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DO 690
JOHN WESLEY'S THEOLOGY TODAY
(Tuesday, Thursday 1:00-1:50 P.M.)
Larry Wood, Professor

This course focuses upon the distinct theological contributions of John Wesley to the larger Christian tradition. It integrates theology and the practice of ministry by showing the impact of Wesley's theology on his ministry and indicating the relevance of the Wesleyan model for the contemporary church.

PURPOSE

1. To understand Wesley's theology within the spectrum of classical Christianity;
2. To understand the distinctive method and elements of Wesley's doctrinal thinking;
3. To understand Wesley's emphasis on the significance of doctrine for the Christian life;
4. To understand Wesley's methodical use of the Bible, reason, experience, and tradition as criteria for doctrinal formulation;
5. To understand Wesley's concept of entire sanctification as the focus of faith and practice;
6. To understand the relevant theological and pastoral aspects of Wesley's thinking for today.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

1. Read Wesley's Standard Fifty-Two Sermons; Read these additional sermons:

"The Mystery of Iniquity" (pp. 451-470), and "The General Spread of the Gospel" (pp. 485-499) in *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Albert C. Outler (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), Volume 2.

"On Patience" (pp. 169-179), "Of the Church" (pp. 45-57), "On Zeal" (pp. 308-321), "The More Excellent Way" (pp. 263-277), "The Danger of Riches" (pp. 228-246), in *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Albert C. Outler, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), Volume 3;
2. Kenneth Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation*
3. Kenneth Collins, *A Real Christian: The Life of John Wesley*
4. Each Student will contract with the professor for the grade desired in this class.

A grade of "C" includes: a conscientious reading of all the assigned readings, and a ten page paper on holiness according to Wesley and Fletcher.

A grade of "B" will include: all the above for grade "C"; and a ten-page paper on predestination.

A grade of "A" will include: all the above for grade "C" and "B" and a ten-page paper on Wesley's view of the sacraments based on Ole Borgen, *John Wesley on the*

Sacraments; Jerry Mercer, “The Centrality of Grace in Wesleyan Spirituality,” *The Asbury Theological Journal* 50, 51 (Fall, Spring, 1995, 1996): 223-233; and the class lecture on “Wesley and the New Baptismal Liturgy.”

BIBLIOGRAPHY

For a recent and exhaustive bibliography, consult Betty M. Jarboe, *John and Charles Wesley: A Bibliography* (Metuchen, New Jersey: The American Theological Library Association and the Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1987) On the library reference shelf <Ref> BX8495 W5 J37 1987

Dr. Kenneth Collins also has a bibliography available on the Library website.

CLASS FORMAT

Wesley’s sermons were intended to shape the beliefs of his preachers. It was typical of the Anglican tradition for theology to focus on liturgical issues in contrast to the Lutheran and Calvinist traditions which specialized in writing pure doctrine and ethical treatises. With his Anglican background it was only natural that Wesley’s theology found its primary expression in sermons rather than in formal, academic treatises. As British theologian and John Wesley scholar, John Lawson, once remarked to me in a personal conversation, “John Wesley did not write a systematic theology because he was British, and British scholars do not generally write textbooks in formal, systematic theology.”

Wesley’s father had at first discouraged him from taking holy orders in favor of becoming a critical scholar with an academic career, but he acted upon the advice of his mother who counseled him to pursue “practical divinity” and prepare for “holy orders” immediately. Most Americans think of “practical” as the opposite of theoretical and critical thinking, but not so for Anglicanism in Britain. In Wesley’s thinking, “practical” included critical theory. Wesley was himself for a time a Greek lecturer, as well as a lecturer in philosophy and logic at Oxford. In his work as an itinerant preacher, he often met with his preachers and taught them philosophy and logic, as his essay, “Advice to the Clergy,” reveals, as well as his diary notes of March 4, Wednesday, 1747. Wesley’s sermons capture the essence of his theology and reveal in the best sense of the term just what “practical divinity” means. For him, what is “true” is also “scriptural” and “experimental” (see “Preface” to his Sermons).

The format of this class will give serious attention to the Standard Sermons of his 1771 edition. We will also examine some of his later sermons originally printed in *The Arminian Magazine*. Wesley’s sermons are the primary source of Wesleyan-Arminian beliefs and a model of how to think in a Wesleyan way. Our purpose will be to listen to Wesley.

Since Wesley stood within the Anglican tradition and accepted the whole body of classical orthodox teaching, we will exam only his distinctives which came to characterize Methodism.

CLASS MODULES

Biographical Snapshots of John Wesley

“Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen, such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the Kingdom of God upon earth” (John Wesley, *Letters*, VI, 272. Letter to Alexander Mather, [August 6], 1777).

The Enlightenment Era and Wesley’s Epistemology

“It is a fundamental principle with us that to renounce reason is to renounce religion, that religion and reason go hand in hand, and that all irrational religion is false religion” (John Wesley, *Works* (Bicentennial edition), 9, 382. Letter to Dr. Rutherford, March 28, 1768).

“When persons are governed by passion rather than reason, we can expect little good” (John Wesley, *Letters* V, 217. Letter to Joseph Benson, January 7, 1771).

“I wish to be in every point, great and small, a scriptural, rational Christian” (John Wesley, *Letters*, VIII, 112. Letter to Freeborn Garrettson, January 24, 1789).

“I go on in an even line, being very little raised at one time, or depressed another I am very rarely led by impressions, but generally by reason and by Scripture. I see abundantly more than I feel” (John Wesley, *Letters*, VII, 319. Letter to Elizabeth Ritchie, February 24, 1786)

The Romantic Movement: Affection in Wesley’s Writings

“It is not safe to live or die without love” (John Wesley, *Letters*, VI, 172. Letter to Charles Wesley, August 10, 1775).

“But what can cold reason do in this matter? It may present us with fair ideas; it can draw a fine picture of love; but this is only painted fire! And farther than this reason cannot go. I made the trial for many years. I collected the finest hymns, prayers, and meditations which I could find in any language; and I said, sung, or read them over and over with all possible seriousness and attention; but still I was like the bones in Ezekiel’s vision: ‘The skin covered them above; but there was no breath in them.’” [John Wesley, *Works* (Bicentennial edition), 2, 598. Sermon 70. ‘The Case of Reason Impartially Considered’ (1781)].

Wesley’s “Preface” to His Standard Sermons

“God himself has condescended to teach the way: for this very end he came from heaven. he hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price give me the Book of God! I have it. Here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri*” [John Wesley, *Works* (Bicentennial edition), I, 105. Preface to *Sermons on Several Occasions* (1746)].

“The Bible is my standard of *language* as well as sentiment. I endeavour not only to think but to speak *as the oracles of God*. Show me any one of the inspired writers who mentions Christ or faith more frequently than I do, and I will mention them more frequently” (John Wesley, *Letters*, V, 8. Letter to John Newton, April 1, 1766).

“But I try every Church and every doctrine by the Bible. This is the word by which we are to be judged in that day” (John Wesley, *Letters* III, 172. Letter to William Dodd, Mach 12, 1756).

“For from hence we may learn, first, that a catholic spirit is not *speculative latitudinarianism*. It is not an indifference to all opinions. This is the spawn of hell, not the offspring of heaven [John Wesley, *Works* (Bicentennial edition), 2, 92. Sermon 39, ‘Catholic Spirit’ (1750)].

The Order of Salvation

“Salvation is carried on by ‘convincing grace’, usually in Scripture termed ‘repentance’, which brings a larger measure of self-knowledge, and a farther deliverance from the heart of stone. Afterwards we experience the proper Christian salvation; whereby, ‘through grace’ we ‘are saved by faith’, consisting of those two grand branches, justification and sanctification. By justification we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favour of God; by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God” [John Wesley, *Works* (Bicentennial edition), 3, 204. Sermon 85. ‘On Working out Our Own Salvation’ (1785)].

Wesley’s Definition of Sin: Legal and Ethical

“Nay, remember, there can be no little sin, till we can find a little God! [John Wesley, *Works* (Bicentennial edition), 3, 383. Sermon 97, ‘On Obedience to Pastors’ (1785)].

“Nothing is sin, strictly speaking, but a voluntary transgression of a known law of God. Therefore every voluntary breach of the law of love is sin; and nothing else, if we speak properly” (John Wesley, *Letters*, V, 322. Letter to Mrs. Bennis, June 1, 1772)

The Attainment of Christian Perfection

“This doctrine (entire sanctification) is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists; and for the sake of propagating this chiefly He appears to have raised us up” (John Wesley, *Letters*, VIII, 238. Letter to Robert Carr Brackenbury, September 15, 1790).

“Always remember the essence of Christian holiness is simplicity and purity; one design, one desire--entire devotion to God. But this admits of a thousand degrees and variations, and certainly it will be proved by a thousand temptations; but in all these things you shall be more than conqueror” (John Wesley, *Letters*, V, 238. Letter to Miss March, April 14, 1771).

“Entire sanctification, or Christian perfection, is neither more nor less than pure love” (John Wesley, *Letters*, IV, 223. Letter to Walter Churchey, February 21, 1771).

“Some of the Mystic writers do not choose to speak plainly; some of them know not how. But, blessed be God, we do; and we know there is nothing deeper, there is nothing better in heaven or earth than love! There cannot be, unless there were something higher than the God of love! So that we see distinctly what we have to aim at. We see the prize and the way to it! Here is the height, here is the depth, of Christian experience! ‘God is love; and he that

dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” (John Wesley, *Letters*, VI, 136. Letter to Miss Ritchie, January 17, 1775).

Holiness and the Human Dimension

“But is ‘a voluntary transgression of a known law’ a proper definition of sin? I think it is of all such as is imputed to our condemnation. And it is a definition which has passed uncensured in the Church for at least fifteen hundred years. . . . The thing is plain. All in the body are liable to mistakes, practical as well as speculative. Shall we call them sins or no? I answer again and again, Call them just what you please” (John Wesley, *Letters*, IV, 155. Letter to John Hosmer, June 7, 1761).

“I believe there is no such perfection in this life as excludes these involuntary transgressions which I apprehend to be naturally consequent on the ignorance and mistakes inseparable from mortality” [John Wesley, *Works*, XI, 396. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (1766)]

“A thousand infirmities are consistent even with the highest degree of holiness, which is no other than pure love, an heart devoted to God, one design and one desire” (John Wesley, *Letters*, V, 6. Letter to Mrs. Bennis, March 29, 1766).

Spiritual Neurosis: Wesley’s Caution against “Enthusiasm”

“I dislike something that has the appearance of enthusiasm, overvaluing feelings and inward impressions: mistaking the mere work of imagination for the voice of the Spirit; expecting the end without the means, and undervaluing reason, knowledge, and wisdom in general” (John Wesley, *Letters*, IV, 193. Letter to Thomas Maxfield, November 2, 1762).

“Beware of that daughter of pride, enthusiasm. O keep at the utmost distance from it!” ([John Wesley, *Works*, XI, 429. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (1766)].

“Beware you do not fall into the second sort of enthusiasm, fancying you have those *gifts* from God which you have not. Trust not in visions or dreams; in sudden impressions, or strong impulses of any kind. Remember it is not by these you are to know what is the will of God on any particular occasion; but by applying the plain scripture rule, with the help of experience and reason, and the ordinary assistance of the Spirit of God. Do not lightly take the name of God in your mouth; do not talk of the will of God on every trifling occasion; but let your words, as well as your actions, be all tempered with reverence and godly fear” [John Wesley, *Works* (Bicentennial edition), II, 59. Sermon 37, “The Nature of Enthusiasm” (1750)].

Social and Ecclesiastical Reform and the Wesleyan Revival

“God’s design was . . . not to form any new sect; but to reform the nation, particularly the Church; and to spread Scriptural holiness over the land” [John Wesley, *Works*, VIII, 299, ‘Large Minutes’ (1770)].

“We look upon ourselves, not as the authors or ringleaders of a particular sect or party; (it is the farthest thing from our thoughts;) but as messengers of God to those who are Christians

in name, but Heathens in heart and in life, to call them back to that from which they are fallen, to real genuine Christianity” [John Wesley, *Works*, XIII, 195-196. *Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England* (1758)].

“I shall endeavour to show that Christianity is essentially a social religion, and that to turn it into a solitary religion is indeed to destroy it” [John Wesley, *Works* (Bicentennial edition), 1, 296. Sermon 24, ‘Sermon on the Mount, IV’ (1748)].

“From hence we may clearly perceive the wide difference there is between Christianity and morality. Indeed nothing can be more sure than that true Christianity cannot exist without both the inward experience and outward practice of justice, mercy, and truth; and this alone is given in morality. But it is equally certain that all morality, all the justice, mercy, and truth which can possibly exist without Christianity, profiteth nothing at all, is of no value in the sight of God, to those that are under the Christian dispensation” [John Wesley, *Works* (Bicentennial edition), 4, 174. Sermon 130, ‘On Living without God’ (1790)].

“For upward of eighty-six years I have kept my accounts exactly. I will not attempt it any longer, being satisfied with the continual conviction that I save all I can, and give all I can, that is, all I have” (John Wesley, *Journal*, VIII, 80n. July 16, 1790).

“It is plain to me that the whole work of God termed Methodism is an extraordinary dispensation of His providence” (John Wesley, *Letters*, V, 257. Letter to Mary Bosanquet, June 13, 1771).

“Methodism, so called, is the old religion, the religion of the Bible, the religion of the primitive Church, the religion of the Church of England” [John Wesley, *Works* (Bicentennial edition), 3, 585. Sermon 112, ‘On Laying the foundation of the New Chapel’ (1777)].

“Our main doctrines, which include all the rest, are three, that of repentance, of faith, and of holiness. The first of these we account, as it were, the porch of religion; the next, the door; the third, religion itself” [John Wesley, *Works* (Bicentennial edition), 9, 227. *The Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained* (1746)].

Wesley’s Debate with the Calvinists over Predestination

“Is not Calvinism the very antidote of Methodism, the most deadly and successful enemy which it ever had?” (John Wesley, *Letters*, VIII, 95. Letter to lady Maxwell, September 30, 1788).

“I believe, That God, before the foundation of the world, did unconditionally elect certain persons to do certain works, as Paul to preach the gospel: That He has unconditionally elected some nations to receive peculiar privileges, the Jewish nation in particular” (John Wesley, *Journal*, III, 84-85. August 24, 1743).

John Fletcher as Wesley’s Personally Authorized Interpreter

“Mr. Fletcher has given us a wonderful view of the different dispensations which we are under. I believe that difficult subject was never placed in so clear a light before. *It seems*

God has raised him up for this very thing [italics mine]. . . . By confining yourself to those who write clearly your understanding will be opened and strengthened far more than by reading a multiplicity of authors; at the same time your heart will be enlarged, and, I trust, more and more united to [God]" (John Wesley, *Letters*, VI, 137, Letter to Miss Ritchey, January 17, 1775).

"Q.74. What is the direct antidote to Methodism, the doctrine of heart-holiness? A. Calvinism Q. 76. What can be done to guard against it? A. (1.) Let all our Preachers carefully read over ours and Mr. Fletcher's Tracts" (John Wesley, *Works* (Zondervan reprint), *The Large Minutes 1744-1789*, VIII, 336).

"Something indeed of a similar kind has been written by that great and good man, Mr. Fletcher, in his treatise on the various *dispensations* of the grace of God. Herein he observes that there are four dispensations that are distinguished from each other by the degree of light which God vouchsafes to them that are under each. A small degree of light is given to those that are under the *heathen* dispensation But a far more considerable degree of light was vouchsafed to the Jewish nation But above both the heathen and Jewish dispensation was that of John the Baptist. . . . But nevertheless, he informs us, 'He that is least in the kingdom of God', the Christian dispensation, 'is greater than he.'" [John Wesley, *Works* (Bicentennial edition), 3, 492. Sermon 106, "On Faith," (1788)].

"When he was able to converse [during the last stages of his illness), his favourite subject was, 'the promise of the Father, the gift of the Holy Ghost,' including that rich, peculiar blessing of union with the Father and the Son, mentioned in that prayer of our Lord which is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of St. John. Many were the sparks of living fire which occasionally darted forth on this beloved theme. "We must not be content," said he, "to be only cleansed from sin: we must be filled with the Spirit.' One asking him what was to be experienced in the full accomplishment of the promise; 'O' said he, 'what shall I say? All the sweetness of the drawings of the Father, all the love of the Son, all the rich effusions of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; -- more than ever can be expressed, are comprehended here! To attain it, the Spirit maketh intercession in the soul, like a God wrestling with a God!'" (John Wesley, "The Life of John Fletcher," *Works*, VI, 446).

"I was intimately acquainted with him for thirty years. I conversed with him morning, noon, and night, without the least reserve, during a journey of many hundred miles; and in all that time I never heard him speak an improper word, or saw him do an improper action. To conclude: Within fourscore years, I have known many excellent men, holy in heart and life: but one equal to him I have not known; one so uniformly and deeply devoted to God. So unblamable a man, in every respect, I have not found either in Europe or America. Nor do I expect to find another such on this side eternity.

Yet it is possible we may be such as he was. Let us, then, endeavour to follow him as he followed Christ." (John Wesley, "The Life of John Fletcher," *Works*, VI, 482).

"He [James Perfect] preaches salvation by faith in the same manner that my brother and I have done; and as Mr. Fletcher (one of the finest writers of the age) has beautifully explained it" (John Wesley, *Works*, XII, 372).

The Sacraments

“Baptism is the outward sign of this inward grace which is supposed by our Church to be given with, and through that sign to all infants, and to those of riper years, if they ‘repent and believe the Gospel’” [John Wesley, *Works* (Bicentennial edition), 11, 107. *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion. Part I* (1745)]

“It is the duty of every Christian to receive the Lord’s Supper as often as he can” [John Wesley, *Works* (Bicentennial edition), 3, 428. Sermon 101, “The Duty of Constant Communion” (1787)].

Excerpts from Wesley’s Diary --The “Real” Mr. Wesley

“I am become, I know not how, an honourable man. The scandal of the cross is ceased; and all the kindom, rich and poor, Papists and Protestants, behave with courtesy [toward me], nay and seeming good will! It seems as if I had well nigh finished my course, and our Lord was giving me an honourable discharge” (John Wesley, *Letters*, VII, 277. Letter to Miss Richie, June 26, 1785).

Wesley as Our Mentor, not as a Guru

“I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid, lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power” [John Wesley, *Works* (Bicentennial edition), 9, 527. ‘Thoughts upon Methodism’ (1786)].

“But as to all opinions which do not strike at the root of Christianity, we think and let think” [John Wesley, *Works* (Bicentennial edition), 9, 34, *The Character of a Methodist* (1742)].

“We are always open to instruction, willing to be wiser every day than we were before, and to change whatever we can change for the better” [John Wesley, *Works* (Bicentennial edition), 9, 263. *A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists* (1749)].

“It is the glory of the people called Methodists that they condemn none for their opinions or modes of worship. They think and let think, and insist upon nothing but faith working by love” (John Wesley, *Letters*, VII, 190. Letter to Mrs. Howton, October 3, 1783).

A Chronology of John Wesley

1662 Dec. 17 - Samuel Wesley, Sr., born at Winterborn-Whitchurch, Dorset

1669 Jan. 20 - Susanna Wesley, born in London

1690 Feb. 10 - Samuel Wesley, Jr., born in London

1703 June 17 - John Wesley born at Epworth, 15th child of 19 children (9 died in infancy) of Samuel and Susanna Wesley

- 1707 Dec. 18 - Charles Wesley born at Epworth, 18th child of Samuel and Susanna Wesley
- 1709 Feb. 9 - John Wesley saved from the burning rectory at Epworth
- 1714 Jan. 28 - John Wesley entered Charterhouse, London, 10 1/2 yrs. old, there 5 yrs.
- 1720 June 24 - John Wesley entered Christ Church, Oxford; spent five years there
- 1724 - John Wesley graduated B.A., Oxford
- 1725 Sept. 19 - John Wesley ordained deacon
- 1726 - Charles Wesley entered Christ Church, Oxford
- 1726 March 17 - John Wesley elected fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford
- 1727 Feb. 14 - John Wesley graduated M. A., Oxford
- 1728 Sept. 22 - John Wesley ordained priest in the Church of England
- 1729 May - Charles Wesley formed the Oxford Holy Club
- 1729 Dec.- John Wesley became leader of the Holy Club
- 1729 - Name "Methodist" given on account of the "regularity of their behavior."
- 1730 - Charles Wesley graduated B. A., Oxford
- 1733 Jan 1 - Sermon, "The Circumcision of the Heart" preached at Oxford.
- 1733 - John Wesley published his first book, *A Collection of Forms of Prayer for Every Day in the Week*
- 1733 March 12 - Charles Wesley graduated M. A., Oxford
- 1735 April 25 - Samuel Wesley, Sr., died at Epworth
- 1735 October 14 - John and Charles Wesley sailed for Georgia
- 1736 Feb. 5 - John and Charles reached America
- 1736 August 11 - Charles Wesley leaves Georgia
- 1736 Dec. 3 - Charles Wesley arrived back in England
- 1737 - John Wesley published his first hymnbook, *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns*, Charleston, South Carolina
- 1737 Dec. 2 - John leaves Savannah
- 1738 Feb. 1 - John Wesley returned to England
- 1738 May 21 - Charles Wesley's evangelical conversion
- 1738 May 24 - John Wesley's Aldersgate experience
- 1739 April 2 - John Wesley began field preaching in Bristol
- 1739 May 12 - John Wesley laid the foundation-stone for the New Room in the Horse Fair, Bristol
- 1739 Nov. 6 - Samuel Wesley, Jr. died
- 1739 Nov. 11 - John Wesley preached the first sermon at the Foundery, which was the first Methodist meeting-house in London
- 1740 - Wesley withdraws from the Fetter Lane Society (Moravians)
- 1740 July 23 - The first Methodist Society founded
- 1740 - Wesley and Whitefield separate over doctrine of particular predestination
- 1741 - The first Methodist newspaper entitled "The Weekly History"
- 1742 - Wesley and Whitefield re-united.
- 1742 - Formation of Methodist Classes.
- 1742 June 6 - Excluded from preaching in the Church at Epworth, John Wesley preaches on his father's tombstone.
- 1742 July 30 - Susannah Wesley died in London
- 1743 - John Wesley writes "An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion"

- 1744 June 25 - John Wesley held the first Methodist Conference in London
- 1744 August 24 - John Wesley's last University sermon at Oxford on "Scriptural Christianity (approximately 176 scriptural verses woven into this sermon)
- 1745 - John Wesley published *Advice to the People Called Methodists*
- 1746 - Nov. 6 John Wesley published the first volume of *Sermons on Several Occasions*
- 1746 - John Wesley read King's "Account of the Primitive Church"
- 1747 - August - John Wesley made his first visit to Ireland and Methodism begins there
- 1749 April 8 - Marriage of Charles Wesley
- 1749 October 3 - Grace Murray (John Wesley's "lady friend") marries John Bennet, one of Wesley's preachers
- 1751 Feb. 18 - John Wesley marries Mary Vazeille
- 1751 April - John Wesley first visit to Scotland
- 1755 January - John Wesley published *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, which he had began in January 1754.
- 1755 May 6-8 - The question of separation from the Church of England discussed at Leeds
- 1756 - John Wesley published "A Treatise on Baptism" written by his father
- 1758 - John Wesley published *Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England*
- 1758 March 10 - John Wesley's Assize Sermon at Bedford
- 1759 - "Thoughts on Christian Perfection," a 30-page publication
- 1763 - Published tract entitled "Farther Thoughts upon Christian Perfection"
- 1763 March 28 - John Wesley's "Sermon on Sin in Believers"
- 1763 - *Model Deed* issued concerning Preaching Houses
- 1765 April 25 - "Preface to Explanatory Notes on the Old Testament; last page date, Dec. 24, 1766.
- 1765 - John Wesley published "The Scripture Way of Salvation" and "The Lord our Righteousness"
- 1766 - "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection" (last revision in 1777)
- 1767 April 4 - John Wesley wrote sermon on "The Witness of the Spirit" Discourse II
- 1768 April 27 - John Wesley makes a will
- 1768 August 24 - Trevecca College opened
- 1769 August 4 - John Wesley made the first appointment of preachers to America
- 1770 Sept. 30 - Death of George Whitefield
- 1770 November 18 - Wesley preaches Whitefield's funeral sermon
- 1771 Jan. 23 - Mrs. Wesley leaves John Wesley
- 1771 August 9 - Wesley published the first in a series of John Fletcher's *Checks to Antinomianism* ("In all his publications, Fletcher had not only Wesley's approval, but his high commendation," (Luke Tyerman, *Wesley's Designated Successor*, p. 298)
- 1771 Sept. 4 - Francis Asbury sails for America
- 1771 - John Wesley issues the first five volumes of his collected works
- 1775 John Wesley published *A Calm Address to our American Colonies*
- 1775 April 27 - Death of Peter Bohler
- 1778 January 1 - First number of the *Arminian Magazine*

- 1778 November 1 - John Wesley opened the New Chapel in city Road, London
- 1780 May 1 - John Wesley published *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists*
- 1781 October 8 - Mrs. John Wesley (Mary Vazeille) died, aged 71
- 1782 August - Adam Clarke at Kingswood School
- 1784 Feb. 28 - John Wesley executed the “deed of declaration” , the charter of Wesleyan Methodism
- 1784 September 1-2 - John Wesley ordained preachers for the United States
- 1784 Dec 25-27 - John Wesley ordained and set apart Francis Asbury as General Superintendent for America
- 1785 August 14 - John Fletcher died
- 1786 Sept. 24 - Dr. Thomas Coke sails with three missionaries
- 1786 Sept. - November - John Wesley wrote a biography of John Fletcher
- 1788 March 29 - Charles Wesley died in London, burial on April 5 in Marylebone
- 1790 - His revised Translation of the New Testament published, his last important publication
- 1790 July 27 - Wesley’s last Conference, in Bristol
- 1790 July 30 - Letter to William Wilberforce
- 1790 October 6 - John Wesley preached his last open-air sermon
- 1790 October 24 - John Wesley’s last *Journal* entry
- 1791 Feb. 1 - John Wesley’s last letter to America
- 1791 Feb. 22 - John Wesley preached his last sermon, at Leatherhead
- 1791 Feb. 24 - John Wesley made the last entry in his diary
- 1791 Feb. 24 - John Wesley wrote his last letter to William Wilberforce
- 1791 Feb. 25 - John Wesley returns to City Road
- 1791 March 2 - John Wesley dies at City Road 10 A.M. His last words, “The best of all is, God is with us.”
- 1791 March 9 - John Wesley was buried at City Road

WESLEY’S ORIGINAL WORKS ON SANCTIFICATION/CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

- 1733 Sermon, Circumcision of the Heart
- 1740 Preface to Hymns and Sacred Poems
- 1741 Sermon, Christian Perfection (written 1739)
- 1742 Principles of a Methodist, Definition of Perfection
- 1742 The Character of a Methodist
- 1759 Thoughts on Christian Perfection
- 1762 Sermon, A Blow at the Root
- 1762 Cautions and Directions Given to the Greatest Professors in the Methodist Societies
- 1763 Sermon, Sin in Believers
- 1763 Farther Thoughts upon Christian Perfection
- 1765 Sermon, Scripture Way of Salvation
- 1766 A Plain Account of Christian Perfection
- 1767 Brief Thoughts on Christian Perfection
- 1768 Sermon, Repentance of Believers
- 1777 A Plain Account of Christian Perfection from 1725-1777

1787 The More Excellent Way