

### Concluding Remarks

In this study of Wesley both the use of his scheme of Knowledge, Virtue, and Happiness, and the use of the method of the centering our attention upon the area of that we have called moral psychology in analyzing the elements in this scheme, has opened, for the writer at least, some new understandings of Wesley, or has thrown new light upon old ones. It has also made necessary and possible some virginal excavations into certain important aspects of his thinking which he never made very explicit.

The more original digging are to be found, first of all, in chapter one where the attempt is made to describe the various powers of the human constitution. Wesley, of course, never expressed himself very clearly on most of the matters discussed there. In the light of his purposes, it really wasn't necessary for him to do so, for these matters had to do with the commonly assumed knowledge of his listeners. And as long as Wesley was approached as a theologian rather than as an ethical thinker, those who wrote about him would have little incentive to investigate this area. The approach used in trying to uncover this aspect of his mind was to become, first of all, intimately familiar with the relevant terms and phrases which Wesley used repeatedly, and then to read widely in the works of the, relatively speaking, second-rate writers of the age, who more systematically expressed the way the average man conceived of such things. Particular attention was, of course, paid to those men whom Wesley himself read, such as Hutcheson and Beattie.

Another place of virginal plowing which this approach to Wesley demanded, and one where there is much remaining to be done, was the analysis of the virtues and temper. This was particularly true relative to their classification. This was made the more difficult because there is no book which the writer was able to discover which dealt specifically and historically with the schematization of the inner tempers of man.

As to contributions toward new understandings of Wesley, the first is the uses the writer has made of Wesley's view of the various modes in which man is present to life and God: hatred and rejection; fear and appeasement; faith and love. Here it became most clear that Wesley was an ethical thinker or a moral theologian whose primary concern was with the logic of the practical life. The analysis made of love for God as grateful delight illuminates many areas of Wesley's thought and helps to clarify the relation of the Reformation and Catholic influences upon Wesley. At this point Lindstrom was of particular help in a general way who, I think, is right in his observation that little has been done in the way of a "systematic analysis" of Wesley's view of love.<sup>500</sup>

The work on love of neighbor and the whole matter of the relation of self-love and benevolence offer, I feel, a contribution toward further study in the thought of Wesley. Other areas might be mentioned such as Wesley's shift in thinking about justification and assurance; the breaking down of the ideas in Wesley's view of faith and noting their interrelation: Further nuances of meaning came, through this approach, as we studied Wesley's view of the new birth or what we have called the Christian revolution. Again, some of the darkness which surrounded Wesley's idea that faith is a gift, yet at the same time an act of man, was dispelled.

I began this study of Wesley with some interest in and appreciation for his thinking. As the study progressed this appreciation soon faded and I became almost offended with his view of the Christian faith and life. Yet when I finally broke through the theological approach to Wesley and saw him as a thinker, and as a creative and original thinker, about the interior history of man he began to make real sense and I must confess has in no small way influenced my thinking. I am also persuaded that at such points as those suggested above he can make contributions to the conversations within the Christian community. I am now prepared to recommend to our times a new reading of John Wesley.

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500 Harold Lindstrom, Wesley and Sanctification. Stockholm: 1946, p. 161.