

**PSYCHOLOGY AND WESLEYAN THEOLOGY:
PRECEDENTS AND PROSPECTS FOR A RENEWED ENGAGEMENT**

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Psychology began to emerge as a distinct discipline at about the same time that John Wesley was developing his mature understanding of the dynamics of Christian life. This essay opens with an account of Wesley's engagement with this emergent psychology and its impact on his understanding of Christian spirituality, including his distinctive conception of Christian perfection. Attention then turns to tracing the continuing engagement of Wesleyan theologians with psychology, noting both where they resisted developments in the discipline and where their appropriation of psychological models reshaped their own assumptions about spirituality. The essay closes with some proposals for exploration in the recent renewal of explicit engagement between Wesleyan theology and psychology.

The recent organization of a Society for the Study of Psychology and Wesleyan Theology must strike many who hear of it as puzzling. While they would recognize that there are issues at this disciplinary intersection, they may wonder why psychology has been chosen, over other academic disciplines, for such attention. One goal of this essay is to show that engagement with competing models of psychology has been an ongoing concern in the Wesleyan tradition.

A further goal, more prescriptive in nature, is interwoven with this descriptive account. After highlighting how consideration of competing psychologies was central to John Wesley's clarification of his views of human nature and Christian life, I argue that the difficulty which his nineteenth-century heirs had in making sense of both Wesley's model of Christian holiness and his emphasis on the means of grace in forming this holiness was connected to their abandonment of the psychological model undergirding his mature views. Seen in this light, renewed interaction with competing psychological models by Wesley's present descendants holds some promise for helping us reclaim in appropriate manners central originating dimensions of our tradition

The Centrality of Wesley's "Affectional" Moral Psychology to his Model of Christian Life

The emphasis on free grace in Martin Luther's theology is often explained by saying that the guiding question of his life was "How can I, a sinner, stand in confidence before the holy God?" The characteristic differences between Luther's theology and that of John Wesley can be understood in large degree by recognizing that a different question guided Wesley's spiritual journey: "How can I be the kind of person that God created me to be, and that I long to be, a person holy in heart and life?" To know that God graciously accepts me when I fall short of this goal is good news; but the news that Wesley longed to hear was that God offered more than just such acceptance, that God offered a gracious means to becoming truly holy in heart and life.

Wesley's guiding question illuminates the transitional development of his basic theological convictions. The years prior to 1738 reveal a morally earnest Wesley focused on our responsibility to strive for holiness of heart and life. In the events surrounding Aldersgate in 1738 Wesley appropriated more deeply the (Lutheran) emphasis on the priority of God's gracious acceptance to any response on our part in the Christian life, which initially created some tensions with his earlier emphasis on our moral rectitude. However, Wesley soon began to weave his deepened conviction of the graciousness of salvation into his long-standing conviction of the importance of holiness in heart and life (cf. Maddox 1994). What is most significant for our purposes is that Wesley drew upon an emerging school of "psy-

chology” in developing his mature interconnection of the primacy and prevenience of grace with expectation of Christian holiness.

My use of quotation marks around “psychology” reflects that I am using the term in a way that differs from common current application. The field of psychology has been understood in a variety of ways historically, some of which are broader than present understandings. In a helpful overview Leslie Stevenson identifies the primal understanding of psychology as study of the soul (*psyche*)—that is, an engagement with questions like how to live, how to prepare for death and perhaps an afterlife, practical methods of spiritual development, and so on (Stevenson 1998). Stevenson allows that this makes psychology nearly synonymous with religious traditions. He then notes that the initial move by philosophers to stake out a unique topic for the discipline identified psychology with the study of human mental powers and operations. This identification, which has roots in Socrates and dominated the field through the nineteenth century, dedicated psychology to the analysis of the various “faculties” of the mind (or self). But it is important to add that the agenda of this work was not merely descriptive. Behind the analysis remained the concern of promoting desired human behavior.

This normative concern inevitably fostered competing schools of thought. The competing emphases were particularly strong in *moral psychology*, which focuses on the dynamics involved in moral choice and action. At issue here are such questions as: Are our options open in any meaningful sense at the juncture of a moral choice or act? If so, what hinders us from choosing as we ought? And, what would most effectively free us to choose differently? The range of differing responses to these questions differentiate in terms of 1) whether they see human choice as totally determined or retaining some element of authentic self-determination, and 2) what they value as the most positive dynamic (e.g., reason, habit, emotion, etc.) in human willing.

The leading voices in Wesley’s early eighteenth century Anglican setting assumed a moral psychology with roots running back to Plato. This model emphasizes our ability to reason as what provides humans with some capacity for self-determination. Conversely, it identifies the greatest obstacle to moral rectitude as the passional dimension of human life—those emotional reactions, instincts, and the like that are not a product of our rational initiative or under fully conscious control. The normative corollary was that truly moral choice and action required bringing this passional dimension of life under rational control. The central stream of this Christian tradition assumed that through regular practice—empowered by grace—we can habituate an increased aptitude for maintaining such control. The records we have of Susanna Wesley’s moral/spiritual advice to her children make clear that John was nurtured in the assumptions of this *habituated rational control* model of moral psychology. His personal embrace of the model is reflected in his early prescriptions for the spiritual life (Maddox 2001).

While a Platonic moral psychology was widely valued in eighteenth-century Anglicanism (in significant part because of its defense of self-determination), there were alternative voices that branded its stress on duty, rational control, and habit formation as “Pelagian.” In this judgment they echoed the challenge that St. Augustine had raised to appropriations of Plato’s moral psychology in the early church. In his spiritual pilgrimage Augustine had struggled and failed to gain habituated rational control over his passions. He drew two conclusions from this failure: 1) that such attempts trust in ineffective human efforts rather than in divine gracious intervention; and 2) that reason is more the slave than the master of the passions. The alternative moral psychology that Augustine developed remains one of the clearest examples of deterministic “voluntarism” in Christian thought. He argued that all human moral choices and actions flow from our ruling affections; reason cannot thwart this flow, and there is no other source of volition. All humans (since Adam) are born with bent affections that can give rise only to sinful actions. Nothing we attempt in our own power can suppress or remove these bent affections. However, in regeneration God graciously implants—in the elect—new affections that then naturally manifest themselves in holy living.

Wesley’s deeper encounter with this Augustinian stream of Christian spirituality in 1738, at the climax of a period of spiritual struggle, sensitized him to the tendency of preoccupation with habit formation to eclipse the conviction of God’s gracious prevenience in salvation. The encounter also reenforced his growing doubts about the ability of rational conviction alone to effectuate human action. But Wesley could not accept Augustine’s deterministic moral psychology

(where God infuses irresistible dispositions). So where was he to turn?

His way forward proved to be paved by Wesley's embrace of the empiricist swing in eighteenth-century British philosophy. Wesley began to engage the growing stream of empiricist moral thought during his Oxford years. In contrast to the Platonic model which had dominated prior Anglican theology, this stream argued that while reason can clarify the conditions and consequences of a proposed course of action it was not capable of effecting our engagement in that action. On analogy with empiricist claims in epistemology, they insisted that humans are *moved* to action only as we are experientially *affected*. To put it in a practical example: rational persuasion of the rightness of loving others is not sufficient of itself to move us to do so; we are ultimately inclined and enabled to love others only as we experience being loved ourselves. To drive home this point empiricist moral thought increasingly called for a redefinition of the human "will." They criticized prior psychologies for either reducing the will to being a mere cipher for intellectual conviction, or assuming it was an innate store of power for spontaneous acts of volition. They argued that the will is instead properly equated with the set of *affections* that all humans possess, and that these are best understood as *responsive* in nature. The affections are not self-generating springs of motive power, they incite us to action only when they are affected.

Wesley's writings after the transitions of Aldersgate reflect a self-conscious adoption of this empiricist-inspired *affectional* moral psychology. This adoption takes formal expression in his list of the faculties that constitute the Image of God in humanity: understanding, will, liberty, and conscience. "Will" is used in this list as an inclusive term for the various affections. These affections are not simply feelings, they are the indispensable motivating inclinations behind human action. In ideal expression they integrate the rational and emotional dimensions of human life into holistic inclinations toward action. While provocative of action, the affections have a crucial receptive dimension as well. They are not self-causative, but are awakened and thrive *in response* to experience of external reality. In what Wesley held as the crucial instance, it is only in response to our experience of God's gracious love for us, shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, that our affection of love for God and others is awakened and grows.

This grounding of moral volition in responsive holistic affections shares similarities with Augustine. It also calls to mind empiricists like David Hume who presented the influence of our passions upon our actions as invincible, thereby undermining freedom. For all of his appreciation of the responsive nature of the affections, Wesley could not accept such implications. This led him to distinguish carefully between the "will" and our human capacity for "liberty." While the will (i.e., the affections) responsively provides our actual *inclinations* to action, liberty is our limited capacity to *refuse* to enact any particular inclination. Though we cannot self-generate love, we do have the liberty to stifle responsive loving! This insistence distanced Wesley's mature moral psychology from both philosophical and theological forms of strong determinism.

To appreciate how his developed views differed from the "quietist" suggestion that we should never coax proper dispositions, but merely await their spontaneous expression, we need to note Wesley's language of moral "tempers." He drew on a common eighteenth-century sense of this word to affirm that our affections need not be simply transitory, they can be focused and strengthened (i.e., habituated) into enduring dispositions. The capacity for simple responsive love is an affection; an enduring disposition to love is a (holy) temper. The crucial point is that Wesley became convinced that God does not typically infuse holy tempers instantaneously. Rather, regenerating grace awakens the "seeds" of such virtues. These seeds then strengthen and take shape as we grow in grace. Given liberty, this growth involves our responsible cooperation, for we could instead neglect or stifle God's gracious empowerment.

With this sketch of Wesley's mature moral psychology in mind we can consider how integral it was to his endorsement of Christian perfection and his emphasis on the means of grace in the pursuit of this goal. This is signaled by the centrality of the tempers to his understanding of both sin and holiness. In the case of sin, he insisted that the issue was more than individual wrong actions. He frequently discussed sin in terms of a threefold division: sinful nature or tempers, sinful words, and sinful actions. The point of this division was that sinful actions and words *flow from* corrupted tempers, so the problem of sin must ultimately be addressed at this affectional level. Correspondingly, Wesley's typical definition of Christian life placed primary

emphasis on this inward dimension, the renewal of our heart after the image of God who created us. This renewal involves both the enlivening of our affections in response to the affect of God's graciously communicated loving Presence and the tempering of these affections into holy dispositions. Since holiness of thought, word, and action would flow from such renewal, Wesley could identify the essential goal of all true religion as the recovery of holy tempers.

This makes the means of grace central to true religion as well, since Wesley frequently warned his followers of the folly of seeking the end of holy tempers apart from the means that God has graciously provided. Reflecting his conviction of God's *responsible grace*, Wesley valued the means of grace both as avenues through which God conveys the gracious Presence that enables our responsive growth in holiness and as exercises by which we responsibly nurture that holiness. Reflecting his holistic psychology, his recommendations to his followers interwove both means that present rational enlightenment or challenge and means designed to nurture our affective openness and responsiveness to God's loving Presence.

How close did Wesley hope we could come, through responsive participation in such means of grace, to the end of recovered holy tempers in this life? He is well-known for the claim that *entire* sanctification is a present possibility for Christians. Perhaps the best way to capture his affectional view of entire sanctification is to say that Wesley was convinced that the Christian life did not have to remain a life of perpetual struggle. He believed that our sin-distorted lives can be transformed through God's loving grace to the point where we are truly freed to love God and others consistently. Christians can aspire to take on the disposition of Christ, and live out that disposition within the constraints of our human infirmities. To deny this possibility would be to deny the sufficiency of God's empowering grace.

The Nineteenth-Century Methodist Shift in Moral Psychology, and Its Impact

The more one appreciates how Wesley's conception of holiness of heart and life was framed by his moral psychology the easier it is to understand how difficult it might be to maintain this conception if one rejected his moral psychology. This is exactly the situation in which Wesley's theological descendants placed themselves, particularly in the North American context. By the beginning of the nineteenth century an affectional moral psychology had come to be equated in popular culture with determinism, due to the influence of the forms of this psychology championed by Hume and Jonathan Edwards. As a result Wesley's heirs increasingly found it hard to recognize his characteristic moral psychology, let alone defend it. The aversion to determinism that they inherited from him ironically led them to rally instead behind those who were defending our capacity for rational choice as what "frees" us to rise above and control all influences that would otherwise determine human choice and action.

For some of Wesley's progeny this meant reclaiming the long-standard habituated rational control model of spirituality. Many more were drawn to the *decisionistic* reframing of rational control moral psychology (via Thomas Reid and Immanuel Kant) that was rapidly pervading North Atlantic culture. On this model nineteenth-century Methodists came to view the "will" as our autonomous ability at any given point to assert rational control over our motivating dynamics, thereby freeing ourselves to make moral choices. Emotional or affectional motivating dynamics were assumed to be blind (arational), hence amoral in character. Likewise habits and inclinations were broadly judged to have moral status only when voluntarily embraced, and often considered more an obstacle to than a facilitator of truly moral *decisions* to act.

Adopting such differing emphases from Wesley's habituated affectional moral psychology was bound to impact the reception of his correlated conviction that true holiness of heart and life is achievable in this life. Indeed, it set off a debate among nineteenth-century Methodists in which revisions of Wesley's precedent crept in on all sides (Maddox 1998).

The greatest revisions were by those who stressed most the decisionistic aspect of the dominant modern moral psychology. Within decisionistic models a "virtuous" person is not one who has nurtured inclinations towards desired moral behavior but one who heroically rises above all inclinations in an autonomous moral act. Moreover, this validation applies only to that act and must be won anew with each subsequent decision. On such terms, prominent nineteenth-century voices in Methodism increasingly characterized "perfect" holiness as simply an *ideal to be endlessly pursued*—being achieved, at best, on only sporadic and fleeting occasions.

Understandably, other Methodists judged this a betrayal of Wesley and sought a way to reaffirm the possibility of enduring Christian Perfection within the dynamics of their revised moral psychology. Some simply insisted that expectation of a consistent series of autonomous virtuous decisions is not so unrealistic, given the provisions of the New Covenant. While they recognized that believers continue to struggle with inclinations to sinful acts, they accepted the decisionist assumption that these inclinations have little moral status. Indeed, such inclinations were considered a necessary expression of our probationary situation. The true locus of moral concern, therefore, is not their amelioration but simply the consistent *decisionistic* exercise over them of the *rational control* that was made possible by our regeneration.

This first defense of Christian Perfection struck many Methodists as overly moralistic. While they shared the conviction that mature Christians should evidence consistency in their moral lives, they did not believe that it was a realistic expectation of the newly regenerate. Rather such consistency must be *developed* within the Christian life. This emphasis moved them closer to Wesley's model of habituated tempers, but differences reflecting the rationalist tone of their preferred moral psychology remained. They tended to conceive of Christian Perfection as the *habituated rational control* over our lower (affectional) nature that is developed by repeated practice. The holism of Wesley's tempers is missing here, as is the empowering dimension of the means of grace that correlates to his emphasis on the responsive nature of affections. This helps explain why they typically restricted interest in the means of grace to those aimed mainly at exhorting our intellect: sermon, bible study, and prayer.

There was a third major possible way of conceiving Christian Perfection within the rational primacy spectrum of moral psychology—affirming that Christians can enjoy an enduring *spontaneous* rational control over our passions and affections. Since most Christians do not enter such an enduring state at regeneration, this option required explaining what obstructions blocked its expression and how they could be summarily removed, so that rational control could flow *immediately* and *naturally* thereafter.

The explanation that came to define the last major revision of Christian Perfection in nineteenth-century Methodism focused upon Original Sin. While Wesley had preferred to call the unholy tempers remaining in believers "inward sin" or "inbeing sin," he also occasionally used the traditional language of "Original Sin." In the push to demonstrate their Protestant orthodoxy, "Original Sin" rapidly became the standard term his heirs used to designate these distorted inclinations of believers' affections. But this forced a confrontation with the modern decisionistic assumption that inclinations of our affections are morally relevant only to the degree that they represent the cumulative impact of our individual deliberate choices (thereby specifically excluding any *innate* inclinations). A predictable result of this confrontation was the growing number of Methodists abandoning the notion of Original Sin. The more significant result, for present interests, was the manner in which some chose to defend the notion. They specifically differentiated Original Sin from any inclination of our affections; it became a deeper lying inborn "evil principle," with distortions in our affections being among its secondary effects.

The Methodists who pushed this distinction were those most concerned to champion a model of Christian Perfection as achieved instantaneously, subsequent to regeneration, at the time one receives a distinct "baptism of the Holy Spirit" (a model introduced into Methodism by John Fletcher). They made their case by using this revised conception of Original Sin to account for the spiritual struggles of new believers. They argued that the true obstacle to holy living is not wrong inclinations, which might be defused or reshaped, but this deeper lying evil principle (which they described with such additional names as the "Old Man" and the "carnal mind"). The clear implication was that neither heroic volitional resolve nor thorough habituation can bring true freedom to obedience. The only thing that will suffice is for this principle to be entirely removed from the believer's life. And how is this possible? The core of the final revision was the claim that the baptism of the Holy Spirit—and it *alone*—effects this removal. New believers struggling with unholy inclinations should be encouraged to move on rapidly to receiving this additional gift of God, not frustrated with fruitless counsel about nurturing holy character. Those who receive this baptism will find that, with the obstacle of the evil principle eradicated and the Spirit's empowering presence dwelling fully within, *spontaneous* (though not

irresistible) *rational control* over their *passional nature* will flow.

This final model became the “classic” understanding of the holiness wing of the Wesleyan tradition by the end of the nineteenth century. For all of its differences from the other nineteenth-century revisions, it has suffered the same fate—those growing up in Methodist and holiness churches under these various models through the twentieth century have increasingly found them inadequate. The models called for a level of Christian maturity that they did little to empower and nurture (since most of Wesley’s central means of grace had been set aside), rendering their call unrealistic. *In retrospect it has become clear that their antipathy to determinism had pushed Wesley’s heirs to conceive of the “freedom” of the will in a way that failed to value sufficiently the responsive and formative dimensions of human willing.*

Reactions to the Emergence of Modern Psychotherapy & Experimental Psychology

As doubts about the realism of their (revised) models of Christian Perfection were piling up in the early twentieth century one might have expected folk in the various Wesleyan traditions to question the adequacy of their moral psychologies and seek alternatives, but developments in the discipline of psychology forestalled such reconsideration for some time. At the heart of these developments was the move to transform psychology into a science.

The first steps in this direction came with Enlightenment figures like John Locke who began to shift the attention from debates about what faculties might account for our experience to simple consideration of our states of consciousness themselves as empirical data to be analyzed and categorized. This shift carried within it a recasting of the nature of psychology, moving from a consciously metaphysical and normative discipline to a purportedly *descriptive* and *explanatory* discipline. As this new casting gained dominance it summarily ruled off-limits for professionals the concerns of the earlier approaches to psychology as the study of the soul and the study of our human faculties. The converse of this was that those interested in “care of souls” were initially unlikely to expect aid from the new approach to psychology.

As those who did engage it quickly recognized, the initial wave of descriptive psychology retained many assumptions of nineteenth century moral psychology. Prominent representatives like John Dewey continued to take at face value the human capacity for self-determination and to identify as the mark of mature character the presence of rational/moral control over the passions, a control that is developed by an intentional series of decisions. Most of the revised models of Christian life in Methodism found little to object to here. The one clear area of debate focused on the apparent dismissal of the possible efficacy of a single decisive act of the will.

The typical response of writers in the holiness movement at this juncture to emphasis by academic psychologists on the scientific evidence of the positive benefits of habituation was to charge them with offering a false alternative to the true instantaneous means of establishing the control of our will over our passions (Hames 1929). By contrast, the work of Dewey and other psychologists was more frequently invoked in the broader Wesleyan movement as scientific warrant to critique the privileging of dramatic conversion experiences as the normative pattern for becoming a Christian. In a few cases this critique hardened into a suspicion of (or disdain for) all dramatic conversions (e.g., Coe 1916). Most moved instead toward the normative conclusion that William James subtly advanced in 1902 through his psychological “description” of *The Varieties of Religious Experience*—namely, that we should avoid standardizing any one way of experiencing religious conversion, because differing ways will be appropriate to the naturally occurring variety of human temperaments. While James’ book never appeared on Methodist courses of study for ministers in training, later examples of such irenic psychological descriptions of human religious experience did make an appearance by the mid-1930s (e.g., Pratt 1920).

Meanwhile things were changing rapidly in the discipline of psychology. Major theorists were pushing the discipline beyond mere description of psychological states, focusing it on the ultimate scientific goal of *explaining* human experience and behavior. And in these explanations they specifically refused to take at face value our sense of being the autonomous rational master of our behavior. In particular Sigmund Freud’s “hermeneutic of suspicion” stressed the role of the unconscious with its collection of irrational drives and suppressed experiences in explaining behavior that previous psychologists had usually attributed to conscious human choice. This marked a reentry into modern psychology of emphasis on the *passional element* in human

willing, though as formulated by Freud it carried heavy overtones of determinism. After Freud introduced such themes, there has been a series of deterministic accounts of human action in experimental psychology that stress factors other than conscious rational choice—starting with B. F. Skinner’s behaviorism and continuing through recent models of sociobiology and evolutionary psychology. Even subfields like the study of cognitive development have emphasized structural models that can become purely formal (ignoring the impact of the actual content known) or even deterministic (cf. Browning 1987; Jones & Butman 1991).

Like the larger religious community, the initial reaction of most in the Wesleyan tradition to these changing emphases in psychotherapy and experimental psychology was quite negative (Burnham 1985). The dominant intellectual current in Methodism at this time was Boston Personalism, which focused on defending freedom and responsibility against the deterministic implications of various modern philosophies. The similar implications in Freudianism and behaviorism rendered them objectionable to those influenced by personalism who were crafting the new field of the psychology of religion (e.g., Strickland 1924; Allport 1937, 1950; Johnson 1945, 1957). They argued for psychological models that preserved a role for authentic choice and responsibility in personal existence. Of texts on pastoral psychology assigned in Methodist courses of study up to mid-century, only a couple provided discussions of the unconscious that accepted its existence and considered its pastoral implications (esp. Weatherhead 1935).

The initial reaction in the holiness wing of Wesleyanism to suggestions of the role of the unconscious in human action was also negative, worrying that this was simply an attempt to “explain away” sinning (e.g., Taylor 1963). But continuing dialogue with modern psychology and its emphasis on the nonrational dimensions of human motivation encouraged moves in this wing to qualify the “spontaneous rational control” emphasis of their classic model of Christian Perfection. The most common way of doing this has been to invoke a distinction between *purity* and *maturity* that separates the “carnal nature” (that is instantaneously cleansed in entire sanctification) from repressed complexes and other psychological issues that must be dealt with through long-term counseling (e.g., Mavis 1965; Seamands 1981; Purkiser 1985). Whatever else one makes of this distinction, it equates Christian Perfection with something quite different from Wesley’s model of holy tempers formed by participation in the full range of the means of grace.

With their reductionist and determinist tendencies, Freudian psychotherapy and experimental psychology pushed many of the traditional issues of moral psychology out of bounds for psychological study, at least in professional settings. The championing in recent decades of alternative “humanistic” schools of psychotherapy—with their emphasis on restoring authentic freedom by healing distorted self-perceptions—was a move to recover the central concern of moral psychology. Many in the Wesleyan camp initially welcomed these humanistic models as compatible with their commitments (esp. Oden 1967, 1972). But further reflection has led them to join other Christian interpreters in judging many of these models to be unduly optimistic about primal human nature (cf. Browning 1987; Roberts 1993). Equally problematic for Wesleyans is the recognition that the humanistic conception of therapy tends to terminate at the juncture *accepting* one’s character flaws, lacking Wesley’s emphasis on the possibility of truly *recovering* holy character. So where are Wesleyans to turn for a psychological model that is more in keeping with their larger convictions?

Some Proposals for the Ongoing Engagement

While several current psychological models and emphases have significant points of contact with central Wesleyan theological convictions, no model should be embraced wholesale. Instead we stand at the juncture where more rigorous and self-conscious dialogue between Wesleyan theology and psychology could be *mutually* beneficial. As an encouragement in this direction, let me close with some proposals about points of exploration in this dialogue.

1. In light of the preceding history, a Wesleyan engagement with modern psychology should welcome the recovered emphasis on those dimensions of life other than reason—primal drives, repressed experiences, early conditioning, and the like—that exercise a constraining role in human willing (cf. Timpe 1985). However, it will strive to appreciate these dimensions in a way that is holistic, rather than simply antithetical to reason. It will also insist that, however much they constrain, their various influences do not totally determine human choices and action.

2. As an application of the first point, a truly Wesleyan engagement with modern psychology will resist overly dualistic conceptions of human nature that posit fundamental disjunctions between mind and brain, or soul and body. It will support and seek to develop holistic (including non-reductive physicalist) accounts of human nature (cf. Brown 1998).

3. Likewise, a truly Wesleyan engagement with modern psychology will resist either polar option in “nature/nurture” debates about human action. Following the example of Wesley’s “Thoughts on Nervous Disorders” (1786), it will challenge one-dimensional models of human disorders, recognizing that causes are typically manifold and interrelated (cf. Gorman 1999).

4. Moving in a somewhat different direction, an authentically Wesleyan engagement with modern psychology will want to insist that the ultimate goal of any “care of the soul” is more than just overcoming distorted self-perceptions and promoting self-acceptance. It will advocate a conception of therapy as true *healing*—that is, as promoting those life-enriching dispositions that constitute the “fruit of the Spirit” and the “likeness of Christ.” And it will recognize the limits to what psychology alone can offer toward this goal. While there are dimensions of healing for which it is uniquely suited, psychology cannot (and should not) usurp the role of the larger range of the means of grace in spiritual formation (cf. Mangis 2000).

5. Put in slightly different terms, a Wesleyan engagement with modern psychology will seek the balance of his doctrine of prevenient grace—it will see actual human nature as good and as sensitive to the good, but as insufficient in itself of realizing the health that is appropriate to it. This means that it will judge popular understandings of “self-realization” to be inadequate (and some actually destructive). Neither the goal humans *truly* strive toward nor the *ultimate* resources we need to realize that goal are latent within our “self.” These are both found only as we respond to the grace of God already at work in us and open ourselves toward fuller participation in Christ.

6. Taking up another thread from the historical survey, a renewed Wesleyan engagement with modern psychology will resonate most with those recent models of psychotherapy that are more sensitive to how our relationships with others impact us in both positive and negative ways. Psychodynamic models, object-relation models, and the like will be important partners with which to be in conversation early in the engagement.

7. Finally, if they are to be faithful to Wesley’s own distinctive emphases, as Wesleyans engage modern psychology they will call for more attention to be devoted to the role of affect and emotion in empowering and directing human choice and action than is currently the case in psychological analysis and models of motivation (cf. Hill 1995).

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