MEDICINE AS METAPHOR:
JOHN WESLEY ON THERAPY OF THE SOUL

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John Wesley's involvement in matters of health is well documented. Early in his ministry Wesley established a visitation program for the sick and dispensed medicines to the poor in London and Bristol. In 1747 Wesley published *Primitive Physick*, a collection of simple remedies. He also procured an electrical apparatus by which he gave a primitive form of therapy. Beyond these endeavors Wesley consistently urged the Methodists toward a life style conducive to good health. Wesley viewed sensible regimen as the divinely appointed pattern for a life of health and wholeness. Wesley understood his commitment to the total well-being of the individual to accord with the scriptural injunction "to do good to all men . . . [according to] the ability that God giveth." As he explained in a letter to the young Alexander Knox, the Great Physician purposes "inward and outward health."

In this study I intend to focus on another facet of Wesley's interest in medicine—his use of medicine as metaphor. Given his attention to health care and his concept of health as wholeness, I will emphasize that the medical imagery employed by Wesley served to illuminate his larger theological or soteriological concerns.


2John Wesley, *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* [hereafter, *Letters*], ed. John Telford, 8 vols. (London: The Epworth Press, 1931), 4:121. The reference is specifically to the publication of *Primitive Physick* and *Electricity Made Plain and Useful*. However, these are but concrete expressions of Wesley's broader concern for health care.


Metaphor was critical to the articulation of Wesley’s theology. Wesley freely admitted that one could not fully explain the particular workings of the Spirit of God on the soul. In his sermon on “The New Birth,” Wesley warned that one should not expect a philosophical explanation. Even “the wisest man under the sun is not able to explain.” Words elude the most adept. “It is hard to find words . . . and indeed there are none that will adequately express what the children of God experience.” Because Wesley was aware of the limits of religious language, metaphor proved to be his ally in his development of the themes implicit in the order of salvation.

The works of John Wesley are replete with metaphor. Albert Outler, in an essay on the “Wesleyan Quadrilateral,” noted Wesley’s utilization of such common images or metaphors as “porch,” “door,” and “room.” E. Brooks Holifield structured his own study, Health and Medicine in the Methodist Tradition, around Wesley’s use of the metaphor, “journey.” Still another metaphor developed by Wesley was the medical concept of therapy. For Wesley, true religion was at root the therapy of the soul.

Medical language, concepts, and images abound in Wesley’s writings. In addition to sermon titles such as “The Circumcision of the Heart,” and “The Cure of Evil Speaking,” one can trace an array of medical terms—malady, disease, and distempers as well as cure, remedy, and healing. On occasion, Wesley moved through a sermon as though he were a diagnostician. In the sermon, “The Wilderness State,” Wesley examined the nature (symptoms), cause and cure of the disease. Such sermons as “Original Sin,” “The Great Deliverance,” and “On the Education of Children,” include extended development of symptoms and/or cures. The Methodists were urged to engage in “exercises of the soul.” At the society meetings the early Methodists were engaged in weekly sessions comparable to modern group therapy or a support group.

Medicine as metaphor was a natural for John Wesley. His love of the Scripture, his study of the early church traditions, his encounter with the medical sciences of his day were all contributing factors. Albert Outler has observed that from the outset of his ministry the language of Scripture was as a second language for Wesley. It is to be expected that one would find frequent references to such biblical images as “sickness” and

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4 Holifield, Health and Medicine in the Methodist Tradition, 8ff.
“infirmities,” “balm,” and “healing.” Wesley was well attuned to the fact that Jesus carried out his teaching ministry in conjunction with his healing ministry, and therefore, could rightly be called the “great Physician of souls.” 12

Though he claimed to be a “man of one book,” Wesley’s writings attest to his rich and varied background. Wesley was steeped in the traditions of the church. From the writings of the early church fathers, Wesley garnered the view of sin as a disease—a defacing of the original creation. 13 Salvation meant the restoration of the image of God, 14 or, in Wesley’s words, “the recovery of primitive health.” 15

Since his student days at Oxford Wesley had also studied medicine. Such prominent physicians as Hermann Boerhaave, Thomas Sydenham, and George Cheyne were formative for Wesley’s understanding of health as wholeness. The genius of Wesley was that he enveloped insights, gleaned from the physicians of his day, within a theological framework to stress that through a life of sensible regimen one could translate the biblical mandate of stewardship into the concrete practice of health care.

Beyond this clarion call for sensible regimen Wesley freely and naturally drew links between health and wholeness, healing and salvation. It was not that Wesley equated health of body and health of soul. However, he did acknowledge a remarkable correlation between the two. In a Journal entry for May 12, 1759, Wesley included the following comment:

Reflecting today on the case of a poor woman who had continual pain in her stomach, I could not but remark the inexcusable negligence of most physicians in cases of this nature. They prescribe drug upon drug, without knowing a jot of the matter concerning the root of the disorder. And without knowing this, they cannot cure, though they can murder the patient. Whence came the woman’s pain (which she would never have told had she never questioned about it)? From fretting for the death of her son. And what availed medicines while the fretting continued? Why, then, do not all physicians consider how far bodily disorders are caused or influenced by the mind, and in those cases which are utterly out of their sphere, call in the assistance of a minister... 16

Wesley understood his own ministry as addressing the needs of the total person. Wesley anticipated the more contemporary emphasis on the multidimensional nature of healing, embracing a unitive view of healing and health. Mind (Wesley was more apt to use the term “soul.”) and body work together in the healing process. When the mind is in a state of disease, healing is thwarted. Health as wholeness is realized through the appropriate

practice of sensible regimen and the faithful use of "that old unfashionable medicine, prayer."\textsuperscript{17}

Before exploring the ways in which Wesley utilized medicine as metaphor, there is a need to examine his concept of health as wholeness. Wesley's view of health shared an affinity with concepts of health common to the classical traditions. A brief etymological excursion will help to elucidate what I have broadly termed the classical understanding of health as wholeness. Contemporary considerations of the concept of health have emphasized the relationship of the word "health" to its classical roots. The English word literally means "wholeness," and to heal connotes "to make whole."\textsuperscript{18} These words are related to the Old Latin form, "salvus," (salve, salvation), the Old English, "hal" (hale), and the Old German, "heil" (whole, holy). The words point to integrity, completeness, wholeness. In the classical sense health suggests, as Kenneth Vaux has stressed, not only being in a state of equilibrium (well-working or wholeness), but also implies being at peace.\textsuperscript{19}

Wesley's reading in selected physicians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries significantly influenced his understanding of health. Of particular interest to this present study is the concept of health as wholeness or well-working. The concept of well-working rested upon a particular understanding of the body. In the latter half of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century, the body was increasingly viewed and studied in terms of mechanical principles. This paralleled the Newtonian understanding of the natural order. Nature was viewed as one vast, orderly machine. The human body, as created, shared the harmony or balance characteristic of the natural order.

Hermann Boerhaave, a major figure in early eighteenth century medicine on the continent, reflected the Newtonian commitment to orderliness in his own understanding of health. In medicine as in astronomy, the laws of motion reigned. In explaining health and disease Boerhaave relied heavily on mechanical explanations. Proper interaction of solids and fluids constituted health, whereas disease resulted from the faulty interaction of these elements.\textsuperscript{20}

George Cheyne, whom Wesley first read while a student at Oxford, mirrored Boerhaave's view. Cheyne pictured the body as comprised of "an infinity of branching and winding canals, filled with liquor of different natures." Diseases, he continued, arise from a "vitiation of the quantity, and quality or motion of the fluids, or to a bad disposition and texture . . . of their conduits."\textsuperscript{21} In short, a healthy body depends upon the free passage

\textsuperscript{17} Wesley, Works, 14:313, 314.
\textsuperscript{19} Kenneth L. Vaux, This Mortal Coil (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 104ff.
\textsuperscript{20} Lester S. King, The Medical World of the Eighteenth Century (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 75.
of fluids through the various tubes and vessels within the body. Any obstruction of the free vascular movement will result in disease.

John Wesley’s summary description of a body in a state of health clearly indicates an awareness of the accepted medical perspective. In his sermon, “On the Fall of Man,” Wesley depicted humankind before the Fall. His intent was theological, but the language used was the language of medical physiology.

But how fearfully and wonderfully wrought into innumerable fibers, nerves, membranes, muscles, arteries, veins, vessels of various kinds! And how amazing is this dust connected with water, with enclosed, circulating fluids, diversifies a thousand ways by a thousand tubes and strainers! Yea, and how wonderfully is air impacted into every part, solid, or fluid, of the animal machine; air not elastic, which would tear the machine in pieces, but as fixed as water under the pole! But all this would not avail, were not ethereal fire intimately mixed both with this earth, air, and water. And all these elements are mingled together in the most exact proportion; so that while the body is in health, no one of them predominates, in the least degree, over others. 22

A similar theme can be traced in Wesley’s earlier sermon, “The Image of God.” The original state of humankind, Wesley noted, was one of life in a body prepared for immortality. The body was incorruptible in all its parts. Consequently, the “juices” moved freely throughout the body. The point seems to be that initially the body as a whole functioned without resistance. It was a free, well-working system. As for what followed Wesley could only surmise. He suggested “as probable” that the eating of the forbidden fruit released into the body particles which began to “adhere to the inner coats of the finer vessels.” Strictures within the vessels laid “a foundation for numberless disorders in all parts of the machine,” signaling the inevitable process of death. 23

That Wesley understood health in terms of a well-working system is underscored by his reference in this same sermon to an antidote that was also present in the garden. This antidote was the fruit from the Tree of Life. According to Wesley, the fruit possessed a “thin, abstersive nature,” which would have countered the strictures occasioned by eating the forbidden fruit. The body would have continued to function effortlessly, free of disorders, “notwithstanding he had eaten death.” 24

These physiological insights expressed in the sermon, “The Image of God,” by Wesley’s own admission, were based more on conjecture than on Scripture. Nonetheless, they do illustrate Wesley’s view of health. Somatic health means a well-working system. The perfect model or

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22 Wesley, Works, Bicentennial Edition, 2:405. The bold type is added for emphasis.
expression of health would be Adam before the Fall—a balanced, harmonious, human organism designed for immortality. Since the Fall, the wholeness to be realized is wholeness within the limits of mortality. Within these bounds, however, a well-working system is the goal.

While it is possible, and indeed, common to speak of Wesley's soteriology without reference to his medical acumen, the medical images prevalent throughout Wesley's works are nonetheless illuminating. Wesley used the concept of health as wholeness to delineate both the negative and positive impressions—sin and salvation. For Wesley, sin was a disease, a defacing of the image of God. It can be understood as the loss of moral harmony or balance that Adam enjoyed before the Fall. In the second place, Wesley utilized health as wholeness as the model for salvation. Salvation was viewed as a restoration of humankind to primitive health, a recovery of the harmony and balance that characterized the original creation. In short, salvation, according to Wesley, was the "therapy of the soul."25 Finally, Wesley employed the medical model to stress that Christian living involved discipline. Just as sensible regimen was the divinely appointed pattern for a life of wholeness or well-working, so were religious exercises or disciplined living critical to Christian growth.

Throughout the corpus of Wesley's sermons one can trace numerous references to sin as disease, an infection within human nature. In the sermon on "Original Sin," Wesley detailed the symptoms of this most serious of all diseases. The essence of this "fatal disease," Wesley noted, was a "love of the world." The symptoms included a "desire of the flesh," "pleasure of the imagination," and "desire of praise."26 In his sermon, "One Thing Needful," Wesley offered an extended description of the "distempered" nature.

Our nature is distempered as well as enslaved; the whole head is faint and the whole heart is sick. Our body, soul, and spirit, are infected, overspread, consumed, with the most fatal leprosy. We are all over, within and without, in the eye of God, full of diseases, and wounds, and putrifying sores. Every one of our brutal passions and diabolical tempers, every kind of pride, sensuality, selfishness, is one of those deadly wounds, of those loathsome sores, full of corruption, and of all uncleanness.27

For Wesley, sin as disease entailed the loss of harmony or balance within the original creation. The theme was developed by Wesley in his first "university sermon" preached in St. Mary's on November 15, 1730.28 In the sermon, "The Image of God," Wesley pictured Adam's pristine nature as prepared for immortality. His was a well-working system, characterized by health and wholeness. What was true of his physical makeup was equally true for his moral nature. Adam, as created by God,

reflected the moral image of the Creator, possessing an “unerring understanding, an incorrupt will, and perfect freedom, . . . .” Balance and harmony distinguished Adam’s spiritual nature.

One cannot help but wonder how it was that such a being should have fallen from God. Wesley, like other theologians before him, stated that one must take seriously Adam’s freedom to go against God. Wesley had far more to say about the consequences of Adam’s disobedience. Adam, the being once prepared for immortality, became an “instrument” out of tune, no longer capable of making the same harmony. “But all of these [bodily organs] are more debased and improved by the fall of man than we can possibly conceive; . . . .” Wesley observed. “From a disordered brain . . . there will necessarily arise confound[ed]ness of apprehension, showing itself in a thousand instances; . . . .” The harmony which marked the original creation was no more. The understanding became “clouded,” the will seized with “legions of vile affections,” love, the very “balm of life,” filled with “torment,” and liberty ruled as by a “merciless tyrant.” In short, Adam experienced the negative impression of that which was known in the original created state. “The consequences of [Adam’s] being enslaved to a depraved understanding and a corrupted will could be no other than the reverse of that happiness which flowed from them when in their perfection.” Wesley concluded the sermon on “The Image of God” lamenting the condition of those who are “insensible of their innate disease, or refuse the only cure of it.” These are “they who are always sick, often in pain; destruction and unhappiness are in their ways; the way of peace have they not known, ‘an evil cleaves to them; . . . .’”

In the sermon, “The Fall of Man,” Wesley traced the spread of the disorder and disease through the whole of creation. In truth, the disorder which Adam experienced within his own being due to his own disobedience was but a microcosm of the disharmony expressed throughout the created order.

See the darkness that may be felt; see ignorance and error; see vice in ten thousand forms; see consciousness of guilt, fear, sorrow, shame, remorse, care, covering the face of the earth! See misery, the daughter of sin. See on every side sickness and pain, inhabitants of every nation under heaven, driving on the poor, helpless sons of men, in every age, to the gates of death!

The whole earth, Wesley observed, “is indeed, in its present state, only one great infirmary: all that are therein are sick of sin, and their one business there is to be healed.”

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35 Wesley, *Works*, Bicentennial Edition, 3:533. Albert Outler noted that Wesley’s view of “sin in believers” did change. Nonetheless, the emphasis on disharmony and disorder pervading
There is no healing, no salvation without an understanding of one's true condition. To be pitied are those who are "insensible of their innate disease, or refuse the only cure of it." These are they who are "plunging through the flame of a fever into those that never shall be quenched, and perhaps dreaming [they are] in perfect health, . . . " Wesley admonished, "Know your disease! Know your cure! . . . By nature you are wholly corrupt; by grace you shall be wholly renewed."

As to be expected, medical metaphors abound in Wesley's discussion of salvation.

But can the Creator despise the work of his hand? Surely that is impossible! Hath he not then, seeing he alone is able, provided a remedy for all these evils? Yea, verily he hath! And a sufficient remedy, every way adequate to the disease.

Jesus, of course, is the "Great Physician" sent to heal the "sin sick soul." The use of such metaphors as "Christ the Physician" and salvation as "healing" marked Wesley's departure from the reformers. While Wesley admitted that his theology edged to "within a hair's breadth" of Calvinism, his "therapeutic views of justification and sanctification" set him apart from the forensic interpretations more common to the Reformers. The very nature of religion, as Wesley affirmed in the sermon, "Original Sin," is "therapy of the soul, God's method of healing a soul which is . . . diseased. Hereby the Great Physician of souls applies medicine to heal the sickness; to restore human nature, totally corrupted in all its faculties." The theme is repeated within two paragraphs of the same sermon. "Ye know that the great end of religion is to renew our hearts in the image of God, to repair that total loss of righteousness and true holiness which we sustained by the sin of our first parents."

On any number of occasions Wesley returned to the theme of salvation as the restoration of the image of God in humankind. In Outler's estimate this was the "axial theme" in Wesley's soteriology. In the sermon, "The Image of God," Wesley sketched Adam's original perfection.

Then indeed to live was to enjoy, when every faculty was in its perfection, amidst abundance of objects, which infinite wisdom had purposely suited to it, when man's understanding was satisfied with truth, as his will was with good; when he was at full


40 Wesley, Works, 8:284.
liberty to enjoy either the Creator or the creation; to indulge in rivers of pleasure, ever new, ever pure from any mixture of pain.\textsuperscript{45}

Salvation is nothing short of the restoration of the original state of "primitive health." The point is stated explicitly in Wesley's essay, "A farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion." Salvation is "a present deliverance from sin, a restoration of the soul to its primitive health, its original purity; a recovery of the divine nature; the renewal of our souls after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness, in justice, mercy, and faith."\textsuperscript{46}

From the perspective of the individual, restoration begins with the awareness of one's true state. Knowledge of the "disease" opens the door for faith.\textsuperscript{47} Through faith one appropriates the remedy or cure. In the sermon, "Circumcision of the Heart," Wesley stressed "that faith alone is able to make them whole, . . . (for it is) the one medicine given under heaven to heal their sickness."\textsuperscript{48} Then it is that Jesus, the "Physician of the Soul," with the skill and compassion of a surgeon "cuts away what is putrified or unsound in order to preserve the sound part."\textsuperscript{49} Through the agency of the Spirit, the Great Physician moves to cure those infirmities or diseases of our nature—"self love and the love of the world"—and to restore or recover the love of God, "the health of our souls."\textsuperscript{50} The love of God is the medicine for all life, "for all the miseries and vices of men."\textsuperscript{51} For, as Wesley explained in "The Character of a Christian," God's love "has purified the heart from all revenge passions, from envy, malice, and wrath, from every unkind temper, or malign affection."\textsuperscript{52} As with Adam before the Fall, so again, Wesley explained, "The whole soul is . . . sensible of God. . . . The Spirit or breath of God is immediately inspired, breathed into the new-born soul; . . . And by this new kind of spiritual respiration, spiritual life is not only sustained, but increased day by day, . . ."\textsuperscript{53} The spiritual sensitivity to God's nature and purpose common to Adam before the Fall has been restored. Through faith, the individual is introduced to the life of holiness and happiness.\textsuperscript{54}

The third way in which Wesley utilized the medical model was to emphasize that vital Christian living entailed the life of discipline or sensible

\textsuperscript{54}Here, one finds a theme common to Wesley's theology. To be spiritually whole is to enjoy holiness and happiness. Where one is missing there is no spiritual wholeness or salvation. See Wesley, \textit{Works}, Bicentennial Edition, 2:194-196.
regimen. In truth, this emphasis reflects his readings in the Catholic tradition as well as the influence of his Puritan heritage. Nonetheless, when Wesley sought to illustrate his conviction, he turned again and again to medical imagery.

For Wesley, health as wholeness was at one and the same time a gift and a discipline. On the one hand, health is what was intended for creation, and in that sense, is a gift. God, "Who has all power in heaven and earth . . . gives life and breath and all things, and . . . cannot withhold from them that seek him any manner of thing that is good." Or, as Wesley explained in a letter to a Mrs. Hall, "It is not wisdom to impute either our health or any other blessing we enjoy merely to natural causes. It is better to ascribe all to Him whose Kingdom ruleth over all." On the other hand, health as wholeness was, for Wesley, also a matter of discipline. Wesley's readings in seventeenth and eighteenth century medicine had fostered in his own mind the link between sensible regimen and health.

Sensible regimen, for Wesley, meant the responsible use, and not the abuse, of the so called non-naturals. Dr. George Cheyne's book, *An Essay of Health and Long Life*, which Wesley read while at Oxford, was organized around the six non-naturals. The non-naturals traditionally have included air, food and drink, exercise, sleeping and waking, evacuations and retentions, and passions of the soul. While Wesley himself did not actually use the term, "non-naturals," it is clear that he was aware of the eighteenth century conviction that careful attention to the non-naturals served to promote a life of health and well-being. Wesley published *Primitive Physick* with the avowed purpose of placing in the hands of the general populace "a plain and easy way of curing most diseases," and appended to the Preface a few "Plain Easy Rules adapted from Dr. Cheyne's book. The rules covering the six non-naturals were presented as aids to good health. The tenor of these rules is captured in the following summation:

Observe all the time the greatest exactness in your regimen or manner of living. Abstain from all mixed or high-seasoned foods. Use plain diet easy of digestion . . . . Drink only water if it agrees with your stomach. Use as much exercise daily in the open air as you can, without weariness. Sup at six or seven on the lightest food; go to bed early and rise betimes. To persevere with steadiness in this course, is often more than half the cure.

To mention four or five of the non-naturals in a particular context was not unusual for Wesley. He concluded his "Thoughts on Nervous Disorders" with instructions regarding air, food and drink, exercise, sleeping and waking, and passions. An extended comment on the non-naturals

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is beyond the scope of this paper. What is critical to this discussion is Wesley's conviction that sensible regimen was viewed as the divinely established pattern for a life of health and wholeness. Wesley, in turn, utilized this emphasis as a paradigm to underscore his long held belief that disciplined living was the avenue to spiritual wholeness—holiness and happiness.

Just as God desires for all a life of health and well-being, so, as Wesley continually stressed, God wills for all the life of holiness and happiness. As with somatic health, spiritual health or wholeness was a gift and a discipline. This is most clear in that sermon, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation." It is God who "worketh in you" and "therefore you must work." 59

The two foci expressed in this sermon were the hallmark of Wesley's order of salvation. Salvation embraced the moments of forgiveness and restoration (gift) and the stages of process and growth (discipline). And, here again, the medical metaphor worked well for Wesley, particularly with respect to his emphasis on Christian living involving one in the ongoing process of growth toward spiritual wholeness.

Wesley was a realist. He knew that life, even for the believer, was not without its perils. In delineating these perils Wesley frequently turned to medical imagery. To read through Wesley's sermons is to sense that one is witnessing a spiritual clinician at work. With insight characteristic of our own day Wesley knew that growth toward wholeness was contingent upon an awareness of one's true state. The individual must be cognizant of those diseases that plague the spirit, thwarting spiritual growth. The most explicit example of Wesley's functioning as the clinician is his sermon, "The Wilderness State." Wesley began the diagnosis defining the nature of the disease through an enumeration of its symptoms. As to the cause or causes, the "wilderness state" is not to be attributed to God's sovereign pleasure, but to the individual's own shortcoming. Sins of commission as well as sins of omission may foster and feed the "wilderness state." A clear understanding of the cause is critical to the cure. Wesley observed that from medicine one knows that there is no cure apart from understanding the cause. One must avoid supposing that for those in the "wilderness state" there is only one cure. Wesley chided some of his colleagues who assumed that one need only "preach the gospel." Such an approach is tantamount to the practice of "quackery." 60 In short, the cure must be consistent with the cause.

Any examination of the diseases that hinder growth toward spiritual wholeness, according to Wesley, must take into account both the outward and inward perils to be faced along the journey. As for those outward

threats to holiness and happiness, Wesley observed that the Christian, called to live in the world, faces the danger of encountering a debilitating "contagion" when he/she may least expect it. Because one lives in the public arena, the individual must always be aware of the possibility of being exposed to a contagious disease. It is not, Wesley observed, that the person who is contagious intends to infect another. Rather—and here Wesley cited an interpretation current in his day—it is that "the atmosphere surrounding every human body, . . . naturally affects every one that comes within the limits of it."61 The caveat, of course, is that as far as possible one should move about in an environment conducive to spiritual health. "If you continue long within their atmosphere," Wesley warned, "you can hardly escape the being infected. The contagion spreads from soul to soul, as well as from body to body, even though the persons diseased do not intend or desire it."62

It is clear from the above that Wesley was particularly concerned about relationships in the world and their consequences on the individual. In addressing the critical nature of the type of relationship one keeps in the world, Wesley turned to still another metaphor borrowed from medicine. Wesley expressed concern that extended contact with those who do not fear God may lead to strictures within the soul. Again, the language is intriguing. In the sermon, "The Image of God," Wesley conjectured that the fruit of the forbidden tree released particles into the body which in time began to adhere to the linings of the vessels, thus creating blockage in the vessels which prohibited the free flow of blood throughout the vessels of the body. The lesson to be drawn from the experience in the garden was that one should be careful of the relationships one chooses to share. The Christian should converse with the Godly, and as for those who do not meet the standard, "gently and quietly let them drop." They will "do you no service. Nay," Wesley warned, "if they did not lead you to outward sin, yet they would be a continual clog to your soul, . . . and hinder your running with vigor . . . the race that is set before you."63

Significantly, Wesley used the same metaphor while emphasizing that one cannot and should not live totally apart from the world. The Christian is to realize that Christianity is at root a social religion. As such, the Christian is under the responsibility to reach out to the world. To those who object, raising the question as to whether or not such interaction with society might "clog the soul," Wesley responded that loving God at the least entails keeping the "outward commandments." One is to make of

62 Wesley, Works, Bicentennial Edition, 3:135. It is important to keep in mind Wesley's attention to fresh air. Wesley repeated Dr. George Cheyne's emphasis on fresh air being conducive to good health. Late in his ministry Wesley was to attribute his long life to goodness of God, as well as to some inferior means, and among the latter he included exercising daily in the fresh air. See Wesley, Journal, 7:408.
his/her daily employment "a sacrifice to God, . . . ." According to Wesley, "this is worshipping God in spirit and in truth as much as praying to him in a wilderness."\(^{64}\)

Wesley again turned to the metaphor developed in the sermon, "The Image of God," to comment on those inward perils that plague the Christian. In his sermon, "The Repentance of Believers," Wesley invoked the imagery of "particles (that) were apt to cleave to anything they touch," to stress that even the Christian must be aware that sin may yet "cleave" to conversation and action.\(^{65}\) A similar use of the metaphor is to be found in the sermon, "The Scripture Way of Salvation." In this sermon Wesley returned to cardinal theme of his ministry. Salvation is experienced in two phases or stages – justification and sanctification. Through the former one stands before God as forgiven; through the latter one is "born from above." Nonetheless, one should not imagine that all sin is gone. The work of sanctification is begun, but the individual is to go on to perfection. If one is honest before God and with oneself, he/she must confess that sin remains in the believer, "cleaving" to all "words and actions."\(^{66}\)

Those diseases, both inward and outward, that would debilitate the believer must be countered by a life of spiritual discipline. While it is true that the "Physician of our Souls" as surgeon must "root out" that which has defaced the original creation and restore humankind to "primitive health," it is also the case that growth toward wholeness necessitates regimen or disciplined living.

From the outset of his ministry Wesley adopted regimen as the norm for Christian living. At Oxford, Wesley, along with the other young men in the Holy Club, engaged in daily self examination.

> Have I been simple and recollected in all I said or did? Have I been simple? That is, setting the Lord always before me, and doing everything with a single view of pleasing him? Recollected; that is, quickly gathering in my scattered thoughts, recovering my simplicity, if I had been in any wise drawn from it by men or devils or my own evil heart.\(^{67}\)

To give careful attention to these question was according to Wesley to "exercise the presence of God."\(^{68}\)

Equivalent standards were established for members of the Band Societies. Members of the societies were to meet weekly under the mandate to be obedient to the "command of God, [to] 'Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed.'"\(^{69}\) These

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weekly meetings were conducted as spiritual clinics, similar to a modern day support group. With insight characteristic of today's therapist, Wesley also set down positive directives for the society members. In addition to instructions regarding life styles, persons committed to the life of spiritual wholeness were "zealously to maintain good works" and "constantly to attend on all the ordinances of God; . . . ."70 Persons were exhorted to engage in works of mercy as "fruits meet for repentance." Such activities—"feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, (and) entertaining the stranger, . . . ."—were tantamount to exercises in creative waiting. As Wesley explained, "This is the way wherein God hath appointed his children to wait for complete salvation."71 There were, of course, those works of piety—practicing public (including family prayers) and private prayers, receiving the sacraments, searching the Scriptures, fasting as one's health permits—necessary for holiness and happiness. These expressions of piety were, in the words of Wesley, "exercises of the soul." In the sermon, "The Wilderness State," Wesley warned against the failure to pursue those "secret exercises of the soul." Here Wesley made explicit reference to the link between exercise and wholeness. Without these religious exercises, Wesley observed, "life will surely decay. And if we long or frequently intermit them, it will gradually die away."72

In this study I have represented metaphor as an apt literary tool chosen by Wesley for the development and articulation of his soteriology. As such metaphor was more than a literary device selected to aesthetically enhance his prose. Through metaphor Wesley pointed to realities which, by his own admission, exceed the limits of language. For Wesley, the medical metaphor became a model for interpreting to his reader the very essence of true religion—"therapy of the soul, God's method of healing [the] soul. . . ."73

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