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DO 628

THEOLOGY OF JOHN WESLEY

SPRING 2001

Dr. Allan Coppedge

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PURPOSE

A study of the theological doctrines and opinions of John Wesley and the origin of Methodism as a vigorous reaffirmation of the evangelical faith of Christendom. The development of the doctrinal position of Wesley is studied with reference to his life, work, religious experience, and the Evangelical Revival in England in the eighteenth century. This heritage is studied in order that it may be critically and appropriately explained and communicated.

LEARNING GOALS

1. To provide an introduction to the theology and thought patterns of John Wesley in the following areas:

Prevenient grace and sin; Universal atonement and transforming grace; Justification and regeneration; Sanctification and Christian perfection; Christian life and means of grace; the Church and ministry; Doctrine of God the Father; Doctrines of Grace; Predestination; Religious Authority; Pluralism and the Bible.
2. To offer an analysis of the background factors that influenced Wesley's life and thought.
3. To introduce the life of Wesley and his influence in shaping eighteenth century Methodism.
4. To understand how Methodism is a part of the larger Christian Church and where it contributes to it, especially in the areas of theology and the practice of the Christian life.
5. To see some historical models of the transforming power of grace in the application of Biblical truth to individual lives, the Church, and society.
6. To recognize the practical implications of the theological ideas.
7. To understand the positive and negative lessons from the rise of Methodism and personal lives, the collected body of believers, and the culture at large.
8. To be able from within this heritage to address the theological issues that confront the church and the world today. This goal will be accomplished primarily through lecture and discussion in class.

REQUIREMENTS

I. Study Assignments

- A. Reading and outlining of assignments as indicated in the syllabus.
- B. A Collateral chart (included in syllabus) is to be kept which should include a record of the number of hours per week spent reading, outlining and taken notes. The number of hours studied will determine the grade options available to the student for the entire course. To be eligible to earn any grade up through an “A”, a total of at least 52 hours should be spent over the term. For a “B”, at least 46 hours per term. For a “C”, at least 40 hours per term. At least 36 hours per term is required for a passing grade.
- C. A notebook should be kept of all outlines and notes taken (but not class notes), plus a record of the student’s reading. The notebook should be organized by subject (justification, sin, sanctification, etc.). A grade will be given the notebook and the completion of assignments on time. It will constitute 33.3% of the final grade.

II. Examinations

There will be a mid-term and final that will cover reading assignments and class presentation. The date for the mid-term examination is Wednesday, March 21; the final is Wednesday, May 16, 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

III. Attendance

Attendance at all class periods is expected. Students should report the number of class periods from which he/she has been absent on his/her collateral sheet.

Out of courtesy to other members of the class, it is requested that no food or beverage be consumed in class.

IV. Textbooks

- A. **Required:**
John Wesley, Wesley’s Fifty-two Standard Sermons, ed. N. Burwash.
_____, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection.
Kenneth Collins, The Scripture Way of Salvation.
Harold Lindstrom, Wesley and Sanctification.
Kenneth Collins, A Real Christian.
- B. **Recommended:**
Allan Coppedge, John Wesley in Theological Debate.
Kenneth Collins, A Faithful Witness.
- C. **Requested:**
The Holy Bible (RSV) in class.

READING SCHEDULE

Outlining should be done so that the key arguments from any chapter or sermon can be seen from it. Normally two or three pages per chapter and one page per sermon will cover the material, although here are several exceptions to this guideline. In your syllabus is a guide to taking notes from Wesley's A Plain Account of Christian Perfection. This should be used for the assignment on A Plain Account October 23-27.

****BACKGROUND****

February 5 - 10

Read and Outline: (Required)

Collins, Kenneth, The Scripture Way of Salvation, Introduction, pp. 13-17. Chapter 2: Convincing Grace, pp. 47-68.

Read only: (Recommended as hours permit)

Collins, Kenneth, A Real Christian.

****BACKGROUND****

February 12 - 16

Read and Outline: (Required)

Wesley, John, Standard Sermons, Sermon I, "Salvation by Faith," Sermon II, "The Almost Christian."

Wesley, John, Works, VIII, "The Principles of a Methodist."

Collins, Kenneth, The Scripture Way of Salvation, Chapter 3: Justification, pp. 69-100.

Read only: (Required)

Wesley, Sermons, III, "Awake, thou that sleepest." Charles Wesley.

Collins, A Faithful Witness, Chapter 2, "Christology."

Collins, A Real Christian. Complete this work.

****JUSTIFICATION/NEW BIRTH****

February 19 - 23

Read and Outline: (Required)

Wesley, Standard Sermons, Sermons V, "Justification by Faith," XIX, "The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God," ZLV, "The New Birth."

Collins, The Scripture Way of Salvation, Chapter 4: Regeneration, pp. 101-130.

Read only: (Required)

Wesley, Sermons, VI, "The Righteousness of Faith," VII, "The Way to the Kingdom," XVIII, "The Marks of the New Birth."

Read only: (Recommended)

Wesley, John, The Journal of John Wesley, Standard Edition, Vol. II, pp. 121-137, 156-58, 167-88.

Schmidt, Martin, John Wesley, Vol. I, Chapter 7, “The Conversion.”

****WITNESS OF SPIRIT/ASSURANCE****

February 26 – March 2

Read and Outline: (Required)

Wesley, Standard Sermons, Sermon X, “The Witness of the Spirit, I.”

Wesley, John, Works, VIII, A Farther Appeal, Part I, Section, I, Sub-section 1-6.

Collins, The Scripture Way of Salvation, Chapter 5: Christian Assurance, pp. 131-152.

Read only: (Recommend)

Collins, A Faithful Witness, Chapter 3, “The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit,” pp. 57-76.

Wesley, Sermons, XI, “The Witness of the Spirit, II” XII, “The Witness of our Own Spirit.”

Wesley, Works, VI, Sermon, LXXXVI, “A Call to Backsliders.”

****DOCTRINE OF GOD****

March 5 - 9

Read and Outline: (Required)

Wesley, Works, VI, Sermon LXVII, “On Divine Providence.”

Coppedge, Allan, John Wesley in Theological Debate, pp. 123-132.

Read only: (Recommended)

Collins, A Faithful Witness, Chapter 1, “The Doctrine of God.”

Wesley, Works, Vol. VI: Sermons LV, “On the Trinity,” LIV, “On Eternity,” LVI, “God’s
Approbation of His Works,” LXVIII, “The Wisdom of God’s Counsel;” Vol. VII:

Sermons CXI, “On the Omnipresence of God,” CXIV, “The Unity of the Divine Being.”

Wesley, Sermons, Sermon XV, “The Great Assize.”

****SIN AND PREVENIENT GRACE****

March 12 - 16

Read and Outline: (Required)

Wesley, Sermons, Sermon XLIV, “Original Sin.”

Lindstrom, Harold, Wesley and Sanctification, pp. 19-50 (notes on key concepts).

Collins, The Scripture Way of Salvation, Chapter 1: Grace, Creation and Fall, pp. 19-46.

Read only: (Required)

Wood, Burning Heart, Chapter XXI, “The Loathsome Leprosy,” XXV, “The Wrath to Come.”

Wesley, Works, VI, Sermon 85, “On Working Out Your Salvation.”

Collins, The Scripture Way of Salvation, pp. 185-190.

(continued on next page)

Read only: (Recommended)

(March 12 –16 continued)

Wesley, Works, VI, Sermon LVII, “On the Fall of Man,” LXII, “The End of Christ’s Coming.”
Collins, A Faithful Witness, “The Doctrine of Humanity.”

****SANCTIFICATION****

March 19 - 23

Read and Outline: (Required)

Wesley, Sermons, Sermons XIII, “On Sin in Believers,” XIV, “The Repentance of Believers,”
XL, “Christian Perfection,” XLIII, “The Scripture Way of Salvation.”
Lindstrom, Sanctification, pp. 126-160.

Read only: (Recommended)

Wesley, Sermons, Sermon XIV, “The Repentance of Believers,” XVII, “The Circumcision of
the Heart.”
Coppedge, The Promise of Something More.
Collins, The Scripture Way of Salvation, Chapter 6: Sanctification, pp. 153-170.
Wood, Burning Heart, Chapter XXIV, “The Grand Depositum.”

****CHRISTIAN PERFECTION****

March 26 - 30

Read and Outline: (Required)

Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection. Use study guide in syllabus.
Lindstrom, Sanctification, pp. 126-160.

Read only: (Recommended)

Wesley, Works VI, Sermons LXXVI, “On Perfection,” and LXXXIII, “On Patience.”
Collins, The Scripture Way of Salvation. Chapter 6: Sanctification, pp. 171-184.

****PASTORAL THEOLOGY****

April 2 -10

Read only: (Required)

Wesley, Works, VIII:
“A Plain Account of the People Called Methodist.”
“Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies.”
“Rules of the Band-Societies.”
“Directions Given to the Band-Societies.”
Schmidt, Martin, John Wesley: A Theological Biography, Vol. 2, Part 1, Chapter 3, “John
Wesley as Organizer of the Methodist Movement.”

(continued on next page)

Read only: (Recommended)

(April 2 –10 continued)

Wesley, Sermons, XLVI, “The Wilderness State,” XLVII, “Heaviness through Manifold Temptations,” XLI, “Wandering Thoughts,” XLII, “Satan’s Devices.”
Wesley, Works, VIII:
“Minutes of Several Conversations between Wesley and Others.” (Large minutes)
“Advice to the People Called Methodists.”

****THE CHURCH AND MINISTRY****

April 11 - 20

Read and Outline: (Required)

Wesley, Sermons, XVI, “The Means of Grace,” XXXIV, “The Original, Nature, Property, and Use of the Law.”
Wesley, Works VII, Sermon CXV, “The Ministerial Office,” XCVII, “On Obedience to Pastors,” LXXIV, “Of the Church.”

Read only: (Recommended)

Wesley, Works, “Communion,” VII, pp. 147-157, “Baptism,” X, pp. 189-201.
Collins, A Faithful Witness, Chapter 4, “The Doctrine of the Church.”

****PREDESTINATION****

April 23 - 27

Read and Outline: (Required)

Wesley, Works, Vol. VI, Sermon LVIII, “On Predestination,” Vol. VII, Sermon CXXVIII, “Free Grace.”

Read only: (Required)

Lindstrom, Wesley and Sanctification, pp. 64-75.
Coppedge, Wesley in Theological Debate, pp. 132-143.

Read only: (Recommended)

Collins, A Faithful Witness, Chapter 7, pp. 163-177.

****PREDESTINATION AND AUTHORITY****

April 30 – May 4

Read and Outline: (Required)

Wesley, Sermons, Sermon XX, “The Lord Our Righteousness.”

Read only: (Required)

Wesley, Works, Vol. X, “Predestination Calmly Considered,” “What is an Arminian?”
Wesley, Works, X, “A Blow at the Root.”

Read only: (Recommended)

(continued on next page)
(April 30 – May 4 continued)

Coppedge, Wesley in Theological Debate, pp. 191-222.

PLURALISM/DOCTRINAL STANDARDS**

May 7 - 11

Read and Outline: (Required)

Wesley, Sermons, Sermon XXXIX, “Catholic Spirit.”

Coppedge, Allan, “How Wesleyan’s Do Theology,” Doing Theology in Today’s World, ed.

John Woodbridge and Thomas McComisky, pp. 267-289. If this has been read in DO501, then read: Coppedge, Allan, “John Wesley and the Issue of Authority in Theological Pluralism” A Spectrum of Thought, ed., Michael Peterson..

Read only: (Required)

Wesley, Sermons, Introduction to Edition by N. Burwash, pp. V-XVIII; Sermon XXXVI, “The Law Established Through Faith, II;” Sermon XXXVII, “The Nature of Enthusiasm.”

Read only: (Recommended)

Williams, Wesley’s Theology, Chapter I, “The Catholic Spirit: Doctrine and Opinion.”

Oden, Doctrinal Standards in the Wesleyan Tradition, pp. 15-68.

DO 628
THEOLOGY OF JOHN WESLEY

COLLATERAL CHART

DATE	WORK COMPLETED	HOURS	ABSENT

A Plain Account of Christian Perfection

John Wesley

Study guide

Introduction:

As you read through Wesley's work on Christian perfection/entire sanctification, you will discover he has given us quite a combination of materials related to this subject. Most of these were shorter writings of Wesley done on other occasions. He put them together in this total package without rewriting them. That accounts for the duplication you will find in this work. It may be helpful in trying to get a simple yes or no, or short answer to the question. Take enough notes that you can fully address the issue from Wesley's perspective and keep a record of your page numbers for your answer should you desire to use these materials in some other way.

1. List the major terms Wesley uses for Christian perfection/entire sanctification. When you are finished, indicate three or four of these Wesley uses most often.
2. List the Scripture passages he uses under each term or phrase for this doctrine.
3. List the ways Wesley describes a person who has experienced entire sanctification, i.e., what is characteristic of their lives, attitudes, etc.
4. In what sense may a Christian not be perfect?
5. In what sense may a Christian be perfect?
6. How is perfection related to mistakes, infirmities, temptations?
7. When does this experience happen?
8. Is it an instantaneous experience or gradual?
9. How does Wesley relate these two things?
10. How does Wesley describe sin? Note the difference between sin, properly so called, and sin, improperly so called.
11. Should one give testimony to this experience? If so, why and in what manner?
12. What is the evidence one would have to know that he had this experience?
13. What is the condition for receiving this experience? How does one seek it?
14. Can you lose this experience? Regain it?
15. What are the advices Wesley gives to avoid enthusiasm/fanaticism/extremism, especially regarding this teaching?
16. How does Wesley counsel dealing with subjective experiences like dreams, visions, impressions, etc.?
17. Summarize Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection.