1-1-2001

DO 628 John Wesley’s Theology Today

Kenneth J. Collins

Follow this and additional works at: http://place.asburyseminary.edu/syllabi

Recommended Citation
http://place.asburyseminary.edu/syllabi/1025

This Document is brought to you for free and open access by the eCommons at ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange. For more information, please contact thad.horner@asburyseminary.edu.
John Wesley’s Theology Today  
DO 628

Kenneth J. Collins, Professor

1. Course Description and Objectives:

The course will explore the theology of John Wesley in terms of his doctrine of salvation. Principal attention will be given to the following elements: 1) the nature of justification, 2) the significance of Wesley’s Aldersgate experience, 3) the new birth, 4) assurance 5) the faith of a servant, and 6) Christian perfection. In terms of methodology, the course will proceed in a Socratic and dialogical manner as it entertains an array of possible meanings of selected texts. This process, intense in many ways, should enhance the ability of students not only to understand the thought of Wesley in greater depth in its eighteenth-century context, but also to think historically and critically. Moreover, the course will be attentive to current scholarly interpretations of Wesley’s soteriology and will assess such judgments in light of the primary evidence. All the tasks of the course, then, will concern exploring Wesley’s practical divinity in terms of its relevance for twenty first-century theology and ministry.

2. General Goals

Upon completion of the course successful students will be able to do all of the following:

1) Identify the major elements in Wesley’s soteriology, especially in terms of the order evidenced in the key sermon, “The Scripture Way of Salvation.”
2) Evidence an awareness of historiographical concerns in the interpretation of Wesley’s soteriology, especially in terms of narrow, limited or unfair (biased) perspectives
3) Explore the interplay between religion and culture especially in terms of the intellectual developments (philosophical and theological) of the eighteenth century as reflected in Wesley’s writings.
4) Display an extensive knowledge of the theological distinctions and nuances employed by Wesley in crafting an articulate and well-developed theology, especially in the areas of justification, the new birth, and entire sanctification.
5) Demonstrate an understanding of the continuing significance of Wesleyan theology today especially for the broader ecumenical community.
6) Conceive one's calling as a minister of the gospel in light of the Methodist theology and practice.
7) Articulate the relevance of Wesleyan theology for effective pastoral ministry today

3. Texts:

Required:


Collateral:


4. Course Procedures

Competency in this course will consist in satisfying the following criteria:

A. Two examinations will be given during the semester: a mid-term and a final. These exams will not only include the designated reading material but will also focus on class discussions. This component will constitute 50% of
the grade.

B. It is imperative that students attend class on a regular basis. Absenteeism (missing more than 2 classes) will result in grade reduction. Class participation, attendance, and completion of the assigned readings will constitute 20% of the grade.

C. Students must outline the thirty sermons of Wesley listed below. The outline must reveal the major themes and emphases of each piece in a way that is clear, coherent, and comprehensive. Do not simply follow Burwash’s outlines in terms of the sermons for they do not pick up enough detail. Besides, the outlining should be original. On the other hand, students should not include excessive detail in the outlines. This task, then, calls for judgment on the part of students as to what is soteriologically important and what is not. Exercise such judgment. In addition, these outlines, which must be typed, should be placed in a notebook (or bound in some other fashion) and are due two weeks before the last day of class. Late submissions will result in grade reduction. All Fifty-Two Standard Sermons Must Be Read.

The sermons to be outlined as follows:

Sermon I. Salvation by Faith
Sermon II. The Almost Christian
Sermon III. Awake, Thou That SLEEPEST
Sermon IV. Scriptural Christianity
Sermon V. Justification By Faith
Sermon VI. The Righteousness of Faith
Sermon VII. The Way to the Kingdom
Sermon VIII. The First Fruits of the Spirit
Sermon IX. The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption
Sermon X. The Witness of the Spirit
Sermon XI. The Witness of the Spirit: Discourse II
Sermon XII. The Witness of Our Own Spirit
Sermon XIII. On Sin in Believers
Sermon XIV. The Repentance of Believers
Sermon XVI. The Means of Grace
Sermon XVII. The Circumcision of the Heart
Sermon XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth
Sermon XIX. The Great Privilege of Those that are Born of God
Sermon XXXIV. The Original, Nature, Properties and Use of the Law
Sermon XXXV. The Law Established Through Faith
Sermon XXXVI. The Law Established Through Faith: Discourse Two
Sermon XXXIX. Catholic Spirit
Sermon XL. On Christian Perfection
Sermon XLIII The Scripture Way of Salvation
Sermon XLIV. Original Sin
Sermon XLV. The New Birth
Sermon XLVI. The Wilderness State
Sermon XLVII. Heaviness Through Manifold Temptations
Sermon XLVIII. Self-Denial
Sermon L The Use of Money

You must also clearly indicate on the first page of your outlines if you have outlined all of these sermons. If not, you must indicate those which were left
Failure to complete this assignment will result in grade reduction. The outlines will constitute 30% of the grade.

D. A reading report which indicates that students have completed all of the assigned readings is due on the day of the final exam.

5. **Note:** this syllabus may be changed, as the instructor sees fit, due to academic considerations.

6. **Office Hours**

   The professor will post his office hours on his door (AD 405) on the first day of class.

7. **Chronology**

   Life of John Wesley

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6/17/03</td>
<td>Born at Epworth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/09/09</td>
<td>Saved from Fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/12/11</td>
<td>Nominated for Charterhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/28/14</td>
<td>Gown-boy at Charterhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/24/20</td>
<td>Enters Christ Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19/25</td>
<td>Ordained Deacon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/17/26</td>
<td>Fellow of Lincoln College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1729</td>
<td>Name Methodist given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1735</td>
<td>Whitefield joins Holy Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/25/35</td>
<td>Samuel Sr.’s Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/21/35</td>
<td>Sails for Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/05/36</td>
<td>Reaches America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/11/36</td>
<td>Charles leaves Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/02/37</td>
<td>John leaves Savannah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/01/38</td>
<td>John lands at Deal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/21/38</td>
<td>Charles’ Evangelical Conversion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/24/38</td>
<td>John’s Evangelical Conversion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/13/38</td>
<td>Visits the Moravian Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/02/39</td>
<td>Field-Preaching in Bristol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/11/39</td>
<td>Preaches in the Foundery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/20/40</td>
<td>Withdraws from Fetter Lane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/28/42</td>
<td>First visit to Newcastle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/06/42</td>
<td>Preaches on his father’s tomb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/30/42</td>
<td>Death of Susanna Wesley</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
05/29/43  Opens West Street Chapel, London
08/26/42  Sets out for Cornwall
10/20/42  Riot at Wednesbury
06/25/44  First Conference

08/24/44  Last University sermon
08/09/47  First visit to Ireland
04/08/49  Marriage of Charles
10/03/49  Grace Murray marries John Bennet
02/18/51  Wesley marries Mrs. Vazeille
April/51  First visit to Scotland
06/01/51  Resigns Fellowship
11/26/53  Writes his Epitaph at Lewisham
Jan/55  Notes Upon the NT published
05/06/55  Issue of Separation Discussed

1757  Charles’ itinerancy limited
03/13/57  Ordination of John Fletcher
02/16/59  Public Fast; fear of French invasion
02/21/60  French Landing at Carrickfergus
10/25/60  Death of George II
11/26/62  Answer to Bishop Warburton
01/07/63  Wesley meets George Bell
Mar/63  Earthquake panic in London

04/28/63  Thomas Maxfield leaves Wesley
04/18/64  Letter to Evangelical Clergy
May/64  Hervey Letters published
Jan/65  Conference on Ordinations
01/31/66  Closer union with Whitefield
1766  Plain Account Published
03/30/67  Wesley visits Ireland
08/18/67  Francis Asbury received on trial

Jan/68  Appointed chaplain to the Countess Dowager
08/24/68  Trevecca College opened
Aug/1770  Doctrinal Minutes of the Bristol Conference
09/30/70  Death of George Whitefield
11/18/70  Wesley preaches at Whitefield’s funeral
01/17/71  Benson dismissed from Trevecca
01/23/71  Mrs. Wesley leaves him

09/04/71  Francis Asbury sails for America
ν 09/04/71 Fletcher’s 1 and 2 Checks published
ν 08/14/72 Meets Howell Harris at Trevecca
ν 08/14/72 Fletcher’s 3 and 4 Checks published
ν 08/14/72 Wesley issues Vols. 11-16 of his Works
ν 03/14/73 Replies to Richard Hill’s *Farrago Double-Distilled*
ν Dec/73 Vols. 17-25 of Wesley’s Works published
ν 06/04/74 Arrest in Edinburgh
ν 1775 *Calm Address* published

ν 04/27/75 Death of Peter Bohler
ν Aug/ 75 Asbury decides to stay in America
ν 01/03/76 Death of Westley Hall
ν 08/18/76 Wesley first meets Dr. Coke
ν 04/21/77 Foundation-stone of City Road Chapel laid
ν 01/01/78 First number of Arminian Magazine
ν 05/30/78 Death of Voltaire
ν 11/01/78 Opening of City Road Chapel
ν 1779 Publishes *Popery Calmly Considered*

ν 08/10/80 Letter to Bishop Lowth on ordination for America
ν 01/25/81 At his Nephew’s concert
ν 10/08/81 Death of Mrs. Wesley
ν Aug/ 82 Adam Clarke at Kingswood School
ν June/83 Visit to Holland
ν 02/28/84 Deed of Declaration
ν Sep/ 84 Ordinations for America
ν Dec/ 84 Francis Asbury Ordained
ν 08/14/85 Death of John Fletcher

ν 01/24/86 Hears George III in House of Lords
ν 07/25/86 Conference begins at Bristol
ν 08/08/86 Visits Holland
ν 09/24/86 Dr. Coke sails with three missionaries
ν Jan/ 87 Begs £ 200 for London poor
ν 08/04/87 Conference in Manchester
ν 1788 Second Series of Sermons Published
ν 03/29/88 Death of Charles Wesley

ν 04/05/88 Burial of Charles Wesley in Marylebone
ν 08/06/88 Conference at Bristol
ν 07/28/89 Conference at Leeds
8. Bibliography

A Wesley Bibliography

Primary Sources: Books

Unpublished at This Point


Published


Students may also access the far more extensive Wesley bibliography on Asbury’s homepage (look under “Resources”) or download it from http://wesley.nnc.edu.