

CHAPTER 7

Essence and Energies: Classical Trinitarianism and “Enthusiasm”

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The wind was again fair. He read Macarius and sang. At 6:30 they reached Bennett's Point. At 8:00, in the boat, he read prayers and expounded. For two hours it rained, but he still read Macarius and sang until noon, when they dined on bread and butter and were not a little affrighted by the falling of the mast. But he again read Macarius and sang. They lost themselves but found their way, and rowed and sang and read and prayed until, at 8:30, they lay down and slept.¹

So the entry in John Wesley's diary for 30 July 1736. The date should indicate that this was during his mission in Georgia. According to the *Journal*, on his trip across the Atlantic Wesley daily checked his reading of Scripture against the early authors; clearly Macarius was among them. But Macarius was not just an author to whom Wesley turned prior to his warmed heart. When in 1750 he published the multivolume *Christian Library* for the education of his followers, a translation of some homilies of Macarius appeared in the very first volume.² We need to know more about these texts that were so important to Wesley.

Wesley and “Macarius”

But the question is what do we need to know? After all, Wesley could not have known that by now the homilies would appear under

the name of Pseudo-Macarius and would be attributed to an unknown, probably Messalian and therefore suspicious, author from Syria. Surely, one might argue, it is most important to understand how Wesley would have read them. As a gesture of respect for that view, I shall not use the term *Pseudo-Macarius* (*Macarius* will appear instead in quotation marks). The Messalian origin of these writings increases their interest for Wesley studies, for the Messalians were regarded with suspicion because of their "enthusiasm" and therefore for the radical challenge they posed to the Orthodox ecclesiastical establishment even as they deeply influenced it; you could hardly have a neater historical parallel! Current critical scholarship also provides an important clue to their significance for a discussion of the Trinity and Wesleyan theology, for it links the corpus of Macarian writings with Gregory of Nyssa, one of the great Cappadocian Fathers involved in the final controversies that forged the classic doctrine of the Trinity. Although neither "Macarius" nor Wesley provide us with much discussion of trinitarianism, my contention is that both presuppose and illuminate a robust trinitarian doctrine in which the distinction between essence and energies is fundamental. It is this that the following discussion is intended to clarify.

Wesley's introduction to the Macarian homilies in the *Christian Library* shows that he owed much to his reading of "Macarius." Believing they were written by the "great Macarius of Egypt," he offers an exemplary sketch of his life, suggesting that "what he continually labors to cultivate in himself and others is, the real life of God in heart and soul, that kingdom of God, which consists in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."³

Commending the homilies, he deduces that "Macarius" was educated in the holy Scriptures, and his knowledge of them was "not merely literal or speculative" but "true and practical," "able to save his soul":

There is visibly to be distinguished in our author, a rich, sublime, and noble vein of piety, but that perfectly serious, sober and unaffected; natural and lively, but sedate and deep withal. Whatever he insists upon is essential, is durable, is necessary.

Using phrases that indicate his perception of congruence between his own thought and that of "Macarius," he writes:

He is ever quickening and stirring up his audience, endeavouring to kindle in them a steady zeal, an earnest desire, and inflamed ambition,

to recover that Divine image we were made in; to be made conformable to Christ our Head; to be daily sensible more and more of our living union with him as such; and discovering it, as occasion requires, in all the genuine fruits of an holy life and conversation, in such a victorious faith as overcomes the world, and working by love, is ever fulfilling the whole law of God.

Clearly Wesley and "Macarius" have a common practical theology, a common drive toward perfection as the goal of the Christian life, a common emphasis on the incarnation and the Holy Spirit as the generators of perfection, a common stress on the love of God. This creates a dynamic theology of overflowing divine energies. The reader who knows Wesley will find familiar thoughts on page after page of "Macarius," not only ideas and phrases but favorite scriptural texts. But to fully grasp the significance of their understanding of the divine energies, it is vital to bear in mind the classic trinitarianism which both of them presuppose. To that we therefore turn.

Classical Trinitarianism

To an Anglican of Wesley's time, the *Book of Common Prayer* would have presented the Trinity in the form of the Athanasian Creed, what many may feel is a catalogue of dry definitions. But Wesley most certainly read the Greek Fathers and he would have known, as "Macarius" did, that the most important thing about the doctrine is that it is not a definition.

The clinching debate in the fourth century was the struggle against Eunomius. Eunomius claimed to define God as *agenetos* (that is, the one being that has never come into being, but eternally is, has been, and will be). Logically, this definition could only apply to the Father, since the Son is *gen(n)etos* (that is, begotten, generated from the Father and therefore not within the definition). The crucial argument against this heresy was precisely the point that a person cannot define the being of God. To define God is to put bounds around the infinite or boundless, which is impossible. To claim to know God is to claim to comprehend or encompass the Divine Being in a finite human mind, which clearly reduces God to less than one of us, and that means God cannot be God. God's inherent incomprehensibility is fundamental. The doctrine of the Trinity is not, and can never be, a definition. The essence of God transcends human comprehension

and human language. But it is that basic agnosticism that makes God's energies so crucial.

The Cappadocian Fathers kept insisting that God's essence (*ousia*) is unknowable, but we know God through the divine *energeiai*, which means "activities" as much as "energies." They distinguished between *theologia* and *oikonomia*, essentially making the same point. Theology (*theologia*) concerns the mystery of the Divine Being in itself and is therefore beyond us, whereas we can discern something of the divine economy (*oikonomia*), for that refers to God's way of managing the creation, to the activities of God in relation to what is external to the Divine Being because created out of nothing. Thus the Greek word *oikonomia* covers providence, revelation, incarnation, sanctification, and the like; and there are signs of these divine activities around us in the created order. We can know the *energeiai*. "Macarius" and Wesley focused their attention on the latter, which is hardly surprising given the pragmatic and moral drive of their theology, but equally they challenged the presumption of claiming to comprehend the divine mystery.

Eunomius, our fourth-century gadfly, effectively distinguished the essence of God from that of the Son, and by implication from that of the Spirit. For him there was only one God. Despite these monotheistic claims, the Cappadocians vilified this doctrine as really pagan and polytheistic because it set up more than one supernatural being. But as they sought to embrace Father, Son, and Spirit within one and the same Divine Being, they ran the risk of tritheism themselves. Gregory of Nyssa wrote the treatise *Not Three Gods*. Basil, his elder brother, had insisted that a person cannot apply number to the divine and add up ($1 + 1 + 1 = 3$), for the Divine Being is inherently indivisible. Gregory and Basil insisted that divinity is not a class like humanity, to which a number of members can belong: Father, Son, and Spirit are not like Peter, James, and John. The Threeness and Oneness is not comprehensible in terms of human language and logic. Dare I suggest that there are good reasons here for being wary of using the doctrine of Trinity in speaking about community as if the internal relationships within God were known to us? The practical theology of both "Macarius" and Wesley presupposes a single divine activity, a single divine outpouring of love, all the energy of God being directed to one aim and having one divine source. What we know about is not God's internal relationships, but God's dynamic energies.

And yet the Cappadocians would argue that God cannot lie, and therefore what God has revealed of the divine self must be as true as it could be, given human limitations. God "accommodates" the divine self to what creatures can cope with. The Son is genuinely "son" of God in the truest sense of the word, even though God has no physical reproductive organs and therefore the sonship cannot be "literal." So we can meaningfully distinguish Father, Son, and Spirit, and indeed in the practical theology of Wesley and "Macarius," the divine persons have particular functions. Overwhelmingly, Wesley and "Macarius" speak of the Holy Spirit because their focus is upon the perfection and sanctification of believers through the Spirit's activities. But when they speak of the Holy Spirit, it is the activity of God as a whole that they imply, often linking it with the love of God displayed in the incarnation.

The work of the Holy Spirit, according to "Macarius" and Wesley, is to effect new birth and new creation, reversing the damage done by Adam's Fall, and making it possible for believers to be perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect. Again, the fourth-century context is significant, and for two reasons.

1. Against Arius, Athanasius had established the crucial distinction between the Creator and all things created. No longer could the issue of Christ's divinity be obscured by making him a preexistent Mediator yet not quite God. No longer could there be a kind of blurring between eternal souls and the divine. Eternity was a divine gift, not a right. Reason and life came from the divine Logos (the Eternal Word and Reason), with which Adam had originally been endowed but which he had subsequently lost. Through the incarnation the Logos was returned to humanity; through the Spirit that return was effected for individual human beings. Only if Word and Spirit were truly of God could human *theopoiesis* (divinization) occur. All is divine-saving gift.

2. But the gift is a process. The problem with perfection is that once it is attained human nature soon tires of it, like a child with too much ice cream. This was an old explanation of the Fall (particularly associated with Origen), and logically that meant that to reestablish perfection would only risk another catastrophe. Gregory of Nyssa saw the answer to the problem: A person cannot tire of God because there are always deeper depths to plumb and higher heights to attain. Complete knowledge of God is unattainable for any creature, as we have seen. So Gregory of Nyssa exploited God's incomprehen-

sibility as the ground for a never-ending journey into a dynamically conceived perfection. The spiritual journey goes from grace to grace, from one perfection to another. There is always more challenge, more heights appearing in the Cloud of the Presence. So there is the possibility of perpetual progress. Wesley and "Macarius" saw this in terms of new discoveries of humility and love.

So what is perfection? It is never something you can claim, though it remains ever the goal at which you aim. It is divine gift, the outworking of the energies of a God whose essence is beyond comprehension but whose activities in Christ and the Spirit are the "outskirts of his ways," the back parts that alone could be revealed to Moses as he hid in the cleft of the rock (see Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Moses*). The doctrinal debates of the fourth century have a significant bearing on aspects of faith that might be called mystical, devotional, and practical. It was the genius of "Macarius" and Wesley to see that this was what it was all about. Far from being a lifeless definition, the doctrine of the Trinity was the dynamic undergirding of the Christian life.

A Wesleyan Reading of "Macarius"

In this section, I want to illustrate themes that significantly stand out in the Macarian texts if the reader reads them with Wesleyan spectacles, and to offer selected passages with comment. The selection of passages is somewhat arbitrary and haphazard; I have emulated Wesley's instinctive and not overscrupulous scholarship. Both "Macarius" and Wesley kept saying the same sort of things over and over in various ways, and all I can offer is a sample.

Clearly the abridged bits from "Macarius" that John Wesley selected for the *Christian Library* would be the most significant indicators of his reading of these texts. But it is most unlikely that his own reading was confined to these. He knew his Greek, and in any case, in 1721 Thomas Haywood published the first English translation.⁴ The Macarian homilies had already influenced German Pietism and Wesley's father, Samuel. Unconscious of the anachronism, many believed that "Macarius" taught the doctrine of justification by faith. One thing that complicates the matter is that there are in the manuscript tradition several different collections. As a purely practical way forward, I have taken account of all the Macarian material now avail-

able in the new translation in the series *Classics of Western Spirituality* and therefore easily accessible to an English readership.⁵ Yet I will focus particularly on John Wesley's selection and translation of these materials because he, of course, chose English phrases that brought out the coherence of the theology of "Macarius" with his own.

We begin with Wesley's rendering of part of Homily 5 (Homily 4 in Wesley's abridged version):

[True Christians] have their heart and mind constantly taken up with the thoughts of Heaven; and, through the presence and participation of the Holy Spirit, do behold, as in a glass, the good things which are eternal, being born of God from above, and thought worthy to become the children of God in truth and power; and being arriv'd through many conflicts and labours, to a settled and fix'd state, to an exemption from trouble, to perfect rest, are never sifted more by unsettled and vain thoughts. Herein are they greater and better than the world; their mind, and the desire of their soul are in the peace of *Christ*, and the love of the Spirit; *they have pass'd from death to life*. Wherefore the alteration peculiar to Christians doth not consist in any outward fashions, but in the *renovation* of the mind, and the *peace* of the thoughts, and the *love* of the LORD, even the heavenly love. Herein Christians differ from all men besides. The LORD hath given them truly to believe on Him, and to be worthy of those spiritual good things. For the glory, and the beauty, and the heavenly riches of Christians are inexpressible, and purchased only with labour, and pains, and trials, and many conflicts. But the whole is owing to the grace of God. . . . Therefore ought every one of us to strive, and be diligent in vertue [sic], and to believe and to seek it of the LORD; that the inward man may be partaker of that glory in this present life, and have that holiness of the Spirit, that we may have at the resurrection wherewith to cover our naked bodies, and refresh us to all eternity in the kingdom of heaven.⁶

One hears the voice of Wesley, surely, yet it is "Macarius" in Wesleyan English. They are both interested in transformation, a renewal that comes from the grace of God through the activity of the Spirit, a new birth that turns Christians into children of God. This transformation that distinguishes Christians from others is an inner change, constituted of holiness and love. It comes from God and yet requires effort and struggle. Wesley's resolution of the tension between faith and works came from the synergism of Eastern theology transmitted through "Macarius."

Our first passage then quickly sketches their common practical

theology, and hints at a common set of favorite texts. Homily 25 (not among those translated by Wesley) confirms that this is what draws their language together. For text after text of Scripture that "Macarius" quotes or alludes to would prove to be significant in Wesley's own works, if a full study were undertaken. Here "Macarius" indicates what perfection would be by describing what we are "not yet":

We have not yet accepted the happiness in Christ's salvation, for "the sting of death" (1 Cor. 15:55) has its roots in us. "We have not yet put on the new man who has been created after God in holiness" (Eph. 4:24), because we have not yet put off "the old man that is corrupt according to the sinful lusts" (Eph. 4:22). We have not yet "given birth to the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:49), nor have we been made "conformed to his glory" (Phil. 3:21). We have not yet adored "God in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24), since "sin reigns in our mortal body" (Rom. 6:12). . . . We have not yet put on the armor of light (Rom. 13:12) because we have not yet thrown off the armor and spears and the works of darkness. We have not yet been "transformed by the renewal of the mind," since we are still "conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2) "in the vanity of the mind" (Eph. 4:17).

We are not yet "glorified with Christ" because we have not yet "suffered with him" (Rom. 8:17). . . . We have not yet become "heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17) because the "spirit of bondage" is still in us and not that "of adoption" (Rom. 8:15). We have not yet been made "the temple of God" (1 Cor. 3:16) and the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. . . . We have not yet received the likeness (Gen. 1:26) of the LORD, nor have we become "participators of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4).⁷

Comparable collages of texts are easy to find in Wesley's published works. Take the sermon "Awake, Thou That Sleepest": "Art thou 'partaker of the divine nature'? Knowest thou not that Christ is in thee, except thou be reprobate? Knowest thou that 'God dwelleth in thee, and thou in God, by his Spirit, which he hath given thee'? Knowest thou not that 'thy body is a temple of the Holy Ghost, which thou hast of God'?"⁸

Or consider the constant return to the theme of adoption. There is the whole sermon "The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption," but I quote the summary from his earlier sermon "Salvation by Faith":

They are saved from fear. Not indeed from a filial fear of offending, but from all servile fear. . . . "They have not received again the spirit of

bondage, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father: the Spirit itself also bearing witness with their spirit, that they are the children of God. . . ." Thus they have "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . They rejoice in hope of the glory of God. . . . And the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts through the Holy Ghost which is given unto them."⁹

Readers of Wesley will recognize here recurrent themes, and it is not surprising that he should have spoken of checking out his reading of Scripture with early authorities. "Macarius" was one of those who led him to see how certain biblical texts, phrases, and themes could be woven together into a "Plain Account of Genuine Christianity." That was, of course, the title of one of Wesley's pamphlets, and it is notable that in it he acknowledges reverence for "the primitive Fathers," listing several and deliberately adding "Macarius." "I reverence them," he says, "because they describe true genuine Christianity, and direct us to the strongest evidence of the Christian doctrine."¹⁰ "Christianity, considered as an inward principle," declares Wesley, "is the completion of all [biblical] promises. It is holiness and happiness, the image of God impressed on a created spirit; a fountain of peace and love springing up into everlasting life."¹¹ Returning to his rendering of "Macarius," we can trace an important influence on his understanding of the operation of grace, the inwardness of religion, the circumcision of the heart, the fundamental principle of love.

A man goes in to bow the knee, and his heart is fill'd with a divine power, and his soul rejoiceth with the LORD, as the bride with her bridegroom. The inward man is snatched away to yet farther devotion, into the unfathomable depth of that world in much sweetness, insomuch that his whole mind is estrang'd, being rais'd and carried off thither; so that, for that time there is a cloud of oblivion upon the thoughts of earthly wisdom; for his thoughts are fill'd with divine and heavenly things, things infinite and incomprehensible, certain wonderful things, which are impossible to be utter'd.

Sometimes the love flames out and kindles with greater strength; but at other times more slow and gentle. . . . At another season the light which was shining in the heart, has disclosed a yet more inward, profound, and concealed light, insomuch that the whole man being absorbed in that sweetness and contemplation, was master of himself no longer, but was to this world as a mere fool and barbarian, by reason of the superabundant love and sweetness of the hidden mysteries.

So that the person being for that time set at liberty, arrives to such degrees of perfection, as to become pure and free from sin. . . . And one that is rich in grace, at all times, by night and by day, continues in a perfect state, free and pure, ever captivated with love, and elevated to God.¹²

Both Wesley and "Macarius" imply a dynamic view of perfection: The perfection of a babe in Christ will be superseded by the perfection of the mature. Both tend to confess that though perfection is the goal, they have never yet met a perfect Christian. Neither were oblivious to the possibilities of slippage, to the devices of Satan and the problems of temptation. What they set against this was the power and work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. But this itself meant that it was impossible to take pride in spiritual achievements. The ultimate Christian virtue had to be humility before God. And this would involve a sense that there is no end to hungering and thirsting after righteousness, there is no perfect stopping place on the journey, and there are stages on an ever-evolving way:

The soul that is truly a lover of God, and a lover of *Christ*, though it does righteous works without number, demeans itself however, as if it had wrought just nothing at all, thro' the insatiable love it beareth to the LORD. . . . Tho' it had been thought worthy of the several gifts of the Spirit, or favour'd with revelations and heavenly mysteries; yet by reason of its immense love for the LORD, doth it seem to itself as if it had just nothing in possession: But hungering and thirsting thro' faith and love, it is carried on insatiably in the persevering spirit of prayer to the mysteries of grace, and to every degree of vertue [sic]. And being wounded by the heavenly Spirit, continually exciting an inflam'd desire after the heavenly Bridegroom, and longing to be completely admitted to the mystical and inexpressible communion with Him in the sanctification of the Spirit . . . it . . . becomes conformable to his death, ever waiting in the abundance of desire to die for the sake of *Christ*, and expecting to obtain under the conduct of the Spirit, an entire redemption from sin, and the darkness of the affections: That being purified by the Spirit, sanctified in soul and body, it may be a vessel clean, prepar'd for the susception of the heavenly ointment, and the residence of *Christ* the true and heavenly King. And then is the soul filled with heavenly life, and becomes the pure habitation of the Holy Spirit.

But these are heights which the soul does not reach all at once; but through many labours and conflicts, with variety of trials and temptations, it receives spiritual growth and improvement . . .¹³

With that passage we begin to move to the point and, I hope, to recall the earlier exposition of fourth-century theology. This spiritual journey has as its prior condition a transcendent divine reality whose mystery is never wholly grasped but whose energies are felt and known in the life of the true Christian, and that single divine reality is loved as Father and as Bridegroom through the holy fire of love imparted by the Spirit. Trinitarian theology alone accounts for Christian experience. Though Wesley and "Macarius" rarely discuss the doctrine, their theology presupposes it.

This claim is borne out by the extraordinary homily set at the head of the collection and included in Wesley's translation.¹⁴ Homily 1 is described as "an allegorical explication of the vision describ'd by the prophet Ezekiel"; that is the vision of God's chariot-throne found in Ezekiel 1. It may be doubted whether Wesley or "Macarius" knew anything of the significance of this passage in Jewish mystical traditions, but it is worth noting that in contemplating this passage, they join the select company of those who dared to consider the vision of the Merkabah (chariot-throne) despite rabbinic warnings against it. This is a passage that has traditionally generated dangerous speculations but also points to the impossibility of attaining a comprehensive view of God.

"Macarius" begins by describing Ezekiel's vision, noting it is (as Wesley rendered it) "a vision full of mysteries surpassing utterance."¹⁵ The chariot is described, with its strange cherubim, each with four faces, wings and wheels to every face, and eyes all over their forms. The Spirit was in the wheels, and on the throne "he saw as it were the likeness of a man." But then "Macarius" turns to what this "signified, or shadow'd forth beforehand"; it was "a matter mysterious and divine," "made manifest at the appearing of *Christ*." It becomes apparent that the throne is the soul, and the mystery that the prophet saw is "the [human] soul as she is hereafter to receive her LORD, and become herself the very throne of his glory."

The soul that is worthy is to be "irradiated by the beauty of his ineffable glory" and become "all light, all face, and all eye." Nothing in her will be darkened: "but she is all entirely wrought into light and spirit, and is all over full of eyes" and "appears to be altogether face, by reason of the inexpressible beauty of the glory of the light of *Christ*, that rides and sits upon her." Like the sun, she is without defect.

So the soul that is thoroughly illuminated by the inexpressible beauty of the glory of the light of the face of *Christ*, and partakes of the Holy Spirit in perfection, and is thought worthy to become the mansion and the throne of God, becomes all eye, all light, and all face, and all glory and all spirit; *Christ* Himself who governs and drives, and carries and supports her, thus preparing her, and thus gracing and adorning her with spiritual beauty.¹⁶

This is an amazing adaptation of Plato's chariot-image of the soul, with the emotions and passions as horses governed and tamed by Reason. In Christian thought the Logos or Reason is, of course, Christ. So "Macarius" sees Christ as the charioteer, governing and restraining the soul's desires with the reins of the Spirit.

If therefore thou art become the throne of God, and the heavenly Charioteer hath seated Himself upon thee, and thy soul is become all over a spiritual eye; and thou art nourish'd with that food of the Spirit, and hast been made to drink of the living water, and art cloth'd with the garments of light; lo, then thou livest indeed, even the life which is truly eternal.¹⁷

So "Macarius" has not been tempted by Ezekiel's notorious vision to indulge in speculations about the being of God, nor does he at any point explore the inner communion of the persons of the Trinity. Rather, the whole discussion focuses on the divine energies as they affect the soul of the creature. But clearly, though it is the work of the one God, it is the Spirit of Christ that effects it. And just as Wesley keeps referring back to the atonement as the foundation of a salvation that is worked out through the sanctification of the Spirit, so "Macarius" punctuates his writings with reference to the incarnation as the crucial act that made the restoration of the divine image in humanity possible. All is of grace, and all is mystery in the proper sense. For, to quote Wesley:

A "Christian" cannot think of the Author of his being without abasing himself before him; without a deep sense of the distance between a worm of earth and him that "sitteth on the circle of the heavens." In his presence he sinks into the dust, knowing himself to be less than nothing in his eye and being conscious, in a manner words cannot express, of his own littleness, ignorance, foolishness.¹⁸

The attitude is "awful reverence" and "tenderest gratitude." All the Christian needs to know is that God is love, and he or she is to be

conformed to that likeness. "This is Christian faith in the general notion of it. In its more particular notion, it is a divine evidence or conviction wrought in my heart that God is reconciled to me through his Son, inseparably joined with a confidence in him as a gracious, reconciled Father."¹⁹

John Wesley implies not only a trinitarian doctrine, but also a doctrine of God that reckons with the old distinction between "essence" and "energies."

Enthusiasm and Community

Fourth-century ecclesiastics accused the Messalians of being "Enthusiasts." Theodoret said this was because they had come under the influence of a demon that they supposed to be the advent of the Holy Spirit.²⁰ They were mocked for claiming to live in continuous prayer (the Syriac behind the name "Messalian" means "praying people") and they were also known as Euchites (from the Greek for "praying"). Their confusion of dreams and fantasies with prophecies, and their indifference to the sacraments are other charges we find. They claimed that the indwelling Holy Spirit with visible signs of his presence freed the body of its passions and the soul of sin; then the recipient of this gift could see with the eyes the holy Trinity. Messalianism, we are told, infected the monasteries of Syria and Asia Minor.

The link between the Macarian texts and the Messalians has been recognized and discussed for a long time. Columba Stewart has recently made a comparative study of the spiritual vocabulary of the Macarian texts and concluded that opposition to the Messalians arose out of a failure in cross-cultural understanding.²¹ Greeks failed to appreciate the devotional language of Syriac Christianity; in the Greek of the Macarian texts, we see the suspicious elements integrated into their context. Now the scholarly debates about the history need not detain us, but the reason I mention this is that the words selected for Stewart's study unconsciously reinforce the link between "Macarius" and Wesley. Here is a Greek vocabulary expressing assurance and experience, and pointing to the evidence for Christianity lying in the Spirit's witness in the heart. Metaphors of "mixing" and "blending," while "underscoring the pervasive presence of sin in the soul also describe the close union of the soul with God."²²

It is in this context that *koinonia* and its related words appear. Communion is about divine "indwelling," another metaphor that expresses well the transformation that comes when sin is evicted and the Holy Spirit takes up residence. "Being filled with the Spirit" or "filled with grace" is identified as "one of the more characteristic Ps. Macarian themes."²³ Stewart opens his study with the following words:

Because the gospel speaks both individually to the heart and universally to the world, Christians have struggled since the day of Pentecost to integrate the believer's quest for deepened faith with the Church's communal witness. This integration becomes threatened when individuals or groups are convinced that Christ's imperative, "Be perfect as my Father in heaven is perfect," is addressed especially to them. . . . Any claim to perfection and exclusivism invites notice and often sparks controversy. In every case the key question is the same: to what extent does an individual's response to the Spirit depend upon or oblige participation in the larger Church?²⁴

Wesley's achievement was to remove Macarian themes from the old exclusive world of monks and hermits, to democratize them and set them in the context of a social gospel. Yet he, too, was accused of "enthusiasm," and his sense of communion was principally that of the divine indwelling Spirit filling the heart. As Outler put it:

When his doctrines of assurance and experience were labeled "enthusiasm," he carefully distinguished between "enthusiasm proper" and that true earnestness based upon the Spirit's witness in our hearts. . . . Wesley . . . had learned about the goal of the Christian life from . . . the *teleiosis* of "Macarius," Gregory and Ephraem. . . . "Perfect love," as Wesley understood it, is the conscious certainty, *in a present moment*, of the fullness of one's love for God and neighbor, as this love has been initiated and fulfilled by God's gifts of faith, hope, and love. This is not a state but a dynamic process.²⁵

Wesley consistently opposed the enthusiasm of some of his followers. He had looked for the fruits of faith and love, righteousness and holiness, joy and peace. But instead the movement had brought forth wild grapes: "enthusiasm, imaginary inspiration, ascribing to the all-wise God all the wild, absurd, self-inconsistent dreams of a heated imagination," and above all pride, prejudice, mutual condemnation, "all totally subversive of that brotherly love which is the

badge of the Christian profession."²⁶ It is not after all surprising that the nickname "Methodist" stuck rather than "Enthusiast."

Yet "Macarius" and Wesley see Christianity in terms of a divine "inbreathing," an *enthousiasmos* that is both power and communion and is grounded in a doctrine of the Trinity that reserves the mystery of the divine essence while experiencing the divine energies in the transformation of both heart and life. The best expression of their common theology is a Charles Wesley hymn:

Father of everlasting grace,
 Thy goodness and thy truth we praise,
 Thy goodness and thy truth we prove;
 Thou hast in honour of thy Son,
 The gift unspeakable sent down,
 The Spirit of life, and power, and love.

Send us the Spirit of thy Son,
 To make the depths of Godhead known,
 To make us share the life divine;
 Send him the sprinkled blood t'apply,
 Send him our souls to sanctify,
 And show and seal us ever thine.

So shall we pray, and never cease,
 So shall we thankfully confess
 Thy wisdom, truth and power, and love,
 With joy unspeakable adore,
 And bless, and praise thee evermore,
 And serve thee as thy hosts above.

Till added to that heavenly choir,
 We raise our songs of triumph higher,
 And praise thee in a bolder strain,
 Out-soar the first-born seraph's flight,
 And sing, with all our friends in light,
 Thy everlasting love to man.²⁷

Theology 14 (1998): 403-23; and Geevarghese Mar Osthathios, *Theology of a Classless Society* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1959).

25. See Gideon Freudenthal, *Atom and Individual in the Age of Newton* (Boston: Reidel, 1986); and Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, 114-22.

26. Noam Chomsky, *Deterring Democracy* (New York: Verso, 1991).

27. See also Friedrich Kluge, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, 23d ed. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1995).

7. *Essence and Energies* (Young)

1. For the terse diary entries from which I have composed this narrative, see Wesley, diary (30 July 1736), *Works* 18:405-406.

2. See *Christian Library* 1:81-154.

3. This quotation and the following come from §7 of Wesley's Introduction in *Christian Library*, 1:83.

4. Thomas Haywood, *Primitive Morality: or, The Spiritual Homilies of St. Macarius the Egyptian* (London: W. Taylor, 1721). Wesley's abridged republication draws on Haywood.

5. *Pseudo-Macarius: The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter*, trans. George A. Maloney, S. J. (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1992). This work will be cited hereafter as *Macarius*.

6. Wesley, Homily 4.4-9, *Christian Library* 1:99-102. (*Macarius*, Homily 5.4-8, 64-73).

7. *Macarius*, Homily 25, 159-64; here p. 161.

8. Sermon 3, "Awake, Thou That Sleepest," §2.8, *Works* 1:149. This sermon is actually by Charles Wesley but was included by John in his earliest collection of published sermons.

9. Sermon 1, "Salvation by Faith," §2.4, *Works* 1:122. See also Sermon 9, "The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption," *Works* 1:249-66.

10. *A Plain Account of Genuine Christianity*, §3.11-12, *John Wesley*, 195.

11. *Ibid.*, §2.12, *John Wesley*, 191.

12. Wesley, Homily 5.1-3, *Christian Library* 1:102-103 (*Macarius*, Homily 8.1-3, 81-82).

13. Wesley, Homily 6.3-4, *Christian Library* 1:106-107 (*Macarius*, Homily 10.1-5, 88-90).

14. Wesley, Homily 1, *Christian Library* 1:84-90 (*Macarius*, Homily 1, 37-44).

15. This quote and the following are from *Christian Library* 1:85.

16. Wesley, Homily 1.3, *Christian Library* 1:86 (*Macarius*, Homily 1.2, 38).

17. Wesley, Homily 1.13, *Christian Library* 1:90 (*Macarius*, Homily 1.12, 44).

18. *A Plain Account of Genuine Christianity*, 1.2, *John Wesley*, 183.

19. *A Plain Account of Genuine Christianity*, 2.7, John Wesley, 189.
20. Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History*, book 4, chapter 10. See also Aelred Baker, "Messalianism: The Monastic Heresy," *Monastic Studies* 10 (1974):235-41.
21. Columba Stewart, OSB, *"Working the Earth of the Heart": The Messalian Controversy in History, Texts, and Language to A.D. 431* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991).
22. *Ibid.*, 170.
23. *Ibid.*, 223.
24. *Ibid.*, 1.
25. Outler, Introduction, John Wesley, 30-31.
26. Sermon 107, "On God's Vineyard," §5.2, *Works* 3:515.
27. *Hymns*, no. 366, *Works* 7:535-36.

8. Reflections (Beck)

1. The reports of some of the working groups can be found on the online version of *OXFORDnotes*: www.wesleyanstudies.org/OXFORDnotes.
2. Gabriel Setiloane's lecture is not included in this published collection. The interested reader will find the substance of the lecture in two of Setiloane's published works: *The Image of God Among the Sotho-Tswana* (Rotterdam: Balkema, 1976), especially pp. 77-88; and *African Theology: An Introduction* (Johannesburg: Skotaville, 1986), especially pp. 21-29.
3. *Hymns*, no. 415, *Works* 7:589-90.