this qualification was his own and not held by the Catholics. On the other hand, like the Roman Catholics, Wesley believed in the possibility of perfection for men, but this he saw as a result of a second step of faith taken after justification. In slight contrast to the Catholic view, Wesley believed that at justification, sin was overcome, but not rooted out; it was conquered but not destroyed (Wesley, VII, 341). While both believed that the justified man was still open to the attacks of sin, Wesley believed that it was possible to be 'entirely sanctified' in an instant, usually, so that a man might never succumb to such attacks again. Once more, following the Catholic understanding, such grace as resulted in sanctification was seen as being infused into the believer rather than imputed. The Catholic view however, was more cautious than Wesley's. Its

understanding was that 'perfection' was a process, not achieved instantaneously, although its definition was the same; that is, loving God and our neighbour with our whole heart and our whole strength. Moreover, perfection was a goal that man could only approach asymptotically; in other words, a man might come close to it but he never actually reached it. For Wesley, in contrast, perfection was something that God might give a child as well as an adult. A child could be 'entirely sanctified' in so far as it loved God and its neighbour with all its heart, soul and mind; for perfection had to do with being all it was possible for one to be at a given time. Therefore, perfection was also, in his mind, consistent with "ignorance, or mistakes, or infirmities or temptations" (Hein, 181). Also, it was active, not static, for true holiness was exhibited as a man continued to grow in it and display its fruits. This helps to explain why it was possible for a child to have it because its perfection would be consistent with its own possibilities and potential rather than being compared to some external standard of perfection. Perfection then was understood in a relative rather than in an absolute sense by Wesley; it was relative to the person, but not relative in terms of degrees. He said, "there is no perfection of

degrees, as it is termed; none which does not admit of a continual increase" (Wesley, VI, 5). Thus, there was to be no 'resting upon one's laurels' for the entirely sanctified person, but as Wesley's biographer, Robert Southey(3) remarked, "the term 'perfection' was still an unfortunate one and ignorant hearers took it for what it appeared to mean; and what, from the mouths of ignorant instructors, it was intended to mean" (Southey, II, 70). Although Wesley preached this doctrine with "Inconsiderate ardour" at the beginning of his career, later, "he admitted that it did not include a power never to think a useless thought, nor speak a useless word" (Ibid.). Southey's objection was that the doctrine actually preached was inconsistent; it was 'imperfect perfection.'

Actually, it is in this doctrine that Wesley comes closest to being a Pelagian, for Pelagius likewise preached that it was only through God's grace that a man could do any good work and he said that "when we say that it is possible for a man to be without sin, we are even then praising God by acknowledging the gift of possibility which we have received." "He it is that bestowed this 'posse' on us, and there is no occasion for praising the human agent when we are treating of God alone" (Bettenson, 53).

Wesley would not argue with this for Pelagius likewise gives all credit to God alone in terms of the possibility of perfection but he does differ with Pelagius, as I have said, in that he accepted the doctrine of original sin.

Perhaps something that needs to be pointed out here is that Wesley's views of justification and sanctification entailed a grand view of the God who makes this perfection possible in human beings. Wesley believed that He would do this for everyone and anyone and that the problem with men was that they would not make use of the grace they were given. Once again, his view should be seen in contrast to discern its implications. For example, the Catholic idea of holiness is that

if a man's surrender to God grows and bears fruit, by the grace of God... in such a way as to become a distinctive component of the holiness of the Church, then this Christian holiness attains that maturity which is known in present ecclesiastical terminology as a heroic degree of the theological and cardinal virtues..."(Rahner, 212). (emphasis mine)

In fact, this is the view of common sense, for it shows a willingness to recognize that it is unusual, perhaps even a miracle, when people display a morality

that is far above the ordinary. The term, supererogation, is the term which the Catholics have used to name that class of duties that go beyond what one might normally expect of a man. Works of supererogation are only possible, however, if one has a limited sense of what a man's duty is. The Reformers rejected the idea believing as they did that a man's duty to God was unlimited, not limited, thus meaning that it was impossible to have works of supererogation. Interestingly enough, John Wesley's father wrote to remind John, when he heard of his son's abstemious behaviour at Oxford, saying, remember, "there is no such thing as works of supererogation" (Southey, I, 41).

Although Wesley's view reflected a generous view of God, it did so at the expense of his view of man. What I mean here is that whereas the Roman Catholics recognized heroic degrees of virtue or supererogatory works, they also respected the fact that these were often special vocations, grace having been given in varying measure. This is consistent with the parable of the talents and also with such words of Jesus as, "to whom much is given, much is required. (Luke 12:48) Wesley's concept of God, however, along with his emphasis on free will and prevenient grace, appears to make a man more blameworthy, than say, he is in the

Catholic tradition, because, as I mentioned, he believed that "no man sins because he had not grace but because he does not use the grace he hath"

(Wesley, VI, 512). Grace is available to man and man then is blameworthy to the extent that he refuses to avail himself of it. For example, take Wesley's view of the single life. He begins by quoting Christ who says, "all men cannot receive this saying, but they to whom it is given." This would appear to support the Catholic and Anglican position, that it is not expected of all but only of a few. But Wesley turns this around so that it better fits with his view of human nature.

He says:

In general, I believe every man is able to receive it when he is first justified. I believe every one receives this gift; but with most it does not continue long. It is not clear, whether God withdraws it of his own good pleasure, or for any fault of ours. I incline to think, it is not withdrawn without some fault on our part (Wesley, XI, 458). (emphasis mine)

Here again is evident Wesley's understanding of grace that far from completing or restoring nature, is in tension with it. Although Wesley claimed that he would not dispute which life was better, single or married, and he did give his approval to Miss Bosanquet when she

asked for his blessing regarding marriage to Reverend Fletcher, it is instructive of how he and his followers really felt about marriage to observe Mr. Fletcher's reasoning in this matter. He says in a letter that he only felt free to marry when he read that, "Enoch begat sons and daughters. And Enoch walked with God, and was not; for God took him" (Wesley, XI, 332). Fletcher explained in a letter that reading this verse made him realize that one could attain to the highest degree of holiness and still be married; only thus did he go ahead and marry.

Another curious item in this respect is that if singleness is a gift, as Wesley, quoting Jesus believed, one wonders why it was a gift that had to be fought for. What kind of view of God is reflected in such an idea? Certainly, not a very gracious one. And yet, this is what Wesley, in this same paper, put forth for consideration. To be fair, he says that it is not God who will tempt a man having this gift but Satan, "children of the world and children of God," still, for two pages, he talks about the kind of negation and repression that is required, even so far as avoiding "all needless conversation, much more all intimacy, with those of the other sex" (Wesley, XI, 461). He advocates that one, cry out, "My God, and my all, I am

thine, thine alone! I will be thine for ever. O save me from setting up an idol in my heart! Save me from taking any step toward it..."(Ibid.). Wesley is more demanding even than Paul on this point, who while wishing that all were like himself in his single state, affirmed that "each has his own special gift from God" and that "it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion." (1 Corinthians 7:7,9, RSV) Again, Wesley's view hearkens back to the idea that a saved man was ruled by two contrary forces, grace and nature, a view held by the Puritans. (New,51)

'The More Excellent Way'

Because godliness was foreign to the human spirit, Wesley believed that people could not be left to themselves or even to the churches. They needed to be organized into societies that met regularly and that would keep a check on people's spiritual progress. Wakeman says that "practically, Methodism was a religious order in the Church of England"(Wakeman,439). While this is true in that it had its own special rules and organization, Wesley did not intend it to be so. His vision was not for the few such as might be interested in a religious order, but for the many. He

called every Christian to recognize that there was a 'more excellent way.' Everyone was called to what the Catholics would term works of supererogation, although Wesley would not accept the use of that term. And yet, supererogation is not an inappropriate term in that it draws attention to two levels of faith, which Wesley recognized as being in evidence in the churches. There were those who did enough to get by (or to get to heaven or who were merely 'saved') and those who followed what Wesley termed 'the more excellent way.' (To give him credit, Wesley realized the difficulty in trying to appeal to those who were satisfied as they were with the 'less' excellent way, given that there would be no sorrow or regrets in heaven!)

(Wesley, VII, 29) Still, he preached that perfection was open to all and that all should expect to be entirely sanctified, no matter whether they were new Christians or not.

It is often said that Wesley's great strength was that of being an organizer, and certainly the growth and spread of Methodism does owe much to the societies he founded. Yet, their *raison d'être* also seems to owe something to his view of human nature. Undoubtedly, it is true that when people are held accountable, as he held them, on a weekly basis, regarding their spiritual

lives, they are more likely to keep on the straight and narrow path than be led astray. On the other hand, the question can also be raised as to whether such are, by nature, foreign to a religion that is supposed to be 'of the heart.' Wesley, at any rate, did not think so; he saw his societies as 'spiritual helps' which they no doubt were, especially to those who had no other spiritual support system.

The only condition Wesley laid on those wishing to become members of his societies was "a real desire to save one's soul" (Southey, II, 287). Apart from this, a person could be of any denomination. The societies were not intended to replace the churches; in fact, their members were enjoined repeatedly to attend church and to take communion frequently. The aim, as Wesley saw it was for God to raise up these groups "to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land, among people of every denomination, leaving every one to hold his own opinions, and to follow his own mode of worship. This could only be done effectually, by leaving these things as they were, and endeavoring to leaven the whole nation with that faith that worketh by love" (Wesley, VII, 208).

To begin, a person who wanted to become a member of one of his societies was placed in a class which met

once a week for an hour with an appointed leader. The leader was to visit each person during the week for as Wesley said, "by this means it was quickly discovered if any of them lived in any known sin. If they did, they were first admonished; and, when judged incorrigible, excluded from the society"

(Wesley, VII, 207). Nor was this all. The leaders of the societies, called stewards, were expected to meet the appointed Preachers of a given district once a quarter, to give an account of their societies, and then once a quarter, the principal Preacher in every circuit would examine every member of the societies therein. "By this means," Wesley said,

if the behaviour of any one is blamable, which is frequently to be expected in so numerous a body of people, it is easily discovered, and either the offence or the offender removed in time" (Ibid., 209).

This was a simple task, normally, in that each quarter, a person's 'ticket' had to be renewed, and if it were not renewed, he was no longer allowed access. By this means then, Methodism took hold and even George Whitefield admitted that the relative inefficacy of his own ministry was due to a failure to organize his people similarly.

But this kind of zeal for purity within the societies was not at all Anglican but Puritan or radical Protestant. And New comments that Puritanism's concern to weed out the unworthy, reflected its low view of human nature, and, that its desire for a restricted communion was linked with its conception of the Church as composed of converted persons" (New,69). This may have been Wesley's reasoning in that he seems to have had little patience with those who would not avail themselves of such 'spiritual helps' as he and God provided; on the other hand, his desire to leaven the lump of the church also recalls the idealism or the longings of Martin Luther.

Like Wesley, Luther struggled with the tension between the invisible and the visible church. He longed that the two be the same, as the Puritans later attempted to effect, but eventually he settled on a middle way, often referred to as 'ecclesiola in ecclesia,' or little churches within the church, whereby true believers could assemble in private homes apart from regular church times. (Bridge,111) Luther said, "the right kind of evangelical order cannot be exhibited among all sorts of people. But those who are determined to be Christians... must enroll themselves by name and meet apart for prayer and reading, to

baptize and take the sacrament." "But," he added, "I have not yet the right people for it" (Ibid., 110). Luther recognized the weakness of people and could not bring himself to exclude them from the church; thus he settled on the territorial idea of the church. Wesley tried to have the best of both worlds, leaving the Anglican Church as it was, while establishing what amounted to 'ecclesiolae in ecclesia.' While this was managed during Wesley's lifetime, eventually, the Methodists took their beliefs to their logical conclusion and opted to separate.

While Wesley differed from the Puritans in that he did not attempt to change the Anglican understanding of the church, he was similar to them in that he felt called to police those enrolled in his societies. In some respects, it is difficult to know whether this reflected a low view of human nature or a more vivid understanding of the work of the devil, or perhaps, both at once. Wesley's comments about the need for visiting people weekly, and then again quarterly, given the likelihood of finding sin, recall his ideas about the single life and the battle with self and Satan that ought to be expected. In any event, he certainly went further than Paul or Jesus in his conception of such groups and in terms of their intrusiveness.

Aside from the fact that the thought of being the member of such a weekly group wherein I would be interrogated as to the state of my soul and asked to confess my sins is somewhat repellent, I also found myself reacting negatively to Wesley's equation of renunciation of worldly pleasures with his 'more excellent way' or true holiness. Once again, I see this as a Puritan or nonconformist leaning rather than an Anglican one, reflecting a different view of Scripture and reason.

The Anglican view was that one looked to the Bible for what it said concerning salvation but that man was left to use his reason concerning things pertaining to life, on which the Bible took no stand. Thus, they saw "no harm in worldly pleasures; bodily adornment, dancing, Sunday sports, stage plays and the like were perfectly seemly" (New, 22). The Puritan view, on the other hand, was that such things were wrong because they were not recommended in Scripture. Wesley was a Puritan when it came to worldly pleasures and in his sermon, "The More Excellent Way," he talks about there being two orders of Christian. The first order, in terms of how he describes them, is clearly an example of one who accepted the more Anglican ways. He does not dispute that the person is a Christian but he also

Indicates that he does not approve of him or his way of life. He says of such a one:

The one lived an innocent life, conforming in all things, not sinful, to the customs and fashions of the world; doing many good works, abstaining from gross evils, and attending the ordinances of God. They endeavored, in general, to have a conscience void of offence in their behaviour but did not aim at any particular strictness, being in most things like their neighbours (Wesley, VII, 28).

Wesley seems to have been almost preoccupied by the visible manifestations of holiness, not that Christianity is not to be reflected in a visible manner, but this emphasis may ignore the fact that just as yeast in the dough is unseen, or salt on the food is unseen, so too, the work of God is often not visible nor is it always audible.

Wesley is not comfortable with the idea that something good might very well be accomplished by such people, who, on the outside, are 'in most things like their neighbour.' Although he agreed that his people were not to separate themselves, for how then would they have any influence, he seems also to have been of two minds about this. It is so much easier when things are black and white, and Wesley preferred that they be

that way. In his thoughts on the single life, he commented on how much easier it is wholly to conquer our natural desires than to gratify them "exactly so far as Christian temperance allows! Just so far as every pleasure of sense prepares us for taking pleasure in God" (Wesley, XI, 459). For Wesley, the line was a fine one between temperance and abuse, the inference being, that God was fearful or tyrannical. Wesley implied that God expects 'exactness' if one is going to indulge in pleasures; thus it is better, knowing God's nature and man's weakness, to renounce pleasures completely.

But the objection to this kind of thinking is that Wesley removes the tension, the wrestling before God that a man might do, and so, too, removes a man's responsibility. It is a step of regression then, not one towards maturity. Wesley's advice is paternalistic in a way that Jesus' never was. Moreover, it is anti-educational in that Wesley does not see that in having to face one's natural desires and wrestle with their goodness and badness, that one might learn much about God and self. His advocacy of renunciation short-cuts such a process, leaving people dependent on his societies and on him. A case in point here is that when he died, the Methodists decided that his sermons

and other writings would be the standard creed, if you will, of Methodism. The inherent danger of such a move however, is that of anti-intellectualism, because it discourages question raising, especially if the questioner differs with Wesley.

The second order of Christian that Wesley believed exemplified 'the more excellent way,' he described as follows:

The other Christians... used all diligence to attain the whole mind that was in Christ. In order to do this, they walked in a constant course of universal self-denial, trampling on every pleasure which they were not divinely conscious prepared them for taking pleasure in God. They took up their cross daily. They strove, they agonized, without intermission, to enter in at the strait gate. This one thing they did, they spared no pains to arrive at the summit of Christian holiness..."(Wesley, VII, 28). (emphasis mine)

Wesley, very ably here describes the Puritan view of pleasure; it was not enough that something be not sinful, but everything was to be measured in terms of whether it prepared one for 'taking pleasure in God.' It was inconceivable to such a mind that there were things 'harmless.' As Southey said, "Innocent was a word which Wesley would never suffer to be applied to

any kind of pastime, for he had set his face against all diversions of any kind, and would not even allow children at school to play" (Southey, II, 292-3).

Yet this kind of thinking is at bottom, anti-life; it is against our nature and may also be seen as a failure to be thankful to God for the good things He has given. There is also a kind of presumption here on Wesley's part that he spoke for God. We may accept that he knew what God asked of him, but it is presumption or, perhaps, more kindly, paternalistic of him, to think he knew what God asked of others, as well. Wesley was an autocratic personality, and he did work mainly with those unequal to him socially and educationally. This is even more reason to be careful. Without wanting to take away what he did for those ignored by the Anglican Church of his day, I think it is still fair to comment upon his theology which may today, and then, have been objectionable to those in less dependent positions in life.

The other point, in this regard, is that the implication is that holiness is something imposed from without. I say, 'imposed,' rather than 'infused,' even though Wesley used the word, 'infused,' because 'infused' seems to be too gentle a term to describe what is, in fact, something violent. One is reminded

of the contrast between Jesus and the Pharisees, where the common people were said to have heard Jesus gladly, over against the Pharisees, who laid on them, burdens too heavy to bear. Wesley's words describing the Christian life, especially 'the more excellent way,' are frightening rather than inviting and one might well wonder why they had any influence or attraction. But they did, and this may in part be explained because ironically, Wesley gave men what they wanted, and also what Jesus refused to give. He gave them himself, as an authority on spiritual things, one whom they might follow. He provided them with answers that were black and white; they were not encouraged to struggle with the gray, with the ambiguities (I suppose that Wesley is not alone in this; the Church has played this kind of role down through the ages, but it is the intrusiveness that I still find disturbing and which nevertheless calls for comment.) For there is, of course, a cost in all of this; because although followers of this kind of thinking yield the uncertainty about this or that, that free will leaves them with, they pay heavily in terms of negative religion. They might think that they know 'God's way,' but not realize this was not His only way. Moreover, instead of finding they had a yoke that fit them, as

Jesus wanted to provide, they would find the yoke harsh and abrasive, one of 'agony, self-denial and pains.' Wesley, while believing that he was giving man back his free will, which Augustine and Calvin had taken away, actually gave man a highly qualified freedom. One had freedom to respond positively to his injunctions, but one risked being lost if one refused such spiritual helps that he claimed, came from God Himself. One had freedom to think as Wesley thought, but no real freedom beyond that.

Objections to Renunciation

Wesley's equation of the 'more excellent way' with renunciation had another serious problem, ironically, that it carried with it a sometimes very superficial view of human nature, despite the belief in total depravity. Wesley expected of all serious Christians what Roman Catholics, for instance, in their wisdom or common sense, realized was only possible for a few. Rahner, in speaking about the evangelical counsels to perfection, says that they were to be understood as special individual vocations. Similarly, in reference to Christian asceticism, he takes care to mention that

"neither can this ever... constitute the only path to God; rather it must be a vocation" (Rahner, 29, 158).

Now an objection to this might be that somehow such a theology lets people 'off the hook' so to speak. It lets them 'get away with' doing less, whereas Wesley required more. But the Biblical basis for this comes from the fact that Jesus was reproached for being a glutton or a winebibber. While John the Baptist was an ascetic, Jesus was not, therefore, all are not called to this kind of renunciation. Apart from this however, what is not taken into account or even considered are the actual dangers of such renunciation. Erik Erikson speaks of the "inner power house of rage which must be submerged ...as some of the fondest hopes and the wildest fantasies are repressed and inhibited." He goes on to refer to "self-righteousness," as "often the principal reward for goodness" and says that it can later be most "intolerantly turned against others in the form of persistent, moralistic surveillance..." (Erikson, 231). MacDonald, revealing characteristic insight into the human soul, says similarly:

In crossing his natural, therefore in themselves, right inclinations, a man may develop a self-satisfaction which in its very nature is a root of all sin. Doing the thing God does not require of

him, he puts himself in the place of God, Becoming not a law but a law-giver to himself, one who commands, not one who obeys. The diseased satisfaction which some minds feel in laying burdens on themselves, is a pampering, little as they may suspect it, of the most dangerous appetite of that self which they think they are mortifying (Hein,281). (emphasis mine)

Renunciation, then, is best kept for the few, as the Catholics believe, for those who can truly embrace it joyfully without becoming embittered and angry at others whose lives are less strict.

Despite his affinity for such a life, Wesley himself was not free from such self-righteousness for it is reflected in his judgment about the two orders of Christians. He put himself in the place of God, assuming he knew what motivated those of the first order even in so far as concluding that they "aimed at no particular strictness." Although he professed to care about inward holiness, he was often preoccupied by its external manifestations, which he presumed to know; thus he spoke on the subject of dress, outward adornment, the playing of cards, drinking, etc.. Yet he seemed blind to the fact that true hypocrisy would be found among those who outwardly appeared to be his followers. Counterfeits are found where the 'real' is found, but Wesley did not see these dangers inherent in

his calls to renunciation and also to uniformity. For him, God was not a god of variety, at least not in spiritual things, and later in life, he regretted that he had not gone the way of the Quakers, who required uniformity of dress. Overton, speaking of Wesley, says that he had a "amiable weakness and that was, a guileless trustfulness of his fellow-man, who often proved very unworthy of his confidence" (Abbey and Overton, 334), but this may also be translated as a kind of naivete about human nature. While he professed belief in total depravity, he had no real discernment as far as men were concerned. He projected a uniformity among men where great variety existed; a case in point being his advice regarding singleness. Southey affirms that Wesley "was nothing more erroneous than in judging of others by himself and requiring of them a constant attention to spiritual things and that, unremitting" (Southey, II, 292).

Whereas for Wesley this seems to have been a natural thing, in that he did not indicate that it went against his nature or desires, but believed himself to be supremely happy in God, he apparently was oblivious of what he was asking of other people, not similarly constituted. He was also, as I have said more than a little blind to his own tendency to self-righteousness.

Referring to the playing of cards and the seeing of plays, he says that he "could not do these with a clear conscience," but he adds, "I am not obliged to pass any sentence on those who are otherwise minded"

(Wesley, VII, 35). His disclaimer, however, does not ring true and undoubtedly his hearers were left with the clear understanding that this kind of behaviour was 'bad.' It takes little imagination to see how such an attitude would contribute as well to self-righteousness on the part of his followers. In addition to this, it may be remembered that, in Wesley's own words, "the grand objection to us (the members of his Holy Club at Oxford) for all those years was, the being righteous overmuch..." (Wesley, VIII, 29) but this he never perceived to be a problem.

While the religion that Wesley advocated was to be one of the heart, motivated by love, he seems to have been uneasy, leaving it at that. Augustine, to his credit, had said, "love God and do as you please," love being the limiting factor in one's behaviour. But Wesley, perhaps again because of his Puritan or evangelical leanings, was not content with preaching love or grace. In fact, he said that "gospel Preachers, so called, corrupt their hearers" (Wesley, XI, 491), by preaching love but making no

demands for changed lives. Thus, Wesley advocated as the right method of preaching, that, 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..." (Ibid.). Yet surely it is guilt rather than love that becomes the motivating factor in such a system for one has always to be on one's spiritual toes, even calculatingly so. How else could one fulfill all of Wesley's injunctions, right down to that of "letting one's conversation at mealtimes not be about worldly things but be to the use of edifying' calculated to edify either the speaker or hearers or both" (Wesley, VII, 33). (emphasis mine) But what self-consciousness, let alone self-righteousness must surely result from this? Instead of grace increasing one's naturalness then, as the Catholics believe, Wesley's grace appears to introduce an artificiality. This, so far from being attractive to those unconverted but at the same time attempting to live up to a standard, is actually repellent. Again, on the level of common sense, how much more reasonable MacDonald's words sound, that "he is a perfect man who at length never thinks of duty, who forgets the name of it." He goes on to say, that,

the commandments can never be kept while there is a strife to keep them: the man is overwhelmed in the weight of their broken pieces. It needs a clean heart to have pure hands, all the power of a live soul to keep the law-- the power of life, not of struggle; the strength of love, not the effort of duty (Hein,116).

MacDonald's insight is that at bottom we must be motivated by a relationship of love (at best, love of God), because it is love that will empower us to do what is our duty. Although Wesley talked much about love of God being, for instance, the only requirement for becoming a member of his societies, or, love of God, being what 'entire sanctification' means, it is my contention that the effect of his preaching was motivation by guilt or duty, not love. L.P. Curtis, in speaking about the secret of his appeal, said that it lay in his technique, which was "not so much of terrifying directly, as of suggestion to the same end. (He) probed and kept on probing until the human citadel fell. Whole pages of John Wesley's printed sermons... consisted of interrogations" (Curtis,65). This, I think, gets at the heart of my own reaction to reading Wesley. For it reminds me of Erikson's comment that "there is a limit to a child's endurance in the face of demands to consider himself, his body and his wishes as evil and dirty, and to his belief in the infallibility

of those who pass such judgments" (Erikson, 227). At first, Wesley's questions come as a challenge to faith and to discipline; at length, however, one feels that he has gone too far, has intruded where he has no business. Ironically, while believing that he has given men back their free will, one is left feeling that one has no free will at all. Wesley has spoken; ours is to obey. Phillip Gosse's response to his father's similar method of interrogation was unbelief; his father had pushed too far and the young Gosse, says that he "took a human being's privilege to fashion his inner life for himself" (Gosse, 178). Though not pushed to unbelief, my reaction to Wesley may be summed up by Gosse's thought that a human being has a right to fashion his inner life for himself, and Wesley errs then, when he takes that right away, presuming to have the mind of God in matters of such as these. Though perhaps he offers 'a way' to follow Christ, he does not offer 'the only way.'

In conclusion, then, I am saying that Wesley's theology lies somewhere between Catholicism and Anglicanism, on the one hand, and radical Protestantism, that is, evangelicalism, on the other, though I believe he leans much more heavily on the evangelical side. In fact, except for his doctrine of

sanctification, Wesley is, for all intents and purposes, an evangelical, as defined in the introduction. Having this perspective is helpful in that it provides a backdrop to his thinking about children and their upbringing, and his thoughts about their education.

CHAPTER II

JOHN WESLEY'S VIEW OF CHILDHOOD

Training the Child in Christianity

Wesley's understanding of a discontinuity between grace and nature, led him to stress that to "train a child in Christianity was to go directly contrary to his nature, which was imbued with love of self, pride, and love of the world" (Monk,190). He therefore asked parents, in his sermon called, "On Obedience to Parents:" 'have you broken their wills from their earliest infancy; and do you continue to do so, in opposition both to nature and custom?' What is remarkable is his question to parents:, "Did you explain to them, as soon as their understanding began to open, the reasons of your proceeding thus" (Wesley,VII,104)? For Wesley assumes a quality of relationship between Christian parent and child, wherein it is commonplace for such explanations to take place. This was certainly true in his own upbringing in which Susannah spent one night with each child alone, every week, in order to speak to him or her about spiritual things. It is not stretching the point to expect that such explanations might take place then, because Wesley was adamant that children should never

to expect that such explanations might take place then, because Wesley was adamant that children should never be spoken to in an angry passion, but always with a calm spirit.

Though Wesley's theology of human nature was quite negative, this method he recommended of a calm loving parent explaining things to the child no doubt acted to soften his message. For in the same sermon he makes clear what a parent is to teach. He says:

teach your children, as soon as you possibly can, that they are fallen spirits; that they are fallen short of that glorious image of God wherein they were first created, that they are not now what they were once...but more ignorant, more foolish and more wicked than they can possibly conceive. Show them that in pride, passion and revenge, they are now like the devil; and that in foolish desires and grovelling appetites they are like the beasts of the field (Wesley, VII, 171).

Now this cannot be taken in isolation. In response to those who objected that children would not understand this, his reply was consistent with his theology of the dichotomous man. He answered that their objection not only held true for children but for people of any age, because no person can see the reality of his own sinful plight until God opens his

eyes. And this, he believed, God could do at any age, in childhood as well as in old age. Thus, he exhorted people to pray for this gift of God, for an eye which really sees, a spiritual eye.

What is commendable in Wesley's treatment of the child here is the respect with which he expected a child to be treated. The child was treated as one in the image of God, which for Wesley meant, one capable of God. God was not limited by Wesley to creating a point of contact only with adults, but Wesley believed that God invited children to know and love Him and be changed in their moral image as well.

The point of reaction, I think, comes with the harshness of his words. But if we keep in mind his method and the context of such explanations, the blow is somewhat softened.

Although Wesley does not state at what age a parent is to begin to explain his actions, elsewhere, he takes the emergence of language as evidence that a child's reason is beginning to operate. This being the case, a parent might start such explanations at around the age of three. For the sake of contrast here, I want to compare Wesley with Aquinas on the subject of children and discipline, in particular in terms of the timing of their explanations. Aquinas does not expect

to begin as early as does Wesley. He makes the point that in contrast to the animals, who seem to have a natural prudence, "a man lives by reason, which he must develop by lengthy, temporal experience so that he may achieve prudence." "Hence," he says,

children must be instructed by parents who are already experienced people. Nor are they able to receive such instruction as soon as they are born, but after a long time, and especially after they have reached the age of discretion" (Aquinas, III, 145).

Like Wesley, Aquinas does not specify the age of beginning such instruction, but his statement that this is not to take place until 'after a long time' can still be contrasted to Wesley's statement that it begin as soon as possible.

My point is that Wesley's hurry to break the child's will points again to the tension between grace and nature which is characteristic of evangelicalism. On the other hand, given the assumption that there are promptings of nature that are right, even in accord with divine law, Aquinas can afford to take his time with the child in terms of developing his reason. He accepts, however, that the child will "require not only instruction but correction, because of the impulsion of

the passions, through which prudent judgment is vitiated" (Aquinas, III, 145). This latter quotation, he takes rather matter-of-factly from Aristotle, not from the fact of the child's original sin, nor for that matter, from a belief in the depravity of each and every passion. But this, of course, reflects the view, which I earlier pointed out was a distinguishing feature of Anglicanism, that while the Bible is God's word, it is not the only word of God to man. Aquinas then recognizes in Aristotle's Ethics, truth that he can apply in his Christianity, whereas, Wesley, stressing instead, the discontinuity between grace and nature, claims that to train a child as a Christian is to go counter to his nature, his instincts, his will. Notice, however, that Aquinas did not say that a child would have no need of training or of correction because of 'natural law' operating in him, but he did say that a child might come to an understanding of good and evil as they operate in the natural order, and in himself. Now an interesting corollary from the idea that grace and nature are discontinuous as opposed to being continuous, is found in the respective ideals for family life that each group held. Philip Greven first brought this to my attention and I found what he said

of 'evangelical family life' to be true of Wesley.

Greven says, regarding the household that,

Ideally evangelical families consisted only of parents and children. Parents needed exclusive...control...in order to accomplish their goals. ...Evangelicals constantly sought to ensure that their own immediate households would remain separated from the surrounding world and as free as possible of pernicious influences. They always knew that corruption and sinful influences could come not only from the outside world but also from within the household itself, owing to the presence of outsiders--usually domestic servants ...or to the presence of grandparents (Greven, 25-27).

To be fair to Wesley, his own mother Susannah believed she had experienced the truth of this. Prior to a fire breaking out in the rectory, she had had complete control over her children and their lives and habits. But she later despaired, once the family was back together again, the children having been farmed out to different families after the fire, because all the discipline she had worked so hard to establish was gone. In a similar vein, Wesley said of his own experience at Charterhouse Boarding School that "outward restraints being removed, I was much more negligent than before, even of outward duties, and almost continually guilty of outward sins" (Body, 37).

Likewise, regarding the role of grandmothers, he said, after observing his own mother that even she, the model mother, did not make a model grandmother, at least not in so far as what he considered to be 'model.' Thus he advised parents to obey, even after marriage, their parents in every point. "But with regard to the management of your children, steadily keep the reins in your own hands" (Greven,27).

Following the chapters on 'evangelical' families which Greven states were authoritarian and characterized by love and fear, he proceeds to give an account of what he calls 'moderate' or authoritative families, which were characterized by love and duty. I mention this view because it is very close theologically to Anglican and Catholic views of human nature as I have outlined them here. They too believed that "human nature was sinful, but not altogether corrupted and that reason ought to govern the passions"(Greven,151). They emphasized 'connectedness' and such parents welcomed the help of the extended family in the raising of their children, even when this meant that they thereby provided for them alternative sources of authority and guidance. (Greven,155) Although they were equally concerned about the obedience of their children, they clearly did not have

the same fear and abhorrence of nature that evangelicals had. Thus, the methods they advocated were of less violent imagery. Instead of breaking a child's will, they talked about bending or shaping it. They were not ignorant of, nor did they overlook children's defiance but because they were not afraid of 'nature,' they accepted it as 'natural,' even so far as to say as follows:

This willfulness, or obstinacy, is not so purely bad, or evil, as it seems. It is partly his feeling of himself and you, in which he is getting hold of the conditions of authority, and feeling out his limitations (Greven,169).

By accepting it, I do not mean that they condoned it; rather they worked with it, understanding that, as Bushnell(4) put it,

the true problem is ...not to break, but to bend rather, to draw the will down, or away from self-assertion toward self-devotion, to teach it the way of submitting to wise limitations, to raise it into the great and glorious liberties of a state of loyalty to God (Greven,169).

To speak of bending or shaping a child's will reflects an acknowledgement that the will is not entirely bad, but that it is something that can be

worked with. On the other hand, to emphasize the need of breaking the will, reflects a belief in its inherent badness. And this, of course, is what Wesley believed to be the case. A child's will was understood by him to be identical with self-will. And self-will was evident in any kind of self-assertion, even in the expression of a preference in terms of food. What comes across then, in reading Wesley, is that it was impossible for the will to express itself in any 'neutral' terms, and of course, if it expressed itself positively toward God, it only did so because of God's grace. But it is this former view that I want to focus on.

Self Assertion and Breaking the Will

Wesley defines sin as a "voluntary transgression of a known law" (Wesley, VI, 423). On the other hand he says that "a wise and truly kind parent will take the utmost care, not to cherish in her children the desire of the flesh." Thus she will give them only simple food, and only one kind of food at a meal, besides bread, with the result that "they will never desire to taste either meat or drink between meals, if not accustomed thereto" (Wesley, VII, 95-6). He goes on to

add that a parent must be exceedingly watchful of her servants, so that her job is not undermined: "better lose a good servant than spoil a good child," he advised (Ibid.). But the difficulty here is that he, perhaps unwittingly, trivializes sin, placing, by inference, the desire arising from a child's sweet tooth on the level of 'voluntary transgression of a known law.' Somehow, if a child, following Oliver Twist, says, "please, sir, can I have some more," such self-assertion is by definition, sin. This, I think, is going too far. Surely we can distinguish between childish wants and full-blown sin, or even between childish stubbornness or ill-temper and 'transgression of known law.' Wesley, I think, traps himself here. Because nothing 'natural' is good; therefore, any and every act of self-assertion is sin-filled and will undoubtedly, if not checked, become the basis of habitual sin later in life. Given his theology, he has no understanding of, nor can he understand, stages in human growth towards autonomy or selfhood. So any cry on the part of a child for this or that becomes an issue of epic proportions, on which the child's destiny, whether heaven or hell depends. Accordingly, Wesley wrote:

If you do fear God, how dare you suffer a child above a year old to say 'I will do' what you forbid, or 'I won't do' what you bid, and go unpunished? Why do you not stop him at once, that he may never dare to say again? Have you no bowels, no compassion for your child; no regard for his salvation or destruction? Why disobedience is as certain a way to damnation as cursing or swearing...(Wesley,102-3). (emphasis mine)

This last statement reflects the same arbitrariness expressed by the Puritans when, at their worst, they would put abstinence from work on the Sabbath on the same level as justice, mercy and kindness (J. Marshall,119). Can it really be that the 'disobedience' of a child 'over one' is to be considered by God or parents, as the same as 'cursing or swearing?' It is when people like Wesley take liberties such as these, driven, as they would say by their theology, that one longs for the appeal of common sense. It is then that the Catholic and Anglican idea that God has also spoken through reason appears well-grounded. For such discontinuity as Wesley countenances between what common sense might say about a child's crying and what he thinks God is saying about the same is too much to believe.

In reading Wesley's sermon, "On the Education of Children," I found it interesting, and at first even a

little disconcerting to read his quotation from William Law.⁽⁵⁾ For Wesley's quotations from Law sound remarkably Catholic or Anglican as he talks about education restoring our rational nature to its proper state and argues that a Christian education should "strengthen all that is right in our nature and remove all our diseases" (Wesley, VII, 87-88). To hear Wesley thus quoting seemed to bring into question the idea that man was totally depraved. The curious thing, I found, however, as I read on was that Wesley never once mentioned how we might 'strengthen what is right in our nature,' rather it is as though he were only aware of the second part of Law's phrase. For the rest of his sermon answers the question, 'what are the diseases of his nature' and he goes on to say that these are atheism, self-idolatry, pride, love of the world, anger, deviation from truth and injustice. (Ibid., 89-90) Given the predominance of all these diseases, it is no wonder Wesley focussed on them rather than on strengthening what was right; for him, the bad far outweighed any good that even the respected Law might believe to be in man. Though one could argue that the fact Wesley left Law unabridged at this point implies an agreement with him, still it is what Wesley chooses to emphasize that I think best reflects his

views. Again, what I want to draw attention to is the tendency in Wesley to a difference in emphasis rather than to a difference in actual meaning.

To return once again to the subject of the child's will, another reason Wesley believed it must be broken was because eventually the child was expected to submit his will to God. Susannah believed that "religion is nothing else but the doing of the will of God, and not our own" (Wesley, VII, 103), and this again reflects the dichotomy between nature and grace. But there is a danger inherent in this idea and that is in the spiritual passivity or irresponsibility it can produce. John Wesley himself, as his admirers admit had the superstitious practise of letting the Bible fall open and then reading what it said, to know what God's will was on a certain thing. If one cannot appeal to reason, one is left to depend on devices such as these.

The final point I want to make about his advice to break the will of the child is that it is possible to secure obedience, to parents and ultimately to the will of God, without the necessity of first breaking the will. Greven states, regarding what he called 'the moderates,' in terms of temperament, that,

the evidence from their family papers generally indicates that they did indeed nurture children who would become more remarkably obedient, as well as deeply affectionate toward their parents, combining their expressions of love with an equally important declaration of dutifulness. The theme of obedience was profoundly important in the lives and attitudes of moderates, but it was never forced (Greven,160).

Surely the 'success' of the moderates then ought to count as evidence for both their methods of child-rearing and their theology. Moreover the opposite is also true, that the 'overkill' method advocated by Wesley, deriving from his theology, may be called into question.

Alfred Body, a sympathetic critic of Wesley, made the point that "the inherent defect in the system was that Wesley never considered the child as a child, but rather as a unit for salvation, bred in sin, apt to evil, and altogether as 'a brand to be plucked out of the burning' (Body,94). This view, too, expresses a particular theological understanding. Among other things, it reflects a low estimate of the purpose of life on earth. While Wesley is partially correct, at least in terms of Christianity, in his view that this life is a preparation for the next life, again, to emphasize this and this only, as truth, seems to lead

to a misunderstanding, and even a devaluation of this life. By a devaluation, I mean that the Christian is once again brought into conflict with the world in light of what is meant by 'the good life' or even 'a' good life. To be sure, this is inevitable, one may argue in that what Christianity values and what the world values are vastly different. This, of course, has to be admitted, but the point I want to make is that the wisdom of the world, as found in a Socrates or an Aristotle, is in fact wisdom, and as Socrates pointed out, may rightly reflect the divine operating in man, or in Christian terms, may reflect what is the image of God in man. That is to say, there is a continuity rather than a dichotomy between nature and grace. The consequence of this kind of thinking, it would seem to me, leads to an affirmation or celebration of this life, or perhaps better, an attitude of thankfulness towards God for the beauties or joys to be found therein. This stands in contrast to the kind of negation and renunciation of life and its pleasures that Wesley felt obliged to advocate. Although, as I said, his view is partly correct, taken as the whole truth, it gives a distorted picture of life's purpose. Surely, what Wesley recommends is not the 'life abundant' that Jesus spoke of in John 10:10.

My impression is that this 'life abundant' was to have been recognizable as such by the non-believer, not something one would recognize or appreciate at length after all kinds of efforts at self-abnegation.

The Arminian position, which Wesley represented, has always maintained that one could lose one's salvation, but if this is true, and if Wesley is correct that life on earth is nothing but a preparation for life in the next, then the Calvinist rebuttal that one should shoot, i.e., kill, the convert, thereby ensuring that he dies 'saved,' makes sense. As logical as this appears, the idea is, of course, repellent, although perhaps helpful in that it points to the flaw in such thinking. The flaw is in thinking that this life has no inherent worth even in terms of preparation for the next life. While affirming with Wesley that this life is a means to an end, perhaps one could talk about 'ends' within the means; life then, is not merely a 'means' but becomes a means to a greater or lesser extent, depending on what one makes of it or how one responds to it. To negate it or to renounce it may be wrong then, for in negating, one may miss what life has to teach about God, self, and others. But to explore this any more probably is to get away from Wesley. What is at issue here is Body's criticism that the

child was a unit for salvation. If this is a true statement, I am arguing, then Wesley has a problem because he has taken attention away from the purpose God had for individuals in the present life. Thus far the focus has been largely negative, due as I said, to the fact that I felt an increasing discomfort with Wesley's pronouncements about the world, friendship with non-believers, dress, the Christian life, etc.. My purpose then was to look at the theological assumptions underlying his propositions and to see them in the larger Christian perspective, including the Catholic, on the one hand, and the more radical Protestants on the other. I make no apology for my disagreement with Wesley theologically, but I do recognize that he had good things to say as well as those with which I disagree, and these are important to include if one is to have a balanced picture of his advice on children and child-rearing. It is to this that I now turn.

Parents as Co-Workers with God

From his mother, (she being the one who wrote about her method of childrearing rather than his father) Wesley inherited a high view of Christian

parenting. Greven is correct in saying that evangelical parents exercised absolute control over their children, but the qualifier, at least in the case of the Wesleys, was that they did so, believing this to be an inherent part of the trust relationship that God had placed them in with regard to their children. Wesley said, "every child, therefore, you are to watch over with utmost care, that, when you are called to give an account of each to the Father of Spirits, you may give your accounts with joy and not with grief" (Wesley, VII, 79). Susannah saw herself as a co-worker with God, in the saving of a soul, specifically in the breaking of the child's will. She said, that "the parent who indulges the child does the devil's work, making religion impracticable and salvation unattainable" (Ibid., 103). Whether one agrees with her methods or her theology, it can be admitted that her motivation was a high one, and just as the success of 'moderate' parents counted in their favour, so too ought her success with the six children who lived to maturity count in her favour. The difficulty comes in trying to pass along the advice of breaking the will, for apart from a loving, Christian family, the idea of breaking the will can easily become distorted and grotesque. Yet, in an atmosphere of love and with an

awareness of the grave responsibility one has as a 'trustee' before God, as was the case with Samuel and Susannah Wesley, such advice finds a home. Nevertheless, the advice about breaking the will seems to be another case of what Southey despaired of, something that might be taken by ignorant people to mean what it 'appeared to mean' and what 'ignorant preachers might even intend it to mean.' On the other hand, one must keep in mind that Wesley never intended his advice, even about breaking the will, to be for 'the masses.' It, too, was for those in his societies who sought to live 'the more excellent way,' loving God and their neighbours with all their hearts. Such love then was perhaps expected to be the limitation on what has been interpreted as absolute power and domination of parents over children.

In actual fact, Wesley was quite pessimistic, again following his mother, about the likelihood of even Christian parents following this way. When John had asked Susannah to write an account of how she had raised her children, she said,

No one can, without renouncing the world, in the most literal sense, observe my method; and there are few, if any that would entirely devote above twenty years of the prime of life in

hopes to save the souls of their children, which they think can be saved without so much ado; for that was my principal intention, however unskillfully and unsuccessfully managed (Tuttle,47).

Similarly, Wesley said:

And how few parents are to be found even among Christians, even among them that truly fear God, who are not guilty of this matter! who do not continually feed and increase this grievous distemper in their children (i.e., self-will) ...To let them have their own will, does this most effectually. ...But who has the resolution to do otherwise? One parent in a hundred (Wesley,VII,92)!

In another sermon, Wesley, on the same theme turned to berating parents who would not follow his advice. He asked, "why then do you disobey? Because you are a coward; because you want resolution. And doubtless it requires no small patience, more than nature ever gave. But the grace of God is sufficient for you" (Wesley,VII,105). Then he adds, ..."for without much pain you cannot conquer," implying that parenthood is a cross to be borne or a thorn in the flesh to be endured. Hardly a happy prospect for whatever expectant parents he may have had in the crowd. Although I said I was going to focus on the positive, I

cannot help remarking that both Wesley's and his mother's points of view sound remarkably stoic rather than Christian. One was to keep a stiff upper lip and to persevere in the rather misery-laden task of rearing children. This in turn fits with the negative view of this life that I have referred to earlier.

In his favour, Wesley did reflect a condescension, in the best sense of that word, to the position of childhood. His advice is quite sound when, in a sermon called, "On Family Religion," he suggests that a parent "carefully observe the few ideas which (your children) have already and endeavor to graft what you say upon them" (Wesley, VII, 81). For all his faults or his negative theology, Wesley was very much concerned that people, including children, grasp the grandeur and the love of God in a personal way. Thus he was against the common manner of speaking that included allusions to 'nature,' 'chance,' 'good or ill fortune,' etc.. He believed that this fed a child's natural atheism; so he advised parents, "from the first dawn of reason, continually inculcate that God is in this and every place; moreover, that God made you, and me, and the earth and the sun and the moon and everything" (Ibid., 91). He continues in this vein for half a page

and his simplicity of language and examples are suitable and such that any parent could use them.

Elsewhere, he addresses "all parents and schoolmasters" saying, "beware of that common, but accursed way of making children parrots, instead of Christians. Labour that as far as possible, they may understand every single sentence which they read. Therefore do not make haste" (Wesley, XIV, 216). The business of making 'parrots' out of children was apparently widespread enough that Jonathan Edwards commented in a letter, on the "gross defects of the ordinary method of teaching among the English, of learning without understanding" (Edwards, cvi). Wesley's advice then is a credit to him in a day when the method he abhorred was widely used. His reasoning, in another place, repeating the idea that one was not to make haste, was that "understanding was a work of time and must proceed by slow degrees" (Wesley, VII, 103) and it too indicates a realism with regard to the expectations he had for children.

The other positive thing that can be said for Wesley is that he advocated a basic respect for children when it came to their discipline. In this, he followed the Puritans, once again, who while not shy of using the rod for correction, always saw it as a last

resort. When someone objected to Wesley that not every child needed physical correction, he agreed in principle, accepting that children differed according to how defiant they were, but he objected to the implication that one take this as a universal rule (Wesley, VII, 80). Thus in his sermon, "On Family Religion," he advocated:

Your children while they are young, you may restrain from evil, not only by advice, persuasion, and reproof, but also by correction; only remembering that this means is to be used last, --not till all other have been tried, and found to be ineffectual. And even then you should take the utmost care to avoid the very appearance of passion. Whatever is done should be done with mildness; nay, indeed with kindness too (Ibid., 79). (emphasis mine)

This being the case, I think Greven goes too far when he too easily asserts that "evangelical parents were engaged in a war with their children, a war which could only end with the total victory by the parents and the unconditional surrender by the child" (Greven, 37).

Although it is true to say of them that a war was being fought, it is closer to the truth, at least for Wesley, to say that he believed parents to be engaged in a war with their children, in the sense that they were seeking to help their children in the war for their

souls between the Devil and God. What is disturbing is that he overstates the case, if the experience of the moderates is taken seriously, and thereby serves to alienate people who do not see life in such stark terms, especially those coming from a secular background.

CHAPTER III

JOHN WESLEY'S UNDERSTANDING OF EDUCATION

Wesley's Aim in Education

Aristotle said that "the aim of education was to make a pupil like and dislike what he ought" (Lewis, 1947, 26). What is problematic, however, is deciding of what these 'oughts' should consist. Just what ought a pupil to like or revere? Different world views and different views of human nature will provide various, even conflicting answers. My purpose in this chapter is to examine what Wesley saw as the aims of education and to see how these were arrived at given his particular theology. I am particularly interested in the part his view of human nature and grace played in the understanding of education.

In the previous chapter, I mentioned that Wesley, in quoting William Law regarding Christian education, emphasized the negative side of the quotation which stressed "removing all our diseases." What I saw him as failing to address was the positive injunction, the stress of which was upon "strengthening all that is right in our nature." Wesley concludes, after outlining all that was wrong in human nature with the question, "if these are the general diseases of human

nature, is it not the grand end of education to cure them" (Wesley, VII, 89, 90)? Upon reading this again, I realized that the imagery of disease and cure reflected a difference in emphasis once more, as opposed to an absolute difference per se. To speak of curing is to speak of repairing, restoring, to set straight, etc.. For Wesley, then, education was synonymous with Christian education; that is, the goal of education was that children and adults be restored to their true natures. This reparation would come not from within man but from without, from God. God was the one who created the contact; it was he that healed man through making him spirit, soul and body, through the granting to him of spiritual senses by which he could see his true condition and be restored accordingly. Thus, I think it is still fair to say that Wesley did not address Law's positive injunction, not because he did not believe it, but because, in his mind, one could not strengthen what was diseased. One had to be cured, made whole, before strengthening could occur. Though there is overlap here in the imagery of disease and cure, if cure is taken as a process that involves strengthening, to push the metaphor's implications in this case is probably to distort the meaning. For Wesley's idea of both justification and of

sanctification were not that they were processes but that they were both achieved instantaneously. His pleasure, then, upon hearing about how the boys in his schools were faring came when he heard of their conversions. There is no mention of joy over a process that did not end in a distinct spiritual 'event,' as it were.

For Wesley, the foundation of education lay in his view of human nature and his understanding of how that nature might be restored to wholeness. He believed in the biblical assessment that "the fear of the Lord was the beginning of wisdom." His understanding of human nature, however, and his conception of how it was to be healed, were influential in determining his method of education. To help children to fear the Lord then, was at once a goal in education and the foundation for future learning. While this goal was to be achieved in this world and certainly had implications for life in this world, its proper context was seen by Wesley in terms of the next world. Thus he asked parents who were considering, for instance, home schooling versus public schooling, (the latter meaning in those days what we today would term 'private' schooling) "did you think of this world only?" Education, as Christian

education, had to be concerned in terms of priorities, first, with the next world and second, with this world.

Early Training of the Child

Wesley, following his mother, believed that a child's education began around the age of one, when his assertions of self-will attracted the firm and negative response of the parent. Susannah is quoted by him as follows:

I insist upon conquering the wills of children betimes; because this is the only foundation for a religious education. When this is thoroughly done, then a child is capable of being governed by the reason of its parent, till its own understanding comes to maturity (Wesley, VII, 103).

In Wesley's view then, parents could do two things with regard to a child's education. First, they could break the child's will, which meant never reinforcing any acts of defiance or of negative self-assertion, and second, they could concentrate upon instilling good habits and right thinking. But one must not get the idea that this was a simple task. For given Wesley's belief that to train a child in Christianity was to go directly contrary to its nature, the road was

definitely conceived of as an uphill one. Thus he believed one had to begin very early and work very hard to ensure, for instance, that the child thought in the right manner. So he exhorted,

from the first dawn of reason,
continually inculcate, God is in this
 and every place. God made you and me
 and the earth and the sun.... There is
 no such thing as chance. He gives us
 all the goodness we have; every good
 thought and word and work are from Him
 (Wesley, VII, 91). (emphasis mine here and
 following.)

And again:

Habituate them to make God their end in
 all things, and inure them; in all they
 do, to aim at knowing, loving and
 serving God (Ibid., 97).

And:

Ye that are truly kind parents, in the
 morning, in the evening, and all the
day, press upon all your children, to
 walk in love as Christ also loved us...
 (Ibid., 98).

Given his idea of grace being contrary to human nature, one understands why there was an urgency evident in his sermon to Christian parents. He believed that they were not as concerned as they ought to be. His observations of them led him to conclude that they continually 'fed' the diseases in their children instead of 'curing' them, by things such as dressing them up and complimenting them, by coddling, and by

overlooking childish bouts of temper. And in doing these things, he believed, they helped the Devil do his work, because the odds were already stacked against raising a God-fearing child, and such indulgence only made matters worse.

John Locke's Influence upon Wesley

Wesley was a great admirer of John Locke. He was particularly impressed by Locke's Essay on Human Understanding and he included it as part of the curriculum for the senior boys at his Kingswood School. He agreed with Locke that the child's mind was a 'tabula rasa,' though neither took this to mean that the child was, as Pelagians would say, without original sin. Locke was a Christian and though he was softer on original sin than was Wesley, he still believed that most children were born "with some bias in their natural temper, which it is the business of education either to take off or counterbalance" (Locke, 132). What he was at pains to emphasize in this idea of the 'tabula rasa' was the importance of the child's environment in the shaping of his character. The child, as Locke saw it, was very impressionable and Locke believed, regarding the men we meet, "that nine

parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education" (Locke,6). Though Locke accepted the doctrine of innate depravity, as the Anglicans understood it, this related to the character of the man's mind rather than to the contents of it. He maintained that the mind itself, in terms of innate ideas was blank though it had a character stamped on it. It is not my purpose to examine Locke's theory in any more detail; I mention it because Wesley read Locke and accepted his idea that the mind was a 'tabula rasa.' My point is to draw attention to the fact that Locke like Wesley does not give space to that which is considered to play a minor role in the development of human nature, in Locke's case, the 'one part' in ten which was not the result of environment, in Wesley's case, whatever good might have been said to reside in human nature which might have been strengthened. For Locke then, "the great thing to be minded in education is what habits you settle" (Locke,18). Habits, as I have already stated, were also important to Wesley, though he differed from Locke in placing his primary emphasis in child-rearing upon breaking the child's will.

In contrast to Wesley, Locke saw the goal of education in terms of a process. He saw the process as

that of 'mending,' which is close to Wesley's idea of curing, but he differed from Wesley in that his view of human nature was more Anglican or Catholic. That is, man was healed or restored through a nurturing process, rather than by a conversion event whereby he was actually altered, i.e., made spirit, soul and body as opposed to remaining simply soul and body. Thus, he says,

God has stamped certain characters upon men's minds, which, like their shapes, may perhaps be a little mended but can hardly be totally altered and transformed into the contrary.

And again:

Observe what their (children's) native stock is, how it may be improved and what it is fit for. In many cases, all that we can do, or should aim at, is, to make the best of what nature has given (Locke, 47).

Locke's imagery, like that used by what Greven calls the 'moderate' temperament, is from gardening. He speaks of "weeding out faults" and of "planting what habits you please" (Locke, 46) and this fits nicely with the idea of bending or shaping the will as opposed to breaking it. No battle is implied nor anticipated and prayer is a weapon to be used only as a last resort. (Locke, 74) In this sense, prayer was seen as an

'option' to Locke, whereas to Wesley, such an idea was anathema. Prayer was compulsory, and as he told parents bluntly, they ought to expect that childrearing be an impossible task without the grace of God.

Locke's view of human nature was far more positive than Wesley's; indeed his statement that "a dislike of evil is so natural to mankind" (Locke,106) recalls Aquinas' quotation from Aristotle about men having a natural inclination to help all others. Although he too, believed that childish defiance had to be dealt with strongly, like Aquinas, he did not see this as happening as early as did Wesley. While both Locke and Wesley used the language of domination, Wesley speaking of breaking the will, Locke of it being "mastered and subdued" (Locke,68), elsewhere Locke reflected a milder emphasis upon man's sinfulness than did Wesley.

The Education of Desire

Regarding the education of children, Locke admits to having the following 'fancy,' which gives an indication of his view of human nature. He says:

I have always had a fancy, that learning might be made a play and recreation to children; that they might be brought to desire to be taught, if it were proposed

to them as a thing of honour, credit, delight and recreation, or as a reward for doing something else, and if they were never chid (sic) or corrected for the neglect of it (Locke,143).

What Locke was saying, in so many words, was that there was something one might appeal to in a child, and that if approached in the right way a child might be brought to love and revere education. Plato, likewise, in speaking of the education of the young, mentioned "directing their natures" (Jowett,445) again acknowledging that there was something to be worked with as opposed to being battled against, while at the same time recognizing that "of all animals, the boy is the most unmanageable, inasmuch as he has the fountain of reason in him not yet regulated" (Jowett,444). Neither was saying that the child, if left to his own devices would become good because of natural promptings within him; however, there was an assumption in Plato or Aquinas or Locke, that there was something in a child that could be 'trained.'

As I said to begin with, Aristotle said that the business of education was to make the pupil like and dislike what he ought; Plato, earlier had said the same.

The little human animal will not at first have the right responses. It must be trained to feel pleasure, liking, disgust and hatred at those things which really are pleasant, likeable, disgusting, and hateful, so that when reason at length comes to him, then, bred as he has been, he will hold out his hands in welcome and recognize her because of the affinity he bears to her (Lewis, 26, 27).

What Plato and Locke were advocating was the education of desires, whereas Wesley's emphasis was on the cure of desires, which by definition were diseased. The first step, consequently, in Wesley's plan was to break the will of the child, for the will was the root of the child's wrong desires. Plato, on the other hand, did not underestimate the willfulness of the child, he, like the moderates mentioned, talked about "binding with many bridles" (Jowett, 444) the child in one's care, which amounts, in so many words, to shaping the will as opposed to breaking it.

Utilitarian Education for the Lower Orders

Locke and Wesley also differed in their aims for education in terms of whom they thought education should be for. Locke's "Some Thoughts Concerning Education" were intended with the education of a

gentleman in mind. Although implicit in this was the idea of a Christian gentleman, his thoughts were not concerned with the next world, so much as they were with this world. He was writing with those in mind, who complained "of the great decay of Christian piety and virtue everywhere" and suggested that the way to retrieve these in the next generation was through laying a foundation in a proper education.

(Locke, IX, 58) The assumption here was that the upper classes acted as an example in their manners for good and ill, for the lower orders; thus if Christian piety and virtue could be recovered by gentlemen, it would have societal repercussions.

Wesley, though not a revolutionary, did not operate upon such an assumption. He told his preachers specifically that, "you are no more concerned to have the manners of a gentleman than a dancing master"

(Ford, 48). His overriding concern for the next life made him impatient to reach people now, so that if nothing else resulted, they might be converted and ready to meet their Maker. His ministry was to the lower orders, as they were known, and any education he envisioned for them began with their conversion.

After this first step, education did take place for adults and children alike. As was mentioned earlier,

Wesley organized people into small groups or societies, wherein they were given opportunities for leadership as well as for spiritual growth. For children under the age of twelve, he opened schools in London and at Kingswood, and social class or an ability to pay had nothing to do with eligibility.(6) Only complete parental support and a willingness on the part of the student to keep the rules was required.

What Wesley specifically borrowed from Locke regarding education for these people was Locke's progressive idea that education be utilitarian. In this, Wesley was ahead of his time. Not very much earlier, in the year he was born in fact, the heads of the University of Oxford met and forbade Locke's Essay from being read. Babenroth explains that "when there was a danger of innovation in high places in the educational world, a 'sable shoal of broad hats, and hoods and caps' curled around Dullness and, as friends of Aristotle, championed traditional learning" (Babenroth,166). The reference to Dullness is from Alexander Pope's poem, "The Dunciad," in which he ridicules the endowed schools and their classical education. Locke's idea that schools become more utilitarian were a threat to that system and therefore, they were rejected.

In contrast with the schools of his day then, Wesley included utilitarian subjects in his curriculum. In the sixth class, algebra, physics, gardening, music, and geography were taught alongside those subjects of a more classical nature. Not only that, Wesley, out of his concern for adults as well as for children, began evening and early schools for adults in which they were taught "reading, writing, and the casting of accounts" (Body,139). The kind of compassion which this indicates has also to be seen as one of the very positive things that was an outgrowth of his theology. Body contends that one cannot judge Wesley on his theory alone, one must look at what he did, and undoubtedly his schools, in an age where brutality and violence were the norm (Aries,264) are a credit to him and to his beliefs. Adamson makes a similar comment with reference to August Francke's schools in Germany which served as a model for Wesley's own schools. The context was the severity exercised, in terms of rules against play and the numerous hours to be spent in studies or in prayer, (which Wesley copied) but given the situation in other schools, such schools stood out as milder and more humane. (Adamson,250)

Though Wesley did differ from the educators of his day in emphasizing education that was utilitarian,

still his primary focus was spiritual. Susannah's dictum that "no girl be taught to work till she could read very well" (Pritchard,26) assumed the same thing because reading was necessary if one were to read one's Bible or other religious writings, which was the expectation of the Puritan child. Moreover, it was unlikely in those days that many girls would need to read in order to work; actually, the context of Susannah's words presumed such work to be sewing, for she comments, "the putting of children to learn sewing before they can read perfectly is the very reason why so few women can read fit to be heard, and never well to be understood" (Pritchard,26). Similarly, Wesley said in a letter that "it is not our view so much to teach Greek and Latin as to train up soldiers for Jesus Christ" (Pritchard,54). When Wesley was asked by Christian parents which school was best, he replied, "let it be remembered, that I do not speak to the wild, giddy, thoughtless world, but to those that fear God. ...Send them to such masters as will keep it always before their eyes" (Wesley,VII,83).

In the following chapter, I will conclude with the implications of Wesley's theology for education.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

Because one's philosophy of education derives from one's world-view, I have taken pains to describe how Wesley understood his world. This involved looking at his view of God, his understanding of human nature and his theology of what it meant for man to be in relationship to God. But these things too, needed a context, and the obvious one, as I saw it, was that of the theological continuum of historic Christianity. Thus I compared Wesley's views with the two 'outer limits,' as it were, with Roman Catholicism on the one hand, and with a specifically defined evangelicalism on the other. I then sought to understand how his theology influenced his views of childhood and of education.

The particular view that seemed to overshadow his other ideas was his view of human nature. In this view he was at one with the Reformers, Luther and Calvin, but all three had deviated from the view held for several centuries expounded by Thomas Aquinas. This view, which the Catholic Church continues to hold, includes seeing man, as separated from God and unable to reestablish a relationship with Him, and seeing God,

to reestablish a relationship with Him, and seeing God, as extending his grace to man in his hopeless situation and enabling him to respond. Where Catholics differ is in their belief that God's grace finds in human nature an affinity for it. The point of contact, as I have called it, is intrinsic to human nature in this position. One implication of this is that one can assume a place of appeal in human beings. Another is that there is a continuity, though incomplete, between human morality and God's laws. As Aquinas put it divine law acts as an aid to natural law.

Wesley's view, following the Reformers, was more radical than this. He believed that man was totally depraved, by which he meant that man had lost in the Fall, the point of contact with God, which he had had originally. God had to create that point of contact again and He did so by His grace. By grace too, He gave to man the freedom to respond to greater gifts of grace. (This is not without its problems, but as Wesley did not resolve them nor will I attempt to do so.) The implication of this view is that there is nothing to appeal to in a man; there is no affinity for God intrinsic to human nature.

Three consequences for education are apparent. First, Wesley's theology of human nature meant that he could not sublimate, that is, channel or redirect or elevate, those childish instincts which he found objectionable because to do so would be the same as overlooking them or making allowance for something inherently sinful. This, in his words, would be to do the devil's work. (Wesley, VII, 103) Only suppressing those instincts, that is, breaking the child's will would suffice to make such a parent or teacher truly a co-worker with God for the salvation of a soul.

When it came to dealing with children in his schools, this view led him to demand of parents complete control over their child. Parents had to agree that the child would not come home, even if ill, even for a day, because Wesley felt all his work would be undone by such a move. The influence of parents, particularly their instincts to coddle their children, were not in the child's best interests. The other thing that could happen if a child went home was that he might be left on his own. Human nature being what it was, this was a thing to be avoided thought Wesley. At school, therefore, he ordered that the students, at all times, be in the presence of an adult. They were allowed no time, day or night, to be alone. This is a

view that does not square with the ideas of modern educators, not because they are un-Christian, but because they value privacy even for children.

Another consequence that follows from his understanding of human nature is that there is little power implicit in a morally good example. Children needed their wills broken and their minds and habits trained but it was not expected that they would be nurtured into faith in Christ. It was expected rather that they would undergo a crisis experience that involved a loathing of self and a submission to God's will, characterized as contrary to one's own will. Examples of a shocking nature then, were favoured over examples of the morally good. Thus, Wesley and his headmaster at Kingswood considered it a great opportunity for the students in terms of their own conversions, when they heard of the recent death of somebody who lived nearby. The boys, some as young as seven, were taken round to view the corpse that they might think about death and their soul's salvation. They were preached to on the same subject for over a week and encouraged to stay up till all hours of the morning, pouring out their confessions to God. Wesley rejoiced when he heard that many of the boys had become

Christians as a result. As he soon learned, however, these results had little lasting effect.

The third consequence of his view was that natural theology was 'out,' as far as helping a person in his understanding of God. Wesley's view was that from the existence of the creature was implied the existence of God, but that this still left unanswered the question: 'what kind of God' (Williams,31). The Catholic view is that such knowledge is a reminder of something we each know already anyway and that Wesley's question is answered by reason looking at nature. (Smith,34) This view then encourages curiosity and speculation assuming the human mind can discover truth.

The implications then of his theology for education are largely negative. His view of human nature is more pessimistic, I think, than is warranted. I do not want to underestimate the degree to which man is fallen, but it is important too, not to overstate the case.

What can be said positively about Wesley's theology, in terms of education, is that it provided an inexhaustible motivation for reaching out to the disenfranchised, the disinherited of his society. His own wide reading meant that he made use of Locke's progressive ideas of utilitarian education, and this,

combined with his belief that God wanted everyone to come to know Him, gave the impetus for going beyond merely the education of a gentleman, to reach the lower orders. I agree with Body that he has to be judged by his practise not only by his theory and certainly some of his practises can be applauded. Nevertheless, the more intrusive measures advocated in his schools, deriving from a negative view of human nature, and that view itself, I cannot and do not commend. The weakness in Wesley's philosophy of education can be traced to his perspective on human nature, which in its negative emphases, seems to overstate the Christian truth of man as a fallen creature.

ENDNOTES

1. John Tillotson (1630-1694)- Archbishop of Canterbury and leader of the Latitudinarian Party in the Church of England. In his preaching, for which he was famous, he made a constant appeal, on all matters of religion, to reason.

2. George MacDonald (1824-1905)- a Scottish pastor and writer of fiction. He eventually left the pastorate as his unorthodox views were very unpoular with a v rigidly Calvinistic Church.

3. Robert Southey (1774-1843)- an English writer of verse and prose, also a friend of Samuel T. Coleridge. His biography, Life of Wesley, was published in 1820.

4. Horace Bushnell (1802-1876)- American Congregational minister. His first book, Christian Nurture, focussed on the religious training of children. He consciously emphasized the idea of 'nurture,' that is, of bending and shaping the child's will, over against another popular idea, that of breaking the will.

5. William Law (1686-1761)- a Non-Juror, that is, a clergyman who refused the Oath of Allegiance of 1689.

He was a student of mystical theology and wrote "A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life," to which John Wesley made frequent reference, with approval.

6. In 1739, Wesley bought a 'heap of ruins' called the London Foundery. He turned it into a Methodist meeting place and also into a school for poor children. These children, for the most part, were both clothed and educated free of charge.

In 1740, Wesley built the original school at Kingswood which was intended for colliers' children. It also operated as a night school for poor children of the district who could not come during the day. In 1748, Wesley built the New School at Kingswood and the majority of the children were the sons of Methodist laymen. The school was, however, open to all who were 'approved' and whose parents were willing to abide by the strict injunctions.

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