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STEWARDSHIP AND RESPONSE The Moral-Theological Heart of John Wesley's Economics

GREGORY P. VAN BUSKIRK



ABSTRACT

This article reframes John Wesley's economics as a species of his moral theology of stewardship and response. After beginning with Wesley's unwavering economics of stewardship as predicated upon the dynamics of the divine economy, it briefly considers the nature and activity of grace in Wesley's theology. The discussion then turns to Wesley's affective-responsive moral psychology of habituation in Christian practices and virtues. Indeed, this combination—an economics of stewardship, an affective-responsive moral psychology, and the Christological content of perfection—fundamentally characterizes the entirety of Wesley's moral theology, not just his economics. The moral-theological heart of Wesley's economics is therefore a hermeneutical cycle of stewardship and response that accounts for our cooperation with God's grace throughout the entirety of creation, including our ecological stewardship.

Keywords: John Wesley, moral psychology, moral theology, economics, stewardship

Dear Sir,

Since I received your favour I have had many thoughts on worldly and Christian prudence. What is the nature of each? How do they differ? How may we distinguish one from the other? It seems *worldly prudence* either pursues *worldly ends*—riches, honour, ease, or pleasure—or pursues Christian ends on *worldly maxims* or by *worldly means*. The grand maxims which obtain in the world are: The more power, the more money, the more learning, and the more reputation a man has, the more good he will do . . . Christian prudence

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THE LANGUAGE OF SALVATION IN WILLIAM BOOTH'S IN DARKEST ENGLAND

MARK R. TEASDALE



ABSTRACT

In many of his early writings and sermons William Booth employed similar language to John Wesley when teaching about Christian perfection. However, in *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, he changed this language. He bifurcated God's blessings for this world and the next, using the terms 'Social Salvation' and 'Eternal Salvation', and explained that Social Salvation did not require an internal transformation by the Holy Spirit. This article surveys the three primary reasons posited for this change and offers a fourth: Booth modified the language he used for salvation to elicit the best response from his intended audience.

Keywords: sanctification, salvation, evangelism, social work, William Booth

William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, was a committed Wesleyan. Even after exiting both the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the Methodist New Connexion to become an itinerant evangelist, he maintained his great admiration for John Wesley. When Hugh Price Hughes once asked Booth if he had any advice for the Methodists, Booth's answer was 'Follow John Wesley, glorious John Wesley.'

Booth was especially influenced by John Wesley's teachings about salvation, particularly sanctification.² Both Booth and his wife, Catherine, used

1. Hugh Price Hughes, 'An Interview with William Booth on the Salvation Army', *The Methodist Times*, London (3 February 1885), 82.

2. Numerous biographers have discussed Booth's reliance on Wesley's teachings about salvation, including Harold Begbie, *The Life of General William Booth*, 2 vols (New York:

WHY NOT NOW?

The 1890 and 1894 Free Methodist Debates on Ordaining Women

CHRISTY MESAROS-WINCKLES



ABSTRACT

This article uses the 1890 and 1894 Free Methodist Church debates on women's ordination as a case study on the discursive construction of gender in evangelical culture. At the turn of the twentieth century, women's roles in religious culture were being debated around the United States in various denominations, and the decision to ordain women varied greatly depending on biblical interpretation and denominational theology. The rhetorical performances of two female evangelists and General Conference delegates, Clara Wetherald and Ida Gage, will be discussed and used to illustrate how their opponents used organizational silencing in an attempt to write them out of the organizational record.

Keywords: women's ordination, Clara Wetherald, Ida Gage, rhetorical silencing, gender constructs

I think the great difficulty is that man is not satisfied to be the head as God has designed him, but he seems to aspire to be being neck and arms, and in fact the whole body, and monopolize the whole seat of authority.¹

-CLARA WETHERALD, 'SHALL WOMEN BE ORDAINED?'

In the lead-up to the quadrennial General Conference of the Free Methodist Church, a debate raged in the pages of *The Free Methodist*, the denominational

1. Clara Wetherald, 'Shall Women be Ordained?', The Free Methodist (14 May 1890), 2-3.

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A VOCATION OF HOLINESS A Practitioner Rereads the Doctrinal Standards of the British Methodist Church

PHILIP STANLEY TURNER



ABSTRACT

There are many ways to source a theology of the Methodist Church of Great Britain. This article argues that a rooted, engaging, and dynamic British Methodist theology can be sourced from its doctrinal standards. The doctrinal standards are not only the legal basis of the church, but also an inspiration for Methodists seeking to understand their identity and purpose in our complex twenty-first-century context. The article shows how the doctrinal standards call British Methodists to a vocation of holiness and how John Wesley's forty-four *Sermons* and *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* illuminate this vocation. Research is highlighted that points to how presbyters can empower Methodists to embark on a journey to explore Methodism's 'special vocation'. Keywords: Britain, Methodism, doctrine, theology, holiness

Locating Doctrine

The Methodist Church of Great Britain assumes that it will be its presbyters who will prepare candidates for Methodist membership, and these preparations will include 'an introduction to the doctrines, discipline and formal statements of the Methodist Church'.¹ Throughout my twenty years as a Methodist

1. 'Standing Order 050', in Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes, *The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church*, 2 vols (London: Methodist Publishing, 2017), II:303.

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The Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History

The Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History is a research centre of Oxford Brookes University, which embodies the relationship between the university and the trustees of the former Westminster College, Oxford. The Centre is home to important resources, including the Wesley Historical Society Library and a number of archive and art collections. The Routledge Methodist Studies series of monograph research publications is also edited from the Centre. The Centre offers a small number of visiting research fellowships each year to enable scholars to come to Oxford to use its resources. The Centre also has a number of research students working in the broad field of religious history and culture. It also sponsors lectures, conferences, and other research activity. For more information, go to: https://www.brookes.ac.uk/hpc/research/oxford-centre-for-methodism-and-church-history/ or contact the Centre's Director, Professor William Gibson: wgibson@brookes.ac.uk.

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