Christian Love: 
The Key to Wesley’s Ethics

by Leon O. Hynson

When Charles Wesley wrote his “Love divine all loves excelling, Joy of Heaven, to earth come down...,” he wrote what was at once the great work of Wesleyan hymnody and the essence of the theology which John Wesley articulated through a long life of love toward God and man.

The historical factors which converged upon Epworth and Oxford, shaping John Wesley into the consummate witness of the Christian theme of love, have yet to be adequately traced. How did it happen that of all the churchmen in nearly two millenia of Christian history who pondered the meaning of love, Wesley should achieve such a maximum view of the concept? Who else has surpassed Wesley in his perception of holiness as love, socially active, catholic in temper, personally integrative, unitive, liberating?

Other Christian thinkers, including Augustine, Bernard, and the mystics wrote warmly and compellingly of love. Augustine powerfully contrasted two loves which challenge the lives of men:

Two cities have been formed by two loves: the earthly by the love of self, even to the contempt of God; the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self. 1

The Christian mystic often spoke in rapturous transport of the glories of Christian love, until his spirit seemed to be a sounding board of the harmony and unity of God. “Jesus the very thought of thee, with sweetness fills the breast... But what to those who find? Ah, this, nor tongue, nor pen can show: the love of Jesus, what it is, none but his loved ones know.” (Bernard of Clairvaux, traditional author).

Nevertheless, there often were deeply ingrained flaws in the vision which Augustine, Bernard, Richard of St. Victor, or a Kempis experienced. Augustine’s concept of love was distorted by his theological pilgrimage through the noble paganism of Plato and its revival in neo-Platonism as well as the more exotic system of the Manicheans, both of which denigrated the material creation in their zeal to emphasize the realm of the spirit. The effect of this bifurcation of matter and spirit entailed a misunderstanding of the Biblical idea of love, which balances the forms and expressions of love in a pattern of wholeness. Augustinians were never able to crush eros but were continuously striving to insulate the world of spirit against the chilling winds of flesh. Much the same must be said of the

1. The City of God, XIV, 28.
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mystics and to a lesser extent the pietists, and of many Christians. Wesley did not escape it either even though he had little affection for the theology of St. Austin, as he called him. The romances of Wesley show us both a spirit of warm, tender love, and a reticence which was exaggerated by a deep concern over the possible conflict between human love and Christian duty.

As a mature man he wrote:

Many years ago I might have said, but I do not now,
   Give me a woman made of stone
   A widow of Pygmalion.
And just such a Christian one of the Fathers, Clemens Alexandrinus, describes; but I do not admire that description now as I did formerly. I now see a Stoic and a Christian are different characters. 2

Recognizing as we should the limitations which characterized Wesley, we must not allow ourselves and those to whom we preach to miss the centrality of the doctrine of love in Wesley. Olin Curtis, a sympathetic, knowledgeable exponent of Wesley has opined that he “had almost the same epochal relation to the doctrinal emphasis upon holiness that Luther had to the doctrinal emphasis upon justification by faith, or that Athanasius had to the doctrinal emphasis upon the Deity of our Lord.” 3 Always to be remembered is Wesley’s normative understanding of holiness as love.

The Biblical Ground of the Wesleyan Ethic
Love of God and Neighbor

Love is the central Christian virtue which Wesleyan ethics elaborates. It is a composite principle which incorporates the personal and social dimensions. It is rigorously demanding, and radically challenging, for in Wesley love and perfection are linked together to form a lofty ideal. This is love perfected, an ethical challenge which influences the whole range of Christian thought and action. The perfection of love which Wesley so often stressed was consistently the love which Jesus taught:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Mt. 22: 37-40.

The idea of perfection stressed by Jesus is summed up by the concept of wholeness. The whole heart, mind, and soul committed to God in a loving relationship, and the same intensity of love or quality of love which is bound up in self-love is to be expressed toward the neighbor. There are loves of various kind in human experience which are not necessarily

2. Letters, VI. 129.
Christian. "What makes it Christian," writes Knudson, "is its permeation with the Christian ideal of moral perfection." Differently expressed, love is Christian when it participates in the nature of God, who himself is love, and reaches outward from oneself to other selves. It is love which, rooted in the divine nature, is turned toward God's creation. Because God is perfect, and God is love, Christians, according to New Testament claims, are to participate both in the perfection and love of God. We are called to act in the sphere in which we live as God does in His Kingdom that we may be the children of our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:45). Our relationship to God is determinative of our behavior. "Ye shall be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48) The two commandments to love are indivisible.

What then does love (Christian love) have to do with ethics? It is this, that love for God radically affects our behavior so that the new life of love permeates the totality of our affections, will, and intellect, shaping relationships with others, influencing decisions, and forging thought patterns which are in conformity to the mind of Jesus Christ. Love sets the tone for action, helps shape priorities, and inspires to the realization of the Christian's calling.

Love as Wesleyan theology and ethics articulates it is frequently interpreted as intensely individualistic, but this represents a deficiency of understanding. Love, according to the New Testament, is a word of community, of social significance. So it precisely is with Wesley:

The Gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social; no holiness, but social holiness. Faith working by love is the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian perfection.  

In addition to this argument, Wesley holds a concept of the church as koinonia and community. For him, koinonia means "holding things in common," and this is descriptive of the style of the church, especially the primitive church. Wesley frequently speaks of the church as a society or community. So prominent is this note in Wesleyan ecclesiology that Gordon Rupp has argued that with Wesley a fourth mark of the church has been added to other Protestant views of the church. Along with the other marks or notes — the Word faithfully preached, the sacraments rightly administered, discipline exercised — stands the mark of community. With Wesley the importance of the church as community is now recognized, especially the idea of the "Christian cell."

The primary implication of this Wesleyan focus on love, community, and koinonia is that the Christian must seriously engage in what

Bonhoeffer has called a "worldly Christianity." Wesley would say that holiness, perfect love, love, is "at home" in the world of men. It flourishes in abrasive contacts with Christian men, and men of the world. The solitary Christian is an anomaly; "holy solitaries" like the "holy adulterer" represent a perversion of Christian faith. Separation from the world in order to further the life of holiness involves a contradiction of the Gospel. Holiness happens in the world. The life of mercifulness or peacemaking can only be realized among saints and other men. It is Satan's perversion of God's purpose, the "grand engine of hell" which deceives men into believing that God's will is realized by withdrawal.9

Albert Knudsen, a contemporary Methodist, perceptively argues the case for the social character of love in his discussion of the principle of love:

The Christian ethic is an ethic of love, and it is such because the Christian world is a personal world and a personal world is a social world. If the Christian world were a mere collection of individuals, each with his private aim and destiny, the fundamental ethical principle of Christianity would be purity or perfection... But the Christian world is not such a world... The real world is a world of mutually dependent beings. It is a social world of interacting moral beings; and in such a world love is necessarily the basic moral law.

Knudsen further asserts that love and perfection include each other. "Perfect love is moral perfection and moral perfection is a state of perfect love."10

Faith Which Works Through Love

A second major Biblical principle in Wesley's ethics, more doctrinal than the summa of Jesus, is the Pauline assertion in Galatians 5:6 that the Gospel is not bound up in rites of Judaic legalism but is incarnated in the faith which works by love. John Wesley's translation in his Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament, and his consistent translation, is "faith which worketh by love," although he once writes: "Faith working or animated by love is all that God now requires of man."11 Of crucial importance in the Pauline dictum is the word translated "working". Does the word emphasize faith more strongly than love? The answer seems to contain important implications for ethics. Energoumene is a participle, present tense, middle voice. Machen indicates that the middle voice conveys the idea of the "subject acting on something which is part of itself." Dana and Mantey agree generally stating that it describes the "subject participating in the results of the action."12 What this suggests is that we

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9. It is necessary to show here that the context of Wesley's special concern was the quietism of certain of his associates who eventually separated from him, shaping Fetter Lane into a Moravian society.
may not interpret Galatians 5:6 in a way that weakens the integral relationship of faith and love in Christian life. Wesley's own note reads "faith-alone; even that faith which worketh by love — All inward and outward holiness." 13

Lightfoot wrote concerning verse six that these words "bridge the gulf which seems to separate the language of St. Paul and St. James. Both assert a principle of practical energy, as opposed to a barren, inactive theory." 14

The value of this study of the text becomes apparent if we compare the ethics of Wesley with the ethics of Luther. Lutheran ethics has been given careful attention in Paul Althaus' *The Ethics of Martin Luther*. He makes a clear case for the primacy of faith in Luther's ethics. As Althaus puts it, "Luther's ethics is determined in its entirety, in its starting point and all its main features, by the heart and center of his theology, namely, by the justification of the sinner through the grace that is shown in Jesus Christ...." Justification is seen "as the presupposition of all Christian activity," and "the source of all Christian activity." 15

In himself man is a sinner before God, but by God's gracious gift he is righteous. The justified man has a twofold character; he is *simul justus et peccator*, at one and the same time justified and sinner. When he experiences God's justifying love man is enabled to love his neighbor. In other words, faith results in action or good works. Christian activity flows out of his experience of God's love, and this activity is itself love, sharing all of the characteristics of the love of God who justifies.

While Lutheran ethics stresses the primary force of faith and justification, resulting in love or Christian activity, Wesley's ethics is rooted in love or holiness. Primary to Wesley's social commitment is love. As Wesley was previously quoted:

> The Gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social; no holiness, but social holiness. Faith working by love is the height of Christian perfection. 16

Faith is described by Wesley as the clear source of justification, and like Luther he stresses that good works are the "immediate fruit" of faith. Luther insists, in his *Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans*, that faith is "a living, busy, active mighty thing. ... It is impossible for it not to be doing good works incessantly. It does not ask whether good works are to be done, but before the question is asked, it has already done them, and is constantly doing them." 17 Wesley is concerned to stress the greater significance of love. Faith in Christ is to be preached so as to produce

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holiness or love. He insisted that “faith itself, even Christian faith, the faith of God’s elect, the faith of the operation of God, still is only the handmaid of love . . . Yea, all the glory of faith . . . arises hence, that it ministers to love; it is the great temporary means which God has ordained to promote that eternal end.”

Love is promoted by faith and involves grateful love to God which leads to love for our neighbor.

Comparing Luther and Wesley we may argue that, despite the great similarity of many of their views, Luther’s is primarily an ethics of justification while Wesley’s is an ethics of sanctification. Luther’s is an activism of faith while Wesley’s is an activism of love. All Christian activity grows out of the life of holiness or love. Luther stresses “faith active in love” as clearly as does Wesley, but his focus is on justification which leads to works of love, whereas Wesley’s concern is “faith active in love” which means the clear and actual creation of love in the heart as the result of faith. The law of love is now written on the heart, a new consciousness is given, life is brought under a new law of love, a real change happens in the life, resulting in a life of love toward God and neighbor.

James Gustafson wrestles with the difference between an ethics of justification and sanctification. He suggests that for Luther, Christ alone is true sanctification. Through the holy Spirit the Christian can grow in faith. In faith, the Spirit works through our person (Luther uses the figure of a water fountain or water pipe to describe love coming from God and flowing to neighbor in our acts of love). But while there is a view of sanctification in Luther, it is less significant than justification. Gustafson has written:

> Texts that Wesley . . . used to preach on the possibility of a transformation of will, consciousness, and love receive at the hands of . . . Luther . . . a more dialectical treatment. One can say that for the former . . . the benefits of Christ’s righteousness become man’s righteousness, though man is always dependent upon God’s grace. For Luther, . . . though man participates in Christ’s righteousness, it does not become something man virtually possesses.

This seems to be the case with Galatians 5:6. Quite obviously both Wesley and Luther stress both justification and sanctification, but place special stress upon sanctification and justification respectively. Luther tends to stress freedom to love, a freedom which faith in God gives. He is free to love the neighbor, to be Christ to the neighbor. Nevertheless there is always the twofold character; man is sinner and justified. Man is forgiven, but not healed of sin. Righteousness is not something man possesses. It is God’s not man’s, existing as objective to the self. Love too is God’s, not man’s. When the Christian man loves his neighbor, it is Christ loving through him. The

18. Sermons, II, pp. 77-78.
Christian possesses the power to love, but the power is objective to the self. And the capacity to love is limited by the continuance of the sinfulness of the Christian man. The moral life is thus diminished in its power.

For Wesley, love is the fruit or consequence of faith, but love or sanctification is magnified above faith. Faith is the means to holiness. "Faith... is the grand means of restoring that holy love wherein man was originally created. It follows, that although faith is of no value in itself,... yet as it leads to that end, the establishing anew the law of love in our hearts,... it is on that account an unspeakable blessing to man...."20

Of course, Wesley cannot separate faith from love and holiness. Wesley indicated that "holiness (salvation continued) is faith working by love."21 For Wesley the life of love or holiness is a life of good works. Holiness — love — good works are inseparable. The door to these is faith. Faith opens the heart to love and active works. The life of holiness is a life of progress in works of love which nourish and perfect faith. Now living under the "law of faith", the Christian is required only to experience the faith which is animated by love. Commenting on James 3:22, Wesley asserts that

faith has one energy and operation; works, another; and the energy and operation of faith are before works, and together with them. Works do not give life to faith, but faith begets works, and then is perfected by them. . . .

Faith hath not its being from works (for it is before them), but its perfection.22

Wesley seems to argue that love and good works are virtually the same or at least inseparable. A life without good works is not a life of love: therefore, it is not a holy life.

I suggest that Wesley stresses the relationship between holiness/love and good works so insistently because good works are the outflow of the holiness/love received in Christ. Apart from this outreaching love holiness has no content. The holiest of men need the merits of Christ without interruption. God does not "give them a stock of holiness. But unless they receive a supply every moment, nothing but unholiness would remain."23 If holiness is best defined as love, failure to love (or do good works) means lack of holiness. It means that the personal participation in Christ is circumvented by failure to love. "For our perfection is not like that of a tree, which flourishes by the sap derived from its own root, but...like that of a branch which, united to the vine, bears fruit..."24

In summary, Wesley stresses an organic, natural union or relation with the Spirit. Good works flow or grow from that relation. The basic motivations or intentions are cleansed or made whole or are characterized

20. Works, V. pp. 462-64.
21. Ibid. VIII, p. 290.
by health. The recurrent tendency to pride is overcome so that good works do not threaten to become works of righteousness as long as the organic relation is sustained. Good works grow within the holy life and are integral to that life. Luther emphasized an instrumental concept wherein the Christian is a more passive, conveyor of the life of the Spirit. Good works are the works of Christ flowing through the believer while the believer himself is *simul justus et peccator*. Thus, there is a significant difference in Wesley and Luther.

**Implications**

What issues are at stake in this comparison between Lutheran and Wesleyan theology which bear upon the question of ethics?

First it is evident across the Christian centuries that certain serious aberrations seem recurrent in each of these systems of theology. The ethic of faith alone or justification has borne the potential for quietism, moral indifference, antinomianism, complacency, lack of passion for holiness. Justified, experiencing the pardoning love of God (but yet a sinner), one stands in that grace which frees. "In Christ, man is given freedom from concern about saving himself; he is freed from earning moral and religious merits." 25 The *sola fide* position does not ask as its primary question: "How can I live the Christian life?", but rather, "What must I do to be saved?" The answer is that faith is required, and not works. Despite all that Luther could say about the fruit of faith, the central concern remained justification not sanctification or good works. Christian activity is good despite our sinfulness, because it is done in faith.

Why is it that the ethics of justification seems limited in moral challenge, even when, as in Luther, there are mighty preachments which call for good works? For example, Luther will declare that the believer has the Holy Spirit "and where he is, he does not permit a man to be idle but drives him to... the practice of love toward all men"26, or in other words, to sanctification or holiness. No simple answer is available, but one may suggest that the ethic of justification with its *simul justus et peccator* dialectic, and the freedom it bears, makes possible a condition of moral passivity. If the justified person is something of a "tube" or channel through which love or the Spirit flows, this may result in ethical "stillness" as it did in the *Unitas Fratrum* of Zinzendorf. As Daniel Benham expressed it in 1856 in his *Memoirs of James Hutton*, Wesley's great commitment in contrast to that of Zinzendorf was to the doctrine of "an active love, proceeding from the new birth and faith; and manifesting itself in striving after holiness and Christian perfection, and to the doctrine of the furtherance of this active love by the means of grace in the church." Zinzendorf

25 Gustafson, *op cit*. p. 118
26 Althaus, *op cit*. p. 13, n. 40
on the other hand allowed of none other than a grateful love, proceeding from the . . . heart of a pardoned sinner . . ." [27]

While we are contrasting Luther and Wesley, this comparison of Wesley and Zinzendorf does seem to give a clue to the differences between Luther and Wesley. Luther was no quietist, but the effect of his intensive preaching of faith alone seems to have lacked the moral stimulus toward the life of spiritual maturity or holiness, with its implication of good works, that he so zealously proclaimed in his Freedom of the Christian Man and elsewhere.

Another kind of problem is recurrent in the ethics of sanctification, the danger of complacency again, only now a complacency buttressed by a mistaken sense of completeness, the feeling of "having arrived". (This contrasts with the opposite kind of complacency which remains content with little because "arrival" is firmly disavowed in this finite life). There is another peril of the loss of the freedom gained through faith in an excessive spiritual psychologizing; a "pulse taking" which easily becomes self-oriented and transfers the vision from "Christ in me", living in me and working out through me, to the quality and character of my actions, thoughts, and words. The implication of this, especially for Christian social ethics, is that the Christian's call to love the neighbor as one's self is forgotten in one's intensive assessment of the force of his love, the quality of his prayer life, etc. Social ethics becomes a threat to personal ethics. Faith is no longer active in love.

Wesley preserved his ethics from that sort of excessive preoccupation with personal holiness by his insistence on the life of Christian growth. He insisted that holiness is salvation continued, faith working by love. [28] In his teaching and practice, he made clear that Christian perfection or sanctification "implies a continued course of good works . . .," [29] which are inseparable from those good works which follow faith.

The ethics of love/sanctification does not incorporate a view of man as passive bearer, but as actively striving to live out the life of love to God and neighbor. The ethics of holiness is an ethic of the Cross, a cruciform ethic wherein the divine and human intersect and unite. It is an ethic of the Cross in that it means that the Christian man voluntarily takes up the Cross, seeking to share more and more in the life of God. Sanctification ethics thus seems to lack something of the freedom or spontaneity of the justification ethic, by its deliberate quest for holiness. Ever risking works-righteousness it avoids antinomianism and Pelagianism by its continued insistence on a need for Christ's righteousness which then is worked out by love toward others; faith active in love.

Such a rigorous ethic escapes the perils of a faith ethic while risking

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29. Ibid., pp. 46-47.
pride and Pelagianism, and ever presses the believer toward a religion of love. If this sometimes seems to result in a more austere ethic, it may be argued that the cross suggests a course of life that entails stress. He who follows the ethic of love or holiness takes up the cross voluntarily as the way to realization of Christ's will. Luther, on the other hand, emphasizing the freedom of justification, man's standing before God as justified, freed, saved, did not consider the cross a burden to be willingly picked up, but emphasized the "pressing cross" of Christ; the cross pressed upon man, even as it was pressed on Simon on that "Black Friday" of 29 A.D.

The ethic of Wesley seems to place a greater claim upon the Christian man. This is because the Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection does not admit of the recurrent presence of sin in the life of the perfect Christian.30

There is a wide divergence between an ethics of justification with its concomitant of imputed righteousness (where the Christian's whole life is one of subjective sinfulness along with objective justification, and where the Christian's whole life is one of repentance (Thesis one in the 95 Theses)), and an ethics of holiness where righteousness is decisively bestowed in the living personal relationship with Christ. The latter ethic emphasizes purity of intention, while admitting deficiency in the execution of intention. The life of love does not insure a perfect personal relationship, or form the basis for a perfect social ethic. It does insist upon a kind of rigor and discipline that the faith ethic does not appear to imply. In Tillich's words the ethic of justification asserts: "Accept the fact that you are accepted despite the fact that you are unacceptable." The ethic of holiness incorporates a tension which makes that kind of Reformation theology exceedingly difficult to accept, even though one of the consequences of the passion for holiness seems sometimes to be a nervous kind of Christianity which strips the Christian life of some of the joy and power it bears. I do not argue that the ethic of holiness necessarily bears this sort of "worried mind," but historically, among both Catholics and Protestants, such an intensity has borne heavily upon many who have sought to practice the presence of God by the disciplines of the holy life. It is quite clear that this was the burden of Wesley's theological pilgrimage until after Aldersgate (in fact, sometime after Aldersgate), as he struggled for sanctification before he understood the reality of faith and justification. With his understanding of the Pauline principle of "faith active in love," Wesley seems to have brought into balance the life of

30. Although Wesley insisted that the Christian is freed from sin, cleansed from inner corruption, and set on the road to wholeness which is to be finally realized in heaven, he also emphasized that every moment the Christian, because of his finitude, needs the merit of Christ's death. In an indirect, oblique way, Wesley even seems to hold a view in which sin, defined as a deviation from the perfect law of God, is every Christian's condition. Why should the Christian need the merits of Christ's death for his involuntary transgressions if these are not in some sense a violation or departure from moral rectitude or in other words, sin? But Wesley did not call this sin, defining sin in relation to man's volitional capacity. Sin, properly so called, is a matter of volition. "Involuntary transgressions" is the nearest Wesley comes to a second definition of sin, similar to the Reformed view.
faith/freedom/justification and love/discipline/sanctification. Albert Outler writes that "the life of faith is a life of discipline, nurture, effort . . .," or in a word, sanctification. The doctrine of Christian love, "faith which works through love," is thus the central principle in Wesley's Christian ethic. Faith is never demeaned. It is the means to love, which perfects faith. Nevertheless, love is the key in Wesley's theology to personal and social ethics. Love/good works/holiness involves both the personal and social. In Wesley's sermon "The Scripture Way of Salvation," the personal and social dimensions of holiness or love are articulated in a discussion of two kinds of good works, both necessary to sanctification. First are "works of piety," including prayers, receiving the Lord's Supper, reading the scripture, fasting, all rather specifically personal and interior. Secondly are the "works of mercy," the ministering to the souls and bodies of men who are in prison, who are sick, who are lonely and naked, alienated from God. These two kinds of works seem to reflect the Wesleyan way of balancing personal and social concerns.

Conclusion

It is time for many who have listened long to the cliches about Wesleyan individualism, to see that Wesley had a deep sense of social compassion and concern. It is not hit or miss, growing out of Wesley's warm heart but is the result of careful Biblical exegesis and preaching. It is also time to remember that Wesley did plow deeply into the soil of his society, attacking slavery before Wilberforce was born, supporting civil and religious liberty against a threatening radicalism, warning the nation about economic practices which ignored the weak and poor, developing perhaps the first clinic in London, preparing practical studies on medicine and electricity for healing the sick, and setting up spinning and knitting shops for the poor. By his own testimony he had spent twenty-six or twenty-seven years during his leisure hours studying anatomy and physics, although he had only "properly" studied them during the months of the voyage to Georgia in 1735. As the revival moved forward in power, Wesley saw the human wreckage that his age so tragically scattered about it. He began anew to study medicine, sought the advice of an apothecary and a surgeon, and began to invite those in his societies to come to him for advice and medicines. His compassion was especially for the poor who were sick, some ruined by medical expense. Serious illnesses he left to physicians who were chosen by the patients.

32. Carl Michalson, Worldly Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), p. 134. writes that for Wesley, "There is a higher form of Christian existence than the life of faith and that is the life of works, which is 'faith working by love' . . . Faith is only the condition of or the means to works . . . Faith is instrumental to love . . . ."
33. Sermons, II, pp. 455-56.
What was the motivating principle behind this ceaseless activity? To save souls and lead people into holiness? Wesley would say that this is asking the wrong question. His concern was wholeness: Physical, psychological, spiritual, intellectual. The principle which shaped the man and his movement was the faith which works through love.

In 1759 and 1747, respectively, Wesley wrote two works: The Desideratum: Or, Electricity made Plain and Useful. By a Lover of Mankind, and of Common Sense, and Primitive Physick: Or, An Easy and Natural Method of Curing Most Diseases. At the conclusion of the Primitive Physick, Wesley wrote: “And this I have done on that principle, whereby I desire to be governed in all my actions: Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, the same do unto them.”

Elsewhere he indicated his motivation for these works to be faith working through love. The Christian’s love is universal, generous, disinterested, “his love resembles that of Him whose mercy is over all His works. It soars above all these scanty bounds, embracing neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies—yea, not only the good and gentle, but also the forward, the evil, and unthankful . . . . By experience he knows that social love, the love of our neighbor, is absolutely different from self-love, even of the most allowable kind . . . .” Thus, in conclusion, the claim is made: Christian love or holiness is the key not only to Wesleyan personal ethics, but undergirds his social ethics and is the dynamic in his social concerns.

37 Cited in Outler, pp. 184-185.