

## CHAPTER 5

# “Pure, Unbounded Love” Doctrine About God in Historic Wesleyan Communities

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*Hail, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
One God in Persons Three;  
Of thee we make our joyful boast,  
Our songs we make of thee.<sup>1</sup>*

Wesleyan Christians join the chorus of the historic Christian community in the worship of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This fact, the fact of the worship of God as Trinity, must be the basis on which we can say anything further about Wesleyan and Methodist understandings of God. Worship is primary and expresses final or ultimate values; theology and reflection on the meaning of worship is secondary, so that a consideration of doctrinal or theological understandings of God apart from the fact of worship would amount to a peculiar abstraction.

This lecture examines understandings of God that have developed in the historic Wesleyan traditions, with a focus on *doctrine*. By “doctrine” I mean *corporate consensus about what to teach*, and I distinguish “doctrine” in this sense from “theology” more broadly, which might be defined as any critical reflection on religious teachings.<sup>2</sup> My

principal concern here is to ask what Methodist churches have agreed to teach about God, the Trinity, and God's attributes. Doctrine itself, even according to the definition I have given it, is capable of a wide range of meanings and I do not intend to restrict it here. In its strictest sense it would denote teachings that hold the status of corporate consensus as a result of formal, legal, or constitutional status. Methodists have historically defined some doctrines in this manner. But in the broader sense, doctrine refers to corporate consensus reached in other, less juridical ways—for example, in the process by which a community reaches consensus about which hymns to include in a hymnal.

There are five principal sources of Methodist doctrine that I shall use in this discussion. My first source will be the writings of John and Charles Wesley. In the most formal sense, they are a source of doctrine because the "Model Deed," which was incorporated into the "Large Minutes" and subsequent Methodist constitutions and doctrinal statements, held certain of Wesley's *Sermons on Several Occasions* and his *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament* to be standards of Methodist teaching or doctrine. In a broader sense the Wesleys' writings provide a source of doctrine for Methodists, as they have consistently funded Methodist theological reflection and spirituality, and in this sense they are not limited to the constitutional "doctrinal standards." The use of the Wesleyan writings as sources of doctrine is not without both legal and theological problems for Methodists. It requires some judgment as to which writings really constitute consistent sources of corporate consensus. I find, for example, that the *Sermons* are far more often a source of Methodist reflection than the *NT Notes*.<sup>3</sup>

Beyond the Wesleys' writings, I have utilized as a second source the doctrinal statements of Wesleyan and Methodist churches. This would include Articles of Religion (Methodist Episcopal Church and its successors), Confessions of Faith (United Brethren and successors), Articles of Faith (Church of the Nazarene), and the like. Doctrinal standards are not uniformly utilized through Wesleyan churches, and formal statements of faith are most characteristic of North American Methodist churches. The British Conference and its successors do not adopt particular statements of faith but state in general terms their allegiance to historic Christian faith and Wesleyan teachings in their constitutions.

For a third source I have utilized Methodist hymnals and

liturgies as an indication of doctrinal consensus. Although hymns may be the compositions of individuals, their acceptance into a hymnal shows some degree of communal approval, and I have found that even the structure of Wesleyan hymnals reveals consistent points of doctrinal consensus. As a specific example, the structure of Methodist hymnals gives the basic reason in this lecture for considering the praise of the Trinity before considering the attributes of God.

I have utilized Methodist catechisms as my fourth source of indications of corporate teachings. There is a long and complex history of Methodist catechisms, down to the 1988 catechism sponsored by the British Conference, although in this case North American Methodists have been less active in the use of catechisms since early in this century.

The fifth and final source that I have utilized is the writings of Wesleyan and Methodist theologians whose works have been approved for study by preachers, and so have a degree of communal approval. In particular I shall have reference to Richard Watson, Thomas O. Summers, William Burt Pope, John Miley, and the Nazarene theologian H. Orton Wiley. This category is problematic because one can question whether the simple inclusion of a book in a prescribed course of study implies approval of the book's content as a whole. It is particularly difficult in the twentieth century to assess whether the inclusion of a work by a theologian (such as Albert Knudson) implies broad communal consensus, or simply indicates that the book is taken as a good example of theological method.

I should note that my intention in examining Wesleyan and Methodist doctrine is to offer a "Pan-Methodist" perspective, embracing the teachings of churches with membership in the World Methodist Council, as well as churches listed in the Council's *Handbook of Information* as related Wesleyan denominations (such as the Church of the Nazarene).<sup>4</sup> In practice you will find that my scope is more restricted by my own (in)experience and the obvious limitations of my study.

Taking these sources of historic Wesleyan doctrine, then, I shall try to show points of consensus on the doctrine of God. I begin with a consideration of the worship of the Trinity and the related doctrine of the Trinity. I then consider the "attributes" ascribed to God, not only as philosophical abstractions but also as expressions of the mystery of the divine nature and as the goal towards which human

existence is intended. I proceed to consider God's relationship to the creation, both the material creation and what Wesley and our Methodist forebears understood to be the spiritual or "invisible" creation. And I conclude with a consideration of God's providential oversight of the world as understood in the Wesleyan traditions, including the possibility of miracles and the providence of God in everyday matters.

### *The Worship of the Trinity*

Wesleyan Christians sing praise to God and insist that praise must be from the heart. The bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church offered in their Episcopal Address of 1876 the following exhortation:

But, beloved, forget not that hymns, spiritual songs—lyrics of the most elevated poetry, breathing the noblest sentiments—avail us nothing, unless we sing with the spirit and the understanding; therefore, in the language of the Apostle, we exhort you to be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.<sup>5</sup>

From the very beginning the songs of the Methodists have praised the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The songs of the Methodist people, then, are the vibrant and living thread that connects their praise to the inheritance of faith in the Trinity received from the ancient Christian community.<sup>6</sup>

In describing the Christians of Asia Minor in the early second century, Roman official Pliny wrote to the emperor that it was the Christians' custom *carmen . . . Christo quasi deo dicere*, "to sing a hymn to Christ as to a god."<sup>7</sup> The doctrine of the Trinity arose in the ancient church as a way of accounting for the Christian community's most distinctive practice, namely the practice of singing praise to Christ. The Arian claim that Christ was a created being, not coeternal with the Father, seemed to make the church's worship a blasphemous act of praising the creation rather than the Creator. Through the vicissitudes of the fourth century—the imperially assembled Council of Nicaea in 325; the ensuing opposition to Nicene teaching on the part of the imperial court; defenses of Nicene teaching by Athanasius and then the Cappadocian theologians; then the Council of

Constantinople in 381—the church affirmed that Christ was none other than God, “of one Being with the Father,” and likewise that the Holy Spirit “with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.” This affirmation characterized the historic churches of the East and the West, and was reaffirmed by the Magisterial Protestant churches at the time of the Reformation. It is recognized in our time as the most universal and ecumenical of all Christian creeds.<sup>8</sup>

Although reverence for the Trinity was the inheritance of John Wesley’s church, it could not be taken for granted. Ancient ideas such as Arianism had been revived by such teachers as William Whiston, whom Wesley respected. Modern ideas such as Socinianism—what we would call “Deism”—had gained ground even in traditional Christian communities such as the Church of England and among English Presbyterians and Baptists. Through the century before John Wesley, Anglicans had earnestly defended the ancient trinitarian doctrine as part of the inheritance of Christian faith that, they believed, had been preserved or even revived in the Anglican tradition. Bishop John Pearson’s *Exposition of the Creed* (1659) became an Anglican classic, illustrating a deep knowledge of ancient Christian writings and traditions in its defense of the traditional faith. Bishop George Bull’s *Defensio fidei nicaenae* (1685) won international praise for its scholarly defense of the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity against Arianism and Socinianism, examining biblical claims about Christ and creedal teachings in fine detail. John Wesley’s father, Samuel, drank deeply from the wells of this Anglican reverence for the ancient church and its trinitarian worship. The inscription on Samuel’s tomb at Epworth reads (in part) as follows:

As he liv’d so he died,  
in the true Catholick Faith  
of the Holy Trinity in Unity,  
And that JESUS CHRIST is God  
incarnate: and the only  
Saviour of Mankind<sup>9</sup>

John Wesley had read the standard Anglican defenses of the Trinity, including those of Pearson and Bull, in his Oxford days. He would later read William Jones’s *The Catholic Doctrine of a Trinity* (1756), on which Charles Wesley’s *Hymns on the Trinity* (1767) was based.<sup>10</sup> The reverence that John Wesley himself held for the Trinity can be seen in the way he used the term. Most frequently when

speaking in his own voice (not quoting someone else) he says "blessed Trinity" or "ever-blessed Trinity." In prayer he addressed the "Holy, undivided Trinity."<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Charles Wesley's hymns offer worship to "A Trinity in Unity"<sup>12</sup> or "One undivided Trinity,"<sup>13</sup> and the trinitarian formula often concludes his hymns.

This should make clear the Wesleys' commitment to historic trinitarian doctrine. It should also be evident that their commitment was not merely doctrinal; it was tied to their devotional and spiritual lives. When confronted by the revival of Arianism or the contemporary emergence of Socinianism (Deism), John Wesley could state the difference between the two: "For whereas [Socinians] deny Christ to be any God at all, [Arians] do not; they only deny him to be *the great God*."<sup>14</sup> And he rejected both as inadequate:

An Arian is one who denies the Godhead of Christ; we scarce need say, the supreme, eternal Godhead; because there can be no God, but the supreme, eternal God, unless we make two Gods, a great God, and a little one.<sup>15</sup>

When he revised the Articles of Religion for the American Methodists in 1784, John Wesley left unchanged the first Article's affirmation of the Trinity, utilizing the Nicene-Constantinopolitan language of three coeternal persons united by one divine substance.

John Wesley's sermon "On the Trinity" (1775) makes it clear that the doctrine of the Trinity is a "necessary" or "essential" doctrine for Christians, not simply an "opinion" on which differences could be allowed.<sup>16</sup> I have argued elsewhere that Wesley distinguished between doctrines essential to the definition of Christianity itself and doctrines essential to the definition of the Methodist movement, and granted this distinction it should be clear that the doctrine of the Trinity belongs to the former category—that is, among doctrines that define the very nature of Christian belief. However, Wesley was also clear in his sermon "On the Trinity" that it is the *substance* of this doctrine, not its "philosophical explanation," that is necessary. He took the substance of the doctrine to be the belief that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are God (here following the traditional reading of the "Johannine comma," 1 John 5:7), while the specific terminology of divine "substances," "persons," and even "Trinity," were not part of this essence. Thus Wesley accepted what he believed to be Servetus's claim, that "the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God" without requiring the language of the Nicene-

Constantinopolitan Creed.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, it may be worth noting in this regard that John Wesley explicitly omitted the Nicene Creed from the eucharistic rite in the *Sunday Service* of 1784, setting a precedent for Methodist practice, which has consistently favored the Apostles' Creed.<sup>18</sup> We must be careful in stating this to indicate that Wesley himself *did* subscribe to the language of the traditional creeds and insisted that his preachers should do so (since they were charged with public explication of the faith), but he believed that it was not necessary for Christian belief or piety to utilize the language of the early creeds and councils. It is fair to conclude that in Wesley himself one finds a degree of liberality with respect to the language a community chooses in affirming the Trinity.

Part of Wesley's concern was to teach the historic doctrine of the Trinity in opposition to Arianism and Socinianism, but another part of his concern was that the doctrine of the Trinity should not be "merely speculative," but have relevance to Christian spirituality. Indeed this is how he explained the contribution of his brother's *Hymns on the Trinity*:

Mr. Jones' book on the Trinity is both more clear and more strong than any I ever saw on that subject. If anything is wanting it is the application, lest it should appear to be a mere speculative doctrine, which has no influence on our hearts and lives; but this is abundantly supplied by my brother's Hymns.<sup>19</sup>

There are two respects in which the doctrine of the Trinity is directly related to Christian spirituality in the thought of the Wesleys. In the first place, the goal of salvation is to restore the lost image of God, which is a trinitarian image. Thus, the full redemption for which we are intended means that we were from the beginning "ordained to be / Transcripts of the Trinity,"<sup>20</sup> and so Charles Wesley concludes the hymn that begins this lecture:

And when we rise in love renewed,  
Our souls resemble thee,  
An image of the Triune God,  
To all eternity.<sup>21</sup>

In the second place, many early Methodists had a vivid religious experience in which they perceived the presence of the complete Trinity, indeed some described their having a "vision" of the Trinity.<sup>22</sup>

As the Trinity expresses the perfection of God, so the culmination of human religious experience was to perceive the presence of the Trinity.

Although this particular form of religious experience seems to have been limited to the first century of Methodism, when Methodism existed as a religious movement within the Church of England, Wesleyan and Methodist churches have consistently followed the historic and ecumenical insights on the doctrine of the Trinity that the Wesleys expressed. Within British Methodist churches this adherence to trinitarian doctrine did not come without a controversy, which centered around the views of the renowned Methodist biblical commentator Adam Clarke. In the 1820s, Clarke advocated the idea that Christ had become "Son of God" only at the time of the incarnation, prior to which Christ was one with the undifferentiated Godhead.<sup>23</sup> In fairness to Clarke's views, it must be insisted upon that this was not Arianism (as some have supposed): in fact, Clarke's concern was to defend on biblical grounds Christ's identity as supreme God from eternity, and he felt that this claim was necessary for the understanding of Christ's work of redemption.<sup>24</sup> The British Conference and other Methodist leaders, including Richard Watson, responded vigorously against Clarke's claim, defending the notion of Christ's "eternal Sonship" against him. The result of this controversy, which extended into the 1860s, was the strong and clear affirmation of historic trinitarian doctrine on the part of Methodist churches.<sup>25</sup> A broader indication of this can be seen in the fact that Methodist churches in the nineteenth century sponsored their own editions of such classic defenses of the doctrine of the Trinity as Pearson's *Exposition of the Creed*.

The historic trinitarian teaching was also affirmed in corporate Methodist doctrinal standards. Churches of the North American episcopal Methodist traditions, which utilize the Twenty-five Articles of Religion of the MEC, affirm the language of the first Anglican Article, which in turn uses the language of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. British Methodist churches and those related to them affirm in their constitution their loyalty to the ancient creeds, which are taken to mean the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.<sup>26</sup> Although Methodists have by custom preferred the Apostles' Creed, their hymnals often include the Nicene Creed for use in public worship; in fact, the trend to utilize the Nicene Creed has been more pronounced in the wake of the Ecumenical Movement of the twentieth century.<sup>27</sup>



Perhaps more significant is the fact that Methodist hymnals since the mid-nineteenth century consistently begin with a framework of praise to the Trinity. This was admittedly not the case with the very earliest Methodist hymnals, including the Wesleys' *Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists* (1780), but the Wesleys' intent in this hymnal was to lay out distinctive Methodist teachings about the "way of salvation," and it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that Methodists produced hymnals that encompassed the breadth of Christian teaching. Even so, a statistical analysis of the 1780 *Hymns* shows that 23 percent of its hymns include explicit references to the three persons of the Trinity.<sup>28</sup> From the middle of the nineteenth century, Methodist hymnals consistently begin with a framework of praise to the three persons of the Trinity. This is true of British and American hymnals, of hymnals in the African American Methodist churches, and of hymnals from smaller Wesleyan and Holiness denominations, although it can be argued that in later Methodist hymnody (in Britain and the United States) the overall percentage of hymns with explicit reference to the persons of the Trinity is smaller than in the 1780 *Hymns*.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, given the central role of the hymnals in mediating Christian tradition to Methodists and in stating Methodist consensus in the faith, the fact that the praise of the Trinity stands at the beginning of hymnals indicates the continuing prominence of the worship of the Trinity in historic Wesleyan piety and devotion. Methodist and Wesleyan catechisms support this, consistently teaching youth to believe in and worship God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.<sup>30</sup>

In a more sophisticated way, the Methodist and Wesleyan theologians whose works were prescribed for study by preachers through the early years of this century—Watson, Summers, Pope, Miley, and the Nazarene theologian H. Orton Wiley—consistently uphold the historic trinitarian teaching, defining the doctrine in the terms of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed and defending it with extensive scriptural citations against ancient and modern errors, especially Arianism, Sabellianism, and Socinianism. Although these theologians could write in a scholastic and philosophical manner, their various writings indicate their awareness that the issue of worship lay beneath the doctrine. Richard Watson, for example, advanced as one argument for the traditional doctrine the fact that worship was paid to Christ in the early church,<sup>31</sup> and William Burt Pope, commenting on the trinitarian controversies, wrote that

"nowhere is precision more necessary than in the ordering of the phraseology of worship."<sup>32</sup>

I must acknowledge that at least one book did spark controversy in the 1930s over whether it faithfully represented historic trinitarian doctrine. This was Albert C. Knudson's *The Doctrine of God* (1930). Knudson's theology has been described as a "personalistic modalism," although this strikes me as a bit unfair. Knudson thought that "the heart of the Trinitarian doctrine" could be affirmed in a contemporary context by affirming "the Christlikeness of God."<sup>33</sup> The inclusion of Knudson's book on the prescribed course of study for elders in the MEC *Disciplines* of 1932 and 1936, and in a separate MEC list in the 1939 and 1940 *Disciplines* of the newly formed MC brought calls for General Conference action to remove the book.<sup>34</sup> But it is difficult to assess what inclusion meant at this time. In the nineteenth century it was clear that books prescribed for study had a strong degree of communal approbation. With the changing of theological pedagogy in this century, however, I have the impression that some works—such as Knudson's book—were included more because they were seen as excellent examples of theological method than as comprehensively approved assertions of church teaching.<sup>35</sup> In any case, throughout this period American Methodists continued to praise the Trinity: In fact, breaking from long-standing Wesleyan tradition, the first hymn in the 1935 joint MEC/MECS *Hymnal* was Reginald Heber's hymn to the Trinity, "Holy, Holy, Holy," sung to the tune NICAEA.

While admitting a few important points of controversy (such as those about the teachings of Adam Clarke or Albert Knudson), it is fair to conclude that the Wesleyan tradition has consistently reflected not only the doctrine of the Trinity, but also the devotion and praise to the Trinity that is the underlying basis of the doctrine. The writings of John and Charles Wesley, the hymns sung by Methodists, the very arrangement of their hymnals, the teachings of their formal Articles of Religion, the catechisms they have utilized to teach the youth, the generality of systematic theologies used to train pastors, and the expressly stated ecumenical commitments of contemporary Methodist churches all concur in this, and Methodists should have every confidence in the centrality of the doctrine and worship of the Trinity.

If there is a qualification to make to this, it might be to note what other Christians may perceive as a rather minimalist understanding

of the Trinity on the part of Methodists. We have noted above that John Wesley himself did not insist on the terms of the ancient creeds for Christian piety. Later and more elaborate understandings of the doctrine of the Trinity, such as the doctrine of circumincession (or *perichoresis*) or the doctrine of "appropriations" in speaking of the persons of the Trinity, may appear in Charles Wesley's lesser-known hymns but not in the 1780 *Hymns* or in collections that could be regarded as doctrinally sanctioned by Methodist churches.<sup>36</sup> The only exception to this would be the fact that the Wesleys and subsequent Wesleyan theologians affirmed the doctrine of the double procession of the Holy Spirit, and Methodist versions of the Nicene Creed have always included the *filioque* clause. The reason for this, however, was the common assumption, inherited from the time of the Reformation and which we now know not to have been the case, that the *filioque* and double procession were affirmed in the original Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. Thus, in affirming *filioque* and double procession then, Wesley did not understand himself to be affirming a later development of trinitarian doctrine. In the light of contemporary historical understanding and ecumenical developments, Methodists should consider seriously joining other historic Western Christian bodies in revising the language of the creed to reflect the original form intended by the council (that is, without the *filioque*).

Likewise, the manner in which Methodists have praised the Trinity and have celebrated the work of the Trinity in the way of salvation can be described as stressing the *economic* Trinity, that is, the persons of the Trinity as revealed in the work of salvation, in contrast to the mysteries of the inner relationships of the persons. Although circumincession may appear in some of Charles Wesley's hymns, it does not appear as a consistent theme in Wesleyan and Methodist hymnals, catechetical reflection, or theological inquiry. The consistent stress in Wesleyan tradition has been on the outworking of the Trinity in the healing of humankind.

In both of these respects—the "minimalist" doctrine of the Trinity and the "economic" emphasis of historic Wesleyan teaching of the Trinity—it may be relevant to consider that Methodists have historically preferred the Apostles' Creed in worship. We noted earlier that John Wesley omitted the Nicene Creed from the eucharistic rite in the *Sunday Service* and that Methodist hymnals through the nineteenth century contain only the Apostles' Creed. The printed services of Methodist churches corroborate this pattern. Although the

reasons that Methodists have preferred this creed are not always clear—probably its brevity and the relative lack of technical terminology account for its popularity—it is nevertheless consistent with Wesley's stated conviction that the more technical language of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed is not to be required for Christian piety. I believe that this trend to utilize the Apostles' Creed was also congruent with Methodist expressions of theological liberalism in the early part of this century. Although one can argue that the language of the Apostles' Creed is more simple, and more scriptural, than the technical terms employed in the Nicene symbol, it is also the case that the Apostles' Creed does not rule out Arianism in the way in which the Nicene Creed unequivocally does.

The implication of this is that there is a certain liberality allowed in Methodist piety with respect to the language employed in the praise of the Trinity. I suspect that one could hold essentially Arian or at least semi-Arian beliefs, or modalist (Sabellian) beliefs, and worship in a Methodist congregation. One might also function in quite another mode, as the kind of Evangelical who prefers to use scriptural language only. This cannot be pressed too far. The Arian or Sabellian would have to be comfortable with singing the praise of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and would have to acknowledge that the explicitly stated doctrines of the church differed from his or her own opinions. Moreover, such beliefs would not appear to be permissible if expressed by candidates for ordained ministry, since these candidates will be asked to make a public profession and pledge to teach the explicitly stated doctrines of their church.<sup>37</sup> But a degree of liberality in Wesleyan piety would appear consistent with Wesley's own teachings and the general practices of Methodist churches.

An expression of this liberality was experimentation in the 1980s, with alternatives to the traditional trinitarian formula "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" in the wake of concerns that this formula is inappropriately masculine (given that God is "without body or parts," and so forth). In particular, an alternative ordinal adopted in 1980 did not specify the central performative portion of the ordination prayer, traditionally performed "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," suggesting instead that bishops and Annual Conference worship committees might devise local expressions.<sup>38</sup> Some ordinations were performed in the name of the "Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer," and some pastors experi-

mented with alternatives to the traditional trinitarian formula in baptism and other rites. These practices raised concerns within Methodist communities and the broader ecumenical community, and as a result the service for ordination in the 1992 UMC *Book of Worship* specifies the traditional formula.<sup>39</sup> Thus, while Methodist liberality with respect to the expression of the doctrine of the Trinity allows the discussion of possible communally sanctioned alternatives to the traditional trinitarian formula, these discussions to date have not succeeded in finding an alternative that has won widespread communal consensus.

### *Divine Attributes and the Believer's Quest for Godliness*

The language of Wesleyan devotion often describes the perfections or "attributes" of God:

Wisdom, and might, and love are thine;  
Prostrate before thy face we fall,  
Confess thine attributes divine,  
And hail the sovereign Lord of all.<sup>40</sup>

Although the divine attributes can be discussed as a rather dry intellectual enterprise of cataloging terms and asking how these terms can be applied to God (and some Methodist theologians have proceeded in this fashion), we should understand considerations of the divine attributes as first and foremost expressions of worship and spirituality. They express worship in giving voice to the mystery of God; they express spirituality, because in the quest for sanctification some of the aspects or attributes of divinity are to be acquired, through grace, by the believer.

Christian devotion and doctrine have traditionally described God by a series of adjectives such as "infinite," "merciful," "omnipotent," "compassionate," and the like.<sup>41</sup> These, when made into abstract nouns, are said to be God's attributes ("infinity," "mercifulness," "omnipotence," "compassion," and so forth). Analysis of the ways in which these adjectives and abstract nouns are used shows that they typically amount to either negations of terms that express the limitations that we experience as humans (everything we experience is "finite" or limited, so God is said to be "infinite") or amplifications of terms that express our limited experience (all of our

knowledge is limited, therefore God is said to have "omniscience," that is "all knowledge"). A case can be made that these terms do not so much express what we know about God as what we in fact do not know about God. On this account the expression of divine attributes is crucial to worship, as worship expresses the mystery of God that lies far beyond our comprehension. Indeed, Charles Wesley sings of the attributes of God in just this way:

O God, thou bottomless abyss,  
Thee to perfection who can know?  
O height immense, what words suffice  
Thy countless attributes to show?  
Unfathomable depths thou art!  
O plunge me in thy mercy's sea;  
Void of true wisdom is my heart,  
With love embrace and cover me!<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, the divine attributes become a pattern for the Christian believer in the quest of sanctification. John Wesley's tract "The Character of a Methodist," adapted from Clement of Alexandria's description of the true Christian "Gnostic," paints a portrait of the true believer by describing the attributes of the divine that are acquired, through grace, by the believer.<sup>43</sup> There is perhaps a tension between Wesleyan devotion and Wesleyan theology on this point, for such classical Wesleyan theologians as Richard Watson often did suppose that they could describe the nature of God by describing the divine attributes, as revealed in Scripture and even, in a limited way, in nature.

The divine attributes appear in John Wesley's sermons, in the Wesleyan hymns, and even in the arrangement of Methodist hymnals, where subsections of hymns on God's "Majesty and Power" and God's "Love and Mercy" appear.<sup>44</sup> They appear in Methodist doctrinal standards, such as the first Article of Religion of the MEC and its successors. They appear in great detail in the works of classical and later Wesleyan theologians.<sup>45</sup> The attributes listed are numerous and cover the span of perfections and qualities traditionally ascribed to God. William Burt Pope, to give just one example, includes categories of absolute attributes of the divine (spirituality, infinity, immensity, eternity, self-sufficiency, immutability, and perfection), attributes related to the creation (freedom, omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, wisdom, and goodness), and attributes

related to God's "moral government" (holiness, righteousness or justice, truth or faithfulness, love, and grace).<sup>46</sup>

In almost every case Methodists affirm the attributes of God acknowledged broadly in Christian tradition. I would note only a couple of instances where Methodist peculiarity or distinctiveness may be seen. The first has to do with a mysterious alteration of the first Article of Religion as it appears in the early *Disciplines* of the MEC. Although the version that John Wesley sent had the traditional Anglican wording stating that God is "without body, parts, or passions," later editions of this Article omit the reference to divine impassibility, and so affirm only that God is "without body or parts." We do not know who was responsible for this omission, but it allows the possibility of speaking of divine "passions," in some sense.<sup>47</sup> The reason for this may not be a deep mystery. Those who have seen William Hogarth's caricature of Wesley entitled "Credulity, Fanaticism, and Superstition" will realize that "passions" were a Methodist hallmark in Wesley's day, and it may have seemed incongruous to Methodist folk that the God of their passionate devotion should be described as existing "without passions."

Understood in its historical context, the traditional association of impassibility with God (as it appears in the first Anglican Article of Faith) means that God is not subject to the kinds of changeable passions to which we are subject as human beings. Wesley himself could say that "God is a spirit; not having such a body, such parts, or passions, as men have."<sup>48</sup> Elsewhere Wesley can speak of "baser passions," suggesting that it is only from these kinds of passions that God is free. Recognizing this distinction of passions, some Wesleyan theologians such as Thomas O. Summers have explicitly defended the notion of divine impassibility.<sup>49</sup>

But such a clarification of the meaning of divine impassibility should not prohibit us from seeing a distinctly Wesleyan tendency at this point—namely, the tendency to stress the vivid, compassionate personality of God. This appears in formal Methodist doctrine and theologies, but also in the spirituality expressed in Charles Wesley's hymns:

Appeased by the charms of thy grace  
 We all shall in amity join,  
 And kindly each other embrace,  
 And love with a passion like thine.<sup>50</sup>

The note of divine compassion for humanity appears even more strongly in popular Methodist devotion and hymnody after the Wesleys' time. As a single example of later Methodist piety consider the idea of divine compassion as it is sounded by the American Methodist hymn writer Fanny J. Crosby:

Hear the voice that entreats you,  
O return ye unto God!  
Hear the voice that entreats you,  
O return ye unto God!  
He is of great compassion  
And of wondrous love;  
Hear the voice that entreats you,  
O return ye unto God!  
O return ye unto God!<sup>51</sup>

The depiction of God in hymns such as this strikes a note of sentimentality that may offend Christians of other traditions (it may even offend some Methodists), but through it we can understand why many Methodists were uncomfortable saying that God is "without passions." The God preached by Methodists and celebrated in their hymns is a supremely personal and compassionate God. Perhaps it is this fact that may explain why the philosophical tradition known as Personalism emerged in Methodist theological circles late in the nineteenth century.<sup>52</sup>

A second issue on which we may be able to discern a typically Wesleyan or Methodist tendency has to do with the difficult issue of describing God as simultaneously omnipotent (all-powerful) and omnibenevolent (all good, or willing only good). If omnipotence means that God can accomplish whatever God wills, and God wills only good, then how do we account for a world in which evil not only exists but so often prevails? Although piety and devotion may suggest that the only appropriate answer to this classic "problem of evil" or theodicy is to be silent and contemplate the mysteries of divine omnipotence and divine goodness, the truth is that particular Christian traditions often reveal consistent tendencies to be *more* silent about one or the other of these claims. There is, for example, a tendency in the Reformed tradition to stress the omnipotence of God and to be much more silent about the benevolence of God—not of course by denial, but more typically by the claim that divine benevolence is the mystery that the human mind is incapable of probing.<sup>53</sup>



The Wesleyan tradition shows at many points a trend in the opposite direction—namely, so to defend divine goodness to restrict, at least by implication, divine power or omnipotence. Again, this is almost never to the point of denial of omnipotence, but the restriction, however subtle, tends to be in this direction for Wesleyans. This trend can be seen, for instance, in Wesley's sermon on "Free Grace," which makes the bold claim that the doctrine of predestination as divine predetermination of who will and will not be saved contradicts "the whole scope and tenor of Scripture" in which God's benevolence for all of humankind is expressed, and even blasphemes God and Christ by making them the authors of evil.<sup>54</sup> God's absolute power cannot be asserted at the expense of God's goodness.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, Wesley consistently defended the notion of creaturely freedom as necessary for the understanding of divine goodness. For example, his treatise entitled "Predestination Calmly Considered" argues that some degree of human freedom is consistent with God's wisdom, since the plan of salvation can be understood as God's manner of dealing with free creatures; with God's justice, since only a free creature can be the object of justice; and with God's love, since it would be unloving to consign creatures to hell for no fault of their own.<sup>56</sup>

This defense of creaturely freedom became a staple of Methodist teachings, distinguishing Methodists especially from Presbyterians and from predestinarian Congregationalists and Baptists.<sup>57</sup> Although Methodists would gradually lose sight of Wesley's insistence that creaturely freedom was itself a gift of divine grace, the issue of creaturely freedom was understood to be relevant not only to the question of human nature and salvation but also to the very nature of God, since it was this idea that preserved the goodness of God in making sin the result of the creaturely abuse of freedom.<sup>58</sup>

In the twentieth century, some Methodist theologians made even bolder claims. Faced with the frustration of unanswered prayer during his wife's chronic illness, Methodist theologian Edgar Sheffield Brightman suggested that the God known in human religious experience is a "finite" or limited God. Brightman did not allow that anything in creation can limit God, but suggested that for the sake of the creation God has accepted certain self-limitations. This did not even rule out the possibility of miracles, as Brightman saw it, but it meant that miracles could not be expected as God's regular way of oversight of the creation. Brightman was followed in this by Methodist

theologians John B. Cobb, Jr. and Schubert M. Ogden, who developed similar claims on the basis of Whiteheadian process philosophy.<sup>59</sup> Although none of these dealt with this issue from the specific perspective of the Wesleyan tradition (Cobb would later write on the Wesleyan theological inheritance), it is notable that Methodists should rank prominently among those who have qualified the meaning of divine power or omnipotence in this way. In doing so, all of them defend the benevolence or goodness of God passionately, and however exaggerated their views may appear, they can be seen to extend a characteristic emphasis of the Wesleyan tradition.

I would stress that both of these points—the Wesleyan tendency to ascribe a kind of "passion" to God and the tendency to emphasize God's goodness with respect to God's power—should be seen as tendencies or trends within the Wesleyan or Methodist tradition. Wesley and his followers *could* define divine impassibility in such a way that it might be affirmed, and they *did* affirm divine omnipotence; however, this affirmation might be limited in practice by their passionate insistence on God's goodness.

In concluding this consideration of divine attributes, we must not miss their significance for Wesleyan spirituality. In the quest for sanctification the believer is to assume progressively the attributes of divinity, especially God's holiness. The quest for sanctification then is indeed a kind of *θέωσις*, a process in which the human is not "deified" but "divinized" by God's own gift of holy love.

### *Creation, the Spiritual Cosmos, the Angelic and Demonic Powers*

The early Methodist movement developed a characteristic understanding of the created order that affirmed that God is the author of the material creation, which bears vestiges of its creator's presence. On the other hand, the Methodists' understanding of the created order involved a richly developed sense of the spiritual or "invisible" creation that is the object of our religious experience and is the domain of the angelic and demonic powers. Although this sense of the angelic and demonic powers has not persisted throughout the Wesleyan tradition, the tradition itself is predicated on the belief that human religious experience provides valid knowledge of spiritual things, and so the understanding of this material and spiri-

tual cosmology, and the epistemology related to it, is critical for an appreciation of the Wesleyan tradition as a whole.

In the second century, Christianity faced a series of challenges from Gnostic and other teachers (such as Marcion) who held that the material creation is not the intention of the true, good God, but is rather the mistaken offspring of an evil or ignorant deity, sometimes identified with the God of the Hebrew Scriptures. Against these deuterotheistic teachings the mainstream of Christianity in the second century and in the ensuing centuries maintained that the whole creation is the good and intended work of the one true God. It followed that the creation itself was essentially good, even if it had been corrupted by the abuse of free, rational creatures. In asserting that God the Father is "maker of all things, visible and invisible," the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed affirmed the essential goodness of the created order. John Wesley's understanding of the whole of creation as a continuous chain of being from the least to the most glorious of creatures demonstrates his affirmation of this basic fact, and his personal interest in observational science (such as his electrical experiments) shows that he shared his century's enthusiasm for the exploration of the created order.<sup>60</sup> In this respect, Wesley shared the Enlightenment culture of his age. Wesleyan hymnals following him have prominently included hymns praising God as the author of the good creation.<sup>61</sup>

Central to John Wesley's understanding of the created universe, however, was his conviction that the visible or material universe is but part of the whole creation, which also comprehends an "invisible," spiritual world. Wesley understood such biblical passages as Hebrews 11:1 (faith is the "evidence of things not seen" KJV) in the light of a long tradition of Christian Platonism, which took the existence of the invisible, spiritual world to be foundational for religious belief and practice. Indeed, the Epistle to the Hebrews may well mark the beginning of this Christian Platonic tradition, which underlies the Nicene Creed's assertion that the Father is the maker of "invisible" as well as "visible" reality.<sup>62</sup>

The spiritual world is inhabited by angels and demons, who with human beings constitute the "rational" creation. John Wesley liked to quote Hesiod (paraphrased by Milton) in this way:

Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth  
Unseen, whether we wake, or if we sleep.<sup>63</sup>

John Wesley's sermon corpus includes a pair of sermons, "Of Good Angels" and "Of Evil Angels," explicating his understanding of these rational beings. Charles Wesley's hymns are often incomprehensible apart from the understanding of their abundant angelology and demonology:

Jesus, the name high over all  
In hell, or earth, or sky;  
Angels and men before it fall,  
And devils fear and fly.<sup>64</sup>

Charles Wesley's hymns often describe sacred mysteries that transcend the rationality of angels to make the point that there is no way that merely human minds could ponder such depths. In describing the mystery of redemption, he writes,

'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore!  
Let angel minds inquire no more.<sup>65</sup>

Similarly, in describing the mystery of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, Charles Wesley writes:

Ask the Father's wisdom how:  
Christ who did the means ordain;  
angels round our altars bow  
to search it out, in vain.<sup>66</sup>

Although the angelic minds far surpass our limited human capacities, John Wesley was clear in his belief that all human beings are capable of knowing the spiritual. In fact he makes the case that human conscience and even our basic self-awareness are part of our spiritual knowledge, so that the prominence of religious experience for Methodism presupposes an awareness of the spiritual world, the spiritual creation, which is woven into the fabric of ordinary human existence.

It can be argued that in subsequent Wesleyan tradition the angels as much as the demons have feared and fled; at least, they do not figure prominently in Methodist literature after the Wesleys' time (though angels, at least, show up in Methodist systematic theologies through the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the works of Miley and Wiley).<sup>67</sup> Ecumenical liturgical revision has called us to

renounce "the spiritual forces of wickedness" along with "the evil powers of this world,"<sup>68</sup> but my impression is that overall Methodists in this century have been content to sing the goodness of God's creation and considerably less comfortable speculating on whatever more mysterious powers the universe may embrace.

### *Providence and Miracles: God's Presence in Everyday Matters*

The early Methodist movement had a vivid sense that God was presently doing something in the world. Sometimes there were reports of miraculous signs accompanying the revival; in almost every case believers perceived God working within themselves and their communities in quieter, more "ordinary" ways. I will conclude this essay on Wesleyan understandings of God by considering God's providential oversight of the world, including the present possibility of divine intervention in the spiritual and material creation.

The theme of God's providential oversight of the world appears frequently in the organizational schemata of Methodist hymnals, and the hymns sung by Methodists celebrate not only God's creation of the universe but also God's continuous oversight of the creation. In Wesley's time, this belief in divine oversight or providence was critical in distinguishing historic Christian belief from the popular teachings of Deists. Deists allowed that God had created the universe, and might even allow that there was a kind of "general" providence consisting in the laws by which the universe was governed, but they would not allow of a "particular" providence, that is, the notion that God intervenes in particular events in the world. The Deistic understanding of God on this point ran counter to the trend we noted earlier in Wesleyan spirituality to see God as intimately involved in the world.<sup>69</sup>

Wesley's sermon "On Divine Providence" defines the doctrine of providence (following Cicero!) as the belief "that all things, all events in the world, are under the management of God."<sup>70</sup> He was particularly concerned to refute the notion that there could be a "general" providence without "particular" providence, and he argued that God is involved in every aspect of the outworking of history's purpose. For Wesley, this included points at which God's freedom allowed God the possibility of deviating from the established laws of the uni-

verse; that is, Wesley's understanding of particular providence included the possibility of miracles. That Wesley believed in miracles can be seen from a casual perusal of his *Journal*, where miraculous signs frequently accompany the events of the Revival. In fact, Wesley believed that miracles had never ceased throughout the history of the church, from the time of the apostles to his own time, and were more prominently seen when true faith and piety prevailed.<sup>71</sup>

However, it is worth noting that Wesley himself distinguished between the "extraordinary" miracles, which he held to be unusual even if God remained free to bring them about, and the "ordinary" operations of God's Spirit, which he believed should be expected by every person.<sup>72</sup> These ordinary operations of the Spirit were also part of God's providential oversight of the creation, and included awareness of oneself, awareness of sin, and the various workings of the Spirit involved in human redemption. Since he defines miracles as deviations from the established laws of nature, it is tempting to link this distinction between extraordinary miracles and ordinary works of the Spirit to his distinction between the material and spiritual creation: God's intervention in the material world is extraordinary; God's intervention in spiritual events is the ordinary manner in which God works.<sup>73</sup>

The implications of this teaching for Christian spirituality were drawn by Wesley himself: Belief in God's providential oversight should give the believer confidence, should excite the believer to give thanks continually to God, and should cause us to walk humbly with God. Lack of this belief, Wesley saw, would lead to a kind of religious despair or "melancholy," arising from the view that God is presently unable to help God's people.<sup>74</sup> In contrast to melancholy, the Christian is to sing to God with confidence, thankfulness, and humility:

Jehovah, God the Father, bless,  
And thy own work defend!  
With mercy's outstretched arms embrace,  
And keep us to the end!  
Preserve the creatures of thy love  
By providential care,  
Conducted to the realms above  
To sing thy goodness there.<sup>75</sup>

In the broader history of the Wesleyan movement, the stress on miraculous events came to be a hallmark of Holiness churches and

eventually of the Pentecostal movement. But it is worth pondering the less spectacular sense of confidence that arose from the understanding that God watches over us. Methodists could not conceive of providence as divine predetermination, but they saw the hand of God everywhere, even in the events of ordinary life.<sup>76</sup> Methodist hymns celebrate the constant presence of God,<sup>77</sup> and popular Methodist literature is replete with stories of commonplace providences: a youth inspired by the words of a gospel song to pursue a career in Christian service; a man recalled from drunkenness by the encouragement of a friend; a soup kitchen that could carry on its work after receiving a small and unexpected gift; a civil-rights worker moved by the words of an old spiritual to march for his beliefs. From the testimonies in camp meetings, to the writings of missionary E. Stanley Jones, to the short devotionals in *The Upper Room*, Methodist writings show time and again the confident belief that behind the most ordinary events of everyday life is the loving, guiding hand of the Almighty:

His eye is on the sparrow,  
And I know He watches me.<sup>78</sup>

## *Conclusion*

What then can we say in conclusion about Methodist corporate consensus about what to teach concerning the nature of God, the Trinity, the divine attributes, and God's providence? I am convinced that there is a fair ground of consensus in historic Wesleyan teaching as it is revealed in the writings of John and Charles Wesley, in corporate Methodist doctrinal statements, in Methodist hymnals, liturgies, and catechisms, and in the theologies prescribed for study by Methodist preachers. These sources of doctrine reveal a historic community that has maintained for two hundred years a recognizably ecumenical understanding of God, but a view that stresses God's compassion (God's passion!) and God's unbounded goodness or love; a classical vision of God, we might say, with a rather Evangelical personality.

These sources of doctrine teach the nature of God as Trinity formally utilizing the terms of the ancient Christian creeds, but often preferring simpler language (like that of the Apostles' Creed) and with a stress on the manner in which the persons of the Trinity are

known in the human quest of healing or salvation. They reveal a devotion that utilizes the language of traditional attributes ascribed to God, but places more stress on some attributes (divine goodness) and less stress on others (divine power), and emphasizes the compassionate, personal nature of God. They reveal a devotion that celebrates God as the author of the good creation (though they have lost some of the wonder of the mysteries of that creation over the period in which this tradition has developed). They reveal a God who constantly watches over the world, and is concerned with the day-to-day life of the human community.

There are a couple of implications that might be drawn from this study. The first might be framed as a criticism of the manner in which theologians have dealt with the Wesleyan tradition in recent decades; but rather than being critical, I should say that there is a significant opportunity for Wesleyan theologians to deal with their own tradition with greater sensitivity to issues of doctrine and communal consensus. I venture to say that theologians have acquired a bad habit—and they probably acquired it from historians—namely, the habit of dealing with Christian tradition by the paradigm of the history of Christian thought. In this paradigm the theologian approaches the Christian inheritance by way of such sentinel theologians as Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, and Barth, with an emphasis on their original or creative contributions. Wesleyan theologians deal with Wesley as a parallel figure in the history of Christian thought, but the focus on Wesley as a creative individual overshadows or diminishes the communal or corporate inheritance that doctrine offers.<sup>79</sup> In my view, systematic theologies in the Wesleyan tradition could only be enhanced by entering into dialogue with the rich and varied doctrinal inheritance of Wesleyan and Methodist churches. They might also contribute in this way to the churches' sense of confidence in their own most distinctive teachings.

And this is the second implication that I would draw: Wesleyan and Methodist churches can look to historic doctrine as a way of building the confidence we seriously need (here perhaps I speak especially of the situation of my own denomination). To hear some critics describe it, one would think that The United Methodist Church as a community has reverted to a steady diet of New Age spirituality, worship of pagan goddesses, overt rejection of historic Christian teachings, and so on. The truth is that for more than two



hundred years our doctrines have changed very little, and I find that Methodist hymnals and liturgies and catechisms largely reflect this historic consensus in the faith. What I do not often find is contemporary recognition of this historic continuity of doctrine. Sermons I hear, even from the most traditional preachers, seem to jump readily from the Bible to the preacher's musings on its contemporary relevance, with little or no place to state what a Christian community has agreed to say or teach. The more I think about it, this habitual manner of preaching strikes me as one that implies considerable arrogance, and one that contributes to the churches' lack of confidence in their central and communally held beliefs.

To put it differently, we might ask why it is that women and men in our churches now are so fearful of creative innovation. Why should we not experiment with "re-imagining" God? Charles Wesley's hymns could be described as a carnival of re-imagining the deity—pouring out image upon image of God—and few in his day challenged his basic orthodoxy. One reason he had the freedom to do that was because he had a well-grounded sense of the church's commonly agreed-upon teachings about God, and that sense of what I have called doctrine offered him a remarkable confidence to describe God in bold, poetic, imaginative terms. We could make the same case for the hymns of Fanny Crosby a hundred years after Charles Wesley.

But in a context in which there is but a weak foundation of corporate agreement or consensus, it would appear that innovation in our naming or imagining of God seems to win accusations of heresy all around. We need to have a clearer sense of what our churches have agreed upon, and what is simply the opinions of individuals. We need the study of doctrine about God, then, as a foundation for our renewed attempts to imagine and re-imagine and worship faithfully and confidently that passionate and personal God to whom our heritage testifies, the God whose nature we know as "pure, unbounded love."<sup>80</sup>

11. Wesley, "Thoughts on the Present Scarcity of Provisions," *Works* (Jackson): 11:53-59.
12. For English translations, see Gustavo Gutiérrez, *The God of Life* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1991); Ronaldo Muñoz, *The God of Christians* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1990); and Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1988).
13. José Míguez Bonino, *Faces of Latin American Protestantism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).
14. Guillermo Hansen, "The Doctrine of the Trinity and Liberation Theology: A Study of the Trinitarian Doctrine in Latin American Liberation Theology" (Ph.D. diss., Chicago Theological Seminary, 1995 [available through University Microfilms Inc.]).
15. Walter Klaiber and Manfred Marquardt, *Gelebte Gnade* (Stuttgart: Christliches Verlagshaus, 1993), 223ff.
16. Boff, *Trinity and Society*, 96.
17. Albert Outler, "Methodism's Theological Heritage: A Study in Perspective," in *Methodism's Destiny in an Ecumenical Age*, ed. Paul M. Minus Jr. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), 44-70; here p. 59.
18. Hansen, "Doctrine of the Trinity," 868.
19. *Ibid.*
20. See also Míguez Bonino, *Faces of Latin American Protestantism*, 144.
21. Several issues of the Latin American journal of biblical studies *RIBLA: Revista de Interpretación Bíblica Latinoamericana* (in Spanish, Editorial DEI, San José, Costa Rica; and in Portuguese, Petropolis/RJ, Brazil Editora Vozes) have explored different social and political issues in this perspective (economics, feminism, oppression, violence, and so forth).

##### 5. "Pure, Unbounded Love" (Campbell)

1. *Hymns*, no. 229, *Works* 7:367.
2. See Ted A. Campbell, *Christian Confessions: A Historical Introduction* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1996), 2-5.
3. There was a debate throughout the 1980s within United Methodist circles on the legal status of the Wesleyan standards; see also Richard P. Heitzenrater, "'At Full Liberty': Doctrinal Standards in Early American Methodism," in *Mirror and Memory: Reflections on Early Methodism* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1989), 189-204; and Thomas C. Oden, *Doctrinal Standards in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1988).
4. See list of member and related denominations in World Methodist Council, *Handbook of Information* (Lake Junaluska, N.C.: World Methodist Council, 1992), 23-147.

5. *Hymnal* / AME 1984, ix.

6. I have tried to utilize, so far as possible, the organization of Methodist hymnals in the basic organizational framework for this lecture as well as the larger study of *The Wesleyan Tradition* of which it is a part. Systematic theologies, including those by Wesleyan and Methodist authors included in this study, typically begin with a consideration of the existence and attributes of God (the locus *de Deo Uno*) and then consider the triune nature of God (the locus *de Deo Trino*). This order is reversed in this paper in deference to the consistent pattern of Methodist hymnals that begin with the praise of the Trinity and then typically celebrate the attributes of God under the heading of "God the Father."

7. A. N. Sherwin-White, ed., *Fifty Letters of Pliny*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 69 (my translation).

8. See Campbell, *Christian Confessions*, ¶¶ 1.2.1, 2.2.1-2, 3.2.1, 4.2.1.a-b. The first Article of Religion of the Church of England affirmed the doctrine of the Trinity in terms drawn from the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. The eighth Article affirmed the Nicene, Apostles', and Athanasian Creeds, and these were all utilized in public worship according to the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* (1662). See also Calvin, *Institutes* 1:13. On contemporary ecumenical appropriation, see the report of the Joint Commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council on *The Apostolic Tradition* that jointly affirms the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (38 [Lake Junaluska, N.C.: World Methodist Council, 1991], 21-22); and the important World Council of Churches Faith and Order Commission document, *Confessing the One Faith* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991).

9. Adam Clarke, *Memoirs of the Wesley Family*, 2d ed. (New York: Lane & Tippett, 1848), 281.

10. This was Charles Wesley's second volume of hymns on the Trinity; the first one had been titled *Gloria Patri, etc. . . . Hymns on the Trinity* (1746). See also Barry E. Bryant, "Trinity and Hymnody: The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Hymns of Charles Wesley," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 25:2 (Fall 1990): 64-73; here 64-65.

11. Passages that show the devotional nature of Wesley's references to the Trinity: "blessed Trinity" (Journal [14 October 1771], *Works* 22:292; and *Remarks on Mr. Hill's Review*, §24, *Works* [Jackson] 10:408), "ever-blessed Trinity" (Sermon 7, "The Way to the Kingdom," §1.6, *Works* 1:220; and *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, pt. 1, §1.6, *Works* 11:108), and "Holy, Undivided Trinity" (*Collection of Forms of Prayer*, Sunday Morning, *Works* [Jackson] 11:203, [see also Friday Morning, 11:230]).

12. Hymns, no. 249, verse 4, *Works* 7:390.

13. Hymns, no. 251, verse 4, *Works* 7:392.

14. Sermon 123, "On Knowing Christ After the Flesh," §5, *Works* 4:100 (italics as in original).

15. *The Question, "What Is an Arminian?" Answered*, §4, *Works* (Jackson) 10:359. For other passages refuting Arianism or Socinianism, see Sermon 20, "The Lord Our Righteousness," §2.4, *Works* 1:459-60; Sermon 123, "On Knowing Christ After the Flesh," §5, *Works* 4:100; *Journal* (14 January 1756), *Works* 21:39-40; Letter to the Rev. Mr. Clarke (3 July 1756), *Letters* (Telford) 3:182; Letter to the Monthly Reviewers (5 October 1756), *Letters* (Telford) 3:204-205; Letter to Dr. Erskine (24 April 1765), *Letters* (Telford) 4:296; Letter to a Member of the Society (16 September 1774), *Letters* (Telford) 6:113; Letter to Charles Wesley (8 June 1780), *Letters* (Telford) 7:21-22; and Letter to Joseph Benson (17 September 1788), *Letters* (Telford) 8:89-90.

16. Sermon 55, "On the Trinity," §2, *Works* 2:376.

17. Sermon 55, "On the Trinity," §4, *Works* 2:377-78. Wesley did not remember the quotation from Servetus correctly; the original quotation is much more questionable, affirming only that the Father is God and Christ is the "Son of God" (see Outler's note in *Works* 2:378 n. 11).

18. See also Nolan B. Harmon, "The Creeds in American Methodism," *Encyclopedia of World Methodism*, ed. Nolan Harmon (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1974) 1:563.

19. Letter to Mary Bishop (17 April 1776), *Letters* (Telford) 6:213.

20. *Hymns*, no. 7, verse 3, *Works* 7:88.

21. *Hymns*, no. 248, verse 6, *Works* 7:390.

22. Henry D. Rack, "Early Methodist Visions of the Trinity," *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 45 (1985): 38-44; and 46 (1987): 57-69.

23. Adam Clarke, Commentary on Luke 1:35, *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments, the Text Carefully Printed from the Most Correct Copies of the Present Authorised Translation, including the Marginal Readings and Parallel Texts, with a Commentary and Critical Notes* (London: Thomas Tegg and Son, 1836) 5:375-76.

24. Note Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 56-57; and David Tripp, "Methodism's Trinitarian Hymnody," *Quarterly Review* 14 (1994-95), 384-85 n. 6. The most extensive study of Clarke's views and the response to them is given in E. Dale Dunlap, "Methodist Theology in Great Britain in the Nineteenth Century: With Special Reference to the Theology of Adam Clarke, Richard Watson, and William Burt Pope" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1956), 104-108.

25. Langford, *Practical Divinity*, 57; and Dunlap, "Methodist Theology." There is a reference to this controversy in Thomas O. Summers, *Systematic Theology: A Complete Body of Wesleyan Arminian Divinity*, ed. J. J. Tigert (Nashville: Publishing House of the MECS, 1888) 1:165, which indicates that American Methodists were aware of the British controversy.

26. Constitution of the MC (GBr) and of churches related to it such as the Methodist Church of South Africa and the Methodist Church of Nigeria, based on the 1932 Deed of Union (MC [GBr] *Constitutional Practice and*

*Discipline*, 1968, p. 3). On the interpretation of the MC (GBr) constitution, see A. Raymond George, "Foundational Documents of the Faith: IX. Methodist Statements," *Expository Times* 91 (1980): 260. The first Article of Religion of the MEC and its successors, including The UMC, AME, AMEZ, and CME churches (*Discipline/UMC* 1996, ¶ 62, section 3, Article 1, p. 57). See also the 1813 Confession of Faith of the United Brethren in Christ (*Discipline/UBC* 1816, 13-15); the 1889 UBC Confession of Faith (in *Discipline/UMC* 1996, ¶ 62, section 3, Article 1, p. 62); and the first Article of Faith of the Church of the Nazarene (in *Manual/CN* 1989, 29).

27. American Methodist hymnals include the use of the Apostles' Creed; see *The Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1932 [a joint hymnal for the MEC, MECS, and MPC]), no. 512; *Hymnal/MC* 1964, no. 738; *Hymnal/UMC* 1989, nos. 881-882. The two most recent hymnals have also the Nicene Creed (1964, no. 739; and 1989, no. 880, where it appears in the first position before the Apostles' Creed). Both the *Hymnal/UMC* 1989 and the *Hymnal/AME* 1984 give the Apostles' Creed in the Communion service and utilize it as the means by which candidates for baptism affirm their faith (UMC, pp. 7 and 35; AME, nos. 799 [p. 10] and 802). The AME declaration on Apostolic Succession and Religious Formalism (1884) states that "we grant that the orderly repetition of the . . . Apostles' Creed . . . may conduce to the attainment" of spiritual worship (cited in *Discipline/AME* 1976, 31).

28. Tripp, "Methodism's Trinitarian Hymnody," 363-70.

29. For the MC (GBr), see *Methodist Hymn-Book* (London: Methodist Conference Office, 1933), section on "God: The Holy Trinity" (nos. 36-40); and *Hymns and Psalms* (London: Methodist Publishing House, 1983), the first section on "God's Nature," divided into subsections on "The Eternal Father" (nos. 21-73), "The Eternal Word" (nos. 74-278), and "The Eternal Spirit" (nos. 279-328). In the U.S., see the joint *Methodist Hymnal* of 1932, initial section on "Worship," followed by sections on "God" (nos. 59-82), "Jesus Christ" (nos. 83-171), and "The Holy Spirit" (nos. 172-183); the *Hymnal/MC* 1964, subsections on "The Praise of God" (nos. 1-70), "The Gospel of Jesus Christ" (nos. 71-130), and "The Holy Spirit" (nos. 131-138); *Hymnal/UMC* 1989, initial sections on "The Glory of the Triune God" (nos. 57-152), "The Grace of Jesus Christ" (nos. 153-327), and "The Power of the Holy Spirit," this last of which includes an extensive treatment of the way of salvation (nos. 328-536); and *Hymnal/AME* 1984, initial section on "Worship and Praise," followed by sections on "God the Father" (nos. 47-87), "Jesus Christ" (nos. 88-188), and "The Holy Spirit" (nos. 189-200).

30. Wesley's *Instructions for Children*, 8th ed. (Bristol: William Pine, 1767) has as its first question, "How many Gods are there?" The response is then given: "One: Who is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. These three are one" (p. 5). See also the MEC *A Short Scriptural Catechism*

*Intended for the Use of the Methodist Societies* (Philadelphia: Henry Tuckniss, 1795), the first two questions on p. 5; *Catechism of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1852), questions 13-18; *A Methodist Catechism, Methodist Church in Ireland* (London: Epworth, 1948), questions 7-8; *The Senior Catechism of the Methodist Church* (London: Methodist Publishing House, 1952), questions 3-18; and *A Catechism for the People Called Methodists* (London: Methodist Publishing House, 1989), questions 53-62, 65. However, initial catechisms of the Wesleyan Methodist Church (GBr) omit specific reference to the persons of the Trinity; see also Thomas Wood, *A Catechism*, 7th ed. (London: T. Cordeaux, 1817); and *The Catechisms of the Wesleyan Methodists* (London: T. Cordeaux, 1823).

31. Richard Watson, *Theological Institutes: or, A View of the Evidences, Doctrines, Morals, and Institutions of Christianity* (New York: Lane & Tippett, 1856), §II:15, "Divine Worship Paid to Christ" (1:596-616).

32. William Burt Pope, *A Compendium of Christian Theology: Being Analytical Outlines of a Course of Theological Study, Biblical, Dogmatic, Historical*, 2d ed. (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1880-81) 1:282. More complete references to the doctrine of the Trinity in the works of Wesleyan theologians studied by preachers are as follows: Watson, *Theological Institutes* 1:447-642; Summers, *Systematic Theology*, 1:147-57; Pope, *Compendium* 1:255-86; John Miley, *Systematic Theology*, 2 vols. (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1892-94) 1:228-75; and H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology*, 3 vols. (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill, 1943) 1:393-439. For secondary studies of the doctrine of the Trinity in nineteenth-century Methodist circles, see Dunlap, "Methodist Theology"; and Sam Powell, "The Doctrine of the Trinity in 19th Century American Wesleyanism, 1850-1900," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 18:2 (Fall 1983): 33-46. I would have to register a dissent on Powell's initial comment that the doctrine of the Trinity had the status of "a vulgar joke in polite company" among nineteenth-century Methodists. Although the case could be made that Wesleyans in general took the doctrine of the Trinity for granted and so did not make an original contribution to it, it is also the case that the doctrine of the Trinity was centrally taught in all nineteenth-century Wesleyan communities of which I am aware. Treatments of the doctrine of the Trinity by more recent Wesleyan systematic theologians would include Colin Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), 93-97; Lycurgus M. Starkey Jr., "The Holy Trinity," *Encyclopedia of World Methodism* 2:2366-77; Geoffrey Wainwright, "Methodism and Apostolic Faith," in *What Should Methodists Teach*, ed. M. Douglas Meeks (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1990), 101-17; Bryant, "Trinity and Hymnody"; and Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994), 136-40.

33. See the conclusion of Albert C. Knudson, *The Doctrine of God* (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1930), 422-28; quotation given is on p. 427.

34. See also Langford, *Practical Divinity*, 177-81, although Langford stresses Knudson's belief that his views affirmed the "central intention of the doctrine of the Trinity" (p. 180). See also Knudson's essay "Henry Clay Sheldon—Theologian" in *Wesleyan Theology: A Sourcebook*, ed. Thomas Langford (Durham, N.C.: Labyrinth Press, 1984), 162-73; especially Knudson's comments on Sheldon's trinitarian theology, pp. 170-71.

35. In fact, the method of Knudson's book was to give an account of traditional doctrinal teachings and then to offer contemporary ways of thinking about them, not prescribing his own views or insisting that they were the church's teachings, but opening students up to think critically and creatively for themselves.

36. The following verse, for instance, expresses the doctrine of circum-  
incession:

God from hence, the God supreme  
 We One and Many know:  
 Every act that flows from Him  
 Doth from Three persons flow:  
 Spoken by three is every word:  
 And prostrate at thy throne of grace,  
 Holy, holy, holy Lord  
 The Triune God we praise.

*Poet. Works* 7:272; cited in Wilma J. Quantrille, "The Triune God in the Hymns of Charles Wesley" (Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 1989), 119.

37. Candidates for ordination as elders in the UMC are asked if they have studied the doctrines of the denomination, if they believe these doctrines to be consistent with the Scriptures, and if they will "preach and maintain them" (*Discipline/UMC* 1996, ¶ 327, questions 8-10). Candidates for ordination in the MC (GBr) are historically asked, "Do you believe the doctrines of the Christian faith as this Church has received them?" And of ministers it is annually asked, "Does he believe and preach our doctrines?" (George, "Foundational Documents," 261; citing the *Constitutional Practice and Discipline* for 1977 [p. 310] and 1979 [p. 400] and the *Methodist Service Book* [1975], p. G9).

38. See *An Ordinal: The United Methodist Church: Adopted for Official Alternative Use by the 1980 General Conference* (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1980), 47-48, for one example of the ordination prayer without specified wording.

39. *The United Methodist Book of Worship* (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1992), 677. There is another revised service order currently under consideration in the wake of the 1996 decision to establish a permanent order of deacons, but the proposed service also has the traditional wording.

40. *Hymns*, no. 225, *Works* 7:363.

41. The first Article of Religion of the Church of England asserts that God is one and eternal, "without body, parts, or passions" (Lat. *incorporalis, impartibilis, impassibilis*). See also Calvin, *Institutes*, I:10.2 and III:25.4.

42. *Hymns*, no. 231, pt. 1, *Works* 7:370.

43. Wesley, "The Character of a Methodist," *Works* 9:32-43. Wesley indicated twenty-five years later that "The Character of a Methodist" had been inspired by "the character of a perfect Christian drawn by Clemens Alexandrinus"; Letter to the editor of *Lloyd's Evening Post* (5 March 1767), *Letters* (Telford) 5:43. See also Ted A. Campbell, *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1991), 57; and Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, book 7, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (reprint edition, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971) 2:523-56. Charles Wesley wrote a poem entitled "On Clemens Alexandrinus's Description of a Perfect Christian," *Poet. Works* 1:34-36.

44. See Sermon 26, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Discourse VI," §3.7, *Works* 1:580-81; Sermon 54, "On Eternity," §20, *Works* 2:371-72; Sermon 118, "On the Omnipresence of God," §1.2-3, *Works* 4:42; and Sermon 120, "The Unity of the Divine Being," §§2-8, *Works* 4:61-3. On Wesley's appropriation of the Alexandrian tradition of the pursuit of divine virtues or attributes in the sanctification of the believer, see David Bundy, "Christian Virtue: John Wesley and the Alexandrian Tradition," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 26:1 (Spring 1991): 139-63; and Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 50-55. Nos. 231 and 232 in *Hymns* (*Works* 7:370-73) are entitled "The Attributes of God," and describe God's immortality, perfection, wisdom, power, infinity, eternity, greatness, unchangeableness, omniscience, benevolence, love, holiness, and omnipotence. These appear in the section "For Believers Rejoicing," and the implication is that believers rejoice in the attributes of God. The joint *Methodist Hymnal* of 1932 has subsections on God's "Majesty and Power" (nos. 59-67) and God's "Love and Mercy" (nos. 75-82). Similarly, the *Hymnal/AME* 1984 has subsections on God's "Majesty and Power" (nos. 52-74) and God's "Love and Mercy" (nos. 75-85). The MC (GBr) *Hymns and Psalms* of 1983 has subsections on "God's Creating and Sustaining Power" (nos. 21-29), "God's Revealing and Transforming Power" (nos. 30-48), "God's Justice and Perfection" (nos. 49-61), and "God's Patience and Guidance" (nos. 62-73).

45. For a discussion of divine attributes in Wesleyan theologies prescribed for study by preachers, see Watson, *Theological Institutes* 1:447-642; Summers, *Systematic Theology* 1:70-109; Pope, *Compendium* 1:287-358; Miley, *Systematic Theology* 1:174-222; and Wiley, *Christian Theology* 1:290-392. Some commentary on these is offered in Dunlap, "Methodist Theology," 144-48, 287-92.

46. Pope, *Compendium* 1:287-358.



47. See Ted A. Campbell, "The Mystery of the First Article of Religion, and the Mystery of Divine Passibility," *OXFORDnotes* 4:1 (24 May 1996), 5.

48. Sermon 120, "On the Unity of the Divine Being," §8, *Works* 4:63.

49. Summers, *Systematic Theology* 1:80-82. See also David Bundy, "Christian Virtue," 147; and Roberta C. Bondi, *To Love as God Loves: Conversations with the Early Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 57-77. Both of these contemporary Methodist authors explain the appropriateness of speaking of passionlessness, in a carefully defined sense, as one aspect of the Christian's endeavor.

50. Hymns, no. 211, *Works* 7:345.

51. Fanny J. Crosby, "Though Your Sins Be as Scarlet," cited from *Hymnal/AME* 1984, no. 279.

52. Langford, *Practical Divinity*, 119-24, 175-81.

53. See Campbell, *Christian Confessions* 3.2.1 (especially p. 146); and John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology*, 2d ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1977), 163.

54. Sermon 110, "Free Grace," §§20-27, *Works* 3:542-63.

55. Wesley's short treatise entitled "Thoughts upon God's Sovereignty" (*Works* [Jackson] 10:361-63) makes a sharp distinction between God's role as Creator and God's role as Governor, and maintains that in the former role God requires full justice, but in the latter role God allows the grace of divine mercy. Again, Wesley will not allow that divine goodness can be undermined by divine sovereignty or power.

56. Wesley, "Predestination Calmly Considered," §§50-54, *Works* (Jackson) 10:232-36.

57. See also Powell, "Doctrine of the Trinity."

58. Robert E. Chiles, *Theological Transition in American Methodism, 1790-1935* (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965), chapter 5, "From Free Grace to Free Will," pp. 144-83.

59. E. S. Brightman, *The Finding of God* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1931), 94-122; John B. Cobb Jr., *God and the World* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 87-102; and Schubert Ogden, "Evil and Belief in God: The Distinctive Relevance of a 'Process Theology,'" *Perkins School of Theology Journal* 31 (1978): 29-34.

60. On Wesley's general sense of the goodness of creation, see Sermon 56, "God's Approbation of His Works," *Works* 2:396-97; Sermon 77, "Spiritual Worship," §3.7, *Works* 3:88-102; and *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation, or A Compendium of Natural Philosophy*, 2d ed. (Bristol: William Pine, 1770), especially 2:184.

61. See the MC (GBr) *Hymns and Psalms* 1983, subsection on "The Natural World," (nos. 329-340); *Hymnal/AME* 1984, subsection on God as "Creator," (nos. 47-51); and *Hymnal/UMC* 1989, subsection on "Creation" (nos. 144-152).

62. The Cambridge Platonists of the seventeenth century, followed by John Norris of Bemerton, served as a channel through which ancient Alexandrian cosmology and epistemology influenced Wesley. See also John C. English, "John Wesley's Indebtedness to John Norris," *Church History* 60 (1991): 55-69.

63. A quotation from *Paradise Lost*, iv. 677-78, given in various forms in Sermon 70, "The Case of Reason Impartially Considered," §2.1, *Works* 2:593; Sermon 71, "Of Good Angels," Introduction, §3, *Works* 3:5; Sermon 117, "The Discoveries of Faith," §6, *Works* 4:31; Sermon 119, "Walking by Sight, and Walking by Faith," §5, *Works* 4:50; and *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, §10, *Works* 11:48. There was a considerable body of literature available in Wesley's time speculating on the nature of angels and demons, a body of literature which Albert Outler describes in his Introduction to the sermons "Of Good Angels" and "Of Evil Angels" (in *Works* 3:3ff.).

64. *Hymns*, no. 36, *Works* 7:125.

65. Charles Wesley, "And Can It Be," stanza 2, *Hymns*, no. 193, *Works* 7:322.

66. Charles Wesley, "O the Depth of Love Divine," *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, no. 57, cited from *Hymnal/UMC* 1989, no. 627.

67. Watson, *Theological Institutes* does not deal with the issue of creation as a separate topic. Summers, *Systematic Theology* does in 1:110-15 (angels on pp. 112-13); Pope, *Compendium* treats creation in 1:361-436 (angels and spirits on pp. 408-16); Miley, *Systematic Theology* treats "God in Creation" in 1:276-308 (angels on pp. 289-91); and Wiley, *Christian Theology* treats cosmology in 1:440-77 (angels and spirits on pp. 472-77).

68. *Hymnal/UMC* 1989, 34 (renunciations in the baptismal rite).

69. And the Deistic claims ran contrary to more conventional theologies of providence that Wesley had studied, such as John Wilkins, *A Discourse Concerning the Beauty of Providence*, 6th ed. (1680); see also Outler's comment in *Works* 2:534. Compare as well Calvin, *Institutes*, I:5.6-8.

70. Sermon 67, "On Divine Providence" §1, *Works* 2:535.

71. John Wesley, Letter to Conyers Middleton (4 January 1749), *Letters* (Telford) 2:312-88. There are numerous references in the *Journal* and various letters to miraculous signs in the early Methodist movement. See also Ted A. Campbell, "John Wesley and Conyers Middleton on Divine Intervention in History," *Church History* 55 (1985): 39-49; and Campbell, *Wesley and Christian Antiquity*, 83-86.

72. Sermon 4, "Scriptural Christianity," Introduction, §§2-5, *Works* 1:160-61.

73. However, Wesley sometimes used "miracle" to describe spiritual events such as inspiration, conviction, and the like.

74. Sermon 67, "On Divine Providence," §§27-29, *Works* 2:548-50.

75. *Hymns*, no. 250, *Works* 7:391.

76. Among Methodist and Wesleyan theologians prescribed for study by preachers, see the following on providence and miracles: Watson, *Theological Institutes* 1:266; Summers, *Systematic Theology* 1:115-20; Pope, *Compendium* 1:437-40; Miley, *Systematic Theology* 1:309-49; and Wiley, *Christian Theology* 1:477-87. For a survey of the nineteenth-century theologians, see Dunlap, "Methodist Theology," 153-54, 293-95. Among contemporary Methodist theologians, see Williams, *Wesley's Theology Today*, 98 and 108; and Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 60.

77. See the MC (GBr) *Hymns and Psalms* 1983, subsection on "God's Creating and Sustaining Power" (nos. 21-29); *Hymnal/AME* 1984, subsection on "His Presence" (nos. 81-87); and *Hymnal/UMC* 1989, subsection on "Providence" (nos. 126-143).

78. Civilla D. Martin, "His Eye Is on the Sparrow," cited from *Hymnal/AME* 1984, no. 435.

79. Here I have in mind the work of Robert Cushman and Albert Outler and the generation of Wesley studies spawned by them. Both were students of Robert L. Calhoun at Yale, a scholar and teacher of the history of Christian thought.

80. See stanza 1 of Charles Wesley's famous hymn "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling," *Hymns*, no. 374, *Works* 7:545.

## 6. *Perichoresis* (Moltmann)

1. See also M. Douglas Meeks, *Origins of the Theology of Hope* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974); Christopher Morse, *The Logic of Promise in Moltmann's Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979); and A. J. Conyers, *God, Hope, and History* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1988).

2. See Steve Bouma-Prediger, *The Greening of Theology: The Ecological Models of Rosemary Radford Ruether, Joseph Sittler, and Jürgen Moltmann* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995); and Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 183ff.

3. Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), chapter 9, "The Sabbath: The Feast of Creation," pp. 276-96.

4. An exception is Max Jammer, *Concepts of Space* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1954).

5. Arnold Goldberg, *Untersuchungen über die Vorstellung von der Schekhinah in der frühen rabbinischen Literatur* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969); and Bernd Janowski, *Gottes Gegenwart in Israel: Beiträge zur Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1993).

6. Petr Alekseevich Kropotkin, *Gegenseitige Hilfe in der Tier-und*

## Abbreviations

AME	The African Methodist Episcopal Church (1816–)
AMEZ	The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (1820–)
CME	The (Colored) Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (1870–)
CN	The Church of the Nazarene (1907–)
MC	The Methodist Church, U.S. (1939–68)
MC (GBr)	The Methodist Church, Great Britain (1932–)
MEC	The Methodist Episcopal Church (1784–1939)
MECS	The Methodist Episcopal Church, South (1844–1939)
UBC	The United Brethren Church (1800–1946)
UMC	The United Methodist Church, U.S. (1968–)

*Christian Library*      *A Christian Library: Consisting of Extracts from, and Abridgements of, the Choicest Pieces of Practical Divinity which have been Published in the English Tongue*, 50 vols. (Bristol: F. Farley, 1749–55; reprinted in 30 vols., London: T. Cordeux, 1819–27).

*Hymnal/AME 1984*      *African Methodist Episcopal Church Hymnal* (Nashville: African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1984).

*Hymnal/MC 1964*      *The Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1964).

## ABBREVIATIONS

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- Hymnal/UMC 1989* *The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1989).
- Hymns* *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists*, ed. Franz Hildebrandt and Oliver Beckerlegge (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983); volume 7 of *Works*.
- John Wesley* *John Wesley*, ed. Albert C. Outler (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).
- Letters (Telford)* *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, ed. John Telford, 8 vols. (London: Epworth, 1931 [N.B.: Use only for letters dated after 1755]).
- NT Notes* *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, 3rd corrected ed. (Bristol: Graham and Pine, 1760–62; many later reprints).
- Poet. Works* *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, ed. George Osborn, 13 vols. (London: Wesleyan-Methodist Conference, 1868–72).
- Works* *The Works of John Wesley*; begun as “The Oxford Edition of the Works of John Wesley” (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975–83); continued as “The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley” (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984–); 15 of 35 vols. published to date.
- Works (Jackson)* *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson, 14 vols. (London, 1872; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958).