

## JOHN WESLEY ON HOLISTIC HEALTH AND HEALING<sup>1</sup>

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Few laity in Wesleyan traditions today are aware that John Wesley published a collection of advice for preserving health and treating diseases, even though that collection, his *Primitive Physick*, went through twenty-three editions in Wesley's lifetime—among the highest number of anything that he published—and stayed in print (and use!) continuously into the 1880s. Those who are aware of this collection, and have glanced at a few of his prescriptions for ailments (samples in Appendix A), tend to dismiss it in bemusement.

This is true of many scholars as well. One recent book on Wesley's ethics describes *Primitive Physick* as "a collection of folklore prescriptions for various ailments . . . [revealing] his reliance on testimony and a sometime credulity in belief in what the folk tradition contained." A new historical study of Wesley characterizes the work as "a strange mix of old wives' tales and recent insights."<sup>2</sup>

The goal of this essay is to call such evaluations, and the larger neglect of this dimension of Wesley's work, into question. I hope to demonstrate that, far from being an amusing avocation, Wesley's interest in health and healing was a central dimension of his ministry and of the mission of early Methodism. Moreover, when considered in its historical context, I believe that Wesley's precedent provides a model of the concern for holistic health and healing that is instructive for his present ecclesial heirs.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This essay was originally presented in 2003 at a celebration of the tercentenary of John Wesley's birth at Emory University. It will appear in a slightly longer form under the title "A Heritage Reclaimed" in a collection of essays arising from that gathering.

<sup>2</sup> See respectively, Ronald H. Stone, *John Wesley's Life and Ethics* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 157; and John Munsey Turner, *John Wesley: The Evangelical Revival and the Rise of Methodism in England* (Peterborough: Epworth, 2002), 41–42.

<sup>3</sup> Readers are encouraged to supplement the discussion that follows with the helpful studies of Deborah Madden that appeared subsequent to my original presentation: "Experience and the Common Interest of Mankind: The Enlightened Empiricism of John Wesley's Primitive Physic," *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 26 (2003): 41–53; "Medicine and Moral Reform: The Place of Practical Piety in John Wesley's Art of Physic," *Church History* 73 (2004): 741–758; and "Primitive Physic": John Wesley's "Cheap, Safe and Natural Medicine for Health and Long Life" (New York: Rodopi, 2007).

### Wesley's Life-long Study of Medical Works

In considering Wesley's interest in health and healing, it is helpful to recall that study of basic medicine had become part of the training of Anglican clergy candidates in the seventeenth century. It was common—at least in smaller villages—for priests to offer medical care as part of their overall ministry.<sup>4</sup> This helps explain why clergy who left parish settings often turned to medicine as an alternative career. A good example is Wesley's great-grandfather Bartholomew Wes(t)ley, who consulted from time to time as a physician while rector of Charmouth in Dorset, and took up this career for his full livelihood when his refusal to sign the Act of Conformity in the early 1660s led to ejection from his pastoral charge.

Following in this tradition, we know from sources like the diary that Wesley began at Oxford of several medical treatises by Robert Boyle and others that he purchased and/or read between 1724 and 1732.<sup>5</sup> To take another snapshot, diary entries for 1736, when Wesley was serving as a missionary priest in Georgia, show continued reading of medical texts, including one by John Tennent listing medicinal herbs that were available on that continent.<sup>6</sup> This reading continued more sporadically throughout Wesley's life and included consultation of the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society and the *Medical Transactions* of the Royal College of Physicians. My working list of medical works that Wesley cites or mentions over his life span stands at nearly 100 items.

### Wesley's Publication of Health and Healing Advice

This reading stands behind Wesley's publication of medical advice. In

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<sup>4</sup> Note how offering medical advice is central to the role of a parson in George Herbert, *A Priest to the Temple; or the Country Parson* (London: T. Garthwaite, 1652), ch. 23 (Wesley read Herbert in July 1730). Cf. A.W. Sloan, *English Medicine in the Seventeenth Century* (Durham: Durham Academic Press, 1996), 138–140; and Robert Heller, “‘Priest-Doctors’ as a Rural Health Service in the Age of the Enlightenment,” *Medical History* 20 (1976): 361–383.

<sup>5</sup> In addition to Boyle's *Medicinal Experiments; or, A collection of choice remedies, for the most part simple, and easily prepared*, 3 vols. (London: Sam Smith, 1692–1694), and *Of the Reconcilableness of Specific Medicines to the Corpuscular Philosophy; to which is annexed a discourse about the advantages of the use of simple medicines* (London: Samuel Smith, 1685); he read during this time at least John Allen, *Dr. Allen's Synopsis medicinae*, 2 vols. (London: Pemberton & Meadows, 1730); George Cheyne, *An Essay of Health and Long Life* (London: George Strahan, 1724); George Cheyne, *A New Theory of Acute and Slow Continued Fevers* (London: George Strahan, 1702); John Drake, *Anthropologia Nova; or, A New System of Anatomy*, 2 volumes (London: William Innys, 1727–1728); John Floyer, *Pharmako-Basanos; or, the Touch-stone of Medicines*, 2 vols. (London: Michael Johnson, 1687–1690); and Daniel Le Clerc, *The History of Physick* (London: Brown, et al., 1699).

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Sydenham, *Complete Method of Curing almost all Diseases* (London: Randal Taylor, 1694), see *Works* 18:447; John Tennent, *Every Man His Own Doctor: or, The Poor Planter's Physician* (Williamsburg, VA: William Parks, 1734), see *Works* 18:443; and Daniel Turner, *The Art of Surgery* (London: C. Rivington & J. Clarke, 1722), see *Works* 18:385. Note also Wesley's comment about studying physick “properly” in preparation for his time in America, in *Plain Account of the People Called Methodists*, §XII.2, *Works* 9:275.

particular, the *Primitive Physick* was based on much more than “folk lore” and “old wive’s tales.” Wesley’s own account traces its origins to remedies transcribed from the books of Robert Boyle and John Tennent, along with “a few more from books or conversation.”<sup>7</sup> In research toward a critical edition of Wesley’s medical writings, James Donat has traced nearly a third of the remedies in *Primitive Physick* back to texts of medical advice, including texts by such other authors as Hermann Boerhaave, Kenelm Digby, Thomas Dover, John Huxham, Richard Mead, Lazarus Riverius, Thomas Short, Thomas Sydenham, and Thomas Willis.<sup>8</sup>

The fact that Wesley drew heavily on his reading of medical works for the original text and later updates of *Primitive Physick* suggests that, far from being a tangential or idiosyncratic concern, publication of this resource should be seen more as a parallel to Wesley’s fifty-volume *Christian Library*. In both cases he was distilling the fruits of broad reading for the benefit of his Methodist people and the larger public. Since his ministry was larger than a single parish, he dispensed the spiritual and medical guidance expected of his priestly office in printed form.

Just as Wesley published more than the *Christian Library* offering spiritual guidance, his medical advice reached beyond the *Primitive Physick*. He published several other works related to maintaining or restoring health, including *A Letter to a Friend Concerning Tea* (1748); *The Desideratum, or Electricity Made Plain and Useful* (1760); *Thoughts on the Sin of Onan, chiefly extracted from [Tissot]* (1767); *Advices with Respect to Health, extracted from [Tissot]* (1769); “Extract from [William] Cadogan on the Gout” (in vol. 26 of his *Works*, 1774); and *An Estimate of the Manners of Present Times* (1782).<sup>9</sup>

### Wesley’s Holistic Understanding of Salvation

While Wesley’s practice of offering medical advice was in keeping with a traditional role of clergy, his ministry spanned a period when the Royal College of Physicians in London was increasingly seeking to control certification of medical practitioners. Clergy joined barber-surgeons, apothecaries, and various “quacks” as groups targeted for exclusion.<sup>10</sup> Like most in the other

<sup>7</sup> Letter to the Editor of *Lloyd’s Evening Post* (23? January 1776), in *Lloyd’s Evening Post* (26–29 January 1776), 102.

<sup>8</sup> See James G. Donat, “Empirical Medicine in the 18th Century: The Rev. John Wesley’s Search for Remedies that Work,” *Methodist History* 44 (2006): 216–226.

<sup>9</sup> These will all be included in Volume 17 of Wesley’s *Works*. For an analysis of the two extracts from Tissot, see James G. Donat, “The Rev. Mr. John Wesley’s Extractions from Dr. Tissot: A Methodist *Imprimatur*,” *History of Science* 39 (2001): 285–298.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Dorothy Porter & Roy Porter, *Patient’s Progress: Doctors and Doctoring in Eighteenth Century England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989); Irvine Loudon, “Medical Practitioners 1750–1850 and the period of Medical Reform in Britain,” in *Medicine in Society*, edited by Andrew Wear (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 219–247; and Roy Porter, “The Eighteenth Century,” in *The Western Medical Tradition*, edited by Lawrence Conrad (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 371–475.

groups, Wesley resisted the suggestion to refrain from offering medical guidance, leaving it to those certified by the College.<sup>11</sup> But his motive for resisting was not to protect a source of income; it was grounded instead in his holistic understanding of salvation.

One of Wesley's deepest theological convictions was that the mediocrity of moral life and the ineffectiveness in social impact of Christians in eighteenth-century England could be traced to an inadequate understanding of salvation assumed broadly in the church. The root of this inadequacy, and the core of Wesley's alternative understanding, can be seen in his own most pointed definition of salvation:

By salvation I mean, not barely (according to the vulgar notion) deliverance from hell, or going to heaven, but a present deliverance from sin, a restoration of the soul to its primitive health . . . the renewal of our souls after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness, in justice, mercy, and truth.<sup>12</sup>

The notion that Wesley was rejecting here reduces salvation to forgiveness of our guilt as sinners, which frees us from future condemnation. Wesley consistently encouraged his followers and contemporaries to seek the benefits of *truly holistic salvation*, where God's forgiveness of sins is interwoven with God's gracious healing of the damages that sin has wrought.<sup>13</sup> The scope of the healing that Wesley invited all to expect is captured well in pastoral letters, like his reminder to Alexander Knox: "It will be a double blessing if you give yourself up to the Great Physician, that He may heal soul and body together. And unquestionably this is His design. He wants to give you . . . both inward and outward health."<sup>14</sup>

While most Christians shared the conviction that God would provide full healing of body and soul at the resurrection, Wesley's emphasis on the degree to which both dimensions of divine healing can be experienced *in the present* was less common. This is evident concerning the spiritual dimension even within the Methodist revival, where the Calvinist branch insisted that we can hope for only limited transformation of our fallen spiritual nature in this life.<sup>15</sup> The assumption that we should expect only limited expression in this life of God's promised salvation of our bodies was more wide spread, but it is notable that resistance to suggestions of clergy including medical care as part of their ministry in the English church during the reign of James I

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<sup>11</sup> Note his rejection of this explicit suggestion in Letter to 'John Smith' (25 March 1747), *Works* 26:236.

<sup>12</sup> *Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, Pt. I, §3, *Works* 11:106.

<sup>13</sup> For more on the "healing" emphasis in Wesley's understanding of salvation, see Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994), 144–147.

<sup>14</sup> Letter to Alexander Knox (26 October 1778), in *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, edited by John Telford (London: Epworth, 1931), 6:327. Another good example is Letter to Miss Agnes Gibbes (28 April 1784), *Methodist History* 6.3 (1968): 53.

<sup>15</sup> See in this regard George Whitefield's Letter to John Wesley (25 September 1740), *Works* 26:31–33.

(1603–1625) also came from the most Calvinist voices in the church. These objectors urged that labor for the souls of their parishioners, by preaching and counseling, should fill the full time of the pastor. In contrast, the more Arminian “High Church” voices, which gained in strength after 1625, elevated a model where, in addition to reverent leadership in defined times of regular worship, clergy were expected to spend a significant part of their time in good works—like medical care—among the needy in their parish.<sup>16</sup>

Wesley’s ancestors, on both the paternal and maternal side, were among those who objected to the reinstatement of the Act of Uniformity governing Anglican worship in 1662 and eventually formed dissenting congregations. While most of these dissenters were moderate to strong Calvinists, they tended to be more willing than their predecessors to make some room for offering medical care in their understanding of the pastoral task. We have already noted how this is reflected in Wesley’s paternal great-grandfather. The library of Samuel Annesley, Wesley’s maternal grandfather, also suggests a broad understanding of the pastoral office; it contained nearly twenty volumes of medical reference works.<sup>17</sup>

Wesley’s strong commitment to this holistic conception of the pastoral office is evident in his instructions to lay assistants about their ministry among the Methodist people. As they visited the various societies, Wesley charged them to leave behind books that could provide ongoing guidance, highlighting most often two works that should be in every house: 1) his excerpt of Thomas a Kempis’s *The Imitation of Christ*, which Wesley valued as a guide to spiritual health; and 2) the *Primitive Physick*, which Wesley had prepared as a guide to physical health.<sup>18</sup> When one compares readings that Wesley recommended for all lay persons to those he assigned to his pastoral assistants, the one notable addition to the latter list is the study of

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. David Harley, “John Hart of Northampton and the Calvinist Critique of Priest-Physicians: an unpublished Polemic of the early 1620s,” *Medical History* 42 (1998): 362–386. An excellent example of the alternative Arminian inclusion of medical care in the pastoral task can be found in Gilbert Burnet, *A Discourse of the Pastoral Care* (London: Richard Chiswell, 1692), 183, 194–201 (a book that Wesley read in October 1729).

<sup>17</sup> See *Bibliotheca Annesleiana; or a Catalogue of Choice Greek, Latin and English Books, both Ancient and Modern, . . . being the library of the Reverend Samuel Annesley . . . sold by auction on Thursday the Eighteenth of March, 1696*, by Edward Millington (copy in British Library). The medical volumes, by such authors as Boyle, Culpepper, Digby, and Helmont, can be found on pp. 7–8, 18.

<sup>18</sup> For a few examples, see “Large Minutes,” Q. 42, *The Works of John Wesley*, edited by Thomas Jackson (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872) 8:319 [this edition cited hereafter as *Works* (Jackson)]; *To the Societies at Bristol* (1764), *Letters* (Telford) 4:272; Letter to Christopher Hopper (20 November 1769), *Letters* (Telford) 5:161; and Letter to Joseph Taylor (9 September 1782), *Letters* (Telford) 7:139.

medical works.<sup>19</sup> Wesley clearly intended for the assistants to be capable of dispensing personal advice along with the books.<sup>20</sup>

This expectation of participation in God's ministry to body and soul was not limited to the itinerant lay assistants in early Methodism. As in many other areas of the movement, Wesley developed a layered structure that included a role for local lay women and men in day-to-day ministries. In this case, it was the office of the "visitor of the sick," who were expected to visit sick members in their area three times a week, to inquire into the state of their souls and their bodies, and to offer or procure advice for them in both regards.<sup>21</sup>

As all of this reflects, while Wesley allowed that healing will be complete only in our resurrected state, he resisted the tendency to minimize the physical dimension of God's healing work in the present world. He longed for Christians to see that participation in God's present saving work involves nurturing both our souls and bodies, and addressing both in reaching out to others.<sup>22</sup>

### Wesley's Holistic Approach to Health and Healing

Just as Wesley's commitment to care for the body was grounded in his conviction of the holistic nature of salvation, his manner of caring for the body sought holistic balance. The goal of this section is to sketch the broad outlines of this balance, clarifying Wesley's emphases within the assumptions and debates of his time. An initial sense of the various dimensions can be gained from the instructions that Wesley sent in 1788 to Samuel Bradburn, one of the lay preachers, when Bradburn was caring for John's brother Charles, who was in declining health:

With regard to my brother, I advise you: (1) Whether he will or no, carry Dr. Whitehead to him. (2) If he cannot go out, and yet must have exercise or die, persuade him to use [the wooden horse] twice or thrice a day, and procure one for

<sup>19</sup> Compare the list recommended for Assistants in "Minutes" (3 August 1745), *Minutes of the Methodist Conferences, from the First, held in London, by the Late Rev. John Wesley, A.M., in the Year 1744* (London: John Mason, 1862), 1:29; to a list recommended to all readers in the Appendix of *Reflections upon the Conduct of Human Life: with reference to Learning and Knowing*, extracted [by Wesley] from John Norris, 3rd edition (London: William Strahan, 1755); and his recommendation in Letter to Margaret Lewen (June 1764), *Letters* (Telford) 4:249, that were later published as "A Female Course of Study," *Arminian Magazine* 3 (1780): 602–604.

<sup>20</sup> Note in this regard that the letter that John and Charles Wesley sent on June 25, 1751 to James Wheatley, a Methodist itinerant who had been caught in sexual impropriety, instructed him to desist not only from preaching but from practicing physic (see *Works* 26:465).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Plain Account of the People Called Methodists*, §XI.4, *Works* 9:274. Phyllis Mack has stressed the prominence of women among the early Methodist visitors of the sick in "Does Gender Matter: Suffering and Salvation in Eighteenth-Century Methodism," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 85.2–3 (2003): 157–176.

<sup>22</sup> Philip Wesley Ott has made this point well in "John Wesley on Mind and Body: Toward an Understanding of Health as Wholeness," *Methodist History* 27 (1989): 61–72; and "John Wesley on Health as Wholeness," *Journal of Religion and Health* 30 (1991): 43–57.

him. (3) I earnestly advise him to be electrified.<sup>23</sup>

### Valued both Professional and Traditional Medical Treatment

The first thing to notice in these instructions is Wesley's insistence that Charles consult a physician. His opposition to the restrictions being imposed by the Royal College did not lead Wesley to reject professional medical care, in favor of sole reliance on traditional treatments. Even in *Primitive Physick*, which was devoted to self-help advice, Wesley makes clear that the best advice in some instances is to consult a good—and honest!—physician.<sup>24</sup>

Wesley speaks respectfully of several physicians over the years, particularly about John Whitehead, who served as his personal physician in later years.<sup>25</sup> In the context of praising Whitehead, Wesley reminded readers of his *Journal* of the exhortation in Ecclesiasticus 38:1–2: “Honor the Physician, for God hath appointed him.”<sup>26</sup> But Wesley was also convinced that many physicians unnecessarily protracted the cure of patients' bodies in order to derive the maximum fee, which is why he stressed finding an *honest* physician.<sup>27</sup>

### Affirmed both Divine and Medical Healing

An even broader implication is evident in Wesley's instructions for Charles to be checked by a physician: endorsement of *both* divine and medical healing.

Assertions of the spiritual superiority of sole reliance on divine healing, avoiding all medical treatment, were rare in Christian tradition up through Wesley's time.<sup>28</sup> On the few occasions that he encountered this extreme, Wesley rejected it.<sup>29</sup> Even more significant was his resistance to a more subtle—and more common—way of framing reliance on divine providence in tension with recourse to medical care. An enduring strand in Christian tradition (particularly in its Augustinian wing) has assumed that at least some instances of calamity and disease are divinely intended for the person affected—to teach a spiritual lesson. The most proper response to such suffering is considered to be submission to God's will. Strong echoes of this

<sup>23</sup> Letter to Samuel Bradburn (13 March 1788), *Letters* (Telford) 8:45.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. the prescriptions for Apoplexy and Measles in Appendix A. See also his Postscript to the Preface of *Primitive Physick*, §5, *Works* (Jackson) 14:317.

<sup>25</sup> See particularly *Journal* (4 January 1785), *Works* 23:340–341.

<sup>26</sup> *Journal* (30 September 1786), *Works* 23:420.

<sup>27</sup> Note his warning against such practice in medicine, and in many other fields, in Sermon 50, “On the Use of Money,” §1.5, *Works* 2:272. Cf. *Primitive Physick*, Preface, §14, *Works* (Jackson) 14:312–313.

<sup>28</sup> See Darrel W. Amundsen, *Medicine, Society, and Faith in the Ancient and Modern Worlds* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), esp. 6–11.

<sup>29</sup> One example would be Wesley's abridgement of the *Homilies* of pseudo-Macarius in the *Christian Library*. He omitted Homily 48, which argued that the most spiritually mature would rely entirely on Christ for physical health and avoid physical cures.

attitude carried over from the Puritan years into eighteenth-century Anglican life. They reverberate, for example, in many of Charles Wesley's hymns, such as this stanza in "Oblation of a Sick Friend":

Till Thy love's design we see,  
Earnest, but resign'd to Thee,  
Suffer us for life to pray,  
Bless us with her longer stay.<sup>30</sup>

As this shows, there was room within submission to request divine healing. For most there was also the assumption of availing oneself of normal medical care. However the focus was on sanctifying the affliction, more than seeking its removal. This could create the subtle suggestion that strong concern for comfort or healing reflected lack of faith.<sup>31</sup> While Charles was prone to this suggestion, John Wesley resisted it. Even a brief perusal of his correspondence will show that he was always quick to encourage use of medical care. Of course, he could characteristically add: "as God is the sovereign disposer of all things . . . I earnestly advise every one, together with all other medicines, to use the medicine of medicines—prayer."<sup>32</sup>

If some religious accounts of suffering led to suspicion of medical care, the opposite tendency was evident in many deist writers of Wesley's day. They emphasized natural accounts of the origin of disease and commended solely medical forms of healing, portraying appeals for miraculous healing as superstitious.<sup>33</sup> By contrast, Wesley was convinced of the possibility of miraculous healing, and often highlighted apparent instances in his publications—partly to rebut deism.<sup>34</sup> Yet, even in such apologetic settings, Wesley resisted polarizing spiritual and natural accounts of the cause or cure of physical ailments.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>30</sup> *Hymns for the Use of Families* (1767), Hymn 83, "Oblation of a Sick Friend," st. 8.

<sup>31</sup> This potential is stressed in Doreen Evenden Nagy, "The Intellectual Climate: Religion and Popular Medicine," in *Popular Medicine in Seventeenth-Century England* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1988), 34–42. Cf. the more nuanced account in David Harley, "Spiritual Physic, Providence and English Medicine, 1560–1640," in *Medicine and the Reformation*, edited by Ole P. Grell & Andrew Cunningham (New York: Routledge, 1993), 101–117.

<sup>32</sup> *Advice with Respect to Health*, Preface, §9, *Works* (Jackson) 14:258. Cf. *Primitive Physick*, Preface, §15, *Works* (Jackson) 14:314; and Letter to Robert Carr Brackenbury (13 February 1784), *Letters* (Telford) 7:209.

<sup>33</sup> This challenge is highlighted in Roy Porter, "Medicine and Religion in 18th Century England," *Ideas and Production* 7 (1987): 4–17.

<sup>34</sup> For some examples in his *Journal* see 20 December 1742 (*Works* 19:306), 12 November 1746 (*Works* 20:145), 22 Sept.–3 Oct. 1756 (*Works* 21:78), and 7 October 1790 (*Works* 24:191). See also the published accounts in *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 251–257, 312–318; 9 (1786): 43–44; and 10 (1787): 35–37. A good secondary study can be found in Robert Webster Jr., "Methodism and the Miraculous: John Wesley's Contribution to the *Historia Miraculorum*" (Oxford University Ph.D. thesis, 2006), 241–285.

<sup>35</sup> This point is demonstrated in further detail in Henry D. Rack, "Doctors, Demons, and Early Methodist Healing," in *The Church and Healing*, edited by W. J. Sheils (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 137–152.



But what about the treatment of mental or emotional ailments? Puritan thought through the seventeenth century generally considered all such disorders as rooted in spiritual causes, prescribing repentance, faith, and prayers for deliverance. As the eighteenth century unfolded, many physicians began to explain mental afflictions in natural terms and to focus on medical treatments. While some Anglicans embraced this change, others reacted with vigorous defense of the traditional account. A few scholars have claimed that Wesley exemplified this reactionary stance on the cause and cure of mental and emotional disorders.<sup>36</sup>

In assessing this claim, one must consider the dynamics of the early Methodist revival. From the beginning of the revival, people who were not sympathetic equated Methodist emotionalism with lunacy, seeking medical treatment for family members who had been brought under conviction by Methodist preaching.<sup>37</sup> Understandably, Wesley's immediate response was to defend the emotional displays as genuine expressions of religious conviction, and to argue that the only therapy which could heal those under conviction was the pardoning touch of the Great Physician.<sup>38</sup> But in the ensuing debate he was soon allowing that at least a few cases of emotional display might be signs of the "natural distemper of madness" rather than the grief of religious conviction, clearly recognizing that the former would require more than a simple sense of God's reconciling love.<sup>39</sup> This proved to be more than a passing concession.

Wesley showed a growing openness to the natural dimensions of many emotional disorders, making it difficult for people to equate his mature position with the traditional Puritan stance. Consider, in particular, the severe disorders known in his day as "lunacy" or "raving madness." Wesley's *Journal* account of the early years of the revival presents several instances of such afflictions solely in terms of demonic causation—and divine deliverance.<sup>40</sup> After reading a book by George Cheyne in 1742, which argued that true lunacy and madness are due to natural causes and require

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<sup>36</sup> See esp., Michael MacDonald, "Religion, Social Change, and Psychological Healing in England, 1600–1800," in *The Church and Healing*, edited by W. J. Sheils (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 101–125, esp. 106 & 125; and Roy Porter, *Mind Forg'd Manacles: A History of Madness in England from the Restoration to the Regency* (London: Athlone, 1987), 68–72.

<sup>37</sup> Wesley notes such reactions in his *Journal* for 21 January 1739 (*Works* 19:32), 1 March 1740 (*Works* 19:140), 23 August 1740 (*Works* 19:166), and 17 September 1740 (*Works* 19:168–169).

<sup>38</sup> Note this defense in *Journal* (21 September 1739), *Works* 19:99. Continuing debate over this defense can be traced in *Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, Part I, §VII.13–17, *Works* 11:197–201; *Answer to Mr. Church's Remarks*, §III.10, *Works* 9:119–120; and *Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained*, §IV.7–10, *Works* 9:207–211.

<sup>39</sup> See *Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, Part I, §VII.14, *Works* 11:198.

<sup>40</sup> See the *Journal* entries for 2 May 1739 (*Works* 19:54–55), 12 October 1739 (*Works* 19:104), 25–26 October 1739 (*Works* 19:110–111), 15 July 1742 (*Works* 19:282), and 13 January 1743 (*Works* 19:311–312).

natural cures, Wesley's *Journal* comments began to reflect more nuance.<sup>41</sup> Soon thereafter he assessed a case of raving madness to be attributable simply to a fever.<sup>42</sup> He also began to record instances where prayer for deliverance was not sufficient for curing lunacy/madness.<sup>43</sup> Conversely, while he was initially sarcastic about the value of confining anyone in "Bedlam" (i.e., Bethlehem Hospital), the first public asylum in London, he came to believe that institutional care of lunatics could be beneficial, particularly at Saint Luke's Hospital, which William Battie established in 1751 with an emphasis on providing medical treatments for mental illnesses.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, the *Primitive Physick*, from its appearance in 1747, included natural cures for lunacy (see Appendix A). While Wesley continued to remind readers in his later years that some physicians considered many cases of lunacy to be diabolical in origin,<sup>45</sup> he came to consider most clear cases of insanity to be natural in origin, and assumed that—in addition to prayer—they should be treated by either professional or traditional medical means.<sup>46</sup>

### Appreciated the Interconnection of Physical and Emotional/Spiritual Health

The influence of George Cheyne upon Wesley's approach to health and healing was broader than just sparking awareness of the natural dimensions of serious mental disorders. Cheyne's writings played a major role in nurturing Wesley's mature emphasis on the broad interconnection of physical health with emotional and spiritual health. Recognition of this connection had been central to Cheyne's own journey. He started his career seeking to provide a "Newtonian revolution" in medicine—to explain health and disease solely

<sup>41</sup> See George Cheyne, *The Natural Method of Curing the Diseases of the Body and Disorders of the Mind Depending on the Body* (London: Strahan, 1742), 78–95, esp. 90. Wesley notes reading this volume in *Journal* (12 March 1742), *Works* 19:256. Cheyne emphasizes a sparse diet and cold baths for the cure.

<sup>42</sup> *Journal* (24 September 1742), *Works* 19:299.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *Journal* (5 June 1753), *Works* 20: 461–463; *Journal* (8–11 September 1755), *Works* 21:28–29; and *Journal* (2 July 1766), *Works* 22:48. Note as well *Journal* (27 April 1752), *Works* 20:421, where Wesley describes a woman as *either* raving mad *or* possessed, and then makes clear that it was demonic possession, since a prayer for deliverance was effective.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. *Journal* (21 December 1762), *Works* 21:400. For a comparison of Bedlam, which did not focus on medicinal treatment of patients, with Saint Luke's Hospital, see G. S. Rousseau, "Science," in *The Eighteenth Century*, edited by Pat Rogers (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1978), 153–207, esp. 180–182; and the recent more nuanced account in Jonathan Andrews & Andrew Scull, *Undertaker of the Mind: John Monro and Mad-Doctoring in Eighteenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Sermon 72, "On Angels," §II.13, *Works* 3:26; and Sermon 132, "On Faith," §8, *Works* 4:194. Wesley is citing Thomas Deacon (1697–1753), another priest/physician. Deacon trained under Richard Mead (1673–1754), a leading physician, who shared this view of the causes of insanity. Cf. Henry Broxap, *A Biography of Thomas Deacon* (Manchester: University Press, 1911), 21–22, 81–88.

<sup>46</sup> This point is well argued, against MacDonald and Porter, in Paul Laffey, "John Wesley on Insanity," *History of Psychiatry* 12 (2001): 467–479. A good example of the elder Wesley attributing madness to natural causes is Sermon 41, "Wandering Thoughts," §II.3, *Works* 2:129.

in mechanical terms of the movement of fluids through the various bodily canals. After a physical and spiritual crisis (in 1705), his work shifted to stress more clearly the integrity of the human spirit and the interactive influence of body and spirit upon health.<sup>47</sup>

In 1724 Cheyne published a summary of his new approach in *An Essay of Health and Long Life*. The book offered a series of recommendations for diet, exercise, and living conditions that Cheyne contended were ideally suited for helping British citizens to preserve health. As noted earlier, Wesley read the *Essay* shortly after its publication.<sup>48</sup> The passing years convinced Wesley of the wisdom of Cheyne's advice, so much so that when he published *Primitive Physick* in 1747 Wesley chose to conclude the Preface with an abstract of Cheyne's recommendations in *Essay* (see Appendix B). We will explore the range of this appropriated advice a little later; the relevant point at the moment is Cheyne's specific emphasis on the impact of the emotions upon physical health.

### ***Emotional and Spiritual Dimensions of Physical Health***

Cheyne devoted Chapter VI of his *Essay* to the "passions," the current umbrella term for emotional states that arise naturally in response to events and agents external to the self—such as joy, grief, fear, and love. Wesley's abstract of Cheyne's summary captures well his main points:

1. The passions have a greater influence on health than most people are aware of.
2. Violent and sudden passions dispose to, or actually throw people into, acute diseases.
3. Slow and lasting passions, such as grief and hopeless love, bring on chonical diseases.
4. Till the passion which caused the disease is calmed, medicine is applied in vain.
5. The love of God, as it is the sovereign remedy of all miseries, so in particular it effectually prevents all the bodily disorders the passions introduce, by keeping the passions themselves within due bounds. And by the unspeakable joy, and perfect calm, serenity, and tranquility it gives the mind, it becomes the most powerful of all the means of health and long life.<sup>49</sup>

This summary stresses that passions affect physical health, but Cheyne refused to reduce the passions to epiphenomena of physical states; he insisted that inordinate passions cannot be cured by medicine alone. Turning this around, Cheyne equally avoided construing the passions as mere psychological dynamics, assuming instead the integrity of their spiritual dimension. Thus, his model of proper care for the passions, and thereby for physical health, necessarily included attention to one's spiritual life.

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<sup>47</sup> The most insightful study of Cheyne is Anita Guerrini, *Obesity and Depression in the Enlightenment: The Life and Times of George Cheyne* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000).

<sup>48</sup> Note his comment about the book in his Letter to Susanna Wesley (1 November 1724), *Works* 25:151. For publication details of *Essay*, see note 7 above.

<sup>49</sup> *Primitive Physick*, Preface, §16.VI (see Appendix B); cf. Cheyne, *Essay*, 170–172.

Wesley appropriated the conviction that such a holistic approach to physical healing is needed, evident in the following sharp comment in his *Journal*:

Reflecting today on the case of a poor woman who had a 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 this woman's pain? (Which she would never have told, had she never been questioned about it.) From fretting from the death of her son. And what availed medicines while that 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—as ministers, when they find the mind disordered by the body, call in the assistance of a physician?<sup>50</sup>

### ***Physical Dimensions of Emotional and Spiritual Health***

This 1759 comment also introduces a balancing emphasis in Wesley's holistic approach to health and healing. It mentions the need not only for physicians to consider possible spiritual dimensions of physical health but also for ministers to consider physical dimensions in the cause and cure of mental and spiritual disorders.

Wesley's sense that physical factors affect emotional and spiritual health did not derive from Cheyne's *Essay of Health*. In this early work, Cheyne had limited consideration of emotional life to the passions, and he approached the passions not as disorders to be cured, but as essential mental faculties to be regulated. Most important, he insisted that regulation "is the business, not of physick, but of virtue and religion."<sup>51</sup> The fact that Wesley omitted this line in his abstract of Cheyne for the *Primitive Physick* may reflect his awareness that Cheyne subsequently came to emphasize the contribution of physick to certain forms of emotional well-being.

The early eighteenth century witnessed a growing interest among English physicians in a set of disorders that they termed "nervous diseases," which spanned the range from mild "lowness of spirits" to hysteria. In the years following publication of *Essay*, Cheyne devoted attention to these disorders, publishing *The English Malady; or, a Treatise of Nervous Diseases of all Kinds* in 1733.<sup>52</sup> Cheyne's focus had shifted from "passions" as mental faculties to "nerves" as the point of connection between the body and mind/spirit. His main emphasis was that these disorders should be traced not to spiritual causes, like sorcery or demonic possession, but to physical causes—specifically, they result from defective connection between body and spirit

<sup>50</sup> *Journal* (12 May 1759), *Works* 21:191.

<sup>51</sup> Cheyne, *Essay*, 171.

<sup>52</sup> Cheyne, *The English Malady; or, A Treatise of Nervous Diseases of all Kinds, as spleen, vapours, lowness of spirits, hypochondriacal, and hysterical distempers* (London: George Strahan, 1733). His title reflects the fact that many on the continent were claiming that the English were particularly susceptible to these diseases. See p. x for his main thesis.

when the nerves are clogged or atrophied. The corollary was that Cheyne assigned treatment of nervous diseases to physick rather than religion (the inverse of his stance on the passions). His own prescription for treating nervous disorders included some medicines, but placed primary emphasis on diet and exercise.

Wesley appears to have read this Cheyne volume shortly after it was released, and to have placed a copy in the library of his school at Kingswood.<sup>53</sup> But he did not fully embrace Cheyne's one-sided assessment of the cause and cure of nervous diseases. His own, more balanced, assessment can be best summarized by Wesley's "Thoughts on Nervous Disorders," published in the *Arminian Magazine* in 1786:

When physicians meet with disorders which they do not understand, they commonly term them *nervous*; a word that . . . is a good cover for learned ignorance. But these are often no natural disorder of the body, but the hand of God upon the soul, being a dull consciousness of the want of God . . . . It is no wonder that those who are strangers to religion should not know what to make of this; and that, consequently, all their prescriptions should be useless, seeing they quite mistake the case. But undoubtedly there are nervous disorders which are purely natural . . . . One cause is the use of spiritous liquors . . . . Another more extensive cause is use of tea; particularly where it is taken either in large quantities, or strong, or without cream or sugar . . . . But the principle causes are, as Dr. Cadogan justly observes, indolence, intemperance, and irregular passions.<sup>54</sup>

The first thing to note in these reflections is Wesley's continuing objection to accounting for all instances of emotional dis-ease in purely natural terms. While he had come to accept the physical dimension of serious cases, he remained convinced that many milder instances were authentic responses to spiritual realities. As he put it ten years earlier: "We know there are such things as nervous disorders. But we know likewise that what is commonly called *nervous lowness* is a secret reproof from God, a kind of consciousness that we are not . . . as God would have us to be, we are unhinged from our proper centre."<sup>55</sup> Wesley insisted that medical treatment alone would not be sufficient to restore well-being in these cases. Their healing requires as well the touch of the Great Physician.<sup>56</sup>

At the same time, Wesley's mature view also acknowledged physical causes or contributors to many instances of emotional/spiritual dis-ease. This

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<sup>53</sup> The entry in his Oxford diary for 9 September 1734 mentions reading "Cheyne" but does not list a title. *English Malady* is item 75 in the list of books in Randy L. Maddox, "Kingswood School Library Holdings (ca. 1775)," *Methodist History* 41.1 (2002): 342–370.

<sup>54</sup> "Thoughts on Nervous Disorders," §1–5, *Works* (Jackson) 11:515–517. The reference at the end is to William Cadogan, *A Dissertation on the Gout, and All Chronical Diseases, jointly considered, as Proceeding from the Same Causes; What these Causes are; and a Rational and Natural Method of Cure Proposed* (London: Dodsley, 1771). Wesley read Cadogan in 1771, and published an extract three years later in Volume 26 of his *Works* (Pine edition).

<sup>55</sup> Sermon 84, "The Important Question," §III.7, *Works* 3:193.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. his comments on "lowness of spirits" in *Journal* (13 July 1739), *Works* 19:79; *Journal* (20 February 1745), *Works* 20:53; and *Journal* (26 August 1752), *Works* 20:435; and on melancholy in *Journal* (22 April 1766), *Works* 22:39.

was an important concession in light of his emphasis on assurance and joy as authentic Christian responses to God's grace. While Wesley never backed away from this standard as the ideal, he also came to stress the potential impact of physical realities on our spiritual/emotional state. In particular, he reminded his followers that spiritual heaviness should not always be attributed to spiritual causes; it often reflects the impact of bodily disorders, acute diseases, calamities, poverty, and the like.<sup>57</sup>

The creative tension between these two tendencies is reflected in the balance of Wesley's advice about dealing with nervous disorders.<sup>58</sup> He was ever ready to affirm the value of prayer. But he was also quick to caution against the assumption that prayer alone will cure every type of nervous disorder. As he once put it, "faith does not overturn the course of nature. Natural causes still produce natural effects. Faith no more hinders the *sinking of the Spirits* (as it is called) in a hysteric illness than the rising of the pulse in a fever."<sup>59</sup> Thus we must address physical factors as well in seeking emotional/spiritual health. Like Cadogan and Cheyne, Wesley's main emphasis in this regard was on proper diet, sufficient exercise, and appropriate rest, though he also advised electrifying (see Appendix A, #502)—a topic to which we shall return.

### Emphasized Preventative Care: The "Cool Regimen"

Wesley's emphasis on diet, exercise, and rest needs to be appreciated in its historical context. Through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, medical care in the North Atlantic context was largely equated with surgical interventions and medications. Against this backdrop the recent emphasis on diet and exercise for promoting wellness could appear to be a modern insight. It is better seen as a recovered balance. From early medieval times, Western approaches to health care reflected a distinction between 1) administering therapies to the sick, and 2) counseling people how to live in accordance with nature by proper diet and exercise, both to restore health and to retain it. The first concern was most associated with the term "medicine," while the second was more associated with "physic[k]" through the early modern period. These concerns were often the focus of different practitioners, and frequently posed against one another as alternatives. At their best, they were seen as complimentary.<sup>60</sup> The dramatic explosion in new knowledge and skills of "medicine" in the past two centuries tended to eclipse the concern for "physick." The recent emphasis on wellness and preventative medicine

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Sermon 47, "Heaviness through Manifold Temptations," §III.1–2, *Works* 2:226–227.

<sup>58</sup> For a more detailed survey of this balance, see Joe Gorman, "John Wesley and Depression in an Age of Melancholy," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 34.2 (1999): 196–221.

<sup>59</sup> Sermon 47, "Heaviness through Manifold Temptation," §III.2, *Works* 2:227.

<sup>60</sup> For more analysis of this distinction, focused on Wesley's setting, see Harold J. Cook, "Physick and Natural History in Seventeenth-Century England," in *Revolution and Continuity: Essays in the History and Philosophy of Early Modern Science*, edited by Peter Barker & Roger Ariew (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1991), 63–80.

is a recovery from this eclipse.

Eighteenth-century Britain bears the marks of a transition stage in these developments. While those most involved in promoting “scientific medicine” emphasized mainly surgical and chemical therapies, popular health-advice manuals continued to devote attention to lifestyle advice for promoting health; the writings of Cheyne are a prime example. It was natural for Wesley to include an abstract of Cheyne’s advice in the preface to his collection of medical therapies. At the same time, his title for the collection shows that any assumed distinction between “medicine” and “physick” was breaking down. Perhaps because the term “medicine” was increasingly displacing “physick,” Wesley chose to label his collection of *primitive* therapies a book of *physick*.<sup>61</sup>

Wesley’s possible failure to appreciate the traditional meaning of “physick” should not suggest a lack of appreciation for the range of physick’s concerns. A long tradition had assigned to physick the six “non-naturals” in Galenic medicine. These were items that, while not constitutive parts of our bodily nature, have profound impact upon bodily health—namely: 1) air, 2) food and drink, 3) motion and rest, 4) sleeping and waking, 5) retentions and evacuations, and 6) passions of the soul.<sup>62</sup> A quick check of Wesley’s abstract of Cheyne’s *Essay of Health* (Appendix B) confirms that each of these items is addressed.<sup>63</sup>

What might be less clear is the distinctive eighteenth-century British stamp on Wesley’s advice. This approach came to be known as the “cool regimen,” and gained near consensus status in eighteenth-century British health advice manuals. The basic assumption of this regimen was that the key to promoting health was to harden the body by exercise and moderate diet, and to bring it into harmony with its environment. Since the environment in England was cool, this meant that people needed to get plenty of fresh cool air, drink plenty of cool water, take cold baths, favor cool vegetables in one’s diet, and so on.<sup>64</sup> A brief survey of Wesley’s health advice (largely drawn

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<sup>61</sup> He was clearly applying “physick” to the therapies collected in the volume, rather than to the advice in the preface. See his comment: “There can be no doubt that your bodily disorder greatly affects your mind. Be careful to prevent the disease by diet rather than physick,” in Letter to Alexander Knox (26 October 1778), *Letters* (Telford) 6:328.

<sup>62</sup> Antoinette Emch-Dériaz, “The Non-naturals Made Easy,” in *The Popularization of Medicine, 1650–1850*, edited by Roy Porter (New York: Routledge, 1992), 134–159.

<sup>63</sup> See also Philip Wesley Ott, “John Wesley and the Non-Naturals,” *Preventive Medicine* 9 (1980): 578–584.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Ginnie [i.e., Virginia] Smith, “Prescribing the Rules of Health: Self-Help and Advice in the Late Eighteenth Century,” in *Patients and Practitioners*, edited by Roy Porter (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 249–282, esp. 259, 264–265; and Virginia Smith, “Physical Puritanism and Sanitary Science: Material and Immaterial Beliefs in Popular Physiology, 1650–1840,” in *Medical Fringe and Medical Orthodoxy, 1750–1850*, edited by W.F. Bynum and Roy Porter (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 174–197, esp. 177–181.

from Cheyne) demonstrates his embrace of the reigning “cool regimen.”<sup>65</sup>

### ***Proper Diet, stressing “Cool” Vegetables and Water***

The longest section of Cheyne’s advice in *Essay of Health* focused on issues of diet (cf. Appendix B, §II ). The overall tone of his advice is a call for temperance, particularly avoiding overly spicy dishes and excessive consumption of meat, and favoring the drinking of water. In essence, as Cheyne admitted later, he was advising his patients and readers—mostly from the upper class—to eat the diet and embrace the lifestyle of the middle and lower-middle classes. In repeating Cheyne’s advice, Wesley likely reinforced the wisdom of this diet among the lower classes.<sup>66</sup>

Cheyne actually held up the ideal of a vegetarian diet, as well as total abstinence from alcohol. Wesley committed himself to this ideal diet on two different occasions, though in each case he returned to moderate consumption of meat and wine after a couple of years.<sup>67</sup> His own advice to readers in later years echoed Cheyne’s less idealistic goal of temperance, protesting suggestions of abstinence from wine.<sup>68</sup> But he clearly understood this moderate approach to remain within the guidelines of a “soft, cool, open diet.”<sup>69</sup>

### ***Regular Exercise, particularly in the Fresh Air***

The second longest section of Cheyne’s advice in *Essay of Health* focused on exercise (cf. Appendix B, §IV). His basic theme was that a due degree of regular exercise is indispensable for health and long life. He also suggested that the value of exercise is enhanced when it is done outdoors in the fresh

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<sup>65</sup> Note as well his critique of a physician who persisted with the “hot regimen” in treating citizens of London when it was clearly ineffective: *Journal* (16 August 1748), *Works* 20:239. See his commendation of Tissot for avoiding this: *Advice with respect to Health*, Preface, §3, *Works* (Jackson) 14:255.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Cheyne, *English Malady*, iv–v; and the analysis of Bryan Turner, “The Government of the Body: Medical Regimens and the Rationalization of Diet,” *British Journal of Sociology* 33 (1982): 254–269, esp. 265–266.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. *A Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London*, §14, *Works* 11:344–345.

<sup>68</sup> See especially “Thoughts on Nervous Disorders,” §6–7, *Works* (Jackson) 11:518; and the Preface to his extract of Cadogan’s *Dissertation on the Gout*, *Works* (Jackson) 14:265–269. But note also that he suggests a vegetarian diet for weight loss (Appendix A, #330). William Stroup’s recent study overplays a little Wesley’s encouragement of vegetarianism; cf. Stroup, “Meat, Ethics, and the Case of John Wesley,” in *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Eighteenth-Century Society*, edited by Regina Hewitt & Pat Rogers (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2002), 267–280. More balanced is Charles I. Wallace, Jr., “Eating and Drinking with John Wesley: The Logic of his Practice,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 85.2–3 (2003): 137–155.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. the advice for avoiding costiveness (i.e., constipation) in Appendix B, §V.1. The phrase “soft, cool, open diet” is Wesley’s summary, not found in Cheyne’s original.



air.<sup>70</sup> The same points emerge frequently in Wesley's advice. Consider a few examples:

Exercise, especially as the spring comes on, will be of greater service to your health than an hundred medicines.<sup>71</sup>

Not that any one particular kind of exercise is necessary for all persons. Indeed Dr. Cheyne supposes the natural exercise of walking, where the strength suffices, to be preferable to any other. But it should be used every day, not less than an hour before dinner, or after supper. Where the strength will not admit of this, the want of it may be supplied by riding two hours at least on horseback every day before dinner or supper. If neither of these can be borne, the end of both may be answered by riding in a carriage . . . . Those who cannot afford this, may use a chamber-horse, which will suit every constitution.<sup>72</sup>

Every day of your life take at least an hour's exercise, between breakfast and dinner. If you will, take another hour before supper, or before you sleep. If you can, take it in the open air; otherwise, in the house. If you cannot ride or walk abroad, use within a dumb-bell or a wooden horse. If you have not strength to do this for an hour at a time, do it at twice or thrice. Let nothing hinder you. Your life is at stake. Make everything yield to this.<sup>73</sup>

These quotes leave no doubt as to the importance Wesley placed on exercise. They may raise some questions about the types of exercise commended.

The first point to note is that Cheyne was not the only one to favor walking. When Wesley left home for school, his father distilled his health advice into one maxim: "Fail not, on any account whatever, to walk an hour every day."<sup>74</sup> Moving to a second point, riding was broadly recommended in Wesley's day, even referred to as "Dr. Horse," due to the belief that the bouncing action helped to clear the lungs, improve circulation, and raise a healthy sweat.<sup>75</sup> The potential loss of this benefit in bad weather, or because of advancing age, is what led to development of a aerobic alternative that could be used indoors—what Wesley refers to as a "wooden horse" or "chamber horse." Actually, a "wooden horse" was the inexpensive version, "a double plank nine or ten feet long, properly placed upon two tressels."<sup>76</sup> The "chamber horse" was a permanent piece of furniture, a chair with high

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<sup>70</sup> For more on the broad conviction of the benefits of open country and fresh air in health manuals of the time, see Andrew Wear, "Making Sense of Health and the Environment in Early Modern England," in *Medicine in Society*, edited by Andrew Wear (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 119–147.

<sup>71</sup> Letter to Lady Maxwell (23 February 1767), *Letters* (Telford) 5:42.

<sup>72</sup> *Extract from Dr. Cadogan's Dissertation on the Gout*, Preface, §10, *Works* (Jackson) 14:268.

<sup>73</sup> "Thoughts on Nervous Disorders," §10, *Works* (Jackson) 11:520.

<sup>74</sup> Letter to Miss Agnes Gibbes (May 1785), *Methodist History* 6.3 (1968): 59.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Porter, "Eighteenth Century," 419–420; and Cheyne, *Essay of Health*, 95. Francis Fuller devoted an entire chapter to the health benefits of riding in *Medicina Gymnastica; or, A Treatise concerning the Power of Exercise with respect to the Animal Economy, and the Great Necessity of it in the Cure of several Distempers* (London: Knaplock, 1705), 165–206 (Wesley read this book in January 1731).

<sup>76</sup> Letter to Mrs. Christian (17 July 1785), *Letters* (Telford) 7:281.

arms on both sides and a seat that would rise on springs, allowing the person to bounce up and down. Wesley attributed this design to Bishop George Berkeley.<sup>77</sup> He purchased one for his London house in his later years, and as he neared death he encouraged his niece Sarah to borrow it and use it at least a half-hour daily.<sup>78</sup> This was, of course, the equipment that John charged Samuel Bradburn to procure for Charles Wesley (Sarah's father) when he was in declining health. The other exercise equipment Wesley mentions is a "dumb-bell." This was not the set of weights we think of today, but a form of upper-body aerobic exercise developed in the seventeenth century. A rope was run into the attic of a house, where it wrapped around a cylinder with weights attached. As one pulled down on the rope, unwrapping it and spinning the cylinder, the weights gave the cylinder sufficient momentum to wrap the rope back up in the opposite direction (like a yo-yo), ready to be pulled down again.<sup>79</sup>

### *Appropriate Rest and Sleep*

When Cheyne suggested a standard of seven to eight hours of sleep a night (cf. Appendix B, §III), his concern was that people may be sleeping *too much*, not too little. This reveals again that the lower classes were not his main audience. They are the ones least likely to have the luxury of sleeping late! He was concerned about persons in every economic class who withdraw from life in depression, often lingering in bed.

Wesley made explicit connections between sleep and mental states. He set a shorter sleep standard than Cheyne, and explained it by direct reference to depression:

I would allow between six and seven hours [of sleep], at an average, to a healthy man; or an hour more, between seven and eight hours, to an unhealthy man. And I do not remember that in threescore years I have known either man or woman who laid longer in bed than this, (whether they slept or no), but in some years they complained of lowness of spirits. The plain reason of which seems to be, while we sleep all the springs of nature are unbent. And if we sleep longer than is sufficient, they are relaxed more than is sufficient, and of course grow weaker and weaker.<sup>80</sup>

In a related sermon he charged that sleeping too much was not only the chief cause of all nervous diseases but also the chief cause for the recent increase

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Letter to Miss Agnes Gibbes (14 January 1785), *Methodist History* 6.3 (1968): 57.

<sup>78</sup> See Letter to Sarah Wesley (18 August 1790), *Letters* (Telford) 8:234.

<sup>79</sup> Wesley may have learned of this device from a description in *The Gentleman's Magazine* 16 (1746): 478. John Fletcher also apparently used one regularly; cf. *The Life and Death of Mr. Fletcher*, §3.13, *Works* (Jackson) 11:291. For a picture and discussion of one of the few remaining examples, see Conrad Volk, "The Dumb-Bell at Knole: A Seventeenth-Century Exercising Device," in *National Trust Studies 1981*, edited by Gervase Jackson-Stops (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1981), 133–138. See also David Bryant, "The History of the Dumb Bell," *The Ringing World* 98 (2002): 260–261.

<sup>80</sup> "Thoughts on Nervous Disorders," §7, *Works* (Jackson) 11:518.

in nervous disorders in Britain.<sup>81</sup>

### *Cold-bathing and Cleanliness*

In two other areas, Wesley echoed and amplified his mentor, namely in Cheyne's call for greater cleanliness and his specific advocacy of cold-bathing (cf. Appendix B, §I.3, §IV.5, §IV.10).

Wesley's emphasis on cleanliness is legendary, drawing the attention of all who study the topic. Indeed, he is often credited with inventing the proverb "cleanliness is next to godliness."<sup>82</sup> While he definitely did not invent this rabbinical proverb, he did cite it often to his people as he exhorted them to seek diligently to be clean in their person, clothing, and housing.<sup>83</sup> The health benefits of this advice are clear today, though Wesley was likely concerned as much, if not more, with the public perception of Methodists.

By contrast, Wesley's emphasis on cold-bathing was primarily for the assumed health benefits, with any sanitary effect or contribution to tidiness being an incidental extra. While Cheyne focused such health benefits in terms of hardening and acclimating the person, Wesley was convinced that cold-bathing could cure several disorders and inhibit many hereditary diseases.<sup>84</sup> Since he believed these benefits were under-appreciated, he advocated cold-bathing as a suggested remedy for many specific disorders in *Primitive Physick*, appending a list of the various disorders supposedly cured or prevented.<sup>85</sup> His major source for this list was a book by two physicians, John Floyer and Edward Baynard.<sup>86</sup> Wesley's appropriation of this emphasis is credited by some for the popularity of cold-water therapy at the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>87</sup>

### **Favored God's "Natural" Cures over Emerging "Chemical" Medicines**

Wesley's interest in cold-bathing straddled the line between preventative regimen and prescribed therapy for healing specific disorders. When one focuses on the prescribed remedies in *Primitive Physick*, the characteristic

<sup>81</sup> Sermon 93, "On Redeeming the Time," §II.4, *Works* 3:326–327 (1782).

<sup>82</sup> See, for example, Keith Thomas, "Cleanliness and Godliness in early Modern England," in *Religion, Culture, and Society in Early Modern Britain*, edited by Anthony Fletcher (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 56–83, p. 65.

<sup>83</sup> See especially "Large Minutes," Q. 44, *Works* (Jackson) 8:320; Sermon 88, "On Dress," §5, *Works* 3:249; and Sermon 98, "On Visiting the Sick," §II.6, *Works* 3:392.

<sup>84</sup> The phrase "it prevents abundance of diseases" in §IV.10 of Wesley's abstract of Cheyne (Appendix B) is Wesley's addition, not found in Cheyne, *Essay of Health*, 108.

<sup>85</sup> For individual examples, see remedies 3, 35, 41, and 138 in Appendix A. The appended list is found in every edition of *Primitive Physick* through Wesley's life (pp. 117–118 in 1791).

<sup>86</sup> John Floyer, *The Ancient Psychrolousia Revived; or, an essay to prove cold bathing both safe and useful . . . also a letter of Dr. [Edward] Baynard's containing an account of many eminent cures done by the cold baths in England* (London: Smith & Walford, 1702). Note Wesley's reference to this work in *Desideratum*, Preface, §4, *Works* (Jackson), 14:242.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Smith, "Physical Puritanism," 180.

that stands out most is his strong preference for simple, natural remedies. By one count, Wesley refers to 225 distinct treatments in his prescriptions, of which 184 are made from plants, 17 are derived from animals, and 24 are minerals.<sup>88</sup> While one could quibble about the details of this count, Wesley makes clear in his preface that he is giving preference to plants and roots over all “chemical, or exotic, or compound medicine.”<sup>89</sup> In this preference he was swimming against the stream of emerging professional medicine, as well as the current practice of many apothecaries.<sup>90</sup>

Wesley was not swimming alone. In his preference for simple medicines over compound, Wesley cited the authority of Hermann Boerhaave.<sup>91</sup> He could as easily have cited Robert Boyle, for in his early Oxford years he read Boyle’s discourse touting the advantages of simple medicines.<sup>92</sup> The reasons Boyle offers are largely “scientific,” stressing how simple medicines make it easier for medical observers to determine which ones have the desired effect or undesired side-effect. He also mentions that they are easier to procure and use. This final benefit is what most motivated Boyle to publish his collection of simple remedies, in hopes of improving self-care among the poor.<sup>93</sup> Wesley appropriated several of Boyle’s simple remedies for *Primitive Physick* because he shared the same concern. As he explained in a 1755 postscript to the original Preface, his aim in making his collection was “to set down cheap, safe, and easy medicines; easy to be known, easy to be procured, and easy to be applied by plain, unlettered men.”<sup>94</sup>

If this explains Wesley’s preference for simple medicines, what was his objection to exotic cures—which are often simple in nature? For many in his setting, the objection reflected the continuing influence of a traditional notion that the diseases native to a country were best cured by remedies to be found in that country.<sup>95</sup> This may have influenced Wesley to consult the

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<sup>88</sup> Eunice Bonow Bardell, “*Primitive Physick*: John Wesley’s Receipts,” *Pharmacy in History* 21 (1979):111–121.

<sup>89</sup> *Primitive Physick*, Preface, §11, *Works* (Jackson) 14:311.

<sup>90</sup> See Juanita G. L. Burnby, *A Study of the English Apothecary, From 1660 to 1760* (London: Welcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1983). This study of the contemporary practice of apothecaries helps to identify many of Wesley’s remedies and to discern his distinctive preferences.

<sup>91</sup> *Primitive Physick*, Preface, §14, *Works* (Jackson) 14:313. See as well his praise of Sydenham, Dover, and Cheyne in *ibid*, §12, 14:311–312; and of Tissot in *Advice with Respect to Health*, Preface, §2, *Works* (Jackson) 14:255.

<sup>92</sup> Wesley’s Oxford diary records that he read Boyle’s *Specific Medicines* (see note 6) on 9 July 1725. Pages 137–225 of this work are devoted to Boyle’s defense of simple medicines.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Barbara Beigun Kaplan, “*Divulging of Useful Truths in Physick*”: *The Medical Agenda of Robert Boyle* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993); and Michael Hunter, “The Reluctant Philanthropist: Robert Boyle and the ‘Communication of Secrets and Receipts in Physick’,” in *Religio Medici: Medicine and Religion in Seventeenth-Century England*, edited by Ole Peter Grell & Andrew Cunningham (Hants, England: Scholar Press, 1996), 247–272.

<sup>94</sup> *Primitive Physick*, Preface, Postscript, §2, *Works* (Jackson) 14:316.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Andrew Wear, “Medicine in Early Modern Europe, 1500–1700,” in *The Western Medical Tradition*, Lawrence Conrad et al. (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 215–360; here, 309–310.

health guide by Tennent when he was in Georgia. But Wesley did not seem to assume that cures were strictly geographically specific. For example, he readily recommended “Peruvian bark” to his British readers for certain ailments (cf. Appendix A, #211), though he chastised those who treated it as a panacea for all fevers.<sup>96</sup> He included other non-native treatments as well, but was careful to suggest more accessible alternatives. His main objection to exotic cures seems to have been that their foreign origin imposed limits on their availability, affordability, and familiarity among the poor and uneducated.<sup>97</sup>

This leaves the question of why Wesley favored natural organic cures over their purified chemical ingredients. The issues of availability and cost surely played a strong role again—roots might be dug in the forest for free, while chemicals must be purchased from the apothecary. In his Preface to the *Primitive Physick*, however, Wesley hints at two theological assumptions that reinforced this practical concern. The first is his Anglican-bred primitivism. Just as Anglican apologists assumed that Christian life and doctrine were purest at the origin of the Christian church, and sought to emulate these times, Wesley privileges the primitive origins of physick and praises the Native Americans for most closely preserving the pristine practice.<sup>98</sup> Closely related to this is the second apparent assumption, which concerns theodicy. Wesley refers to the “Author of nature,” who teaches humanity the medicinal value of plants after sin has introduced sickness and death into creation.<sup>99</sup> This calls to mind Ecclesiasticus 38:4: “The Lord hath created medicines out of the earth”; it also echoes Wesley’s frequent insistence that God would not have allowed the potential damages of human sin if God had not already prepared gracious ways to heal these damages.<sup>100</sup> These connections suggest that Wesley may have viewed the modern privileging of chemical medicines over plants as a failure to trust in God’s long-standing provisions for dealing with the effects of sin.

### Explored God’s Most Ubiquitous Natural Cure – Electricity!

Wesley’s emphasis on natural cures has to be balanced by the recognition that he became an enthusiastic supporter of the most recent alternative to traditional therapies—electrical shock.<sup>101</sup> In the late 1750s, he read

<sup>96</sup> Peruvian bark (or Cinchona) is the natural source of quinine. It was discovered by Jesuits in Peru. For an example of Wesley’s criticism of certain prescriptions of the bark, see *Advice with respect to Health*, Preface, §7, *Works* (Jackson) 14:257.

<sup>97</sup> Wesley emphasized, for example, that people lack familiarity with exotics: *Primitive Physick*, Preface, §10, *Works* (Jackson) 14:311.

<sup>98</sup> *Primitive Physick*, Preface, §4, 14:308–309.

<sup>99</sup> *Primitive Physick*, Preface, §6, 14:308–309. See also §3, 14:308.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Sermon 59, “God’s Love to Fallen Man,” *Works* 2:423–435; and Sermon 63, “The General Spread of the Gospel,” §27, *Works* 2:499.

<sup>101</sup> The most helpful essay on this topic is H. Newton Malony, “John Wesley and the Eighteenth Century Therapeutic Uses of Electricity,” *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 47 (1995): 244–254.

groundbreaking books on the potential uses of electricity as they were published.<sup>102</sup> Moved particularly by the claims of Richard Lovett about the healing benefits of electricity, he procured in 1756 an “electric machine” that delivered very low-voltage shocks through a probe. He began testing its effects for a range of disorders on himself and others, and his confidence in the positive results led him to procure other machines and to publicize this near “panacea.”<sup>103</sup> Along with inserting “electrify” among his suggestions for several disorders in *Primitive Physick*, he added to his appended summary of benefits from cold-bathing a similar summary for electrifying, starting with the 8th edition in 1759. A year later he published *The Desideratum: Or, Electricity made plain and useful* to defend the healing benefits of electrification against skeptics and scoffers in the medical profession.<sup>104</sup>

How do we account for Wesley’s enthusiasm about electrical shock therapy? By his own admission, the evidence of its effectiveness was often ambiguous. I suggest that two other factors intensified his interest. First, electricity could be considered part of God’s creational provision, like other “natural” cures. Indeed, in the opening of the *Desideratum* Wesley speaks of electricity as the “soul of the universe,” the created power permeating all other things.<sup>105</sup> Second, with an anticipated spread of his inexpensive “electric machine,” shock therapy would be increasingly ubiquitous and affordable, like cold-water bathing—his other favored cure.

### Extended Care to the Whole Community

In the midst of extolling the promise of electrical treatment for health disorders, Wesley noted Richard Lovett’s suggestion that this method can only be perfected if it is “administered and applied by the gentlemen of the faculty.” His response was sharp:

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<sup>102</sup> In the Preface to *Desideratum*, §1 (*Works* [Jackson] 14:241) he refers to the following in particular: Benjamin Franklin, *Experiments and Observations on Electricity* (London: E. Cave, 1751); John Freke, *An Essay to show the Cause of Electricity* (London: William Innys, 1746); Dr. Hoadly & Benjamin Wilson *Observations on a Series of Electrical Experiments*, 2nd edition (London: Payne, 1759); Richard Lovett, *The Subtil Medium Proved* (London: J. Hinton et al., 1756); Benjamin Martin, *An Essay on Electricity* (Bath: for the author, 1746); William Watson, *Experiments and Observations Tending to Illustrate the Nature and Properties of Electricity*, 3rd edition (London: C. Davis, 1746); and Benjamin Wilson, *A Treatise on Electricity* (London: Davis et al., 1750).

<sup>103</sup> See *Journal* (9 November 1756), *Works* 21:8; *Desideratum*, Preface, §5, *Works* (Jackson) 14:243; and Willem D. Hackman, *John Wesley and His Electrical Machine* (London: John Wesley’s House and The Museum of Methodism, 2003). For more background on the interest in medical uses of electricity at the time, see Paola Bertucci, “The Electrical Body of Knowledge: Medical Electricity and Experimental Philosophy in the Mid-Eighteenth Century,” in *Electric Bodies: Episodes in the History of Medical Electricity*, edited by Paola Bertucci & Giuliano Pancaldi (Bologna: University of Bologna Department of Philosophy, 2001), 43–68.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. *Desideratum*, Preface, §3, *Works* (Jackson) 14:242. As Wesley admits, the work was almost entirely abridged from others, particularly from Lovett’s *Subtil Medium*.

<sup>105</sup> Wesley, *Desideratum* (London: Strahan, 1760), §1.1, p. 9

Nay, then . . . all my hopes are at an end. For when will it be administered and applied by them? . . . Not till the gentlemen of the faculty have more regard to the interest of their neighbours than their own; at least, not till there are no apothecaries in the land, or till physicians are independent of them.<sup>106</sup>

This passage is reminiscent of Wesley's negative depiction of the monopolizing of health care:

Physicians now began to be had [i.e., held] in admiration, as persons who were something more than human. And profit attended their employ, as well as honour; so that they had now two weighty reasons for keeping the bulk of [humanity] at a distance, that they might not pry into the mysteries of the profession . . . Those who understood only how to restore the sick to health, they branded with the name of empirics. They introduced into practice abundance of compound medicines, consisting of so many ingredients, that it was scarce possible for common people to know which it was that wrought the cure; abundance of exotics, neither the nature nor names of which their own countrymen understood; of chemicals, such as they neither had skill, nor fortune, nor time, to prepare; yea, and of dangerous ones, such as they could not use, without hazarding life, but by the advice of a physician.<sup>107</sup>

People can debate the accuracy or appropriateness of Wesley's suggestions about the actual motivations of apothecaries and physicians in his day.<sup>108</sup> There is little doubt, however, that the moves to monopolize medical care in eighteenth century Britain served, for some time, to increase disparity of access between the rich and the poor, and between those in major cities and those in scattered villages.<sup>109</sup> I suggest that the passion reflected in Wesley's words was aimed less at physicians and apothecaries per se, and more at the disparity. Wesley believed that, just as *God's* mercy is over *all* God's creatures, *our* works of mercy—for both body and soul—should be offered to *all*.

Early in the Methodist revival, as his ministry brought him into daily contact with the lower classes, Wesley set up the first free public dispensary in London. As he described this decision later:

I was still in pain for many of the poor that were sick: there was so great expense, and so little profit . . . I saw the poor people pining away, and several families ruined, and that without remedy. At length I thought of a kind of desperate expedient. "I will prepare, and give them physic myself." . . . I took into my assistance an apothecary, and an experienced surgeon; resolving at the same time not to go out of my depth, but to leave all difficult and complicated cases to such physicians as the patients should choose. I gave notice of this to the society; telling them that all who were

<sup>106</sup> *Desideratum*, Preface, §8, *Works* (Jackson) 14:243.

<sup>107</sup> *Primitive Physick*, Preface, §10, *Works* (Jackson) 14:310–311.

<sup>108</sup> Such attacks upon learned medicine for its cost and exclusivity had become a standard item in works popularizing medical knowledge by the middle of the seventeenth century; cf. Andrew Wear, "Medicine in Early Modern Europe, 1500–1700," in *The Western Medical Tradition*, edited by Lawrence Conrad (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 215–360; here, 324.

<sup>109</sup> Some sense of these dynamics can be gained from Mary Fissell, *Patients, Power, and the Poor in Eighteenth Century Bristol* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); and Anne Digby, *Making a Medical Living: Doctors and Patients in the English Market for Medicine, 1720–1911* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

ill of *chronical* distempers (for I did not care to venture upon *acute*) might, if they pleased, come to me at such a time; and I would give them the best advice I could, and the best medicines I had.<sup>110</sup>

Many of the poor did come to this clinic, both from the Methodist society and from at large. Wesley was pleased with the results that he observed; however, he noted a common obstacle to cures, namely that people were more likely to take their medicine regularly than to follow the regimen he advised.<sup>111</sup> Without regular, holistic care, they were less likely to regain full health.

Within a few years Wesley found the expenses of running a clinic too great for his limited resources, and he closed it. This decision is best seen not as a retreat from his concern to provide “physic for the poor” but as a refocusing of the effort. By then Wesley had published the *Primitive Physick* and was distributing it at little or no cost across the English countryside. In this way he was drawing upon his gifts, and the resources of his movement to offer seasoned advice on medicine and regimen, both to the poor in London and to people in many cities and villages of the land. In short, he was extending his concern for holistic health and healing to the whole community.

### Honoring Our Wesleyan Heritage

While more details could be added, the preceding survey should demonstrate that John Wesley’s commitment to holistic health and healing is a heritage that present Wesleyans should not only celebrate but seek to embody in our own time. To be sure, our context differs in many ways from that in which Wesley was active. This means that our embodiment of this heritage must stand in a *dynamic* continuity. For example, we can affirm Wesley’s insight about the importance of regimen, making this a focus of our lives and our ministries, while recognizing the inadequacy of the specific model of the “cold regimen.” Likewise, as we seek to honor the precedent of Wesley’s concern to provide “physick for the poor” we will surely need to consider alternatives beyond simply publishing an up-to-date self-care health manual. But while our specific actions might differ from those of Wesley, we can only hope that our goal will be the same—to realize as fully as possible in the present the healing of body and soul that God longs to provide to all!

### Appendix A: Selected Remedies from *Primitive Physick* (1791)

#### For an Ague [i.e., intermittent fever and chills]

3. Go into the Cold-Bath just before the cold fit.

<sup>110</sup> *Plain Account of the People Called Methodists*, §XII.1–3, *Works* 9: 275–276.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. *Plain Account of the People Called Methodists*, §XII.6, *Works* 9:276.



- Nothing tends more to prolong an Ague, than indulging a lazy indolent disposition. The patient ought therefore between the fits to take as much exercise as he can bear; and to use a light diet, and for common drink, Lemonade is the most proper.

When all other means fail, give blue Vitriol, from one grain to two grains, in the absence of the fit; and repeat it three or four times in twenty-four hours.

4. Or, take a handful of Groundsell, shred it small, put it into a paper-bag, four inches square, pricking that side which is to be next the skin full of holes. Cover this with a thin linen, and wear it on the pit of the stomach, renewing it two hours before the fit. Tried.

5. Or, apply to the stomach a large onion slit.

6. Or, melt two-penny worth of Frankincense, spread it on linen, grate nutmeg upon it, cover it with linen, and hang this bag on the pit of the stomach. I have never yet known it to fail . . . .

9. Or, make six middling pills of cobwebs. Take one a little before the cold fit, two a little before the next fit (suppose the next day), the other three, if needs be, a little before the third fit. This seldom fails. Or, put a tea-spoonful of salt of tartar into a large glass of spring water, and drink it by little and little. Repeat the same dose the next two days, before the time of the fit.

### **The Apoplexy** [i.e., a seizure, or stroke-like paralysis]

35. To prevent, use the cold-bath, and drink only cold water.

36. In the fit, put a handful of salt into a pint of cold water, and if possible, pour it down the throat of the patient. He will quickly come to himself. So will one who seems dead by a fall. But send for a good physician immediately.

### **The Asthma**

41. Take a pint of cold water every morning washing the head therein immediately after, and using the cold bath once a fortnight.

42. Or, cut an ounce of stick Liquorice into slices. Steep this in a quart of water, for and twenty hours, and use it, when you are worse than usual, as common drink. I have known this give much ease.

43. Or, half a pint of Tar-Water, twice a day.

44. Or, live a fortnight on boiled Carrots only. It seldom fails.

45. Or, take an ounce of Quicksilver every morning, and a spoonful of Aqua Sulphurata, or fifteen drops of Elixer of Vitriol, in a large glass of spring-water at five in the evening. This has cured an inveterate asthma.

### **A Cough**

211. Every cough is a dry cough at first. As long as it continues so, it may be cured by chewing immediately after you cough, the quantity of pepper-corn of Peruvian bark. Swallow your spittle as long as it is bitter, and then spit out the wood. If you cough again, do this again. It very seldom fails to cure

any dry cough. I earnestly desire ever one who has any regard for his health to try this within twenty-four hours, after he first perceives a cough.

212. Or, drink a pint of cold water lying down in bed. Tried.

213. Or, make a hole through a lemon and fill it with honey. Roast it, and catch the juice. Take a tea-spoonful of this frequently. Tried.

### **Deafness**

237. Be electrified through the ear. Tried.

238. Or, use the cold bath.

239. Or, put a little salt into the ear.

240. Or, drop into it a tea-spoonful of salt water.

241. Or, three or four drops of onion-juice at lying down, and stop it with a little wool.

### **Extreme Fat**

330. Use a total vegetable diet. I know one who was entirely cured of this, by living a year thus: she breakfasted and supped on milk and water (with bread) and dined on turnips, carrots, or other roots, drinking water.

### **A Fever**

(In the beginning of any fever, if the stomach is uneasy, vomit; if the bowels, purge: if the pulse be hard, full or strong, bleed)

332. Drink a pint or two of cold water lying down in bed: I never knew it do hurt.

### **The Head-Ache**

389. Rub the head for a quarter of an hour. Tried.

390. Or be electrified. Tried.

391. Or, apply to each temple the thin yellow rind of a lemon, newly pared off.

### **The Iliac [Ileac] Passion [i.e., obstructed bowel]**

433. Apply warm flannels soaked in spirits of wine.

434. Or, hold a live puppy constantly on the belly. (Dr. Sydenham.)

### **For one seemingly killed with Lightning, a Damp, or suffocated**

464. Plunge him immediately into cold water.

465. Or, blow strongly with bellows down his throat. This may recover a person seemingly drowned. It is still better, if a strong man blows into his mouth.

**Lunacy**

467. Give decoction of agrimony four times a day.  
 468. Or, rub the head several times a day with vinegar, in which ground-ivy leaves have been infused.  
 469. Or, take daily an ounce of distilled vinegar.  
 470. Or, boil juice of ground-ivy with sweet oil and white wine into an ointment. Shave the head, anoint it therewith, and change it in warm every other day for three weeks. Bruise also the leaves and bind them on the head, and give three spoonfuls of the juice warm every morning. This generally cures melancholy. The juice alone, taken twice a day, will cure.  
 471. Or, electrify. Tried.

**[Lunacy:] Raging Madness**

472. Apply to the head, cloths dipped in cold water.  
 473. Or, set the patient with his head under a great water-fall, as long as his strength will bear; or pour water on his head out of a tea-kettle.  
 474. Or, let him eat nothing but apples for a month.  
 475. Or, nothing but bread and milk. Tried.

**The Measles**

Immediately consult an honest Physician.

481. Drink only thin water-gruel, or milk and water, the more the better; or toast and water.  
 482. If the cough be very troublesome, take frequently a spoonful of barley-water sweetened with oil of sweet almonds newly drawn, mixed with syrup of maiden-hair.

**Nervous Disorders**

501. When the nerves perform their office too languidly, a good air is the first requisite. The patient also should rise early, and as soon as the dew is off the ground, walk. Let his breakfast be Mother of Thyme tea, gathered in June, using half as much as we do of common tea. When the nerves are too sensible, let the person breathe a proper air. Let him eat veal, chickens, or mutton. Vegetables should be eaten sparingly; the most innocent is the French bean; and the best root, the turnip. Wine should be avoided carefully, so should all sauces. Sometimes he may breakfast upon a quarter of an ounce of the poser of Valerian root infused in hot water, to which he may add cream and sugar. Tea is not proper. When the person finds an uncommon oppression, let him take a large spoonful of the tincture of Valerian root.  
 502. But I am firmly persuaded, there is no remedy in nature, for nervous disorders of every kind, comparable to the proper and constant use of the electric machine.

**To cure the Tooth-Ache**

- 714. Be electrified through the teeth. Tried.
- 715. Or, apply to the aching tooth an artificial magnet.
- 716. Or, rub the cheek a quarter of an hour.
- 717. Or, lay roasted parings of turnips as hot as may be behind the ear . . . .

**Appendix B**

**Preface of *Primitive Physick*, §16, *Works* (Jackson) 14:314–15**

For the sake of those who desire, through the blessing of God, to retain the health which they have recovered, I have added a few plain, easy rules, chiefly transcribed from Dr. Cheyne: —

- I. 1. The air we breathe is of great consequence to our health. Those who have been long abroad in easterly or northerly winds should drink some thin and warm liquor going to bed, or a draught of toast and water.
- 2. Tender people should have those who lie with them, or are much about them, sound, sweet, and healthy.
- 3. Every one that would preserve health should be as clean and sweet as possible in their houses, clothes, and furniture.
- II. 1. The great rule of eating and drinking is, to suit the quality and quantity of the food to the strength of our digestion; to take always such a sort and such a measure of food as sits light and easy to the stomach.
- 2. All pickled, or smoked, or salted food, and all high-seasoned, is unwholesome.
- 3. Nothing conduces more to health than abstinence and plain food, with due labour.
- 4. For studious persons, about eight ounces of animal food, and twelve of vegetable, in twenty-four hours, is sufficient.
- 5. Water is the wholesomest of all drinks; quickens the appetite, and strengthens the digestion most.
- 6. Strong, and more especially spirituous, liquors are a certain, though slow, poison.
- 7. Experience shows there is very seldom any danger in leaving them off all at once.
- 8. Strong liquors do not prevent the mischiefs of a surfeit, nor carry it off, so safely as water.
- 9. Malt liquors (except clear small beer, or small ale of due age) are exceeding hurtful to tender persons.
- 10. Coffee and tea are extremely hurtful to persons who have weak nerves.

- III.1. Tender persons should eat very light suppers, and that two or three hours before going to bed.
2. They ought constantly to go to bed about nine, and rise at four or five.
- IV.1. A due degree of exercise is indispensably necessary to health and long life.
2. Walking is the best exercise for those who are able to bear it; riding for those who are not. The open air, when the weather is fair, contributes much to the benefit of exercise.
  3. We may strengthen any weak part of the body by constant exercise. Thus, the lungs may be strengthened by loud speaking, or walking up an easy ascent; the digestion and the nerves, by riding; the arms and hams, by strongly rubbing them daily.
  4. The studious ought to have stated times for exercise, at least two or three hours a day: The one half of this before dinner; the other, before going to bed.
  5. They should frequently shave, and frequently wash their feet.
  6. Those who read or write much should learn to do it standing; otherwise it will impair their health.
  7. The fewer clothes any one uses, by day or night, the hardier he will be.
  8. Exercise, First, should be always on an empty stomach: Secondly, should never be continued to weariness: Thirdly, after it, we should take care to cool by degrees; otherwise we shall catch cold.
  9. The flesh-brush is a most useful exercise, especially to strengthen any part that is weak.
  10. Cold bathing is of great advantage to health. It prevents abundance of diseases. It promotes perspiration, helps the circulation of the blood, and prevents the danger of catching cold. Tender people should pour water upon the head before they go in, and walk swiftly. To jump in with the head foremost is too great a shock to nature.
- V. 1. Costiveness cannot long consist with health. Therefore care should be taken to remove it at the beginning; and when it is removed, to prevent its return, by soft, cool, open diet.
2. Obstructed perspiration (vulgarly called catching cold) is one great source of diseases. Whenever there appears the least sign of this, let it be removed by gentle sweats.
- VI. 1. The passions have a greater influence on health than most people are aware of.
2. All violent and sudden passions dispose to, or actually throw people into, acute diseases.
  3. The slow and lasting passions, such as grief and hopeless love, bring on chronical diseases.

4. Till the passion which caused the disease is calmed, medicine is applied in vain.
5. The love of God, as it is the sovereign remedy of all miseries, so in particular it effectually prevents all the bodily disorders the passions introduce, by keeping the passions themselves within due bounds. And by the unspeakable joy, and perfect calm, serenity, and tranquillity it gives the mind, it becomes the most powerful of all the means of health and long life.