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FROM PUTREFACTION TO SANCTIFICATION:
JOHN WESLEY'S UNDERSTANDING OF ORIGINAL SIN AND THEOLOGY OF GRACE

John Scheuer

John Wesley's sermons and writings about Original Sin are filled with lengthy and extreme descriptions of the depravity of humanity. Wesley's constant emphasis on humanity's pathetic condition is jarring to twenty-first century theology but complements his theology of grace, which argues that humans come into the world inclined to evil; their only path to redemption is through accepting the resistible grace of God. Wesley's unique theology of grace provides a remedy for Original Sin, restoring humanity's right relationship with God.

WESLEY'S EVIDENCE OF MAN'S DEPRAVITY

To illustrate Wesley's conviction that all people are totally depraved, I will explore examples from Wesley's writings that use Scripture to describe humanity's condition, and whose interpretation is supported by the tradition of the church. Although Wesley's primary source was Scripture, he also cited man's conduct in the world to conclude that man is totally depraved from the inheritance of Adam's sin.

Wesley began his sermon on "Original Sin" referencing Scripture: "And God saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5)¹ and, more, "Abundance of sin

was committed in all places, by all sorts of people; and those sins in their own nature most gross and heinous; and committed daringly, with a defiance of heaven. And that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continuously.”²

Wesley, examining the state of man before the flood, said, “All his nature was purely evil; it was wholly consistent with itself and unmixed with anything of an opposite nature.”³ He described man after the flood, when Noah’s progeny populates the earth:

It was above a thousand years after, that God declared by David concerning the children of men, “They are all gone out of the way, of truth and holiness; there is none righteous, no not one.” And to this bear all the Prophets witness, in their several generations. So, Isaiah, concerning God’s peculiar people, (and certainly the Heathens were in not better condition) “The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores.”⁴

The “Articles of Religion” in Wesley’s *Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America* also represents the teaching of the Anglican Church. This definition of Original Sin is in line with the teaching of St. Augustine and church tradition. Article VII, “Of Original or Birth Sin,” says,

Original Sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man - very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.⁵

This definition mirrors the somber language found in the beginning of Wesley’s sermon titled “Original Sin.” Wesley used the tradition of the Church to further support the claim that all people are totally wicked and inclined to evil.

Wesley's *Doctrine of Original Sin* begins with his observations of man's condition and experience in the world. He listed all ethnic and religious types of man: Jews, Mohammedans, Christians, Catholics, Protestants, Asians, Africans, and Heathens, and asserts their complete wickedness. Describing his personal experience working as a missionary in Georgia among indigenous people he wrote, "They are all likewise all (I could never find any exceptions) gluttons, drunkards, thieves, dissemblers, liars."⁶

Even English peasants could not escape his condemnation: "The generality of English peasants is not only grossly, stupidly, I had almost said brutishly, ignorant to all the arts of this life, eminently so about religion and the life to come."⁷

Wesley's opinion of man allowed him to come to only one reasonable conclusion: that man is universally corrupted. "Universal misery is at once a consequence and a proof of this universal corruption. Men are unhappy, (how very few are the exceptions!) because they are unholy. 'Pain accompanies and follows sin.' Why is the earth so full of complicated distress? Because it is full of complicated wickedness."⁸

As Wesley was adamant about the wickedness of man's condition apart from grace, he was therefore dismayed at the contrary view of the state of man held by some Church Fathers as well as by some contemporary clergymen.

How widely different is this from the fair picture of human nature which men have drawn in all ages! The writings of many of the ancients abound with gay descriptions of the dignity of man; which some of them paint as having all virtue and happiness in his composition or, at least, entirely in his power without being beholden to any other being; yea as self-sufficient, able to live on his own stock, and little inferior to God himself.⁹

These examples show Wesley viewed man's condition as

totally wicked. What is the purpose of Wesley's insistence on the hopelessness of man? The answer lies in his belief that, without God's intervention, man is unable to know or love God.

“In like manner, so long as men remain in their natural blindness of understanding, they are insensible of their spiritual wants, and of this in particular. But as soon as God opens the eyes of their understanding, they see the state they were in before; they are then deeply convinced, that ‘every man living,’ themselves especially, are, by nature, ‘altogether vanity;’ that is, folly and ignorance, sin and wickedness.”¹⁰

Wesley believed that the wickedness of man's condition has only one remedy: the intervention of God to “open our eyes” to our own wickedness. If we can see our true condition, through the grace of God, then we have a chance to choose good over evil. This transformation is the centerpiece of Wesley's theology of grace.

II. WESLEY'S THEOLOGY OF GRACE – THE REMEDY FOR ORIGINAL SIN

John Wesley's theology of grace provides a remedy for Original Sin. Wesley believed man was incapable of restoring his broken relationship with God without God's grace. To understand Wesley's theology of grace we must first define grace; second, describe Wesley's three types of grace; and third, explain how prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace work to free man from the bonds of Original Sin.

Wesley, in his *Instruction for Children*, defined grace as “the power of the Holy Ghost enabling us to see and love and serve God.”¹¹ In his sermon, “Salvation by Faith” Wesley said,

All the blessings which God hath bestowed upon man, are of his mere grace, bounty, or favor; his free, undeserved favor; favor altogether undeserved; man have no claim to the least of his mercies. It was free grace that “formed man of the dust of the

ground, and breathed into him a living soul,” and stamped on that soul the image of God, and “put all things under his feet.” The same free grace continues to us, at this day, life, and breath, of all things. For there is nothing we are, or have, or do, which and deserve the least thing at God’s hand.¹²

The definition and source of grace is instructive for three reasons. First, God extends to us, even though we are not deserving, a chance to right our broken relationship. Second, God’s grace was given to man at the outset when he was created in the image of God. Third, God extends to man today, through the Holy Spirit, the opportunity or favor to see, love, and serve the Lord.

The grace God extends to man today, through the Holy Spirit, requires man to have faith in Jesus Christ, who Wesley frequently referred to as the “New Adam.” God’s grace is not a one-time benefit. God extends his grace to man at birth when man is totally corrupted, but his grace continues until we are totally healed from the sickness of sin that is, completely sanctified:

Therefore, ye must be born again, “born of God.” By nature, ye are wholly corrupted. By grace ye shall be wholly renewed. In Adam ye all died; in the second Adam, Christ, ye all are made alive. “You that were dead in sins hath he quickened:” He hath already given you a principle of life, even in faith in him who love you and gave himself for you! Now, “go on from faith to faith, until your whole sickness be healed” and all that “mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”¹³

There is frequent discussion of what “being born again” or “born of God” means. Some denominations may connect these phrases with a need to re-baptize or to renew a dormant belief in Jesus Christ that had been deactivated. Wesley offered a variety of opinions on these terms but, for the discussion in this essay, I follow the language in his sermon on “Original Sin.” Wesley maintained it is by grace through the Holy Spirit we are reborn by

faith into Jesus Christ. It is through Jesus Christ that our sins are forgiven and we are able to be renewed or reborn into holiness:

According to the whole tenor of Scripture, the being born again does really signify the being inwardly changed by the almighty operation of the Spirit of God; changed from sin to holiness; renewed in the image of Him that created us. And why must we be changed? Because “without holiness no man shall see the Lord,” and because, without this change, all our endeavors after holiness are ineffectual.¹⁴

A dynamic feature of Wesley’s theology of grace was connecting three charisms of grace into a practical path for living a Christian life. *The United Methodist Book of Discipline* describes and lists these three types of grace.

Grace pervades our understanding of Christian faith and life. By grace we mean the undeserved, unmerited, and loving action of God in human existence through the ever present Holy Spirit. While the grace of God is undivided, it precedes salvation as “prevenient grace,” continues in “justifying grace,” and is brought to fruition in “sanctifying grace.”¹⁵

The prevenient grace of God is extended to man at birth and is always present, waiting for man to perceive through the senses His presence. In his sermon, “Working Out Our Own Salvation,” Wesley described prevenient grace as the first step for the remedy for Original Sin:

Salvation begins with what is usually termed (and very properly) prevenient grace; including the first wish to please God, the first dawn of light concerning his will, and the first transient conviction of having sinned against him. All these imply some tendency toward life; some degree of salvation; the beginning of a deliverance from a blind, unfeeling heart, quite insensible of God and the things of God.¹⁶

What makes Wesley distinct from other Protestants was his belief that God extends prevenient grace, but this grace is not irresistible. It requires a response. God extends his grace but, whether through infant baptism in the case of young children or repenting of sins and acceptance of Jesus Christ for adults, action by the recipient must be taken. In his time, Wesley uniquely insisted that responding to God's grace begins a life-long process toward perfection. Perfection for Wesley was *teleios*, which means whole, complete, mature, or grownup. (Not *perfectio*, which means perfect in all regards.)¹⁷

Justifying grace begins when man acknowledges faith and belief in Jesus Christ. Justification is commonly referred to as conversion or new birth. Prevenient grace is God's call to us, and justifying grace is the acknowledgment and acceptance of the grace of forgiveness from our sins through faith in Jesus Christ.

Article IX, "Of the Justification of Man", from the Articles of Religion in *Wesley's Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America*, describes just that:

We are accounted-righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings: wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most whole doctrine, and very full of comfort.¹⁸

The beginning of justifying grace is belief in Jesus Christ, but Wesley presumed that with this faith, man's nature or inclination toward sin was still present. To counter the inclination to sin there would need to be, after acknowledging the forgiveness of sin upon receipt of the justifying grace, a continued return to repentance so the Christian person could continue on the path to holiness:

But not withstanding this, there is also a repentance and a faith (taking the words in another sense, a sense not quite the same,

no yet entirely different,) which are requisite after we have “believed in the Gospel;” yea, and in every subsequent stage of our Christian course, or we cannot “run the race which is set before us.” And this repentance and faith are full as necessary, in order to our continuance and growth in grace, as the former faith and repentance were, in order to our entering in the kingdom of God.¹⁹

Some reformers were critical of Wesley’s theology of grace because the need for continued repentance appeared similar to the Roman Catholic position on works righteousness.²⁰ Wesley made a distinction between repentance and good works, maintaining good works were a result of a lively faith and were pleasing to God. Article X of Religion in his *Sunday Service* provides clarification:

Although good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God’s judgement; yet they are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and spring out of a true and lively Faith, insomuch that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known, as a tree discerned by its fruit.²¹

Wesley’s need for continued repentance reflects, however, the influence of a therapeutic or healing aspect of grace also present in Eastern Orthodox churches. Wesley’s theology of grace is a progression from being totally corrupted by Original Sin, reflecting the broken relationship with God, to eventual perfection through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.²²

Sanctifying grace for Wesley was the final step leading to perfection or complete holiness. *The United Methodist Book of Discipline* states, “Sanctifying grace draws us toward the gift of Christian perfection, which Wesley described as a heart ‘habitually filled with the love of God and neighbor’ and as ‘having the mind of Christ and walking as he walked.’”²³

Wesley explained the connection between justifying and sanctifying grace:

Salvation is carried on by convincing grace, usually in Scripture termed repentance; which brings a larger measure of self-knowledge, and a farther deliverance from the heart of stone. Afterwards we experience the proper Christian salvation; whereby, “through grace,” we “are saved by faith;” consisting of those two grand branches, justification and sanctification. By justification we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favor of God; by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God.²⁴

To summarize Wesley’s theology of grace, man is born into this world completely depraved and wicked from the Original Sin of Adam. God provides his prevenient grace so man may come to know him. Acknowledgement and acceptance of God’s prevenient grace leads to justification; grace is received when man puts faith in Jesus Christ. Justifying grace forgives sin. Even after initial justification, a sinful nature still resides within man; but man continues, through many other means of grace such as repentance, prayer, Eucharist, assisting the poor, and reading Scripture, to seek and accept the sanctifying grace of God that leads to perfection, meaning a mature and grown up faith.

III. BAPTISM - ONE MEANS OF GRACE

Baptism, both adult and infant baptism, is a usual means of grace that can undo the effects of Original Sin. Wesley, immersed in the sacramental theology of the Anglican Church and having a keen interest in primitive Christianity, was clear about why and how baptism functions within his theology of grace. Wesley maintained baptism was the preferred initiatory sacrament that brings us into relationship with God. He considered baptism a “means of grace,” perpetually obligated on all Christians:

What are the benefits we receive by baptism, is the next point to

be considered? And the first of these is, the washing away the guilt of original sin, by the application of the merits of Christ's death. That we are all born under the guilt of Adam's sin, and that all sin deserves eternal misery, was the unanimous sense of the ancient Church, as it is expressed in the Ninth Article of our own.²⁵

To understand John Wesley's *Treatise on Baptism*, we must first understand the unique characteristics of infant baptism in reception of prevenient grace, and second, we must consider adult baptism separately from infant baptism, as a means of grace with two distinct parts.

Infant baptism, a practice John Wesley affirmed, is one means (there are many) of receiving the prevenient grace of God. In his 1756 *Treatise on Baptism*, Wesley addressed the washing away of Original Sin through infant baptism:

This plainly includes infants; for they too die; therefore, they have sinned: But not by actual sin; therefore, by original; else what need have they of the death of Christ? Yea, "death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who have not sinned" actually "according to the similitude of Adam's transgressions." This which can relate to infants only, is a clear proof that the whole race of mankind is obnoxious both to the guilt and punishment of Adam's transgression.²⁶

There were some contemporaries of Wesley who believed infant baptism was not appropriate. They believed young children were incapable of believing in Jesus Christ until they reached the age of reason.²⁷ Others, such as John Taylor, completely dismissed the theology of Original Sin. There would be no urgency in administering the rite of baptism if there was no Original Sin.²⁸

Wesley would later respond to John Taylor's dismissal of infant baptism in his *Doctrine of Original Sin*. He insisted on the importance of baptizing infants by stating, "If infants are guilty of Original Sin, then they are proper subjects of baptism; seeing in the ordinary way, they cannot be saved, unless this be washed away

by baptism.”

Wesley’s belief in infant baptism was also clearly stated in the *Sunday Service*:

Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of indifference, whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized; but it is also a sign of regeneration, of the new birth.

The baptism of young children is to be retained in the church.²⁹

Adult baptism, also a means of grace, was treated differently by Wesley than infant baptism. Wesley divided the sacrament into two parts: an outward visible sign, and an interior spiritual grace. An adult may be “baptized” with water but not be extended the inward sign or spiritual grace (considered “new birth”) if there is not sincere belief in Jesus Christ and repentance for one’s sins. In essence, Wesley separated the sign from regeneration, the thing signified. This does not mean that the visible sign (pouring of water) does not also work with the invisible experience of “new birth:”

That as the new birth is not the same thing with baptism, so it does not always accompany baptism: They do not constantly go together. A man may be possibly “born of water,” and yet not be “born of the Spirit.” There may sometimes be the outward sign, where there is not the inward grace. I do not now speak with regards to infants: It is certain our Church supposes that all who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time born again; and it is allowed that the whole Office for the Baptism of Infants proceeds upon the supposition.³⁰

Wesley believed the sacrament of baptism, followed by frequent participation in the Lord’s Supper, were important means of grace instituted by God to be administered by the Church to lead people to holiness. “New birth” or justification occurs if faith in Jesus is sincere and repentance from sin takes place. Wesley expected the baptized, because of their new birth, to strive to

assist the poor, to take part in prayer, to read Scripture, frequent participation in the Lord's Supper, and to continue to perform acts of repentance to root out the sinful nature that remains even after our initial justification.

IV. ENLIGHTENMENT CHALLENGES TO ORIGINAL SIN

John Wesley insisted Original Sin consumes all people. Our body and our nature inherit wickedness from Adam. This is crucial to Wesley's theology of perfection and is the reason he attacked Enlightenment thinkers and theologians who condemned the traditional teaching of Original Sin expressed in the "Articles of Religion" from the *Book of Common Prayer*, a book Wesley held in high esteem.³¹ Arguably one of the most public examples of Wesley's condemnation of Enlightenment thought is his treatise, *The Doctrine of Original Sin: According to Scripture, Reason, and Experience*. Wesley directly challenged John Taylor's *The Scripture-Doctrine of Original Sin: Proposed to Free and Candid Examination*. Two important matters in this essay are: first, whether Adam passed on physical death and sinful nature to all mankind, and second, whether man was created evil and totally corrupted.

John Taylor, a contemporary of Wesley, gifted Hebraist, and Presbyterian pastor, was a leading enlightenment thinker who, in his treatise, *Scripture and Doctrine of Original Sin: Proposed to Free and Candid Examination*,³² disputed the passing of the sinful nature from Adam and believed man was not created evil. Taylor believed man could choose, through free will, to do evil or good.

On the first point, John Taylor believed the guilty nature of Adam is not passed on to his progeny. The only thing passed from Adam was physical death.³³

Now anyone may see, there is a vast difference between a Man's

making himself a sinner by his own wicked act, and his being made a sinner, by the wicked act of another of which he is altogether guiltless. They who are sinners by the disobedience of another, without their own knowledge or consent, surely can be sinners in no other sense, but as they are sufferers.³⁴

A letter addressed to Wesley was found in Taylor's possessions after his death. This letter, never delivered, reiterated his belief that Adam passed on only physical death.

The proof, that the death, from which all mankind are released at the resurrection, is the only death which came upon all mankind, in consequences of Adam's sin, is very evident from the antithesis, or opposition between the members of the following sentences, Rom. 5:18. "Therefore, as by the offense of one, (Judgement came) upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one (the free gift came) upon all men unto justification of Life." 1 Cor. 15:21-22, "For since by man came death, by man also the resurrection of the dead (that is, of all the dead; for it follows) for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive, (or restored to Life)."³⁵

Wesley, believing we inherit not only physical death but also a guilty nature, countered John Taylor on this point.

The scripture avers, that "by one man's disobedience all men were constituted sinners; that 'in Adam all died,' spiritually died, lost the life and the image of God; that fallen, sinful Adam then 'begat a son in his own likeness'—nor was it possible he should beget him in any other; for 'who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?'—that consequently we, as well as other men, were by nature 'dead in trespasses of sin,' 'without hope, without God in the world'..."³⁶

On the second point, Taylor believed man was not created completely evil or depraved and has the ability, through human will, to choose to be good or evil.³⁷ "God has given to men, not only Adam at first, but to all men in succeeding generations, reason and understanding to distinguish between good and evil, to choose the

one, and refute the other.”³⁸

The ability to choose between good and evil using the power of free will contradicts a key tenet of Wesley’s theology; namely, that we inherit the guilt and sin of Adam and are completely depraved.

The extent to which Wesley affirmed man’s depravity as received from Adam is revealed in dramatic manner in his redaction of Puritan leader Thomas Boston’s “Fourfold State of Man.:

Thus, is man by nature wholly corrupted? But whence came this total corruption of our nature? That man’s nature was corrupted, the very Heathen’s perceived; but how “sin entered” they could not tell. But the Scripture is very plain in the point: “By one-man sin entered into the world.” “By one man’s disobedience many (all) were made sinners.” Adam’s sin corrupted man’s nature, and leavened the whole lump of mankind. We putrefied in Adam as our root. The root was poisoned, and so the branches were envenomed. The vine turned “the tide of Sodom,” and so the grapes “became grapes of gall in Adam,” by his sin, became not only guilty, but corrupt; and so, transmits guilt and corruption to his posterity.³⁹

Wesley believed if John Taylor’s *Doctrine on Original Sin* was not condemned, it would erode fundamental Church teaching:

For I cannot look on this scheme as any other than old Deism in a new dress; seeing it saps the very foundation of all religion, where Jewish or Christian...If therefore, we take away this foundation, that by nature is foolish and sinful, “fallen short of the glorious image of God,” the Christian system falls at once; nor will it deserve so honorable an appellation, as that of a “cunningly devised fable.”⁴⁰

The contention between John Wesley and John Taylor’s Enlightenment values served to highlight the differences in their views of God’s relationship with humanity. Taylor’s denial of two pillars of Original Sin, inherited sinful nature and man’s wickedness apart from God, allows the individual, for better or worse, to choose without God’s cooperation between good or

evil. The belief that you are born free from sin and therefore have the ability to choose between good and evil allows one to live independently from God.

Wesley's insistence that humanity entered this world depraved and without goodness apart from God, calls us to acknowledge our wretched condition. Recognition of a sinful nature and inherited wickedness forces humankind to accept the resistible grace of God and restore its broken relationship with God. For Wesley, humankind's redemption is dependent upon God.

V. RECAPITULATION

Wesley's negative descriptions of man's condition as a result of Original Sin are a foundational component of his theology of grace. Wesley's description of man is harsh, but serves to highlight God's generous Spirit by extending His grace to all mankind. The most common means of accepting God's preventient grace, the remedy for Original Sin, is the sacrament of baptism, which includes that of both infants and adults.

Non-baptized adults can always respond to God's preventient grace. Wesley maintained that the initial action of baptism in water and Spirit needed to be nurtured throughout man's life to overcome the tendency to sin that resides deep within us. Repentance, prayer, acts of mercy, and participation in the Lord's Supper are means to receive the sanctifying grace of God. Sanctification is the complete restoration of the broken relationship with God that resulted from Adam's original sin. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus Christ becomes the new Adam, and Christians, by faith in Christ, participate in this renewal.

Responding to attacks on the doctrine of Original Sin by Enlightenment thinkers, Wesley affirmed that human frailty depended on God for strength. By rejecting the doctrine of Original

Sin, Enlightenment philosophers minimized the gift of God's grace, thereby opening a destructive path that would lead to ultimate rejection of God as Creator and Sustainer. Wesley's bleak theology of Original Sin makes sense only when seen with his theology of grace: a pathway toward renewed fellowship with the Creator through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Wesley charted a path not to despair, punishment, and doom, but a path to healing from sin and restoration of man's relationship with God.

VI. EMBRACING JOHN WESLEY IN 2018

The negative and harsh descriptions of humanity embedded in the sermons of John Wesley are in stark contrast to a 21st century theology espousing humanity's goodness and righteousness. At first glance, Wesley's words cut against contemporary culture's obsessive emphasis on how wonderful we are apart from God. This line of thinking begs the question, "If I am so wonderful, why do I see the world as broken and irreparable?"

As I returned to Wesley's sermons, I discovered the theological advantage to embracing my innate wickedness and accepting that I was "putrefied in the root of Adam."⁴¹ Trusting Wesley's words that apart from God I was worthless allows me to accept the remedy of God's grace, freely given, and the remedy toward hope and restoration in humanity's openness to and need of God.

I was baptized as a child and have faithfully attended a variety of churches through all my days, but I had conveniently ignored the ramifications of Original Sin in favor of language that was positive and avoided confrontation. Wesley awakened in me the grace available in the sacraments. Baptism and Eucharist, usual means of receiving grace, require me to repent from my sin and then actively participate in the life of the Church. Wesley

stressed frequent acts of charity, repentance, and prayer to heal the sickness buried deep within our souls. If sacraments are indeed outward signs of invisible grace, then we, as communities of faith, are strengthened when we admit our human depravity. Wesley's negative view of humanity allows for the transformation of mankind by accepting God's grace through the sacraments, which ultimately restores our broken relationship with the Creator.

Wesley was not a prophet introducing Original Sin to the world. He follows Saint Augustine's theology in the interpretation of the creation account in Genesis chapters two and three. Wesley is one siren voice calling out to the Christian community not to lose sight of how despicable our human condition is at birth. He wanted the individual, communities of faith, and the world to be reconciled back to God so the world could be saved. Wesley provided language to accept our condition, embrace God's grace, and spend our lifetime working to restore our brokenness. Wesley's dark, morose, and dire descriptions of the condition of humanity without God are indeed inseparable from his theology of the Creator's grace and loving care as they are realized in Christian sacraments.

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