

Classic Poetry Series

John Wesley

- 31 poems -

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John Wesley (28 June 1703 - 2 March 1791)

John Wesley was a Church of England cleric and Christian theologian. Wesley is largely credited, along with his brother Charles Wesley, as founding the Methodist movement which began when he took to open-air preaching in a similar manner to George Whitefield. In contrast to George Whitefield's Calvinism, Wesley embraced the Arminian doctrines that were dominant in the 18th-century Church of England. Methodism in both forms was a highly successful evangelical movement in the United Kingdom, which encouraged people to experience Jesus Christ personally.

Wesley's teachings, known as Wesleyanism, provided the seeds for both the modern Methodist movement, the Holiness movement, Pentecostalism, the Charismatic Movement, and Neo-charismatic churches, which encompass numerous denominations across the world. In addition, he refined Arminianism with a strong evangelical emphasis on the Reformed doctrine of justification by faith.

Overview

Wesley helped to organize and form societies of Christians throughout England, Scotland, Wales, North America and Ireland as small groups that developed intensive, personal accountability, discipleship and religious instruction among members. His great contribution was to appoint itinerant, unordained preachers who travelled widely to evangelise and care for people in the societies. Young men who acted as their assistants, known as "exhorters", emulated the twelve apostles after the ascension of Jesus.

Under Wesley's direction, Methodists became leaders in many social issues of the day, including the prison reform and abolitionism movements. Wesley's contribution as a theologian was to propose a system of opposing theological stances. His greatest theological achievement was his promotion of what he termed "Christian Perfection", or holiness of heart and life. Wesley held that, in this life, Christians could come to a state in which the love of God, or perfect love, reigned supreme in their hearts. His evangelical theology, especially his understanding of Christian perfection, was firmly grounded in his sacramental theology. He continually insisted on the general use of the means of grace (prayer, scripture, meditation, Eucharist, etc.) as the means by which God sanctifies and transforms the believer.

Later in his career Wesley was a keen abolitionist. He spoke out and wrote against the slave trade. He published a pamphlet on slavery titled, *Thoughts Upon Slavery*, (1774). To quote from one of his tracts against the slave trade: "Liberty is the right of every human creature, as soon as he breathes the vital air; and no human law can deprive him of that right which he

derives from the law of nature". Wesley was a friend of John Newton and William Wilberforce who were also influential in the abolition of slavery in Britain.

Throughout his life Wesley remained within the Church of England and insisted that his movement was well within the bounds of the Anglican tradition. His maverick use of church policy put him at odds with many within the Church of England, though toward the end of his life he was widely respected and referred to as "the best loved man in England."

Youth

John Wesley was born in 1703 in Epworth, 23 miles (37 km) northwest of Lincoln, the fifteenth child of Samuel Wesley and his wife Susanna Wesley (née Annesley). His father was a graduate of the University of Oxford and a Church of England rector. In 1689 Samuel had married Susanna, twenty-fifth child of Dr. Samuel Annesley, a Dissenter pastor. Wesley's parents had both become members of the established Church of England early in adulthood. Susanna bore Samuel Wesley nineteen children, but only ten lived. In 1696 Wesley's father was appointed the rector of Epworth.

At the age of five, Wesley was rescued from the burning rectory. This escape made a deep impression on his mind, and he regarded himself as providentially set apart, as a "brand plucked from the burning" quoting Zechariah 3:2. As in many families at the time, Wesley's parents gave their children their early education. Each child, including the girls, was taught to read as soon as they could walk and talk. In 1714, at age 11, Wesley was sent to the Charterhouse School in London (under the mastership of John King from 1715), where he lived the studious, methodical and—for a while—religious life in which he had been trained at home.

Oxford and Savannah, Georgia

In June 1720, Wesley entered Christ Church College, Oxford. He was ordained deacon in 1725 and elected fellow of Lincoln College in the following year. He received his Master of Arts in 1727. He was his father's curate for two years, and then returned to Oxford to fulfil his functions as fellow.

In the year of his ordination he read Thomas a Kempis and Jeremy Taylor, and began to seek the religious truths which underlay the great revival of the 18th century. The reading of Law's *Christian Perfection* and *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* gave him, he said, a sublimer view of the law of God; and he resolved to keep it, inwardly and outwardly, as sacredly as possible, believing that in obedience he would find salvation. He pursued a rigidly methodical and abstemious life, studied the Scriptures, and performed his religious duties diligently, depriving himself so that he would have alms to give. He began to seek after holiness of heart and life.

The year of his return to Oxford (1729) marks the beginning of the rise of Methodism. The Holy Club was formed by John's younger brother, Charles Wesley, and some fellow students, including George Whitefield. The holy club met weekly and they systematically set about living a holy life. They were branded as "Methodist" by students at Oxford who derided the methodical way they ordered their lives.

On the 14 of October, 1735, Wesley and his brother Charles sailed on *The Simmonds* from Gravesend, Kent for Savannah in the Province of Georgia in the American colonies at the request of Governor James Oglethorpe. Oglethorpe wanted Wesley to be the minister of the newly formed Savannah parish.

It was on the voyage to the colonies that the Wesleys first came into contact with Moravian settlers. Wesley was influenced by their deep faith and spirituality rooted in pietism. At one point in the voyage a storm came up and broke the mast off the ship. While the English panicked, the Moravians calmly sang hymns and prayed. This experience led Wesley to believe that the Moravians possessed an inner strength which he lacked. The deeply

personal religion that the Moravian pietists practised heavily influenced Wesley's theology of Methodism.

They reached Savannah on 8 February 1736, where Wesley saw Oglethorpe's offer as an opportunity to spread Christianity to the Native Americans in the colony. Wesley's mission, however, was unsuccessful, and he and his brother Charles were constantly beset by troubles in the colonies.

On top of his struggles with teaching, Wesley found disaster in his relations with Sophia Hopkey, a woman who had journeyed across the Atlantic on the same ship as Wesley. Wesley and Hopkey became romantically involved, but Wesley abruptly broke off the relationship on the advice of a Moravian minister in whom he confided. Hopkey contended that Wesley had promised to marry her and therefore had gone back on his word in breaking off the relationship. Wesley's problems came to a head when he refused Hopkey communion. She and her new husband, William Williamson, filed suit against Wesley. Wesley stood trial and faced the accusations made by Hopkey. The proceedings ended in a mistrial, but Wesley's reputation had already been tarnished too greatly, and he made it known that he intended to return to England. Williamson again tried to raise charges against Wesley to prevent him from leaving the colony, but he managed to escape back to England. He was left exhausted by the whole experience. His mission to Georgia contributed to a life-long struggle with self-doubt. He went back to England to earn money for a church.

Conversion; Open-air Preaching

Wesley returned to England depressed and beaten. It was at this point that he turned to the Moravians. Both he and Charles received counsel from the young Moravian missionary Peter Boehler, who was temporarily in England awaiting permission to depart for Georgia himself. John's famous "Aldersgate experience" of 24 May 1738, at a Moravian meeting in Aldersgate Street, London, in which he heard a reading of Martin Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans, and penned the now famous lines "I felt my heart strangely warmed", revolutionised the character and method of his ministry. The previous week he had been highly impressed by the sermon of Dr. John Heylyn, whom he was assisting in the service at St Mary-le-Strand, an occasion followed immediately by news of the death of his brother Samuel. A few weeks later, Wesley preached a sermon on the doctrine of personal salvation by faith, which was followed by another, on God's grace "free in all, and free for all."

Though his understanding of both justification and the assurance varied throughout his life, Wesley never stopped preaching the importance of faith for salvation and the witness of God's Spirit with the belief that one was, indeed, a child of God.

Wesley allied himself with the Moravian society in Fetter Lane. In 1738 he went to Herrnhut, the Moravian headquarters in Germany, to study. On his return to England, Wesley drew up rules for the "bands" into which the Fetter Lane Society was divided and published a collection of hymns for them. He met frequently with this and other religious societies in London but did not preach often in 1738, because most of the parish churches were closed to him.

Wesley's Oxford friend, the evangelist George Whitefield, was also excluded from the churches of Bristol upon his return from America. Going to the neighbouring village of Kingswood, in February 1739, Whitefield preached in the open air to a company of miners. Later he preached in Whitefield's Tabernacle. Wesley hesitated to accept Whitefield's call to copy this bold step. Overcoming his scruples, he preached the first time at Whitefield's invitation sermon in the open air, near Bristol, in April 1739.

Wesley was unhappy about the idea of field preaching as he believed the Anglican Church had much to offer in its practice. Earlier in his life he would have thought that such a method of saving souls was "almost a sin." Wesley recognised the open-air services were successful in reaching men and

women who would not enter most churches. From then on he took the opportunities to preach wherever an assembly could be brought together, more than once using his father's tombstone at Epworth as a pulpit. Wesley continued for fifty years – entering churches when he was invited, and taking his stand in the fields, in halls, cottages, and chapels, when the churches would not receive him.

Late in 1739 Wesley broke with the Moravians in London. Wesley had helped them organise the Fetter Lane Society, and those converted by his preaching and that of his brother and Whitefield had become members of their bands. But he believed they fell into heresy by supporting quietism, so he decided to form his own followers into a separate society. "Thus," he wrote, "without any previous plan, began the Methodist Society in England." He soon formed similar societies in Bristol and Kingswood, and wherever Wesley and his friends made converts.

Persecutions; Lay Preaching

From 1739 onward, Wesley and the Methodists were persecuted by clergymen and magistrates for various reasons. Though Wesley had been ordained an Anglican presbyter, many other Methodist leaders had not received ordination. And for his own part, Wesley flouted many regulations of the Church of England concerning parish boundaries and who had authority to preach. This was seen as a social threat that disregarded institutions. Ministers attacked them in sermons and in print, and at times mobs attacked them. Wesley and his followers continued to work among the neglected and needy. They were denounced as promulgators of strange doctrines, fomenters of religious disturbances; as blind fanatics, leading people astray, claiming miraculous gifts, attacking the clergy of the Church of England, and trying to re-establish Catholicism.

Wesley felt that the church failed to call sinners to repentance, that many of the clergymen were corrupt, and that people were perishing in their sins. He believed he was commissioned by God to bring about revival in the church, and no opposition, persecution, or obstacles could prevail against the divine urgency and authority of this commission. The prejudices of his high-church training, his strict notions of the methods and proprieties of public worship, his views of the apostolic succession and the prerogatives of the priest, even his most cherished convictions, were not allowed to stand in the way.

Unwilling that people should perish in their sins and unable to reach them from church pulpits, following the example set by George Whitefield, Wesley began field preaching. Seeing that he and the few clergymen cooperating with him could not do the work that needed to be done, he was led, as early as 1739, to approve local preachers. He evaluated and approved men who were not ordained by the Anglican Church to preach and do pastoral work. This expansion of lay preachers was one of the keys of the growth of Methodism.

Chapels and Organisations

As his societies needed houses to worship in, Wesley began to provide chapels, first in Bristol at the New Room, then in London and elsewhere. The Bristol chapel (1739) was at first in the hands of trustees. A large debt was contracted, and Wesley's friends urged him to keep it under his own control, so the deed was cancelled, and he became sole trustee. Following this precedent, all Methodist chapels were committed in trust to him until by a "deed of declaration" all his interests in them were transferred to a body of preachers called the "Legal Hundred."

When disorder arose among some members of the societies, Wesley adopted giving tickets to members, with their names written by his own hand. These were renewed every three months. Those deemed unworthy did not receive new tickets and dropped out of the society without disturbance. The tickets were regarded as commendatory letters.

When the debt on a chapel became a burden, it was proposed that one in twelve members should collect offerings regularly from the eleven allotted to

him. Out of this grew the Methodist class-meeting system in 1742. In order to keep the disorderly out of the societies, Wesley established a probationary system. He undertook to visit each society regularly in what became the quarterly visitation, or conference. As the number of societies increased, Wesley could not keep personal contact, so in 1743 he drew up a set of "General Rules" for the "United Societies." These were the nucleus of the Methodist Discipline, still the basis.

General Rules: It is therefore expected of all who continue therein that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,
First: By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind . . . ;
Second: By . . . doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all . . . ;
Third: By attending upon all the ordinances of God

As the number of preachers and preaching-places increased, doctrinal and administrative matters needed to be discussed; so John and Charles Wesley, along with four other clergymen and four lay preachers, met for consultation in London in 1744. This was the first Methodist conference; subsequently, the conference (with Wesley as its president) became the ruling body of the Methodist movement. Two years later, to help preachers work more systematically and societies receive services more regularly, Wesley appointed "helpers" to definitive circuits. Each circuit included at least thirty appointments a month. Believing that the preacher's efficiency was promoted by his being changed from one circuit to another every year or two, Wesley established the "itinerancy", and insisted that his preachers submit to its rules. When, in 1788, some objected to the frequent changes, Wesley wrote, "For fifty years God has been pleased to bless the itinerant plan, the last year most of all. It must not be altered til I am removed, and I hope it will remain til our Lord comes to reign on earth."

Ordination of Ministers

As the societies multiplied, they adopted the elements of an ecclesiastical system. The divide between Wesley and the Church of England widened. The question of division from the Church of England was urged by some of his preachers and societies, but most strenuously opposed by his brother Charles. Wesley refused to leave the Church of England, believing that Anglicanism was "with all her blemishes, [...] nearer the Scriptural plans than any other in Europe". In 1745 Wesley wrote that he would make any concession which his conscience permitted, in order to live in peace with the clergy. He could not give up the doctrine of an inward and present salvation by faith itself. He would not stop preaching, nor dissolve the societies, nor end preaching by lay members. As a clergyman within the established church he had no plans to go further. "We dare not", he said, "administer baptism or the Lord's Supper without a commission from a bishop in the apostolic succession."

When in 1746 Wesley read Lord King on the primitive church, he became convinced that the concept of apostolic succession in Anglicanism was a "fable". He wrote that he was "a scriptural episkopos as much as many men in England." Many years later Edward Stillingfleet's *Irenicon* led him to decide that ordination could be valid when performed by a presbyter rather than a bishop. Nevertheless, many believe that Wesley was consecrated a bishop in 1763 by Erasmus of Arcadia, and that Wesley could not openly announce his episcopal consecration without incurring the penalty of the *Præmunire Act*.

In 1784, he believed he could not longer wait for the Bishop of London to ordain a minister for the American Methodists, who were without the sacraments after the American War of Independence. The Church of England had been disestablished in the United States, where it had been the state church in most of the southern colonies. The Church of England had not yet appointed a United States bishop to what would become the Protestant Episcopal Church in America. Wesley ordained Thomas Coke by the laying on of hands although Coke was already a priest in the Church of England. Wesley appointed him to be superintendent of Methodists in the United States. He also ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey as presbyters.

Whatcoat and Vasey sailed to America with Coke. Wesley intended that Coke and Asbury (whom Coke ordained) should ordain others in the newly founded Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States.

His brother Charles grew alarmed and begged Wesley to stop before he had "quite broken down the bridge" and not embitter his [Charles'] last moments on earth, nor "leave an indelible blot on our memory." Wesley replied that he had not separated from the church, nor did he intend to, but he must and would save as many souls as he could while alive, "without being careful about what may possibly be when I die." Although Wesley rejoiced that the Methodists in America were free, he advised his English followers to remain in the established church, and he himself died within it.

Doctrines and Theology

The 20th century Wesley scholar Albert Outler argued in his introduction to the 1964 collection *John Wesley* that Wesley developed his theology by using a method that Outler termed the Wesleyan Quadrilateral. In this method, Wesley believed that the living core of the Christian faith was revealed in Scripture; and the Bible was the sole foundational source of theological or doctrinal development. The centrality of Scripture was so important for Wesley that he called himself "a man of one book"—meaning the Bible—although he was well-read for his day. However, he believed that doctrine had to be in keeping with Christian orthodox tradition. So, tradition was considered the second aspect of the Quadrilateral.

Wesley contended that a part of the theological method would involve experiential faith. In other words, truth would be vivified in personal experience of Christians (overall, not individually), if it were really truth. And every doctrine must be able to be defended rationally. He did not divorce faith from reason. Tradition, experience and reason, however, were subject always to Scripture, Wesley argued, because only there is the Word of God revealed "so far as it is necessary for our salvation."

The doctrines which Wesley emphasised in his sermons and writings are prevenient grace, present personal salvation by faith, the witness of the Spirit, and sanctification. Prevenient grace was the theological underpinning of his belief that all persons were capable of being saved by faith in Christ. Unlike the Calvinists of his day, Wesley did not believe in predestination, that is, that some persons had been elected by God for salvation and others for damnation. He understood that Christian orthodoxy insisted that salvation was only possible by the sovereign grace of God. He expressed his understanding of humanity's relationship to God as utter dependence upon God's grace. God was at work to enable all people to be capable of coming to faith by empowering humans to have actual existential freedom of response to God.

Wesley defined the witness of the Spirit as: "an inward impression on the soul of believers, whereby the Spirit of God directly testifies to their spirit that they are the children of God." He based this doctrine upon certain Biblical passages (see Romans 8:15–16 as an example). This doctrine was closely related to his belief that salvation had to be "personal." In his view, a person must ultimately believe the Good News for himself or herself; no one could be in relation to God for another.

Sanctification he described in 1790 as the "grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called 'Methodists'." Wesley taught that sanctification was obtainable after justification by faith, between justification and death. He did not contend for "sinless perfection"; rather, he contended that a Christian could be made "perfect in love". (Wesley studied Eastern Orthodoxy and particularly the doctrine of Theosis). This love would mean, first of all, that a believer's motives, rather than being self-centred, would be guided by the deep desire to please God. One would be able to keep from committing what Wesley called, "sin rightly so-called." By this he meant a conscious or intentional breach of God's will or laws. A person could still be able to sin, but intentional or wilful sin could be avoided.

Secondly, to be made perfect in love meant, for Wesley, that a Christian could live with a primary guiding regard for others and their welfare. He based this on Christ's quote that the second great command is "to love your neighbour as you love yourself." In his view, this orientation would cause a person to avoid any number of sins against his neighbour. This love, plus the love for God that could be the central focus of a person's faith, would be what Wesley referred to as "a fulfilment of the law of Christ."

Wesley believed that this doctrine should be constantly preached, especially among the people called Methodists. In fact, he contended that the purpose of the Methodist movement was to "spread scriptural holiness across England."

Advocacy of Arminianism

Wesley entered controversies as he tried to enlarge church practice. The most notable of his controversies was that on Calvinism. His father was of the Arminian school in the church. Wesley came to his own conclusions while in college and expressed himself strongly against the doctrines of Calvinistic election and reprobation.

Whitefield inclined to Calvinism. In his first tour in America, he embraced the views of the New England School of Calvinism. When in 1739 Wesley preached a sermon on Freedom of Grace, attacking the Calvinistic understanding of predestination as blasphemous, as it represented "God as worse than the devil," Whitefield asked him not to repeat or publish the discourse, as he did not want a dispute. Wesley published his sermon anyway. Whitefield was one of many who responded. The two men separated their practice in 1741. Wesley wrote that those who held to unlimited atonement did not desire separation, but "those who held 'particular redemption' would not hear of any accommodation."

Whitefield, Harris, Cennick, and others, became the founders of Calvinistic Methodism. Whitefield and Wesley, however, were soon back on friendly terms, and their friendship remained unbroken although they travelled different paths.

In 1770 the controversy broke out anew with violence and bitterness, as people's view of God related to their views of men and their possibilities. Augustus Montague Toplady, Rowland, Richard Hill, and others were engaged on the one side, and Wesley and Fletcher on the other. Toplady was editor of The Gospel Magazine, which had articles covering the controversy.

In 1778 Wesley began the publication of The Arminian Magazine, not, he said, to convince Calvinists, but to preserve Methodists. He wanted to teach the truth that "God willeth all men to be saved." A "lasting peace" could be secured in no other way.

His system of thought has become known as Wesleyan Arminianism, the foundations of which were laid by Wesley and Fletcher.

Personality and Activities

John Wesley travelled generally on horseback, preaching two or three times each day. Stephen Tomkins writes that he "rode 250,000 miles, gave away 30,000 pounds, ... and preached more than 40,000 sermons[.]"

He formed societies, opened chapels, examined and commissioned preachers, administered aid charities, prescribed for the sick, helped to pioneer the use of electric shock for the treatment of illness, superintended schools and orphanages, and received at least £20,000 for his publications but used little of it for himself.

After attending a performance in Bristol Cathedral in 1758, Wesley said: "I went to the cathedral to hear Mr. Handel's Messiah. I doubt if that congregation was ever so serious at a sermon as they were during this performance. In many places, especially several of the choruses, it exceeded

my expectation."

He is described as below medium height, well proportioned, strong, with a bright eye, a clear complexion, and a saintly, intellectual face. Wesley married very unhappily at the age of forty-eight to a widow, Mary Vazeille, and had no children. Vazeille left him fifteen years later, to which Wesley wryly reported in his journal, "I did not forsake her, I did not dismiss her, I will not recall her."

In 1770, at the death of George Whitefield, Wesley wrote a memorial sermon which praised Whitefield's admirable qualities and acknowledged the two men's differences: "There are many doctrines of a less essential nature ... In these we may think and let think; we may 'agree to disagree.' But, meantime, let us hold fast the essentials..." Wesley was the first to put the phrase 'agree to disagree' in print.

Wesley died on 2 March 1791, in his eighty-seventh year. As he lay dying, his friends gathered around him, Wesley grasped their hands and said repeatedly, "Farewell, farewell." At the end, he said "The best of all is, God is with us", lifted his arms and raised his feeble voice again, repeating the words, "The best of all is, God is with us."

Wesley was entombed at Wesley's Chapel, which he built in Greater London, in England. The site also is now both a place of worship and a visitor attraction, incorporating the Museum of Methodism and John Wesley's House.

Because of his charitable nature he died poor, leaving as the result of his life's work 135,000 members and 541 itinerant preachers under the name "Methodist". It has been said that "when John Wesley was carried to his grave, he left behind him a good library of books, a well-worn clergyman's gown," and the Methodist Church.

Literary Work

Wesley was a logical thinker and expressed himself clearly, concisely and forcefully in writing. His written sermons are characterised by spiritual earnestness and simplicity. They are doctrinal but not dogmatic. His Notes on the New Testament (1755) are enlightening. Both the Sermons (about 140) and the Notes are doctrinal standards. Wesley was a fluent, powerful and effective preacher. He usually preached spontaneously and briefly, though occasionally at great length.

As an organiser, a religious leader and a statesman, he was eminent. He knew how to lead and control men to achieve his purposes. He used his power, not to provoke rebellion, but to inspire love. His mission was to spread "Scriptural holiness"; his means and plans were such as Providence indicated. The course thus mapped out for him he pursued with a determination from which nothing could distract him.

Wesley's prose Works were first collected by himself (32 vols., Bristol, 1771–74, frequently reprinted in editions varying greatly in the number of volumes). His chief prose works are a standard publication in seven octavo volumes of the Methodist Book Concern, New York. The Poetical Works of John and Charles, ed. G. Osborn, appeared in 13 vols., London, 1868–72.

In addition to his Sermons and Notes are his Journals (originally published in 20 parts, London, 1740–89; new ed. by N. Curnock containing notes from unpublished diaries, 6 vols., vols. i.-ii., London and New York, 1909–11); The Doctrine of Original Sin (Bristol, 1757; in reply to Dr. John Taylor of Norwich); "An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion (originally published in three parts; 2d ed., Bristol, 1743), an elaborate defence of Methodism, describing the evils of the times in society and the church; a Plain Account of Christian Perfection (1766).

Wesley adapted the Book of Common Prayer for use by American Methodists. In his Watch Night service, he made use of a pietist prayer now generally

known as the Wesley Covenant Prayer, perhaps his most famous contribution to Christian liturgy. He also was a noted hymn-writer, translator and compiler of a hymnal.

In spite of the proliferation of his literary output, Wesley was challenged for plagiarism for borrowing heavily from an essay by Samuel Johnson, publishing in March 1775. Initially denying the charge, Wesley later recanted and apologised officially.

Legacy

Today, Wesley's influence as a teacher persists. He continues to be the primary theological interpreter for Methodists the world over; the largest bodies being the United Methodist Church, the Methodist Church of Great Britain and the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Wesleyan teachings also serve as a basis for the holiness movement, which includes denominations like the Wesleyan Church, the Free Methodist Church, the Church of the Nazarene, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and several smaller groups, and from which Pentecostalism and parts of the charismatic movement are offshoots. Wesley's call to personal and social holiness continues to challenge Christians who attempt to discern what it means to participate in the Kingdom of God.

He is commemorated in the Calendar of Saints of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on 2 March with his brother Charles. The Wesley brothers are also commemorated on 3 March in the Calendar of Saints of the Episcopal Church and on 24 May in the Anglican calendar.

Wesley's legacy is preserved in Kingswood School, which he founded in 1748 in order to educate the children of the growing number of Methodist preachers. Also, one of the four form houses at the St Marylebone Church of England School, London, is named after John Wesley.

He was recently listed at 50 on the BBC's list of the 100 Greatest Britons.

In 1831, Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut was the first institution of higher education in the United States to be named after Wesley. The now-secular institution was founded as an all-male Methodist college. About twenty unrelated colleges and universities in the U.S. were subsequently named after him.

In film

In 1954 the Radio and Film Commission of the Methodist Church in cooperation with J. Arthur Rank produced the film *John Wesley*. The film was a live action re-telling of the story of the life of John Wesley, with Leonard Sachs as Wesley.

In 2009 a more ambitious feature film, *Wesley*, was released by Foundry Pictures, starring Burgess Jenkins as John Wesley, with June Lockhart as Susanna Wesley, R. Keith Harris as Charles Wesley, and Golden Globe winner Kevin McCarthy as Bishop Ryder. The movie was directed by award-winning filmmaker John Jackman.

Hymn I: O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace!

My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honours of thy name.

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me.

He speaks, and, listening to his voice,
New life the dead receive,
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
The humble poor believe.

Hear him, ye deaf; his praise, ye dumb,
Your loosened tongues employ;
Ye blind, behold your Saviour come,
And leap, ye lame, for joy.

Look unto him, ye nations, own
Your God, ye fallen race;
Look, and be saved through faith alone,
Be justified by grace.

See all your sins on Jesus laid:
The Lamb of God was slain,
His soul was once an offering made
For every soul of man.

Awake from guilty nature's sleep,
And Christ shall give you light,
Cast all your sins into the deep,
And wash the Æthiop white.

With me, your chief, ye then shall know,
Shall feel your sins forgiven;
Anticipate your heaven below,
And own that love is heaven.

John Wesley

Hymn II: Come, Sinners, to the Gospel Feast

Come, sinners, to the gospel feast,
Let every soul be Jesu's guest;
Ye need not one be left behind,
For God hath bidden all mankind.

Sent by my Lord, on you I call,
The invitation is to ALL:
Come, all the world; come, sinner, thou!
All things in Christ are ready now.

Come, all ye souls by sin opprest,
Ye restless wanderers after rest,
Ye poor, and maimed, and halt, and blind,
In Christ a hearty welcome find.

Come, and partake the gospel feast;
Be saved from sin; in Jesus rest;
O taste the goodness of your God,
And eat his flesh, and drink his blood!

Ye vagrant souls, on you I call;
(O that my voice could reach you all!)
Ye all may now be justified,
Ye all may live, for Christ hath died.

My message as from God receive,
Ye all may come to Christ, and live;
O let his love your hearts constrain,
Nor suffer him to die in vain!

His love is mighty to compel;
His conquering love consent to feel,
Yield to his love's resistless power,
And fight against your God no more.

See him set forth before your eyes,
That precious, bleeding sacrifice!
His offered benefits embrace,
And freely now be saved by grace.

This is the time; no more delay!
This is the acceptable day,
Come in, this moment, at his call,
And live for him who died for all.

John Wesley

Hymn III: All That Pass By, to Jesus Draw Near

All that pass by, To Jesus draw near,
He utters a cry, Ye sinners, give ear!
From hell to retrieve you He spreads out his hands;
Now, now to receive you, He graciously stands.

If any man thirst, And happy would be,
The vilest and worst May come unto me,
May drink of my Spirit, Excepted is none,
Lay claim to my merit, And take for his own.

Whoever receives The life-giving word,
In Jesus believes, His God and his Lord,
In him a pure river Of life shall arise,
Shall in the believer Spring up to the skies.

My God and my Lord! Thy call I obey,
My soul on thy word Of promise I stay,
Thy kind invitation I gladly embrace,
Athirst for salvation, Salvation by grace.

O hasten the hour! Send down from above
The Spirit of power, Of health, and of love,
Of filial fear, Of knowledge and grace,
Of wisdom and prayer, Of joy and of praise;
The Spirit of faith, Of faith in thy blood,
Which saves us from wrath, And brings us to God,
Removes the huge mountain Of indwelling sin,
And opens a fountain That washes us clean.

John Wesley

Hymn IV: Ho! Everyone That Thirsts, Draw Nigh

Ho! every one that thirsts, draw nigh!
('Tis God invites the fallen race)
Mercy and free salvation buy;
Buy wine, and milk, and gospel grace.

Come to the living waters, come!
Sinners, obey your Maker's call;
Return, ye weary wanderers, home,
And find my grace is free for all.

See from the Rock a fountain rise!
For you in healing streams it rolls;
Money ye need not bring, nor price,
Ye labouring, burdened, sin-sick souls.

Nothing ye in exchange shall give,
Leave all you have and are behind,
Frankly the gift of God receive,
Pardon and peace in Jesus find.

Why seek ye that which is not bread,
Nor can your hungry souls sustain?
On ashes, husks, and air ye feed;
Ye spend your little all in vain.

In search of empty joys below,
Ye toil with unavailing strife;
Whither, ah! whither would ye go?
I have the words of endless life.

Hearken to me with earnest care,
And freely eat substantial food,
The sweetness of my mercy share,
And taste that I alone am good.

I bid you all my goodness prove,
My promises for all are free,
Come, taste the manna of my love,
And let your souls delight in me.

Your willing ear and heart incline,
My words believingly receive;
Quickened your souls by faith divine
An everlasting life shall live.

John Wesley

Hymn IX: Sinners, Obey the Gospel-Word!

Sinners, obey the gospel-word!
Haste to the supper of my Lord!
Be wise to know your gracious day;
All things are ready, come away!

Ready the Father is to own
And kiss his late-returning son;
Ready your loving Saviour stands,
And spreads for you his bleeding hands.

Ready the Spirit of his love
Just now the stony to remove,
To apply, and witness with the blood,
And wash and seal the sons of God.

Ready for you the angels wait,
To triumph in your blest estate;
Tuning their harps, they long to praise
The wonders of redeeming grace.

The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
Is ready, with their shining host:
All heaven is ready to resound,
"The dead's alive! the lost is found!"

Come then, ye sinners, to your Lord,
In Christ to paradise restored;
His proffered benefits embrace,
The plenitude of gospel grace:

A pardon written with his blood,
The favour and the peace of God;
The seeing eye, the feeling sense,
The mystic joys of penitence;

The godly grief, the pleasing smart,
The meltings of a broken heart,
The tears that tell your sins forgiven,
The sighs that waft your souls to heaven;

The guiltless shame, the sweet distress,
The unutterable tenderness,
The genuine, meek humility,
The wonder, "Why such love to me?"

The o'erwhelming power of saving grace,
The sight that veils the seraph's face;
The speechless awe that dares not move,
And all the silent heaven of love.

John Wesley

Hymn V: Thy Faithfulness, Lord

Thy faithfulness, Lord, Each moment we find,
So true to thy word, So loving and kind!
Thy mercy so tender To all the lost race,
The vilest offender May turn and find grace.

The mercy I feel To others I show,
I set to my seal That Jesus is true:
Ye all may find favour Who come at his call,
O come to my Saviour, His grace is for all!

To save what was lost, from heaven he came;
Come, sinners, and trust In Jesus's name.
He offers you pardon; He bids you be free;
"If sin be your burden, O come unto me!"

O let me commend My Saviour to you,
The publican's friend And Advocate too,
For you he is pleading His merits and death,
With God interceding for sinners beneath.

Then let us submit His grace to receive,
Fall down at his feet And gladly believe:
We all are forgiven For Jesus's sake:
Our title to heaven His merits we take.

John Wesley

Hymn VI: Sinners, Turn, Why Will Ye Die?

Sinners, turn, why will ye die?
God, your Maker, asks you why?
God, who did your being give,
Made you with himself to live -
He the fatal cause demands,
Asks the work of his own hands,
Why, ye thankless creatures, why
Will ye cross his love, and die?

Sinners, turn, why will ye die?
God, your Saviour, asks you why?
God, who did your souls retrieve,
Died himself, that ye might live;
Will you let him die in vain?
Crucify your Lord again?
Why, ye ransomed sinners, why
Will you slight his grace, and die?

Sinners, turn, why will ye die?
God, the Spirit, asks you why?
He who all your lives hath strove,
Wooed you to embrace his love:
Will you not his grace receive?
Will you still refuse to live?
Why, ye long-sought sinners, why
Will you grieve your God, and die?

Dead, already dead within,
Spiritually dead in sin,
Dead to God while here you breathe,
Pant ye after second death?
Will you still in sin remain,
Greedy of eternal pain?
O ye dying sinners, why,
Why will you for ever die?

John Wesley

Hymn VII: Let the Beasts Their Breath Resign

Let the beasts their breath resign,
Strangers to the life divine;
Who their God can never know,
Let their spirit downward go.
You for higher ends were born,
You may all to God return,
Dwell with him above the sky;
Why will you for ever die?

You, on whom he favours showers,
You, possess of nobler powers,
You, of reason's powers possess,
You, with will and memory blest,
You, with finer sense endued,
Creatures capable of God;
Noblest of his creatures, why,
Why will you for ever die?

You, whom he ordained to be
Transcripts of the Deity;
You, whom he in life doth hold;
You, for whom himself was sold;
You, on whom he still doth wait,
Whom he would again create;
Made by him, and purchased, why,
Why will you for ever die?

You, who own his record true,
You, his chosen people, you,
You, who call the Saviour Lord,
You, who read his written word,
You, who see the gospel-light,
Claim a crown in Jesu's right;
Why will you, ye Christians, why
Will the house of Israel die?

John Wesley

Hymn VIII: What Could Your Redeemer Do

What could your Redeemer do
More than he hath done for you?
To procure your peace with God,
Could he more than shed his blood?
After all his waste of love,
All his drawings from above,
Why will you your Lord deny?
Why will you resolve to die?

Turn, he cries, ye sinners, turn;
By his life your God hath sworn,
He would have you turn and live,
He would all the world receive.
If your death were his delight,
Would he you to life invite?
Would he ask, obtest, and cry,
Why will you resolve to die?

Sinners, turn, while God is near:
Dare not think him insincere:
Now, even now, your Saviour stands,
All day long he spreads his hands,
Cries, Ye will not happy be!
No, ye will not come to me!
Me, who life to none deny:
Why will you resolve to die?

Can you doubt if God is love?
If to all His bowels move?
Will you not his word receive?
Will you not his OATH believe?
See! the suffering God appears!
Jesus weeps! believe his tears!
Mingled with his blood, they cry,
Why will you resolve to die?

John Wesley

Hymn X: Ye Thirsty For God, to Jesus Give Ear

Ye thirsty for God, To Jesus give ear,
And take, through his blood, A power to draw near;
His kind invitation Ye sinners embrace,
Accepting salvation, Salvation by grace.

Sent down from above, Who governs the skies,
In vehement love To sinners he cries,
Drink into my Spirit, Who happy would be,
And all things inherit By coming to me.

O Saviour of all, Thy word we believe!
And come at thy call, Thy grace to receive;
The blessing is given Wherever thou art.
The earnest of heaven Is love in the heart.

To us at thy feet The Comforter give,
Who gasp to admit Thy Spirit, and live;
The weakest believers Acknowledge for thine,
And fill us with rivers Of water divine.

John Wesley

Hymn XI: God, the Offended God Most High

God, the offended God most high,
Ambassadors to rebels sends;
His messengers his place supply,
And Jesus begs us to be friends.

Us, in the stead of Christ, they pray,
Us, in the stead of God, intreat,
To cast our arms, our sins, away,
And find forgiveness at his feet.

Our God in Christ! thine embassy,
And proffered mercy, we embrace;
And gladly reconciled to thee,
Thy condescending goodness praise.

Poor debtors, by our Lord's request
A full acquittance we receive!
And criminals, with pardon blest,
We, at our Judge's instance, live!

John Wesley

Hymn XII: Come, Ye That Love the Lord

Come, ye that love the Lord,
And let your joys be known;
Join in a song with sweet accord,
While ye surround his throne:
Let those refuse to sing
Who never knew our God;
But servants of the heavenly King
May speak their joys abroad.

The God that rules on high,
That all the earth surveys
That rides upon the stormy sky,
And calms the roaring seas-
This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our love;
He will send down his heavenly powers,
To carry us above.

There we shall see his face,
And never, never sin;
There, from the rivers of his grace,
Drink endless pleasures in:
Yea, and before we rise
To that immortal state,
The thoughts of such amazing bliss
Should constant joys create.

The men of grace have found
Glory begun below;
Celestial fruit on earthly ground
From faith and hope may grow:
Then let our songs abound,
And every tear be dry;
We are marching through Immanuel's grounds
To fairer worlds on high.

John Wesley

Hymn XIII: Happy Soul that Free from Harms

Happy soul that free from harms
Rests within his Shepherd's arms!
Who his quiet shall molest?
Who shall violate his rest?
Jesus doth his spirit bear,
Jesus takes his every care;
He who found the wandering sheep,
Jesus still delights to keep.

O that I might so believe,
Steadfastly to Jesus cleave,
On his only love rely,
Smile at the destroyer nigh;
Free from sin and servile fear,
Have my Jesus ever near,
All his care rejoice to prove,
All his paradise of love!

Jesus, seek thy wandering sheep,
Bring me back, and lead, and keep;
Take on thee my every care,
Bear me, on thy bosom bear:
Let me know my Shepherd's voice,
More and more in thee rejoice,
More and more of thee receive,
Ever in thy Spirit live:

Live, till all thy life I know,
Perfect through my Lord below,
Gladly then from earth remove,
Gathered to the fold above.

O that I at last may stand
With the sheep at thy right hand,
Take the crown so freely given,
Enter in by thee to heaven!

John Wesley

Hymn XIV: Happy the Man That Finds the Grace

Happy the man that finds the grace,
The blessing of God's chosen race,
The wisdom coming from above,
The faith that sweetly works by love.

Happy beyond description he
Who knows, The Saviour died for me,
The gift unspeakable obtains,
And heavenly understanding gains.

Wisdom divine! Who tells the price
Of wisdom's costly merchandise
Wisdom to silver we prefer,
And gold is dross compared to her.

Her hands are filled with length of days,
True riches, and immortal praise,
Riches of Christ, on all bestowed,
And honour that descends from God.

To purest joys she all invites,
Chaste, holy, spiritual delights;
Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her flowery paths are peace.

Happy the man who wisdom gains,
Thrice happy who his guest retains!
He owns, and shall for ever own,
Wisdom, and Christ, and heaven are one.

John Wesley

Hymn XIX: Rejoice Evermore With Angels Above

Rejoice evermore With angels above,
In Jesus's power, In Jesus's love:
With glad exultation Your triumph proclaim,
Ascribing salvation To God and the Lamb.

Thou, Lord, our relief In trouble hast been;
Hast saved us from grief, Hast saved us from sin;
The power of thy Spirit Hath set our hearts free,
And now we inherit All fulness in thee;

All fulness of peace, All fulness of joy,
And spiritual bliss That never shall cloy:
To us it is given In Jesus to know
A kingdom of heaven, A heaven below.

No longer we join While sinners invite,
Nor envy the swine Their brutish delight;
Their joy is all sadness, Their mirth is all vain,
Their laughter is madness, Their pleasure is pain.

O might they at last With sorrow return,
The pleasures to taste For which they were born;
Our Jesus receiving, Our happiness prove,
The joy of believing, The heaven of love!

John Wesley

Hymn XV: Happy the Souls to Jesus Joined

Happy the souls to Jesus joined,
And saved by grace alone,
Walking in all his ways they find
Their heaven on earth begun.

The church triumphant in thy love,
Their mighty joys we know;
They sing the Lamb in hymns above,
And we in hymns below.

Thee in thy glorious realm they praise,
And bow before thy throne,
We in the kingdom of thy grace:
The kingdoms are but one.

The holy to the holiest leads,
From thence our spirits rise,
And he that in thy statutes treads
Shall meet thee in the skies.

John Wesley

Hymn XVI: Happy the Souls That First Believed

Happy the souls that first believed,
To Jesus and each other cleaved,
Joined by the unction from above
In mystic fellowship of love.

Meek, simple followers of the Lamb,
They lived, and spake, and thought the same;
They joyfully conspired to raise
Their ceaseless sacrifice of praise.

With grace abundantly endued,
A pure, believing multitude,
They all were of one heart and soul,
And only love inspired the whole.

O what an age of golden days!
O what a choice, peculiar race!
Washed in the Lamb's all-cleansing blood,
Anointed kings and priests to God!

Ye different sects, who all declare,
"Lo, here is Christ! " or, "Christ is here!"
Your stronger proofs divinely give,
And show me where the Christians live.

The gates of hell cannot prevail;
The church on earth can never fail;
Ah, join me to thy secret ones!
Ah, gather all thy living stones!

Scattered o'er all the earth they lie,
Till thou collect them with thine eye,
Draw by the music of thy name,
And charm into a beauteous frame.

For this the pleading Spirit groans,
And cries in all thy banished ones;
Greatest of gifts, thy love impart,
And make us of one mind and heart.

Join every soul that looks to thee
In bonds of perfect charity;
Now, Lord, the glorious fullness give,
And all in all for ever live!

John Wesley

Hymn XVII: Jesus, From Whom All Blessings Grow

Jesus, from whom all blessings flow,
Great builder of thy church below,
If now thy Spirit moves my breast,
Hear, and fulfil thine own request!

The few that truly call thee Lord,
And wait thy sanctifying word,
And thee their utmost Saviour own,
Unite, and perfect them in one.

O let them all thy mind express,
Stand forth thy chosen witnesses,
Thy power unto salvation show,
And perfect holiness below!

In them let all mankind behold
How Christians lived in days of old,
Mighty their envious foes to move,
A proverb of reproach - and love.

From every sinful wrinkle free,
Redeemed from all iniquity,
The fellowship of saints make known;
And, O my God, might I be one!

O might my lot be cast with these,
The least of Jesu's witnesses!
O that my Lord would count me meet
To wash his dear disciples' feet!

This only thing do I require:
Thou knowest 'tis all my heart's desire
Freely what I receive to give,
The servant of thy church to live;

After my lowly Lord to go,
And wait upon thy saints below;
Enjoy the grace to angels given,
And serve the royal heirs of heaven.

Lord, if I now thy drawings feel,
And ask according to thy will,
Confirm the prayer, the seal impart,
And speak the answer to my heart.

John Wesley

Hymn XVIII: Father, Saviour of Mankind

Father, Saviour of mankind,
Who hast on me bestowed
An immortal soul, designed
To be the house of God;
Come, and now reside in me,
Never, never to remove;
Make me just and good, like thee,
And full of power and love.

Bid me in thy image rise,
A saint, a creature new,
True, and merciful, and wise,
And pure, and happy too.
This thy primitive design,
That I should in thee be blest,
Should within the arms divine
For ever, ever rest.

Let thy will on me be done;
Fulfil my heart's desire,
Thee to know and love alone,
And rise in raptures higher;
Thee, descending on a cloud,
When with ravished eyes I see,
Then I shall be filled with God
To all eternity!

John Wesley

Hymn XX: Weary Souls, that Wander Wide

Weary souls, that wander wide
From the central point of bliss,
Turn to Jesus crucified,
Fly to those dear wounds of his:
Sink into the purple flood;
Rise into the life of God!

Find in Christ the way of peace,
Peace unspeakable, unknown;
By his pain he gives you ease,
Life by his expiring groan;
Rise, exalted by his fall,
Find in Christ your all in all.

O believe the record true,
God to you his Son hath give
Ye may now be happy too,
Find on earth the life of heaven,
Live the life of heaven above,
All the life of glorious love.

This the universal bliss,
Bliss for every soul designed,
God's original promise this,
God's great gift to all mankind:
Blest in Christ this moment be!
Blest to all eternity!

John Wesley

Hymn XXI: Ye Simple Souls That Stray

Ye simple souls that stray
Far from the path of peace,
That lonely, unfrequented way
To life and happiness,
Why will ye folly love,
And throng the downward road,
And hate the wisdom from above,
And mock the sons of God?

Madness and misery
Ye count our life beneath;
And nothing great or good can see,
Or glorious, in our death:
As only born to grieve,
Beneath your feet we lie;
And utterly contemned we live,
And unlamented die.

So wretched and obscure,
The men whom ye despise,
So foolish, impotent, and poor,
Above your scorn we rise:
We, through the Holy Ghost,
Can witness better things;
For He whose blood is all our boast
Hath made us priests and kings.

Riches unsearchable
In Jesu's love we know;
And pleasures, springing from the well
Of life, our souls o'erflow;
The Spirit we receive
Of wisdom, grace, and power;
And always sorrowful we live,
Rejoicing evermore.

Angels our servants are,
And keep in all our ways,
And in their watchful hands they bear
The sacred souls of grace;
Unto that heavenly bliss
They all our steps attend;
And God himself our Father is,
And Jesus is our friend.

With him we walk in white,
We in his image shine,
Our robes are robes of glorious light,
Our righteousness divine;
On all the kings of earth
With pity we look down,
And claim, in virtue of our birth,

A never-fading crown.

John Wesley

Hymn XXII: Behold the Saviour of Mankind

Behold the Saviour of mankind
Nailed to the shameful tree!
How vast the love that him inclined
To bleed and die for thee!

Hark, how he groans! while nature shakes,
And earth's strong pillars bend;
The temple's veil in sunder breaks,
The solid marbles rend.

'Tis done! the precious ransom's paid,
"Receive my soul," he cries!
See where he bows his sacred head!
He bows his head, and dies!

But soon he'll break death's envious chain,
And in full glory shine:
O Lamb of God! was ever pain,
Was ever love, like thine?

John Wesley

Hymn XXIII: Extended on a Cursed Tree

Extended on a cursed tree,
Besmeared with dust, and sweat, and blood,
See there, the king of glory see!
Sinks and expires the Son of God.

Who, who, my Saviour, this hath done?
Who could thy sacred body wound?
No guilt thy spotless heart hath known,
No guile hath in thy lips been found.

I, I alone, have done the deed!
'Tis I thy sacred flesh have torn;
My sins have caused thee, Lord, to bleed,
Pointed the nail, and fixed the thorn.

The burden, for me to sustain
Too great, on thee, my Lord, was laid;
To heal me, thou hast borne my pain;
To bless me, thou a curse wast made.

In the devouring lion's teeth,
Torn, and forsook of all, I lay;
Thou sprang'st into the jaws of death,
From death to save the helpless prey.

Saviour how shall I proclaim?
How pay the mighty debt I owe?
Let all I have, and all I am,
Ceaseless to all thy glory show.

Too much to thee I cannot give;
Too much I cannot do for thee;
Let all thy love, and all thy grief,
Graven on my heart for ever be!

The meek, the still, the lowly mind,
O may I learn from thee, my God,
And love, with softest pity joined,
For those that trample on thy blood!

Still let thy tears, thy groans, thy sighs,
O'erflow my eyes, and heave my breast,
Till loose from flesh and earth I rise,
And ever in thy bosom rest.

John Wesley

Hymn XXIV: Saviour, If Thy Precious Love

Saviour, if thy precious love
Could be merited by mine,
Faith these mountains would remove;
Faith would make me ever thine:
But when all my care and pains
Worth can ne'er create in me,
Nought by me thy fulness gains;
Vain the hope to purchase thee.

Cease, O man, thy worth to weigh,
Give the needless contest o'er;
Mine thou art! while thus I say,
Yield thee up, and ask no more:
What thy estimate may be,
Only can by him be told
Who, to ransom wretched thee,
Thee to gain, himself was sold.

But when all in me is sin,
How can I thy grace obtain?
How presume thyself to win?
God of love, the doubt explain:
Or if thou the means supply,
Lo to thee I all resign!
Make me Lord - I ask not why,
How I ask not, - ever thine.

John Wesley

Hymn XXIX: Come, Ye Weary Sinners, Come

Come, ye weary sinners, come,
All who groan beneath your load,
Jesus calls his wanderers home,
Hasten to your pardoning God!
Come, ye guilty spirits oppressed,
Answer to the Saviour's call,
"Come, and I will give you rest,
Come, and I will save you all."

Jesus, full of truth and love,
We thy kindest word obey;
Faithful let thy mercies prove,
Take our load of guilt away;
Fain we would on thee rely,
Cast on thee our every care,
To thine arms of mercy fly,
Find our lasting quiet there.

Burdened with a world of grief,
Burdened with our sinful load,
Burdened with this unbelief,
Burdened with the wrath of God;
Lo! we come to thee for ease,
True and gracious as thou art,
Now our groaning souls release,
Write forgiveness on our heart.

John Wesley

Hymn XXV: Stupendous Love of God Most High!

Stupendous love of God most high!
He comes to meet us from the sky
In mildest majesty;
Full of unutterable grace,
He calls the weary burdened race,
"Come all for help to me."

Tired with the greatness of my way,
From him I would no longer stray,
But rest in Jesus have;
Weary of sin, from sin would cease,
Weary of mine own righteousness,
And stoop, myself to save.

Weary of passions unsubdued,
Weary of vows in vain renewed,
Of forms without the power,
Of prayers, and hopes, complaints, and groans,
My fainting soul in silence owns
I can hold out no more.

Beneath this mountain load of grief,
Of guilt and desperate unbelief,
Jesus, thy creature see;
With all my nature's weight oppressed,
I sink, I die for want of rest,
Yet cannot come to thee.

Mine utter helplessness I feel;
But thou, who gav'st the feeble will,
The effectual grace supply;
Be thou my strength, my light, my way,
And bid my soul the call obey,
And to thy bosom fly.

Fulfil thine own intense desire,
And now into my heart inspire
The power of faith and love;
Then, Saviour, then to thee I come,
And find on earth the life, the home,
The rest of saints above.

John Wesley

Hymn XXVI: I Thirst, Thou Wounded Lamb of God

I thirst, thou wounded Lamb of God,
To wash me in thy cleansing blood,
To dwell within thy wounds; then pain
Is sweet, and life or death is gain.

Take my poor heart, and let it be
For ever closed to all but thee!
Seal thou my breast, and let me we;
That pledge of love for ever there!

How blest are they who still abide
Close sheltered in thy bleeding side,
Who life and strength from thence derive,
And by thee move, and in thee live.

What are our works but sin and death,
Till thou thy quickening Spirit breathe!
Thou giv'st the power thy grace to move;
O wondrous grace! O boundless love!

How can it be, thou heavenly King,
That thou shouldst us to glory bring?
Make slaves the partners of thy throne,
Decked with a never-fading crown?

Hence our hearts melt, our eyes o'erflow,
Our words are lost; nor will we know,
Nor will we think of aught beside,
"My Lord, my Love is crucified."

Ah, Lord! enlarge our scanty thought,
To know the wonders thou hast wrought;
Unloose our stammering tongues, to tell
Thy love immense, unsearchable.

First-born of many brethren thou!
To thee, lo! all our souls we bow:
To thee our hearts and hands we give:
Thine may we die, thine may we live!

John Wesley

Hymn XXVII: Saviour, the World's and Mine

Saviour, the world's and mine,
Was ever grief like thine!
Thou my pain, my curse hast took,
All my sins were laid on thee;
Help me, Lord; to thee I look,
Draw me, Saviour, after thee.

'Tis done! my God hath died;
My Love is crucified!
Break, this stony heart of mine;
Pour, mine eyes, a ceaseless flood;
Feel, my soul, the pangs divine;
Catch, my heart, the issuing blood!

When, O my God, shall I
For thee submit to die?
How the mighty debt repay?
Rival of thy passion prove?
Lead me in thyself, the Way;
Melt my hardness into love.

To love is all my wish,
I only live for this;
Grant me, Lord, my heart's desire,
There by faith for ever dwell;
This I always will require,
Thee, and only thee, to feel.

Thy power I pant to prove,
Rooted and fixed in love;
Strengthened by thy Spirit's might,
Wise to fathom things divine,
What the length, and breadth, and height,
What the depth of love like thine.

Ah! give me this to know,
With all thy saints below;
Swells my soul to compass thee,
Gasps in thee to live and move;
Filled with all the Deity,
All immersed and lost in love!

John Wesley

Hymn XXVIII: Love Divine! What Hast Thou Done!

Love divine! what hast thou done!
The immortal God hath died for me!
The Father's co-eternal Son
Bore all my sins upon the tree;
The immortal God for me hath died!
My Lord, my Love is crucified.

Behold him, all ye that pass by,
The bleeding Prince of life and peace!
Come, see, ye worms, your Maker die,
And say, was ever grief like his?
Come, feel with me his blood applied:
My Lord, my Love is crucified.

Is crucified for me and you,
To bring us rebels back to God:
Believe, believe the record true,
Ye all are bought with Jesu's blood,
Pardon for all flows from his side;
My Lord, my Love is crucified.

Then let us sit beneath his cross,
And gladly catch the healing stream,
All things for him account but loss,
And give up all our hearts to him;
Of nothing think or speak beside,
"My Lord, my Love is crucified."

John Wesley

Hymn XXX: Where Shall My Wondering Soul Begin?

Where shall my wondering soul begin?
How shall I all to heaven aspire?
A slave redeemed from death and sin,
A brand plucked from eternal fire,
How shall I equal triumphs raise,
Or sing my great Deliverer's praise?

O how shall I the goodness tell,
Father, which thou to me hast showed?
That I, a child of wrath and hell,
I should be called a child of God,
Should know, should feel my sins forgiven,
Blest with this antepast of heaven!

And shall I slight my Father's love?
Or basely fear his gifts to own?
Unmindful of his favours prove?
Shall I, the hallowed cross to shun,
Refuse his righteousness to impart,
By hiding it within my heart?

No! though the ancient dragon rage,
And call forth all his host to war,
Though earth's self-righteous sons engage
Them and their god alike I dare;
Jesus, the sinner's friend, proclaim;
Jesus, to sinners still the same.

Outcasts of men, to you I call,
Harlots, and publicans, and thieves!
He spreads his arms to embrace you all;
Sinners alone his grace receives;
No need of him the righteous have;
He came the lost to seek and save.

Come, O my guilty brethren, come,
Groaning beneath your load of sin,
His bleeding heart shall make you room,
His open side shall take you in;
He calls you now, invites you home;
Come, O my guilty brethren, come!

For you the purple current flowed
In pardons from his wounded side,
Languished for you the eternal God,
For you the Prince of glory died:
Believe, and all your sin's forgiven;
Only believe, and yours is heaven!

John Wesley

Hymn: Thou Hidden Love of God

Thou hidden love of God, whose height,
Whose depth unfathom'd no man knows,
I see from far thy beauteous light,
Inly I sigh for thy repose;
My heart is pain'd, nor can it be
At rest, till it finds rest in thee.

Thy secret voice invites me still,
The sweetness of thy yoke to prove:
And fain I would: but tho' my will
Seem fix'd, yet wide my passions rove;
Yet hindrances strew all the way;
I aim at thee, yet from thee stray.

'Tis mercy all, that thou hast brought
My mind to seek her peace in thee;
Yet while I seek, but find thee not,
No peace my wand'ring soul shall see;
O when shall all my wand'rings end,
And all my steps to thee-ward tend!

Is there a thing beneath the sun
That strives with thee my heart to share?
Ah! tear it thence, and reign alone,
The Lord of ev'ry motion there;
Then shall my heart from earth be free,
When it hath found repose in thee.

O hide this self from me, that I
No more, but Christ in me may live;
My vile affections crucify,
Nor let one darling lust survive;
In all things nothing may I see,
Nothing desire or seek but thee.

O Love, thy sov'reign aid impart,
To save me from low-thoughted care:
Chase this self-will thro' all my heart,
Thro' all its latent mazes there:
Make me thy duteous child, that I
Ceaseless may Abba, Father, cry!

Ah no! ne'er will I backward turn:
Thine wholly, thine alone I am!
Thrice happy he who views with scorn
Earth's toys, for thee his constant flame;
O help that I may never move
From the blest footsteps of thy love!

Each moment draw from earth away
My heart that lowly waits thy call:
Speak to my inmost soul, and say,

I am thy love, thy God, thy all!
To feel thy power, to hear thy voice,
To taste thy love, be all my choice.

John Wesley