

ASPECTS OF WESLEY'S THEOLOGY AFTER 1770

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Robert E. Chiles has suggested that "the transition from free grace to free will is one of the fundamental changes in American Methodism since the time of John Wesley." He notes that because of a shift in priority from faith itself to "evidences" for faith, and because of the moralistic revision of the understanding of sin there has been a movement away from the classical Protestant orthodoxy of John Wesley.¹ Chiles very convincingly traces this shift.² He observes that Richard Watson in his *Theological Institutes* (1823-29) attributed more to man than did Wesley and "represents a first subtle step toward the modification of free grace in the direction of free will."³ D. D. Whedon during the second half of the nineteenth century shifted further the emphasis from soteriological to anthropological grounds, and insisted on man's responsible freedom, without giving much attention to grace. Whedon argued that the will chooses motives which grace supplies.⁴ According to Chiles, this development culminated in John Miley's *Systematic Theology* (2 volumes, 1894). Miley suggested that whether good motives are derived from nature or from grace is indifferent so far as moral freedom is concerned. Finally, men like Borden Parker Bowne (d. 1910) and Albert C. Knudson (d. 1953), Methodist philosophical and theological thinkers, stressed the metaphysical significance of personality even apart from the gracious basis of motives. Thus concludes Chiles: "The apostasy from free grace to free will is complete."⁵

The thesis which I am suggesting is that the "first subtle step" in this shift from free grace to free will can be found, not in Richard Watson (in whom Chiles finds it), but in John Wesley himself. Certain aspects of Wesley's theology indicate a more decided anthropological emphasis during the last twenty years of his life, primarily with regard to man's freedom of the will. The transition of emphasis was made possible by the defense of Wesley's Minutes of 1770 by John William Fletcher (d. 1785), whose *Checks to Antinomianism* entitle him to be called the "first systematic theo-

¹ Robert E. Chiles, "Methodist Apostasy: From Free Grace to Free Will," *Religion in Life* (Summer, 1958), XXVII, 438.

² He has expanded this theme in his book, *Theological Transition in American Methodism* (Abingdon Press, 1965), in which he illustrates the shift from revelation to reason, from sinful man to

moral man, from free grace to free will.

³ Chiles, *Religion in Life*, 442-43.

⁴ Chiles cites "Methodist Theology in America in the 19th Century," *Religion in Life* (Winter, 1955-56), XXV, 92f; also D. D. Whedon, *The Freedom of the Will as a Basis of Human Responsibility and a Divine Government* (New York: 1864).

⁵ Chiles, *Religion in Life*, 444-47.

logian of Methodism.”⁶ This later development in Wesley frequently is unobserved both because the significance of the Calvinistic controversy (1770's) for a historical understanding of Wesley is too little appreciated, and because Fletcher's defense of and influence upon Wesley has received scant attention.

That Chiles has overlooked this influence, both in his article and that portion of his book which discusses the problem of free will (pp. 144-157), may be seen in the fact that almost all the material which he quotes or cites from Wesley was written *before* 1770. Further, a brief survey of those relevant references to Wesley's writings which *are* dated following this time indicate that the referents have to do more with free will than with free grace. For example, eight references are made to Wesley's *Letters* after 1770, but only two relate specifically to the problem of man's freedom. In these though Wesley mentioned prevenient grace,⁷ the emphasis, unobserved by Chiles, is on man's ability to believe *if* he will (though not *when* he will). *God's assistance* of man in believing is stressed, rather than *man's assistance* of God in the salvation process.⁸ Ten *Sermons* written after 1770 are cited. Four are related only indirectly to the question of freedom, and deal with the nature and love of God, Christ's death and perfection.⁹ Of the six sermons which are pertinent to the discussion of man's moral and spiritual abilities, two stress works and man's power of self-determination,¹⁰ and in two others which discuss freedom, Wesley either did not refer at all to prevenient grace,¹¹ or questioned the significance of asking whether man's free will is "*natural* or superadded by the grace of God."¹² Only in the remaining two sermons adduced by Chiles did Wesley assert that conscience is a supernatural gift of God,¹³ or make an attempt to balance God's grace and man's free will.¹⁴ Finally, Chiles alludes to several additional writings of Wesley other than his letters or sermons, but these are deliberate attempts to underscore man's freedom,¹⁵ with the exception of Wesley's "Plain Ac-

⁶ See the accolades bestowed upon Fletcher and his *Checks* by Luke Tyerman, *Wesley's Designated Successor* (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1886), p. 346; Townsend-Workman-Eayrs, eds., *A New History of Methodism* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1919), I, 320; J. A. Dorner, *History of Protestant Theology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1871), II, p. 92; or Abel Stevens, *The History of Methodism* (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1859), II, 55.

⁷ *The Letters of John Wesley, A. M.*, ed. John Telford (8 volumes; London: The Epworth Press, 1931), VI, 239. Cited hereafter as *Letters*.

⁸ *Letters*, VII, 202.

⁹ *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, 3rd edition, ed. Thomas Jackson 14 vols.; Kansas City, Missouri: Nazarene Publishing House, Reprint of the Authorized Set printed by the Wesleyan Conference Office in 1872), VI, 266, 235, 250, 323. Cited hereafter as *Works*.

¹⁰ *Works*, VI, 280; VII, 205.

¹¹ *Works*, VII, 228.

¹² *Works*, VII, 345 (italics mine).

¹³ *Works*, VII, 188.

¹⁴ *Works*, VI, 507-513.

¹⁵ *Works*, X, 358-61, 388, 431, 444.

count of Christian Perfection," most of which was written prior to 1770 though the *latest* edition is dated 1777.¹⁶

The purpose in examining these references is not to disagree with Chiles's understanding of Wesley's theological position. It is simply to note that the preponderance of evidence which he uses to sustain his interpretation was written by Wesley *before* 1770, and that the relevant references to material prepared after the Calvinistic controversy began, i.e., after Fletcher's defense of Wesley's Minutes, indicate a decided anthropocentric emphasis.

Evidence of a New Emphasis

This shift of *emphasis*, not of theological position, in the direction of man's freedom, may be substantiated conclusively from the writings of the "later" Wesley. Following 1770 man's choice came to pervade Wesley's thought. He buttressed his new emphasis upon man's free will by three main arguments, which seem to correspond to his well-known threefold criteria for truth—Scripture, Reason, and Experience. 1) Wesley began saying that man is free by virtue of the fact that he is a man, made in God's image according to *Scripture*, and that man by nature is free to choose the good. 2) He stressed the idea that man's guilt must not exceed his accountability and that responsibility cannot be greater than his freedom, else the canons of *Reason* are violated. And 3), he observed that the universal *Experience* of man testifies to his power of choice. Each of these arguments may be documented briefly.

Wesley insisted, on the basis of the *Scriptural teaching* that man is a creature of God, that the power of choice is standard equipment for man.¹⁷ In the sermon "Spiritual Worship" (1780) Wesley stated that spirits have been given a "small" degree of self-moving power, or choice.¹⁸ Understanding, will, and liberty, are "essential to, if not the essence of, a spirit."¹⁹ These faculties or functions man possesses because he was created in God's image, "a spirit like himself."²⁰

The same idea is asserted in the sermon "The End of Christ's Coming" (1781). Understanding, will, and liberty are "inseparably united in every intelligent nature," in every "spirit," made in the "natural" image of God. Nowhere in this sermon did Wesley say that Christ came to restore the natural image; he came only to recover the moral image. The implication is that in the Fall man did not lose his liberty, a part of the natural image. Liberty, then, is man's by virtue of the fact that he is a man.²¹ Earlier Wesley had stated simply that because of grace there is no man in history in a

¹⁶ Works, XI, 366-446.

¹⁷ Works, X, 475, 478.

¹⁸ Works, VI, 427.

¹⁹ Works, VI, 362. The evil angels are so because they misused their liberty.

See "Of Evil Angels" (1783), Works, VI, 372.

²⁰ Works, VI, 318.

²¹ Works, VI, 269-70, 276.

completely "natural" state.²² Now he declared that man at creation was "endued with a will, exerting itself in various affections and passions: And, lastly, with liberty, or freedom of choice."²³

The following year also (1782) Wesley spoke as though man, in spite of the Fall, still possesses this same freedom, which distinguishes him from the animal world. In the sermon "On the Fall of Man," he attributed the Fall to man's liberty of using his affections "in a right or wrong manner, of choosing good or evil."²⁴ No suggestion is made that fallen man does not have this same power of choice, and no explanation that it arises out of prevenient grace is given.

In spite of Wesley's view that we must hold together the Scriptures, "Without me ye can do nothing" (Jn. 15:5), and "I can do all things through Christ strengthening me" (Phil. 4:13),²⁵ he tended more and more to underscore the latter one, leaving the impression that man can do almost what he wills simply because he is a man.

To the later Wesley the reality of man's freedom is not only a scriptural teaching, but also a *rational necessity*. Thus more and more emphasis was placed on man and his *responsibility*, rather than on God and His grace. In his sermon "On Predestination" (1773) Wesley said, "If man were not free, he could not be accountable either for his thoughts, words, or actions. If he were not free, he would not be capable either of reward or punishment; he would be incapable either of virtue or vice, of being either morally good or bad."²⁶

No question is "of greater importance in the whole *nature of things*" than whether a man is, or is not, a free agent.²⁷ Without freedom "man would be man no longer," but a "mere machine." Man can choose the "better part"—"assisted" by God's grace.²⁸ It is noteworthy that Wesley did not say the "better part" is man's by grace, assisted by man's choice. Wesley's way of stating it makes grace appear to be secondary to man's freedom and accountability.

In Wesley's mind, *experience* also corroborates the witness of scripture and reason to the power of choice in man. Man is conscious of possessing a "power of self-determination." He senses a "liberty of contradiction"—power "to do or not to do" and also a "liberty of contrariety"—a power "to act one way, or the contrary." To deny this, for Wesley, would be to deny the common experience of all mankind.²⁹

With this solid support of scripture, reason, and experience, Wesley made choice a dominant theme in his later writings. In

²² E. H. Sugden, ed., *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley* (London: The Epworth Press, 1921), I, 188, 183.

²³ *Works*, VI, 242.

²⁴ *Works*, VI, 215, 222.

²⁵ *Works*, X, 475, 478.

²⁶ *Works*, VI, 227, 318.

²⁷ *Works*, X, 457 (Italics mine).

²⁸ *Works*, VI, 280.

²⁹ *Works*, VII, 228.

"God's Love to Fallen Man" (1782) he stated that only man's choice can prevent his receiving saving grace, for "none ever was or can be a loser but by his own choice."³⁰ In the natural world things continue uninterrupted. But in the moral realm "evil man and evil spirits continually oppose the divine will, and create numberless irregularities."³¹ This position is not so different from that prior to 1770, but Wesley went further to state that Pelagius' heresy was merely in believing that one by the grace of God can "go on to perfection."³² Though Wesley asserted that this possibility is by the grace of God, his approval of Pelagius does indicate a shift of emphasis in favor of man's power of decision. Man's eternal state depends upon his choice. Speaking of those who have rejected Christ and are eternally lost, Wesley wrote, "In what a condition are those immortal spirits who have made choice of a miserable eternity! I say, *made choice*, for it is impossible this should be the lot of any creature but by his own act and deed."³³

Man's power of choice is both assumed and emphasized in the numerous *admonitions* which are included in many of Wesley's late sermons, and which are noticeably absent from his *Standard Sermons*. In "The Important Question" (1775) Wesley concluded, "I set before you life and death, believing and cursing. O choose life! . . . By the grace of God, now choose that better part. . . And having once fixed your choice, never draw back. . . Go on in the name of the Lord, whom ye have chosen. . ." ³⁴ In "A Call to Backsliders" (1778) he said, "Only settle it in your heart, I will give all for all. . . Give him all your heart!" ³⁵ "The General Deliverance" (1781), which says nothing of prevenient grace, is concluded thus, "Rest not till you enjoy the privilege of humanity—the knowledge and love of God. . . Give your hearts to Him, who . . . has given you his Son. . . Let God be in all your thoughts. . . Let him be your God and your all." ³⁶ In 1782 the admonition is given, "O let us look back and shudder at the thoughts of that dreadful precipice. . . Let us fly for refuge to the hope that is set before us. . ." ³⁷

It cannot be said that Wesley anywhere avowed that man has freedom apart from God. In fact he stated the opposite. In 1772 he wrote, "Both Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Wesley absolutely deny natural free-will. We both steadily assert that the will of man is by nature free only to evil. Yet we both believe that every man has a measure of free-will restored to him by grace." ³⁸ In the sermon "Working Out Your Own Salvation" (1785) he stated that there is "no man that is in a state of mere nature." All have preventing

³⁰ *Works*, VI, 240.

³¹ *Works*, VI, 326.

³² *Works*, VI, 328.

³³ *Works*, VI, 194.

³⁴ *Works*, VI, 505.

³⁵ *Works*, VI, 527.

³⁶ *Works*, VI, 252.

³⁷ *Works*, VI, 391.

³⁸ *Works*, X, 392.

grace unless they have quenched the Spirit. Man sins because "he does not use the grace which he hath."³⁹ As late as 1788 Wesley declared that man possesses conscience, which is a "supernatural gift of God," a part of prevenient grace.⁴⁰

And yet the priority of grace unintentionally was made to appear to be secondary to man's responsible choice. The emphasis on man's freedom increasingly was shifted away from theocentric to anthropocentric categories. This transition is revealed clearly in one of Wesley's last statements. Speaking of conscience in 1790, he wrote, "Whether this is natural or superadded by the grace of God, it is found, at least in some degree, in every child of man."⁴¹ Thus by the end of his life it seems that Wesley was not too concerned whether man's liberty and conscience are by nature or by grace. He simply wanted to affirm that man has them—else he is not a man.

Possible Reasons for a New Emphasis

It appears that two factors led Wesley to emphasize man's freedom in a way which he had not done prior to 1770: 1) His fear that the revival was losing momentum because the Methodists were becoming dangerously affluent; and 2) His continued conflict with Calvinism which caused him to stress works in an effort to avoid Antinomianism.

The sermons after 1770 indicate a growing concern on the part of Wesley that the revival might be slowing somewhat.⁴² He seems to have been fearful that an increasing affluence among his adherents was having a detrimental effect on their zeal and revival fervor. In 1784 he said: "It is certain many of the Methodists are already fallen; many are falling at this very time; and there is great reason to apprehend, that many more will fall, most of whom will rise no more."⁴³ Two years later (1786) he lamented that friendship with the world had had "melancholy effects" upon the Methodists, and

³⁹ *Works*, VI, 512.

⁴⁰ *Works*, VI, 187f; X, 457, 463-64, 473.

⁴¹ *Works*, VII, 345. Miley, in whom the transition from free grace to free will is supposed by Chiles to have culminated, made a similar point. Thus Chiles states that for Miley whether motives "are derived from nature or from grace is indifferent so far as moral freedom is concerned." Chiles, *Religion in Life*, p. 445, citing Miley, *Systematic Theology*, II, 304f. But apparently the "transition" began in Wesley himself, the "later" Wesley.

⁴² In 1767, the first year that statistics appeared in the *Conference Minutes*, 25,911 members were reported. The fol-

lowing year showed an increase of 1,430 new members, but about 1,100 of these came from Staffordshire alone. Thus there was no widespread growth. In 1769 there was an increase of 922; and in 1770, 916. See *Methodist Conference Minutes, 1744-98* (London: John Mason, 1862), I, 72, 77, 85, 92. Wesley felt these increases were too small. Regarding spiritual growth among the Methodists Wesley said in 1770 that of many hundreds in London who had received deliverance from inbred sin, "I doubt whether twenty of them are now as holy and as happy as they were." *Letters*, V, 185.

⁴³ *Works*, VI, 334.

declared, "How many of the mighty have fallen!"⁴⁴ He complained that his followers failed to bear the fruits of the Spirit,⁴⁵ and to "deny themselves and take up their cross daily."⁴⁶ Reviewing the visible progress of the revival and Methodist complacency Wesley prayed in 1789, "O that God would enable me once more, before I go hence and am no more seen, to lift up my voice like a trumpet to those who gain and save all they can, but do not give all they can!" In seeking reasons for the inefficiency of Christianity, particularly among the Methodists, he observed:

Never was there before a people in the Christian Church who had so much of the power of God among them, with so little self-denial! The Methodists grow more and more self-indulgent, because they grow rich. . . And it is an observation which admits of few exceptions, that nine of ten of them decreased in grace in the same proportion as they increased in wealth.⁴⁷

Besides pleading for frugality, Wesley also called for simple dress among the Methodists, so they would have more to spend for good works. Thus he admonished, "Determine this day . . . Fix your resolution now."⁴⁸ In the sermon "On the Education of Children" (1783) Wesley said, "By the grace of God *assisting us*," we may "gradually cure the natural atheism of our children."⁴⁹ Apparently this concern for the practical evidences of the revival in part led Wesley to stress man's power of choice.

In addition, Wesley's continued altercation with the Calvinists caused him increasingly to stress the necessity and possibility of good works—and quite frequently without mentioning their relation to grace. In 1770 Wesley wrote a tract, "What is an Arminian?" in which he pointed out that the one point of division between Arminians and Calvinists relates to the question: "Is predestination absolute or conditional?" "The Arminians," he noted, "believe it is conditional; the Calvinists, that it is absolute."⁵⁰ Wesley attempted to show that the doctrine of unconditional election is absolutely incompatible with any demand for works. In 1771 he wrote "The Consequence Proved" and cited some of Toplady's statements from which one must deduce that "the elect shall be saved do what they will; The reprobate shall be doomed do what they can."⁵¹

Though Wesley denied the doctrine of absolute predestination, he claimed that if a choice had to be made between Roman works and Calvinistic election, he would choose the former. "I do not believe," he wrote in 1772, "salvation by works. Yet if any man can prove (what I judge none ever did, or ever will) that there is no

⁴⁴ *Works*, VI, 463.

⁴⁵ *Works*, VII, 211f.

⁴⁶ *Works*, VII, 221f.

⁴⁷ *Works*, VI, 286-89.

⁴⁸ *Works*, VII, 20, 24.

⁴⁹ *Works*, VII, 92. Italics mine.

⁵⁰ *Works*, X, 358-60.

⁵¹ *Works*, X, 370-74.

medium between this and absolute predestination; I will rather subscribe to this than to that, as far less absurd of the two.”⁵² Again in 1775 he expressed the same sentiment:

What are all the absurd opinions of all the Romanists in the world, compared to that one, that the God of love, the wise, the just, mindful Father of the spirits of all flesh, has, from all eternity, fixed an absolute, unchangeable, irresistible decree, that part of mankind shall be saved, do what they will; and the rest doomed, do what they can!⁵³

Wesley was sure that the position stated in the 1770 Minutes, which evoked such a storm of controversy and which Fletcher defended in his *Checks*, provided a third possibility so that no such clear-cut choice between works and election is necessary. He was equally convinced that the Minutes, which make what he considered a legitimate place for works, and the doctrine of decrees, cannot stand together.⁵⁴

This high regard for works prompted Wesley to insist upon salvation by works “in a Scriptural sense.” In 1779 he published in *The Arminian Magazine* a short essay entitled “Thoughts on Salvation by Faith.”⁵⁵ In the article he again stated that the Calvinists see “no medium between salvation by works and salvation by absolute decrees.” Thus since he denied absolute election, in their view he was affirming salvation by works. Wesley agreed with their logic, and claimed that “you must assert Unconditional Decrees, or (in a sound sense) Salvation by Works.” He endeavored to clarify this by saying that if salvation is by unconditional election, then it is neither by works nor by faith. If human salvation is by a conditional election, i.e., “He that believeth shall be saved,” then it is by a faith which worketh by love, “which produces both inward and outward good works.” In this sense no man will be saved finally without works. Wesley concluded:

Let none, therefore, who hold Universal Redemption be surprised at being charged with this (salvation by works). Let us deny it no more: let us frankly and fairly meet those who advance it upon their own ground. If they charge you with holding Salvation by Works, answer plainly, “In *your* sense, I do: for I deny that our final salvation depends upon any Absolute Unconditional Decree . . .” But observe! In allowing this, I allow no more than that I am no Calvinist. So that by my making you this concession, you gain—just nothing.⁵⁶

⁵² *Works*, X, 379.

⁵³ *Works*, VI, 199-200.

⁵⁴ *Works*, X, 379, 478.

⁵⁵ *Works*, XI, 492f.

⁵⁶ *Arminian Magazine* (London: Frys, Couchman, and Collier, March, 1779), II, 120-122.

It has been thought that this represents a withdrawal from Wesley's earlier position of salvation by grace alone.⁵⁷ However, he was reasserting simply that justification always issues in the fruit of sanctification.⁵⁸ Wesley himself denied that he had altered his position across the years. In 1782 he rejected absolute predestination on the grounds that it is inconsistent with the scriptural notion of a final judgment. Man will be punished according to his works and his degree of guilt.⁵⁹ Because works are necessary at the last day man will not stand in "Christ's righteousness," but in his own. If it is asked "for *whose sake*, or by *whose merit*, do you expect to enter into the glory of God? I answer," said Wesley, "without the least hesitation, For the sake of Jesus Christ the Righteous." And yet fearing Antinomianism Wesley asserted that this righteousness must become our own—"personal holiness" is required of man. The righteousness of Christ is "necessary to *entitle* us to heaven; personal holiness is necessary to" *qualify* us for it. Without the righteousness of Christ we could have no *claim* to glory; without holiness we could have no *fitness* for it. Wesley said this had been his position for fifty years, and from it he had "never varied, no, not an hair's breadth."⁶⁰

Though Wesley seems to have been correct in claiming that none of these sentiments at all indicate a retraction from his earlier position of salvation by grace, the practical concern of the revival and the continued conflict with the Calvinists in his later years pushed him to stress freedom and man's works more than faith and God's grace.

Fletcher's Influence on the "Later" Wesley

Wesley viewed Fletcher's works as being a significant contribution toward the clarification of his own position, especially with regard to particular predestination. In 1772 Wesley declared that with Fletcher's *Checks* it became "indisputably clear, that neither my brother nor I had borne a sufficient testimony to the truth. For many years, from a well-meant, but ill-judged, tenderness, we had suffered the reprobation Preachers (vulgarly called *Gospel Preachers*) to spread their poison, almost without opposition."⁶¹ Since Wesley had long opposed predestination, he evidently was

⁵⁷ See William R. Cannon, *The Theology of John Wesley* (New York: 1946), p. 115; also Umphrey Lee, *John Wesley and Modern Religion* (Nashville: 1936), p. 166ff.

⁵⁸ Robert E. Cushman agrees with this assessment in his very excellent article "Salvation for All—Wesley and Calvinism" in William K. Anderson, ed., *Methodism* (Nashville: The Methodist

Publishing House, 1947), pp. 111f. However, Cushman, like Chiles, overlooks the fact that Wesley's assertions of freedom and works following 1770 are not equally balanced by affirmations of grace.

⁵⁹ *Works*, VI, 385.

⁶⁰ *Works*, VII, 313-14, 317.

⁶¹ *Works*, X, 413.

asserting that he had not found time to construct systematically a theology which could successfully refute the predestinarians. This, Wesley felt, Fletcher had done. Speaking specifically of the 1770 Minutes, Wesley stated that Fletcher had "effectually vindicated" them, for "there is no resisting the force of his arguments."⁶²

Wesley's opposition to Calvinism persisted until his death. In a letter of January 19, 1791, a few months before he died, he said, "Certainly Calvinism is the direct antidote to Methodism—that is, heart religion. . ."⁶³ Further, there is no evidence that Wesley's evaluation of Fletcher's *Checks* was ever altered. He continued to view them as an effective polemical tool against the Calvinists.

It is in this high regard for Fletcher's works that the clue to his influence upon the later Wesley is suggested. Fletcher, in Wesley's mind, had held together so well in his *Checks to Antinomianism* both God's grace and man's freedom, that Wesley felt safe in stressing either the one or the other—depending upon the situation or need at the moment. Consequently, in his later years he stressed the abilities of man rather than the grace of God. Prior to 1770 Wesley objected to unconditional election *primarily* because of its implications for the doctrine of God; following 1770 he opposed it *largely* because of its implications for the doctrine of man.⁶⁴ His soteriological understanding became more anthropocentric and less theocentric.

This transition is exactly what Chiles says happened first in Richard Watson, who placed "larger stress on man's free will and his 'doing,'" thereby beginning a "subtle shift in emphasis" from "prevenient to cooperant grace," "from divine grace and initiative to the human agency and role in the economy of salvation."⁶⁵ If the analysis in the foregoing pages is correct, then the "apostasy" from free grace to free will may be said to have its origin in Wesley himself. The view of man presented by Wesley in the closing years of his life deserves careful study, for it is obviously significant in the light of the growing tendency of theology to become anthropology.

⁶² *Works*, X, 449, 452.

⁶³ *Letters*, VIII, 256. By "Calvinism" Wesley referred to unconditional election, and not to the Calvinistic interpretation of sin or grace.

⁶⁴ See John Allan Knight, "John William Fletcher and the Early Methodist Tradition" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1966), p.

388f. This is not to claim that Wesley did not object to unconditional election on both these grounds before 1770. See, for example, *Works*, VII, 376-83.

⁶⁵ Chiles, *Theological Transition*, pp. 162-63, quoting with approval Dunlap, "Methodist Theology in Great Britain," pp. 477f.