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Collins, Kenneth J., "DO 629 Readings in Wesley" (2001). *Syllabi*. Book 891.
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**Readings in Wesley
DO 629**

Kenneth J. Collins, Professor

1. Course Description and Objectives:

The course will explore the theology of John Wesley ranging from the doctrine of God to eschatology. Special attention will be paid to the doctrine of God, Christology, pneumatology, as well as to Wesley's views on providence, grace, and human responsibility. The course will proceed in a Socratic and dialogical manner as it entertains an array of possible meanings of selected texts. This process, intense in many ways, should enhance the ability of students not only to understand the thought of Wesley in greater depth in its eighteenth-century context, but also to think historically and critically. Moreover, the course will be attentive to current scholarly interpretations of Wesley's theology and will assess such judgments in light of the primary evidence. All the tasks of the course, then, will concern exploring Wesley's theology in terms of its relevance for twentieth-century theology and ministry.

2. General Goals

Upon completion of the course successful students will be able to do all of the following:

- 1) Identify the major elements in Wesley's theology especially in terms of the broad motif of "responsible grace."
- 2) Evidence an awareness of historiographical concerns in the interpretation of Wesley's theology especially with respect to narrow, limited or unfair (biased) perspectives
- 3) Explore the interplay between religion and culture in terms of the intellectual developments (philosophical and theological) of the eighteenth century as reflected in Wesley's writings.
- 4) Display an extensive knowledge of the theological distinctions and nuances employed by Wesley in crafting an articulate and well-developed theology, especially in the areas of justification, the new birth, and entire sanctification.
- 5) Demonstrate an understanding of the continuing significance of Wesleyan theology today especially for the broader ecumenical community.
- 6) Conceive one's calling as a minister of the gospel in light of the Methodist theology and practice.
- 7) Articulate the relevance of Wesleyan theology for effective pastoral ministry today

3. Texts:

Required:

Thomas Jackson, ed., *The Works of Rev. John Wesley*, 14 vols. (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1829-1831), Reprinted Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1978.

Collins, Kenneth J. *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997)

---. *A Real Christian: The Life of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999).

4. Course Procedures

Competency in this course will consist in satisfying the following criteria:

A. It is imperative that students attend class on a regular basis. Absenteeism (missing more than 2 classes) will result in grade reduction. Class participation, attendance, and completion of the assigned readings are required for course credit.

B. A reading report which indicates that students have completed all of the assigned readings is due on the last day of class.

5. Reading Selections:

Journals

-Wesley's Journal from October 14, 1735 to August 1738. WJW 1:17-147.

Sermons

-"On Predestination," WJW 6:225-230.

-"God's Love to Fallen Man," WJW 6:231-240.

-"The General Deliverance," WJW 6:241-252.

-"The Mystery of Iniquity," WJW 6:253-266.

-"The End of Christ's Coming," WJW 6:253-266.

-"The General Spread of the Gospel," WJW 6:277-287.

-"The New Creation," WJW 6:288-295.

-"On Divine Providence," WJW 6:313-324.

-"The Imperfection of Human Knowledge," WJW 6:337-349.

-"The Case of Reason Impartially Considered," WJW 6:350-360.

-"Of Hell," WJW 6:381-391.

-"Spiritual Worship," WJW 6:424-434.

-"On Dissipation," WJW 6:444-451.

-"On Friendship with the World," WJW 6:452-463.

-"In What Sense We are to Leave the World," 6:452-463.

-"On Working Out Our Own Salvation," WJW 6:506-513.

-"The Danger of Riches," WJW. 7:1-14

-"The More Excellent Way," WJW 7:26-36.

-"On Zeal," WJW 7:57-66.

-"On Visiting the Sick," WJW 7:117-126.

- "The Duty of Constant Communion," WJW 7:147-156.
- "On Faith," WJW 7:195-201.
- "On God's Vineyard," WJW 7:202-213.
- "On the Discovery of Faith," WJW 7:231-237.
- "Walking by Sight, and Walking by Faith," WJW 7:256-263.
- "On a Single Eye" WJW 7:297-304.
- "On the Wedding Garment," WJW 7:311-317.
- "On Faith," WJW 7:326-334.
- "On Living Without God," WJW 7:340-354.
- "Free Grace," WJW 7:373-385.
- "True Christianity Defended," WJW 7:452-462.

Treatises

- *Minutes of some late Conversations between the Rev. Mr. Wesley and others in 1744*, WJW 8:275-298.
- *Minutes of Several Conversations between the Rev. Mr. Wesley and others from the year 1744 to 1789*, WJW 8:299-338.
- *The Character of a Methodist*, WJW 8:339-346.
- *A Short History of Methodism*, WJW 8:347-350.
- *The Principles of a Methodist*, WJW 8:359-374.
- *Predestination Calmly Considered*, WJW 10:204-259.
- *A Dialogue between a Predestinarian and his Friend*, WJW 10:259-265.
- *A Dialogue between an Antinomian and his Friend*, WJW 10:266-275.
- *Serious Thoughts upon the Perseverance of the Saints*, WJW 10:284-297.
- *Thoughts on the Imputed Righteousness of Christ*, WJW 10: 312-315.
- *A Blow at the Root; or Christ stabbed in the House of his Friends*, WJW 10:364-369.

6. Note: this syllabus may be changed, as the instructor sees fit, due to academic considerations

7. Office Hours

The professor will post his office hours on his door (AD 405) on the first day of class.

8. Chronology

Life of John Wesley

- √ 6/17/03 Born at Epworth
- √ 2/09/09 Saved from Fire
- √ 5/12/11 Nominated for Charterhouse
- √ 1/28/14 Gown-boy at Charterhouse
- √ 6/24/20 Enters Christ Church

- √ 9/19/25 Ordained Deacon
- √ 3/17/26 Fellow of Lincoln College
- √ 1729 Name Methodist given
- √ 1735 Whitefield joins Holy Club
- √ 4/25/35 Samuel Sr's Death

- √ 10/21/35 Sails for Georgia
- √ 02/05/36 Reaches America
- √ 08/11/36 Charles leaves Georgia
- √ 12/02/37 John leaves Savannah
- √ 02/01/38 John lands at Deal
- √ 05/21/38 Charles' Evangelical Conversion
- √ 05/24/38 John's Evangelical Conversion
- √ 06/13/38 Visits the Moravian Church
- √ 05/02/39 Field-Preaching in Bristol

- √ 11/11/39 Preaches in the Foundery
- √ 07/20/40 Withdraws from Fetter Lane
- √ 05/28/42 First visit to Newcastle
- √ 06/06/42 Preaches on his father's tomb
- √ 07/30/42 Death of Susanna Wesley
- √ 05/29/43 Opens West Street Chapel, London
- √ 08/26/42 Sets out for Cornwall
- √ 10/20/42 Riot at Wednesbury
- √ 06/25/44 First Conference

- √ 08/24/44 Last University sermon
- √ 08/09/47 First visit to Ireland
- √ 04/08/49 Marriage of Charles
- √ 10/03/49 Grace Murray marries John Bennet
- √ 02/18/51 Wesley marries Mrs. Vazeille
- √ April/51 First visit to Scotland
- √ 06/01/51 Resigns Fellowship
- √ 11/26/53 Writes his Epitaph at Lewisham
- √ Jan/55 Notes Upon the NT published
- √ 05/06/55 Issue of Separation Discussed

- √ 1757 Charles' itinerancy limited
- √ 03/13/57 Ordination of John Fletcher
- √ 02/16/59 Public Fast; fear of French invasion
- √ 02/21/60 French Landing at Carrickfergus
- √ 10/25/60 Death of George II
- √ 11/26/62 Answer to Bishop Warburton

- ∨ 01/07/63 Wesley meets George Bell
- ∨ Mar/ 63 Earthquake panic in London

- ∨ 04/28/63 Thomas Maxfield leaves Wesley
- ∨ 04/18/64 Letter to Evangelical Clergy
- ∨ May/ 64 Hervey Letters published
- ∨ Jan/ 65 Conference on Ordinations
- ∨ 01/31/66 Closer union with Whitefield
- ∨ 1766 *Plain Account* Published
- ∨ 03/30/67 Wesley visits Ireland
- ∨ 08/18/67 Francis Asbury received on trial

- ∨ Jan/ 68 Appointed chaplain to the Countess Dowager
- ∨ 08/24/68 Trevecca College opened
- ∨ Aug/1770 Doctrinal Minutes of the Bristol Conference
- ∨ 09/30/70 Death of George Whitefield
- ∨ 11/18/70 Wesley preaches at Whitefield's funeral
- ∨ 01/17/71 Benson dismissed from Trevecca
- ∨ 01/23/71 Mrs. Wesley leaves him
- ∨ 09/04/71 Francis Asbury sails for America

- ∨ 09/04/71 Fletcher's 1 and 2 Checks published
- ∨ 08/14/72 Meets Howell Harris at Trevecca
- ∨ 08/14/72 Fletcher's 3 and 4 Checks published
- ∨ 08/14/72 Wesley issues Vols. 11-16 of his Works
- ∨ 03/14/73 Replies to Richard Hill's *Farrago Double-Distilled*
- ∨ Dec/73 Vols. 17-25 of Wesley's Works published
- ∨ 06/04/74 Arrest in Edinburgh
- ∨ 1775 *Calm Address* published

- ∨ 04/27/75 Death of Peter Bohler
- ∨ Aug/ 75 Asbury decides to stay in America
- ∨ 01/03/76 Death of Westley Hall
- ∨ 08/18/76 Wesley first meets Dr. Coke
- ∨ 04/21/77 Foundation-stone of City Road Chapel laid
- ∨ 01/01/78 First number of Arminian Magazine
- ∨ 05/30/78 Death of Voltaire
- ∨ 11/01/78 Opening of City Road Chapel
- ∨ 1779 Publishes *Popery Calmly Considered*

- ∨ 08/10/80 Letter to Bishop Lowth on ordination for America
- ∨ 01/25/81 At his Nephew's concert
- ∨ 10/08/81 Death of Mrs. Wesley
- ∨ Aug/ 82 Adam Clarke at Kingswood School

- √ June/83 Visit to Holland
- √ 02/28/84 Deed of Declaration
- √ Sep/ 84 Ordinations for America
- √ Dec/ 84 Francis Asbury Ordained
- √ 08/14/85 Death of John Fletcher

- √ 01/24/86 Hears George III in House of Lords
- √ 07/25/86 Conference begins at Bristol
- √ 08/08/86 Visits Holland
- √ 09/24/86 Dr. Coke sails with three missionaries
- √ Jan/ 87 Begg £ 200 for London poor
- √ 08/04/87 Conference in Manchester
- √ 1788 Second Series of Sermons Published
- √ 03/29/88 Death of Charles Wesley

- √ 04/05/88 Burial of Charles Wesley in Marylebone
- √ 08/06/88 Conference at Bristol
- √ 07/28/89 Conference at Leeds
- √ 1790 Revised Translation of the NT published
- √ 07/27/90 Wesley's last Conference in Bristol
- √ 07/30/90 Letter to Wilberforce
- √ 10/06/90 Last open-air sermon at Winchelsea
- √ 10/24/90 Last entry in Wesley's Journal
- √ 02/22/91 Last sermon, at Leatherhead

- √ 02/24/91 Last letter, to Wilberforce
- √ 03/02/91 Dies at City Road at 10:00 a.m.
- √ 03/09/91 Buried at City Road

9. Bibliography

A Wesley Bibliography

Primary Sources: Books

Unpublished at This Point

- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 5-6: Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 8: Worship and Prayer. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 10: The Methodist Societies II: The Conference. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.

- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 12: Theological Treatises. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 13: The Defense of Christianity. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 14-15: Pastoral, Ethical, and Instructional Writings. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 16: Natural Philosophy and Medicine. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 17: Editorial Works. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 33-34: A Description and Analytical Bibliography of the Publications of John and Charles Wesley. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 35: General Index and Miscellanea. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.

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- Curnock, Nehemiah, ed. *The Journal of Rev. John Wesley*. 8 vols. London: Epworth Press, 1909-1916.
- Jackson, Thomas, ed. *The Works of Rev. John Wesley*. 14 vols. London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1829-1831. Reprinted Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1978.
- , ed. *The Journals of Rev. Charles Wesley*. 2 vols. London: John Mason, 1949. Reprinted Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House 1980.
- Outler, Albert C. *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 1-4: Sermons. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984-1987.
- Telford, John, ed. *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley*. 8 vols. London: Epworth Press, 1931.
- Ward, W. Reginald, and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds. *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 18: Journals and Diaries I. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 19: Journals and Diaries II. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 20: Journals and Diaries III. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 21: Journals and Diaries IV. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992.

- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 22: Journals and Diaries V. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993.
- Wesley, John. *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*. London: William Bowyer, 1755. Most recent reprint, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1987.
- . *Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament*. 3 vols. Bristol: William Pine, 1765. Facsimile reprint, Salem, OH: Schmul Publishers, 1975.
- . *A Christian Library, Consisting of Extracts from and Abridgements of the Choicest Pieces of Practical Divinty which have been published in the English Tongue*. 30 vols. London: T. Blanshard, 1819-1827.
- . *Devotions and Prayers of John Wesley*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1977.
- . *The Journal of John Wesley: A Selection*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- . *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. London: Epworth Press. Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990.
- . *Wesley's Forms of Prayers*. Library of Methodist Classics. Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1992.

Students may also access the Wesley bibliography (look under “Resources”) on Asbury’s homepage or download from <http://wesley.nnc.edu>.