

**SELFISH INDIVIDUALISM OR CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE?  
A CRITIQUE OF MARGARET THATCHER'S IDEA OF INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY WITH  
REFERENCE TO METHODISM<sup>1</sup>**

**The Revd Ross Maidment**

**Abstract:** *Much has been written about Margaret Thatcher's premiership and her political ideas, including individual liberty. There has also been some consideration of whether or not her political thinking was influenced by her Christian faith. In recent academic research, this claim has been scrutinized. Notably, Eliza Filby (King's College, London) has offered an historian's critique of the way Thatcher invoked Christianity, in the context of the apparent secularisation of British society in the 1980s. Filby argues that whilst Thatcher's critics correctly claim that her belief in the liberty of the individual created a more secular society, this was never Thatcher's intention. This essay offers a theological critique of Thatcher's idea of individual liberty, which has been criticised as mere 'selfish individualism,' but which Thatcher herself claimed to be a Christian principle. It presents a full account of Thatcher's idea, how she connected it with Christianity, and the extent to which it can be legitimately claim to be a product of her own 'Nonconformist' tradition. Special attention is given to the theological tradition of Methodism in which Thatcher was raised.*

Choice lies at the heart of the Christian revelation [...] there is something wrong in believing a man [is] fit to choose his eternal destiny but not to decide on the education of his children.<sup>2</sup>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Margaret Hilda Thatcher (née Roberts, 13 October 1925—8 April 2013) took her religious faith seriously. It shaped her personality and, at times, even her politics. It is widely known that her Christianity was rooted in the Protestant Nonconformist tradition of Methodism, and she often emphasised the so-called Protestant 'work-ethic' throughout her Premiership. Mrs Thatcher claimed

---

<sup>1</sup> Invitational presentation at the God, Religion and Politics Conference, Institute for Interdisciplinary Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield (U.K.), 8-9 April 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Lord John Selwyn Gummer, *Faith in Politics: Which Way Should Christians Vote?* (London: SPCK, 1987), p. 9.

that her political convictions were consonant with the insights of Christianity: ‘Although I have always resisted the argument that a Christian has to be a Conservative’, she wrote in her memoirs, ‘I have never lost my conviction that there is a deep and providential harmony between the kind of political economy I favour and the insights of Christianity’.<sup>3</sup> Mrs Thatcher claimed to speak ‘personally as a Christian, as well as a politician’ in an address to the Church of Scotland General Assembly on 31st October 1988.<sup>4</sup> In this speech, famously referred to the ‘*Sermon on the Mound*’, Mrs Thatcher outlined most meticulously the ways in which her faith formed and inspired her politics.

Central to Thatcher’s political vision was her belief in the liberty of the individual. According to Mrs Thatcher, this liberty brings with it a responsibility. Adopting the language of the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30), Mrs Thatcher set out her vision in a speech to the Conservative Party Conference in 1975:

I believe that, just as each of us has an obligation to make the best of his talents, so governments have an obligation to create the framework within which we can do so—not only individual people, but individual firms and particularly small firms.<sup>5</sup>

Much has already been written about Margaret Thatcher’s premiership and her political ideas, including individual liberty. There has even been some consideration of whether or not her political thinking was influenced by her Christian faith, perhaps under the influence of her father, Alfred Roberts (1892-1970), who was a Methodist lay preacher.<sup>6</sup> Thatcher herself certainly claimed that her political thinking was Christian. In recent academic research, this claim has been placed under scrutiny. Notably, Eliza Filby (King’s College, London) has offered an historian’s critique of the way Christianity was invoked by Thatcher in her years in power, in the context of the apparent secularisation of British society in the 1980s.<sup>7</sup> Filby argues that whilst Mrs Thatcher’s critics correctly claim that her belief in the liberty of the individual created a more secular and materialist society, that this was never Thatcher’s intention. Filby suggests that the Conservative Party did not share

---

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Thatcher, *The Path to Power* (London: Harper Collins, 1995), pp. 554-555.

<sup>4</sup> Margaret Thatcher, ‘Speech to General Assembly of Scotland’ (1988), accessed February 1, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107246>.

<sup>5</sup> Margaret Thatcher, ‘Leader’s speech, Blackpool’ (1975), accessed February 1, 2015, <http://www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech-archive.htm?speech=121>.

<sup>6</sup> Following the death of her Father, Margaret Thatcher dedicated a lectern in Mr Roberts memory at Finkin Street Chapel, Grantham. See, Appendix 1.

<sup>7</sup> Eliza Filby, ‘God and Mrs Thatcher: Religion and Politics in 1980s Britain’, Ph.D. diss. University of Warwick. Cf. Eliza Filby, *God and Mrs Thatcher: The Battle for Britain’s Soul* (London: BiteBack, 2015)

Thatcher's theological convictions, and therefore, perhaps ironically, her administration created a more secular society:

Even though it could be said that Thatcherism owes more to Methodism than Monetarism and more to Alderman Roberts than Milton Friedman, Margaret Thatcher's specific religious ethos would not have a lasting impact on the party. The new generation of Thatcherites may have enthusiastically embraced her political ideology but they abandoned the theological precepts underpinning it.<sup>8</sup>

In her own time, Thatcher was, of course, not without her critics. Whilst she believed her idea of individual liberty to be a Christian principle, others suggested it was merely selfish individualism, and have accused Mrs Thatcher of ushering in the era of the yuppie.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, there existed a notable theo-political divide between Mrs Thatcher's interpretation of the faith and a number of Christian leaders, as evinced by Bishop Jenkins in his memoirs:

The highlight of the meeting came when she was telling us how disappointed she was that we bishops did not seem to appreciate that her motivation stemmed from Christianity. Both Christianity and liberal market democracy, she stated, "were about freedom". At this point the evangelical Bishop of Chester, Michael Baughen, gently corrected her in his grandfathering way: "oh no, Primer Minister. Christianity is not about freedom, it is about love."<sup>10</sup>

The purpose of this thesis will be to offer a *theological* critique of Thatcher's idea of individual liberty, which has been criticised as mere 'selfish individualism'<sup>11</sup> but which Thatcher herself claimed to be a Christian principle. In part one, I will attempt to offer an account of Thatcher's idea and the way she connected it with Christianity, before considering in part two the extent to which it can be legitimately claimed to be a product of her own 'Nonconformist' tradition. I will give special attention to the theological tradition of Methodism, in which Thatcher was raised. The thesis will take a thematic approach, and will attempt to 'break down' Margaret Thatcher's idea of liberty into its tenets, and offer a critique of each one. Given that this is a vast subject, with no shortage of primary and secondary material, it will be difficult for this thesis to offer a full theological critique of every aspect of Mrs Thatcher's idea. The aim of the thesis, however, is to demonstrate the ways in which a

---

<sup>8</sup> Filby, 'God and Mrs Thatcher', pp. 236-237.

<sup>9</sup> See, in general, *Ibid*, pp. 93-94.

<sup>10</sup> David Jenkins, *Not Just and Autobiography: The Calling of a Cuckoo* (London, 2002), p. 133.

<sup>11</sup> Janet Daley, *Death of a Revolutionary* (Channel 4, 2013)

Methodist theology of liberty may align itself, or indeed challenge, Mrs Thatcher's idea. This thesis will argue that Margaret Thatcher's idea of individual liberty, can, on the whole, legitimately claim to be a Christian principle according to Methodist theology.

## PART 1

### 1. MARGARET THATCHER'S IDEA OF INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY

#### 1.1. What did Mrs Thatcher mean by liberty/liberty of the individual?

At the heart of our belief is the principle of freedom under the rule of law. Freedom that gives a man room to breathe, to take responsibility, to make his own decisions and to chart his own course. Remove man's freedom and you dwarf the individual, you devalue his conscience and you demoralise him.<sup>12</sup>

At a Conservative Party policy meeting in the late 1970's, Margaret Thatcher banged her copy of Friedrich Hayek's *The Constitution of Liberty* on the table, sternly declaring to her ministers, 'This is what we believe!'<sup>13</sup> Above all else, Mrs Thatcher was a passionate libertarian, committed to liberty, and in particular, the liberty of the individual. The word 'liberty' itself became to viewed as synonyms with Thatcherism<sup>14</sup>, and commentators have suggested that it was under the banner of 'liberty' that all Mrs Thatcher's policies were promoted.<sup>15</sup> But what exactly did Mrs Thatcher mean by liberty, and in particular, the liberty of the individual? I would like to suggest that there were three distinctive, yet inter-dependant tenets underpinning Mrs Thatcher's vision of liberty, and in this section of the thesis I will consider her speeches in order identify these tenets.

---

<sup>12</sup> Margaret Thatcher, *Speech to Conservative Party Conference* (1989), accessed February 10, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107789>.

<sup>13</sup> John Ranelagh, *Thatcher's People: An Insider's Account of the Politics, the Power, and the Personalities* (London: Harper Collins, 1991), p. ix. Cf. In becoming familiar with Hayek's work, one becomes familiar with the context in which Mrs Thatcher developed her idea of individual liberty. Andrew Gamble offers an excellent, and detailed account of Hayek's principle of liberty, and therefore, there is no need to give a detailed account of this here. See, in general, Andrew Gamble, 'Hayek and Liberty', *Critical Review: A Journal of Politics and Society*(2013) 25:3-4, pp. 342-363.

<sup>14</sup> Thatcher recognised this herself, and in a speech to the Conservative Central Council, she remarked: 'To stand up for liberty is now called a Thatcherism'. See, Margaret Thatcher, 'Speech to Conservative Central Council' (1975), accessed February 10, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/102655>. Cf. One commentator notes that Mrs Thatcher 'was the only twentieth-century prime minister to become eponymous'. See, in general, Eric J. Evans, *Thatcher and Thatcherism* (Oxford: Routledge, 2013), p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Filby, 'God and Mrs Thatcher', p. 14.

i. Free choice

We believe that there are many things which the State can and must do, but we know that ultimately “the individual is the sun and the state is the moon which shines with borrowed light”.<sup>16</sup>

Foremost to Mrs Thatcher's idea of liberty was man's right to choose freely, and upon this right rested the essence of ethics. ‘Choice is the essence of ethics: if there was no choice, there would be no ethics, no good, no evil; good and evil have meaning only insofar as man is free to choose’.<sup>17</sup> Mrs Thatcher argued that freedom of choice was ‘morally superior’ to the opposing ‘Socialist-statist philosophy’ as it ensured our purpose in life, ‘[which] is not to be the servant of the State and its objectives, but to make the best of [ones] talents and qualities’.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, according to Mrs Thatcher, a moral society, that is, a society which preserves free choice, underlies a strong economy. In this way, free choice and economic success were inter-dependant: ‘the better moral philosophy of the free society underlies its economic performance. In turn the material success of the free society enables people to show a degree of generosity to the less fortunate’.<sup>19</sup>

ii. Free market

We believe in the diffusion of power. Spreading power among the people—political power, economic power, above all the power of people to run their own lives and make their own decisions.<sup>20</sup>

In terms of economic thought, Mrs Thatcher's views might be described as more ‘neo-liberal’ than conventional pragmatic Conservatism.<sup>21</sup> She was ideologically committed to the liberation of the individual businessman and the ‘wealth creator’. Freedom of choice was paramount. The individual had to use his talents to create wealth, although, he should be encouraged to do so by limiting state control and through low taxation.

---

<sup>16</sup> Thatcher, ‘Speech to Conservative Central Council’.

<sup>17</sup> Margaret Thatcher, ‘Speech to Zurich Economic Society’, *The New Renaissance* (1977), accessed February 10, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/103336>.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Thatcher, ‘Speech to Zurich Economic Society’.

<sup>21</sup> Evans, *Thatcher and Thatcherism*, p. 3.

In fact, aside from controlling inflation through an economic strategy known as monetarism (controlling the supply of money in order to maintain low rates of inflation), and maintaining low rates of tax, Mrs Thatcher believed that the government should not intervene in the market. Indeed, under Mrs Thatcher, the Conservative government attempted to hand over as much ‘control’ as possible to the individual, and perhaps the best demonstration of this was the state selling of publicly owned services. Evans argues: ‘Privatisation had three main aspects, all designed to reduce state interference, regulation and control’.<sup>22</sup>

iii. Free individual

Finally, Mrs Thatcher believed that rather than placing an emphasis on society, and its responsibilities, that the emphasis of responsibility should lie with individual men, women, and families. Ultimately, the individual had to be responsible for his or her own well being, and indeed, the well being of their neighbours. This tenet of Thatcher’s wider idea, whilst distinct, was also inter-dependant. It required freedom of choice, and the free market. Mrs Thatcher pointed to the Victorian era, as a prime example of these three tenets coming together, and of individuals taking responsibility for those in need: ‘It is noteworthy that the Victorian era—the heyday of free enterprise in Britain—was also the era of the rise of selflessness and benefaction’.<sup>23</sup>

Mrs Thatcher argued, therefore, that individuals should be free to help those in need, and even suggested that where it may appear that the state, or society as a whole offers assistance, say in form of the dole, that one should try to think of the assistance as a the contribution of individuals, and in particular, one’s neighbour. This in turn should provide further incentives for the individual to take care of his own affairs:

[...] but when people come an say: “But what is the point of working? I can get as much on the dole!” You say: “Look” It is not the dole. It is your neighbour who is supplying it and if you can earn your own living then really you have a duty to do it and you will feel very much better!”<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 35.

<sup>23</sup> Thatcher, ‘Speech to Zurich Economic Society’.

<sup>24</sup> Margaret Thatcher, ‘Interview for Woman’s Own’ (1987), accessed February 11, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106689>.

## 1.2. How did Mrs Thatcher connect her idea with Christianity?

The Old Testament prophets did not say, “Brothers, I want a consensus”. They said, “This is my faith. This is what I passionately believe. If you believe it, too, then come with me.”<sup>25</sup>

Margaret Thatcher, was, according to Andrew Crines, ‘extremely interested in the idea of duty to God’.<sup>26</sup> She was not afraid to speak publicly about her religious upbringing, and often drew upon the language of the Bible in her speeches. In doing so, she attempted to justify her beliefs, and her deeply held convictions. Thatcher's use of biblical language was different than that of others in a liberal democratic tradition, in that she used it to attack consensus and lead her own neo-Conservative revolution.<sup>27</sup>

Mrs Thatcher also connected her idea of liberty with Christianity, drawing on her own faith, forged in the pews at Fikin Street Chapel, Grantham. Individual liberty, Mrs Thatcher would claim, was at the heart of the Christian message.<sup>28</sup> Having already identified what I consider to be the three main tenets of Thatcher’s idea—namely, freedom of choice, freedom of markets, and freedom of the individual/family—I will now outline how Mrs Thatcher connected her idea with Christianity.

### i. Free choice

Mrs Thatcher argued that our freedoms were God-given, not state-given’.<sup>29</sup> She rejected the idea that such liberty could be given by the state— the state could only defend what God had already given.<sup>30</sup> Mrs Thatcher believed that this freedom of choice brought with it responsibility. It was the duty of the individual to help his fellow man, and these duties, she proclaimed, ‘come not from secular legislation passed by Parliament, but from being a Christian’.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Margaret Thatcher, cited in B. Särilvick and I. Crewe, *Decade of Dealignment: The Conservative Victory of 1979 and Electoral Trends in the 1970s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 29.

<sup>26</sup> Andrew S. Crines and Kevin Theakston, ‘*Doing God’ in Number 10: British Prime Ministers, Religion and Political Rhetoric*, accessed February 10, 2014, <http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/82330/15/theakstonv2.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> James G. Crossley, *Harnessing Chaos: The Bible in English Political Discourse since 1968* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), p. 116.

<sup>28</sup> Filby, ‘God and Mrs Thatcher’, p. 192.

<sup>29</sup> Jenkins, *The Calling of a Cuckoo*, p. 133.

<sup>30</sup> Filby, ‘God and Mrs Thatcher’, p. 193.

<sup>31</sup> Thatcher, ‘Speech to General Assembly of Scotland’.

In an interview with David Frost, Mrs Thatcher pointed to the account of creation, in Genesis 1, arguing that man was made free with ‘fundamental choice’, in the image of God, and further, ‘if he did not have fundamental choice, well he would not be Man made in the image of God’.<sup>32</sup> Later in the same year she restated her point at the Church of Scotland General Assembly: ‘from the beginning man has been endowed by God with the fundamental right to choose between good and evil’.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, Mrs Thatcher claimed that free choice was demonstrably Christian in the act of Christ choosing to lay down his life for his friends.<sup>34</sup> Mrs Thatcher also believed in individual salvation, which required free choice. It has been remarked that Methodists sing their theology<sup>35</sup>, and so it is perhaps not too surprising that Mrs Thatcher justified her belief to the Church of Scotland by quoting the hymn, ‘I vow to Thee, My Country’:

[It] speak[s] of “another country I heard of long ago” whose King can’t be seen and whose armies can’t be counted, but “soul by soul and silently her shining bounds increase”. Not group by group, or party by party, or even church by church — but soul by soul—and each one counts.<sup>36</sup>

For Mrs Thatcher, therefore, it was a the duty of government to protect and defend man’s God given freedom of choice: ‘Let us not forget—our first duty to freedom is to defend our own’.<sup>37</sup> To limit a man’s freedom, would be to limit a man’s potential to realise his true identity as one made in the image of God.<sup>38</sup>

ii. Free market

[...] allowing people to exercise that talent and opportunity means more inequality, but it means you drag up the poor people, because there are the resources to do so. No-one

---

<sup>32</sup> Margaret Thatcher, ‘TV Interview for TV-AM’ (1988), accessed February 10, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/speeches/displaydocument.asp?docid-107022>.

<sup>33</sup> Thatcher, ‘Speech to General Assembly of Scotland’.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid; Cf. John 15:13, NRSV.

<sup>35</sup> It has been remarked that Methodists sing their theology. See, in general, Kenneth Wilson, *Methodist Theology* (London: T&T Clark International, 2011), p. 32.

<sup>36</sup> Thatcher, ‘Speech to General Assembly of Scotland’.

<sup>37</sup> Margaret Thatcher, ‘Confrontation with reality’, *Speech to Conservative Party Conference* (1977), accessed February 10, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/103443>.

<sup>38</sup> Thatcher, ‘TV Interview for TV-AM’; Cf. William Temple, *Christianity and Social Order* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1942), p. 37.



would remember the good Samaritan if he'd only had good intentions; he had money as well.<sup>39</sup>

In order for the people to be free, markets had to be free also. Milton Friedman (1912-2006) coined the phrase 'freer markets lead to free people', and has argued that there is a direct link between economic freedom and political freedom.<sup>40</sup> In an interview for Time Magazine, Mrs Thatcher suggested that one could not separate liberty from economic liberty: '[There can be] no liberty unless there is economic liberty'.<sup>41</sup> However, whilst Mrs Thatcher's idea may well find its roots intellectually in Friedmanian economics, her commitment to it stemmed from her religious beliefs.<sup>42</sup>

Mrs Thatcher believed that it was a Christian duty to 'work, and use our talents', quoting St Paul: 'If a man will not work he shall not eat', she explained.<sup>43</sup> Mrs Thatcher recognised that the free market and the creation of wealth can lead to selfishness: 'the Tenth Commandment—Thou shalt not covet—recognises that making money and owning things could become selfish activities'.<sup>44</sup> She argued that the creation of wealth was not at odds with Christian principles, but rather the 'love of money for its own sake'.<sup>45</sup> Mrs Thatcher insisted that a free market was the best, if not the only way to meet the needs of society and the poor.

According to Filby, the parable of the Good Samaritan was of all Biblical references the 'most frequently evoked by politicians and clergy'.<sup>46</sup> For Mrs Thatcher, the parable provided an example of individual charitable giving—giving that was only possible because 'he had money'. She would later pose the question, how could we today be like the good Samaritan without the freedom to create wealth: 'How could we respond to the many calls for help, or invest for the future, or support the wonderful artists and craftsman whose work also glorifies God, unless we had first *worked hard* and *used our talents* to create the necessary wealth?'<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> Margaret Thatcher, 'TV Interview for London Weekend Television', *Weekend World* (1980), accessed February 11, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104210>.

<sup>40</sup> Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 7-21.

<sup>41</sup> Margaret Thatcher, 'World: An Interview with Thatcher', *Time* (1979), accessed February 11, 2015, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,916774,00.html>.

<sup>42</sup> Filby, *God and Mrs Thatcher*, pp. 146, 236-337; Cf. Richard Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain: The Political and Social Upheavals of the 1980s* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2009) Ch. 3.

<sup>43</sup> Thatcher, 'Speech to General Assembly of Scotland'.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Thatcher, 'Speech to General Assembly of Scotland'.

<sup>46</sup> Filby, 'God and Mrs Thatcher', p. 232.

<sup>47</sup> Thatcher, 'Speech to General Assembly of Scotland'. (emphasis added)

iii. Free individual

There is no such thing [as society]! There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first.<sup>48</sup>

Margaret Thatcher, though not a conventional Conservative in many respects, did believe in the importance of the family. She once claimed that there was no such thing as society, only individuals, and families. This was not uncontroversial, and many criticised Thatcher's views. Martin Steven notes: 'Critics from the left sized upon this individualistic view of the world but, of course, the full text suggests an altogether more nuanced meaning.'<sup>49</sup>

Mrs Thatcher believed that many of our problems could be solved within the family structure, and argued that there was a precedent for this in Christianity. Indeed, in an interview with Douglas Key of *Woman's Own*, she connected her belief in the power of the family structure to solve problems, with the Christian account of the Incarnation: 'the whole of religion is that the good Lord came into the world to help those who had these great problems—most of the problems will be solved within the family structure'.<sup>50</sup> The link between Christianity and traditional family values is perhaps a natural one, as Steven argues: 'one does not have to be a Christian to believe in the importance of the family, but it just so happens that the two often go together quite neatly'.<sup>51</sup>

## 2. CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE: A METHODIST THEOLOGY OF INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY

### 2.1. A Methodist theology of individual liberty: a broad introduction

Therefore inasmuch as God works in you, you are now able to work out your own salvation. Since he worketh in you of his own good pleasure, without any merits of yours, both to will and to do, it is possible for you to fulfil all righteousness.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Thatcher, 'Interview for *Woman's Own*'.

<sup>49</sup> Martin Steven, *Christianity and Party Politics* (Oxford: Routledge, 2011), p. 55.

<sup>50</sup> Thatcher, 'Interview for *Woman's Own*'.

<sup>51</sup> Steven, *Christianity and Party Politics*, p. 55.

<sup>52</sup> John Wesley, 'On Working Out Our Own Salvation', *The Sermons of John Wesley*, accessed February 17, 2015, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-85-on-working-out-our-own-salvation/>.

The Methodist Union of 1932 saw three main strands of Methodism in Britain—the Wesleyans, Primitive Methodists, and United Methodists— come together. Each strand was, and in part, remains distinctive. Whilst the Primitive Methodists were often largely established amongst working class communities, particularly in the North, and affiliated itself with the Labour Party<sup>53</sup>, the Wesleyans were often established among middle-class professionals.<sup>54</sup> This dissertation shall focus exclusively on Wesleyans, as it was within this particular strand of Methodism that Mrs Thatcher was raised.

Methodism has always emphasised the importance of individual effort. Indeed, it has been alleged that the name ‘Methodism’ was given to the group founded by John and Charles Wesley, originally known as ‘The Holy Club’, by their fellow students at Oxford, in order to describe the ‘rule’ and ‘method’ of their faith.<sup>55</sup> John Wesley himself, through his sermons, often stressed the individual responsibility one had for their own salvation (example above). Maldwyn Edwards has argued, therefore: ‘In Methodism the note of individualism is clearly sounded’.<sup>56</sup> In this section of the thesis, I would like to outline a Methodist theology of individual liberty. I will pay particular attention to the works of John Wesley (1703-1791), who as the founder of Methodism continues to be of significant influence.

The value of John Wesley for this exercise, is that not only is his theological contribution to Methodism clearly of great significance, but additionally, claims have already been made which suggest that Wesley was himself a Conservative.

Peter Hawker, a former Methodist Circuit Steward, has described Wesley as a ‘High Tory’<sup>57</sup>, and further, Edwards has argued that Wesley’s political views were consonant with his theological beliefs: ‘Wesley was a staunch Tory. His political tenets were as clearly defined as his theological beliefs’.<sup>58</sup>

E. R. Taylor has considered the relationship between Methodism and Politics following the death of John Wesley and has argued that: ‘the history of Methodism’s relation to politics has been the story

---

<sup>53</sup> See, in general, J.M. Turner, “Methodism in England 1900-1932”, *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* vol. 3, (London: Epworth Press, 1983), p. 358.

<sup>54</sup> See, in general, Rupert Davies, *Methodism* (London: Epworth Press, 1963), p. 141.

<sup>55</sup> See, in general, Filby, *The Battle for Britain’s Soul*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>56</sup> Maldwyn Edwards, *After Wesley: A Study of the Social and Political Influence of Methodism in the Middle Period (1791-1849)* (London: Epworth Press, 1935), p. 37.

<sup>57</sup> Peter Hawker, *Poles Apart: A critique of Methodism and Politics for the XXIst Century from Right of Centre* (Essex: Robert Odcombe Associates, 1988), p. 2.

<sup>58</sup> Edwards, *After Wesley*, p. 14.

of a Liberal displacement of a strong Tory sentiment'.<sup>59</sup> David Hempton has praised Taylor's work for its 'impressive [...] insights into the nature of Wesleyan Conservatism and evangelical social ethics'.<sup>60</sup> It is clear, then, that for many commentators, John Wesley's theology underpinned his political attitudes and, that following his death, went on to inform the political attitudes of many Methodists.<sup>61</sup>

i. John Wesley: liberty and responsibility

John Wesley, preaching that salvation was open to every believer, struck for perhaps the first time, the full authentic note of Protestantism. Methodism was the development of the principle inherent in Protestantism, that neither State nor Church must usurp the right which belongs to the individual conscience.<sup>62</sup>

Man has been endowed by God with the gift of individual liberty, and this gift, John Wesley would argue, brought with it individual responsibility. The individual, and his liberty, is a key aspect of Wesley's theology of faith and salvation. This is evinced in the collection of hymns written by both John and Charley Wesley, and compiled by John Wesley. The very first hymn of the collection emphasises a very personal and individual theology of redemption: 'His [Christ's] soul was once an offering made, For every soul of man'.<sup>63</sup>

Christ died for the soul of every man. Now it was the responsibility of every man to work out his own salvation, and to make his own response to God's offer in Christ. Wesley was utterly opposed to Calvin's soteriological doctrine. He rejected predestination and unconditional election. In his sermon on Free Grace, Wesley makes plain his opposition to Calvinism, and grounds himself in an Arminian understanding of salvation. He argues that if the doctrine of election were true, that 'all preaching [is] vain', and as preaching was an ordinance of God, this proved plainly 'that the doctrine of predestination is not a doctrine of God'.<sup>64</sup> Grace was free, and man had to be free to respond this Grace as he should will. If man should abdicate from this responsibility, believing himself to be elect, then what should prevent him from abdicating his responsibility to live a holy life? Wesley argued:

---

<sup>59</sup> E. R. Taylor, *Methodism and Politics 1791-1851* (New York, 1975), p. 13.

<sup>60</sup> David Hempton, *Methodism and Politics in British Society 1750-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1984), p. 16.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Edwards, *After Wesley*, p. 39.

<sup>63</sup> John Wesley, 'Methodist Hymnal', accessed February 17, 2015, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/?id=4407>.

<sup>64</sup> John Wesley, 'Free Grace', *The Sermons of John Wesley*, accessed February 17, 2015, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-128-free-grace/>.

but that doctrine itself, — that every man is either elected or not elected from eternity, and that one must inevitably be saved, and the other inevitable damned, — has a manifest tendency to destroy holiness in general.<sup>65</sup>

Wesley intended that his theology impact the individual believers Christian life. It was intended to be pragmatic, if not ‘intellectually polished’.<sup>66</sup> Wesley offered the faithful a ‘method’ for Christian living, and in doing so, a ‘theological fusion of faith and good works’.<sup>67</sup> It is no surprise, therefore, that the Methodist Catechism is wholly explicit on the individual, the responsibility they have for their own salvation, and their duty to self:

As my life is a trust from God, I ought to keep my body and mind clean and pure and fit for His service, to be cheerful and brave in spirit, to use and improve all me powers, and to seek by industry and thrift to both provide for my own needs and to be of service to my fellow-men.<sup>68</sup>

When asked, ‘What may we reasonably believe to be God’s design in raising up the Preachers called Methodist?’, Wesley replied, ‘To reform the nation, particularly the church, and the spread scriptural holiness over the land’.<sup>69</sup> Wesley believed that it was possible for the Christian be without sin<sup>70</sup>, and gives an account for this most fully in his work *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. This possibility was/is? available by faith, through grace; grace manifest in Christ, yet, it also required mans free response. The Reverend John Fletcher summarises Wesley's argument thus: ‘the way to perfection is by the due combination of prevenient assisting free grace and of submissive assisted free will’.<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> Wesley, ‘Free Grace’.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, p. 25.

<sup>67</sup> See, in general, Frederick Dreyer, ‘Faith and experience in the thought of John Wesley’, *American History Review* 88.1 (1983), pp. 12-30.

<sup>68</sup> ‘Margaret Thatcher’s copy of the Methodist Catechism’, accessed February 17, 2015, <http://margaretthatcher.org/document/109910>.

<sup>69</sup> ‘Minutes of Several Conversation’, *The Works of John Wesley* vol. 8 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), p. 299.

<sup>70</sup> Here, Wesley speaks of sin as a ‘voluntary transgression of a known law of God which it was within our power to obey’, and not mans ‘falling short of the divine ideal for humanity’. See, in general, R. N. Flew, *The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology* (London, 1934), p. 326.

<sup>71</sup> John Fletcher, *The Works of the Revered John Fletcher: Late Vicar of Madeley, Volume 2* (New York: T. Mason and G. Lane, 1835), p. 634.

For Wesley, the Christian believer is empowered by grace to do good deeds, yet, being wholly free, he must choose to submit himself to that grace. Wesley's account of how a man can be without sin is remarkably similar to the Scottish theologian, Donald Baillie's treatment of Christ, in that they both insist on human liberty working in tandem with God's grace, which is prevenient.<sup>72</sup> For Wesley, the possibility the one could achieve 'Christian perfection' was a central truth of Scripture. Referring to Paul's letter to the Corinthians, he emphasises that full salvation, and therefore 'perfection' was to be experienced by the believer *now*:

That this faith, and consequently the salvation which it brings is spoken of as given in an instant. This it is supposed that instant may be now; that we need not stay another moment; that "now," the very "now is the accepted time; now is the day of this full salvation."<sup>73</sup>

In this way, one could argue, Wesley had faith in the re-generated individual. His view was hopeful. Man, could by faith, through grace in Christ, 'sin no more': '[...] all real Christians, or believers in Christ, are made free from outward sin'.<sup>74</sup> It is perhaps Wesley's belief, or rather, his hope in man's re-generated capacity, that gave rise to the Methodist work-ethic. Indeed, much of Wesley's preaching concerned itself with advice on Christian living (the 'method' of faith). Wesley even advised on '*the right use of money*'. In this particular sermon, one of his most widely quoted, and one which Mrs Thatcher made reference to frequently<sup>75</sup>, Wesley brings together his beliefs in liberty and the free market to encourage his listeners to 'gain all they can, save all they can, and give all they can'.

## 2.2. Margaret Thatcher's experience of Methodism

Strength comes from within, within ourselves, our homes, our vocations, our fellowships, or communities and nations. Each one of us must kindle the spark within. If the foundation

---

<sup>72</sup> Baillie argues: 'Thus while there is a human side to every good action, so that it is genuinely the free choice of a person with a will, yet somehow the Christian feels the other side of it, the divine side, is logically prior. The grace of God is prevenient'. See, Donald M. Baillie, *God Was in Christ* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948), p. 116.

<sup>73</sup> John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (London, 1952), p. 27. Cf., 2 Corinthians 6:2.

<sup>74</sup> John Wesley, 'Christian Perfection', *The Sermons of John Wesley*, accessed February 17, 2015, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-40-christian-perfection/>.

<sup>75</sup> Filby, *The Battle for Britain's Soul*, p. 347.

of our thinking and doing is strong, then and only then will the structure of human society be lasting and effective[...] The Kingdom of God is within you.<sup>76</sup>

It will be worthwhile for us to consider Mrs Thatcher's own experience of Methodism, as it is this experience which is said to have shaped her political thought most.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, it would not be fair for this thesis to offer a critique of Mrs Thatcher's idea of liberty according to Methodism, without first giving an account of her own experience of the faith.

As a child, Margaret attended services at Finkin Street Chapel, Grantham, no less than four times each Sunday. For the Roberts family, Methodism was more than just a one-day a week occupation, but something that impacted every aspect of life. 'Our lives revolved around Methodism', Mrs Thatcher recalled reflecting on her childhood in her memoirs.<sup>78</sup>

Her father, Alfred Robert, was a Methodist lay preacher, and following a period of support for the Liberal party, he switched to the Conservatives. Mrs Thatcher would later describe her father as an 'old fashioned liberal' who believed in liberty and hard work.<sup>79</sup> From the pews at Finkin Street, the young Margaret listened to her father expound on the Methodist 'work-ethic' which would later inform her own thinking, and crucially, her political policies. For example, Mr Roberts believed that idleness was a sin, and his own sermon notes testify: 'a lazy man' was one who had 'lost his soul already'.<sup>80</sup>

Further, his sermon notes evince the importance of individual effort, and the responsibility one had for their own salvation. It is not too surprising, therefore, that Mrs Thatcher herself believed that idleness was a sin. Speaking to Kenneth Harris, Mrs Thatcher explained that her upbringing had taught her that 'the greatest sin of all was wasting time. Every minute of the day was to be filled with useful occupation. Idleness was a waste [...] It was very important to use your life to some purpose'.<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup> Alfred Roberts, 'Strength comes from within', accessed February 17, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/109905>.

<sup>77</sup> Filby has argued that Thatcherism '[owes] more to Alderman Roberts than [to] Milton Friedman'. See, Filby, 'God and Mrs Thatcher', pp. 236-237.

<sup>78</sup> Thatcher, *Path to Power*, p. 5.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, p. 21.

<sup>80</sup> Alfred Roberts, 'sermon notes d' (1950), accessed February 17, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.com/document/109925>. I owe this reference to Filby, *God and Mrs Thatcher*, p. 180.

<sup>81</sup> Margaret Thatcher, cited by Gillian Shephard, *The Real Iron Lady: Working with Margaret Thatcher* (London: BiteBack, 2013), p. 11.

Mr Roberts would often fuse his political ideas together with his theological beliefs, as Filby suggests: ‘a notable feature of Roberts’ sermons was the fusion between political language and religious doctrine’.<sup>82</sup> Referring to the language of the debate concerning tariffs versus free trade, Roberts declared that ‘[God] refuses to put grace on a tariff’.<sup>83</sup> Roberts believed that the market should be free from state restrictions. He also believed that God’s grace was free, and therefore, no tariff could be imposed upon it.<sup>84</sup>

His belief in the free-market stemmed from his own conviction that man had been endowed by God from his earliest moment with liberty. Much like the Wesley brothers, Roberts stressed a Gospel of personal responsibility and salvation. If man was free to work out his own salvation, Mr Roberts might ask, why should he not be free live as he chooses? Why should he not be free to earn, and spend as his conscious directs?

Mrs Thatcher once argued that there was a ‘providential harmony’ between the type of economy she favoured, and Christianity.<sup>85</sup> This belief she shared with her father, Mr Roberts, whose sermons evince his own belief in such a harmony. John Campbell has summed up Alfred Robert’s preaching as: ‘fundamentalist, Bible-based, concerned with the individual’s responsibility to God for his own behaviour [with] an uncompromisingly individualist moral code which underpinned an individualist approach to politics and commerce’.<sup>86</sup>

## PART 2

### 3. SELFISH INDIVIDUALISM OR CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE?

Freedom is the goal of politics. To establish and secure true freedom is the primary object of all right political action. For it is in and through his freedom that a man makes fully real his personality—the quality of one made in the image of God.<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>82</sup> Filby, ‘God and Mrs Thatcher’, p. 181.

<sup>83</sup> Alfred Roberts, ‘sermon notes b’ (1941), accessed February 17, 2015, <http://www.margarethatcher.com/document/109899>. Cf. Filby, *God and Mrs Thatcher*, p. 181.

<sup>84</sup> Filby, ‘God and Mrs Thatcher’, p. 181.

<sup>85</sup> Thatcher, *The Path to Power*, pp. 554-555.

<sup>86</sup> John Campbell, *The Iron Lady: Margaret Thatcher: From Grocer’s Daughter to Iron Lady* (London: Vintage, 2012), p. 16.

<sup>87</sup> William Temple, *Christianity and Social Order*, p. 37.



Margaret Thatcher believed her idea of individual liberty was consonant with Christian ideas of liberty, and asserted that her beliefs were consequent upon her Methodism. However, critics have argued that Mrs Thatcher's idea of liberty would be best described as 'selfish individualism'. This section of the thesis will offer a critique of each of the tenets of Mrs Thatcher's idea, considering both the charge of the critics, and a Methodist theology of liberty— in doing so, asking the question, 'selfish individualism or Christian principle?'

### 3.1. Free choice: 'Man has been endowed by God to choose between good and evil'

Mrs Thatcher's political and religious beliefs coalesced primarily around one principle— individual choice and responsibility. 'The heart of the Christian message' she claimed 'is that each person has the right to choose'.<sup>88</sup> Mrs Thatcher believed that it was her duty as Prime Minister to extend freedom as widely as possible. Campbell has suggested: 'she believed passionately that in politics she was fighting for Good against Evil; and she expected the churches to be on her side'.<sup>89</sup> This was not the case. The Church of England, had, at one time, been dubbed 'the Tory Party at prayer'. It was now one of her most vocal critics, challenging her political ideology, and more fundamentally, the religious faith underpinning it. Indeed, the Bishop of Chester once remarked: 'oh no, Prime Minister. Christianity is not about freedom, it is about love'.<sup>90</sup> The Bishop's comment conveys well the mood of the Church's leadership at the time, many of whom felt that Mrs Thatcher's interpretation of the faith led to an increasingly selfish society:

From the pulpit to the picket line, from the Lords to the inner cities, the Anglican bishops persistently condemned the selfish individualism of enterprise culture, the destruction of the collective ethos within society and the rampant materialism being unleashed by free-market economics.<sup>91</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> Margaret Thatcher, *The Woman at No. 10*, (ITV, 1983).

<sup>89</sup> John Campbell, *Margaret Thatcher, Volume Two: The Iron Lady* (London: Vintage, 2008), p. 391.

<sup>90</sup> Jenkins, *The Calling of a Cuckoo*, p. 133.

<sup>91</sup> Filby, 'God and Mrs Thatcher', p. 13.

However, the Bishop's comment did not necessarily convey the mood of those sitting in the pews.<sup>92</sup> Nor, I would argue, is it an accurate statement about what Christianity *is*. For Christianity is neither exclusively about love, or freedom. According to Augustine, love *requires* freedom: 'The law of liberty is the law of love'.<sup>93</sup> That is to say, love cannot be coerced. John Wesley understood this, and like Augustine, argued that there is a necessary harmony between love and freedom: '[...] the law of universal love, which alone is perfect freedom'.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, for both Wesley and Augustine, it was the harmony between freedom and love, held together in grace, that made possible perfectibility. Augustine argues: 'For we do not deny that human nature can be without sin, and we ought not in any way to deny that it can become perfect, since we admit that it can make progress, but only by "the grace of God, by Jesus Christ our Lord'.'<sup>95</sup>

John Wesley was firmly committed to the freedom of God, and further, the freedom of humanity, made in the image of God. There is a precedent for this in the writings of Anselm, who argued that it is within the very nature of God that humanity should be free, and therefore, even what God wills must occur in accordance with the free will of humanity.<sup>96</sup> Wesley believed that God had endowed man with freedom from his earliest beginnings, and with this freedom came freedom of choice, and responsibility. Made in the image of God, man was designed to know what was good, and given the capacity to choose to do good. Wesley writes:

What made his image yet plainer in his human offspring was [...] the liberty he originally enjoyed; the perfect freedom implanted in his nature, and interwoven with all its parts.<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> Voting patterns demonstrate that, with the exception of Roman Catholics, Christians voted Conservative throughout Mrs Thatcher's premiership. See, in general, Ben Clements and Nick Spencer, *Voting and Values in Britain: Does religion count?* (London: Theos, 2014), pp. 30-34.

<sup>93</sup> Augustine, cited by Mary T. Clark, *Augustine* (London: Continuum, 2005), p. 50.

<sup>94</sup> John Wesley, 'Notes on the General Epistle of St James', accessed February 18, 2015, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/john-wesleys-notes-on-the-bible/notes-on-the-general-epistle-of-st-james/#Chapter+II>.

<sup>95</sup> Augustine, 'On Nature and Grace', *The Fathers of the Church* vol. 86, trns. by John A. Mourant and William J. Collinge (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992), p. 75.

<sup>96</sup> 'Now, God (who knows all truth and only truth) sees all things as they are—whether they be free or necessary; and as He sees them, so they are. In this way, then, without any inconsistency, it is evident both that God foreknows all things and that many things are done by free will. And before these things occur *it is possible that they never occur*. Nevertheless, in a certain sense they occur necessarily; and this necessity (as I said) derives from free will'. Anselm, 'De Concordia Praescientiae et Praedestinationis et Gratiae Dei cum Libero Arbitro', trns. by Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson', *Complete Philosophical and Theological Treatises of Anselm of Canterbury* (Minnesota: The Arthur J. Banning Press, 2000) p. 537.

<sup>97</sup> John Wesley, 'The Image of God', *Works of John Wesley* 4:295.

[...] every spirit in the universe, as such, is endued with understanding, and in consequence with a will and with a measure of liberty, and that these three as inseparably united in every intelligent nature.<sup>98</sup>

It was through free choice that Adam broke humanities relationship with God, and thus, brought sin into the world. Yet, Augustine teaches us that humanities capacity for freedom of choice was not lost by Adam's sin— only its capacity to obtain perfectibility.<sup>99</sup> The latter was restored by God's act in Christ: 'He forgave their sin, but also saved them from sinning in the future by empowering them to do good out of love for God and thus to merit eternal happiness with him'.<sup>100</sup>

As previously noted, Baillie's work *God Was in Christ* provides a good working example of how perfectibility remains possibly for humanity. He does so by weaving together the two essential ingredients identified by Wesley required for one to achieve perfectibility; grace and freedom. Patrick Nullens has summarised Wesley's understanding thus: 'The will is a slave to sin through original sin. But God grants a degree of freedom through his universal prevenient grace, freeing our minds from sinful depravity enough to allow responsible choices for and against God'.<sup>101</sup> According to Baillie, a person's actions are entirely their own, and when a person makes the wrong choice, they are entirely responsible.<sup>102</sup> Yet when a person chooses to make the right choice, and does so freely, he is empowered by the grace of God — and the Christian, according to Baillie, is aware of this: 'Thus whilst there is a human side to every good action, so that it is genuinely the free choice of a person with a will, yet somehow the Christian feels that the other side of it, the divine side, is logically prior. The grace of God is prevenient'.<sup>103</sup>

Influenced by Wesley, Margaret Thatcher argued, 'Man has been endowed by God to choose between good and evil'.<sup>104</sup> Her faith had taught her that not only was man endowed with this freedom, but that man had the capacity to use this freedom to do good— even, perhaps, obtain perfectibility.

---

<sup>98</sup> John Wesley, 'The End of Christ's Coming, *Works of John Wesley* 1:185.

<sup>99</sup> Clark, *Augustine*, p. 49.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Patrick Nullens and Ronald T. Michener, *The Matrix of Christian Ethics: Integrating Philosophy and Moral Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Colorado Springs: Paternoster Publishing, 2010), p. 179.

<sup>102</sup> Baillie, *God Was in Christ*, p. 116.

<sup>103</sup> Baillie, *God Was in Christ*, p. 116.

<sup>104</sup> Thatcher, 'Speech to General Assembly of Scotland'.

Her critics have argued that in freeing the people, Mrs Thatcher created a more selfish society. This does not mean that Mrs Thatcher's idea of individual liberty, and in particular, her commitment to freedom of choice, is selfish. On the contrary, freedom of choice is at the heart of Wesleyan Methodism, and is a principle grounded in Christian tradition (such as the works of Augustine). For Wesley, however, grace was an essential ingredient—the great enabler, which made it possible for a man to recognise, and choose good. Mrs Thatcher understood freedom of choice as a Christian principle, but did she forget Wesley's essential ingredient? It seems that Mrs Thatcher failed to recognise the increasingly secular nature of Britain. She assumed, perhaps naively, that the British people would choose to do good. In the end, Mrs Thatcher herself recognised this failure: 'I cut taxes and thought we would get a giving society and we haven't'.<sup>105</sup>

### 3.2. Free market: 'It is not the creation of wealth that is wrong but love of money'

In order for the people to be free, markets had to be free also. In this way, Mrs Thatcher's idea of liberty relied on inter-dependant tenets; freedom of choice, and the free market. She argued, 'It was not the creation of wealth that is wrong but love of money'.<sup>106</sup> The free market was required as it not only provided people with the opportunity to work hard, and to create wealth, but also to choose to use their wealth to serve those in need. This belief is captured by perhaps her most well remembered statement: 'No-one would remember the good Samaritan if he'd only had good intentions; he had money as well'.<sup>107</sup>

Mrs Thatcher claimed that her vision of the free market was consistent with Wesleyan Methodism. To an extent, one could argue that she was justified in doing so. After all, Wesley did once preach in favour of free market economics: 'gain all you can, save all you can [...]'.<sup>108</sup> But one could also argue that in practice, Mrs Thatcher's vision was not wholly consistent with Wesley's vision. Indeed, for Wesley, there was a further requirement: '[...] give all you can'.<sup>109</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup> Margaret Thatcher, cited by Filby, *The Battle for Britain's Soul*, p. 348.

<sup>106</sup> Thatcher, 'Speech to General Assembly of Scotland'.

<sup>107</sup> Thatcher, 'TV Interview for London Weekend Television'.

<sup>108</sup> John Wesley, 'The Use of Money', *The Sermons of John Wesley*, accessed February 18, 2015, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-50-the-use-of-money/>.

<sup>109</sup> Fails to quote this last part— only the first two bits?

It is quite difficult to categorise John Wesley's position on economic matters. On the one hand, scholars have long argued that Wesley was a staunchly conservative High Church Tory.<sup>110</sup> Yet, on the other, it has been argued that Wesley was a 'proto-Marxist'.<sup>111</sup> One can argue that he was either one, and can find evidence in Wesley's sermons, and letters to defend this.<sup>112</sup> However, I would like to argue that he was neither. This thesis will suggest that Wesley proposed an economic system which was both free, yet restricted. It was a system which would encourage individuals to work hard and provide for themselves, yet also a system which would discourage wealth and property ownership.

Mrs Thatcher believed that the free market encouraged hard work. It was the duty of individuals to do all they could to provide for themselves. One should not assume that the state would provide for them.<sup>113</sup> Free market economics has sometimes been characterised as the economics of the 'carrot and stick'. Mrs Thatcher believed that this framework was synonymous with the Methodist work ethic. According to the catechism, it was each person's duty to: 'seek by industry and thrift to both provide for my own needs and to be of service to my fellow-men'.<sup>114</sup> John Wesley also believed in hard work, and like Mrs Thatcher, believed that it was the individuals duty to provide for themselves and their family. Idleness was not an option. Instead, people should use their time to 'gain all they can'. This opportunity was afforded by the free market:

Gain all you can by honest industry[...] Every business will afford some employment sufficient for every day and every hour. That wherein you are placed, if you follow in earnest, will leave you no leisure for silly, unprofitable diversions. You have always something better to do, something what will profit you, more or less[...] Do not sleep or yawn over it: Put your whole strength to the work. Spare no pains.

Nevertheless, whilst Wesley may well have supported Mrs Thatcher's vision of a free market which would encourage hard work, and thrift, he would have been weary of its excesses. During Mrs Thatcher's last appearance as Prime Minister in the House of Commons, the MP Simon Hughes

---

<sup>110</sup> See, in general, Edwards, *After Wesley*. Cf. Theodore R. Weber, *Politics in the Order of Salvation: Transforming Wesleyan Political Ethics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001).

<sup>111</sup> See, in general, Theodore W. Jennings, *Good News to the Poor: John Wesley's Evangelical Economics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990).

<sup>112</sup> For a full discussion concerning the varying interpretations of Wesley's politics, see Gregory R. Coats, *Politics Strangely Warmed: Political Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2015), pp. 2-9.

<sup>113</sup> Thatcher, 'Interview for Woman's Own'.

<sup>114</sup> 'Margaret Thatcher's copy of the Methodist Catechism'.

(Liberal Democrat) questioned her legacy given that the gap between the rich and poor had widened. Mrs Thatcher responded by rephrasing his argument: ‘He would rather the poor were poorer, provided the rich were less rich’. Mrs Thatcher failed to recognise Hughes concern, and did not perceive there to be any issue with the rich becoming ‘wildly’ rich. In this way, Mrs Thatcher distanced herself from John Wesley and Methodism more broadly. Wesley believed that it was difficult for one to be rich and to serve God obediently: ‘It is easier for a camel to go though the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God’ (Matthew 19:24).<sup>115</sup>

Wesley believed that riches were a hinderance to Christian duty. He suggested that as Methodists increased in wealth, they began to lack in faithfulness: ‘Who of you that are now rich, deny yourselves just as you did when you were poor. Who as willingly endure labour or pain now, as you did when you were not worth five pounds?’<sup>116</sup> According to Wesley: ‘One that has food and raiment sufficient from himself and his family, and something over, is rich’.<sup>117</sup> Given this view, Wesley would have almost certainly been appalled by the excesses of Mrs Thatcher’s ‘loads-a money’ free economy. Wesley encouraged Methodists to ‘give all they can’ — not only in order to serve the poor, but for the benefit of their own souls.<sup>118</sup>

### 3.3. Free individual: ‘There is no such thing as society, there are [only] families’

For Mrs Thatcher, individual liberty came with personal responsibility, for oneself, and for ones neighbour. In the *Daily Telegraph*, Mrs Thatcher wrote: ‘[Our responsibility] is expressed most vividly in the Christian concept of the Church as the Body of Christ; from this we learn the importance of interdependence and that the individual achieves his own fulfilment only in service to others and to God’.<sup>119</sup> However, Mrs Thatcher has often been accused of promoting selfish individualism, and her critics remind us that she believed ‘there is no such thing as society’.<sup>120</sup> Taken out of context, Mrs Thatcher’s words do seem harsh. Yet, in the following excerpt from the interview, Mrs Thatcher goes onto to emphasise the importance of individual philanthropy: ‘the quality of our lives will depend

---

<sup>115</sup> John Wesley, ‘On Riches’, *The Sermons of John Wesley*, accessed February 18, 2015, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-108-on-riches/>.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Wesley, ‘The Use of Money’.

<sup>119</sup> Margaret Thatcher, ‘Moral basis of a free society’, *Daily Telegraph* (1978), accessed February 18, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/103687>.

<sup>120</sup> Thatcher, ‘Interview for Woman’s Own’.

upon how much each of us is prepared[...] to turn around and help by our own efforts those who are unfortunate'.<sup>121</sup>

Mrs Thatcher seems to be offering a vision of society founded on individual responsibility, rather than denouncing it, per se. More recently, the Conservative Party has perhaps managed to capture what Mrs Thatcher meant in their 2010 manifesto: 'We believe there is such a thing as society, it's just not the same thing as the state'.<sup>122</sup> Mrs Thatcher's religious convictions compelled her to argue that the free individual, rather than the state, should see it his or her duty to offer support to those in need:

It is one thing to say that the relief of poverty and suffering is a duty and quite another to say that this duty can always be most efficiently and humanely performed by the State. Indeed, there are grave moral dangers and serious practical ones in letting people get away with the idea that they can delegate all their responsibilities to public officials and institutions.<sup>123</sup>

On the one hand, Mrs Thatcher's rejection of the collectivist vision for society in favour of the individual, and individual families, can be said to resonate with Wesleyan Methodism. Wesley insisted that individuals had a responsibility to their neighbour. He also argued that a man's first responsibility was to his wife and children.<sup>124</sup> For many believers, there is a perceived harmony between traditional family values and Christian teaching, as Steven observes; 'the two often go together quite neatly'.<sup>125</sup> On the other hand, Mrs Thatcher's exclusive emphasis on individuals and families fails to recognise the value of individuals gathered, as one, in the body of Christ. The Reverend Stuart Bell suggests, 'Whilst Mrs Thatcher was right to say each Christian had a duty to love their neighbour, she was wrong to declare "there was no such thing as society". Methodists have always believed in both individual and collective responsibility'.<sup>126</sup>

---

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> *Conservative Party Manifesto* (2010), p. vii. Cf. Peter King argues that the second part of the phrase 'can [...] be seen as a tempering of any implied criticism of Thatcher'. See, in general, Peter King, *The New Politics: Liberal Conservatism or Same Old Tories?* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2011), p. 121.

<sup>123</sup> Margaret Thatcher, 'Address to the St Lawrence Jewry', (1978), accessed February 18, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/103522>.

<sup>124</sup> John Wesley, 'On Family Religion', *The Sermons of John Wesley*, accessed February 17, 2015, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-94-on-family-religion/>.

<sup>125</sup> Steven, *Christianity an Partly Politics*, p. 55.

<sup>126</sup> Interview with Stuart Bell conducted by author, March 10, 2015. The Reverend Bell is a Methodist superintendent minister, and Methodist historian.

Mrs Thatcher's rejection of a collectivist society is not wholly consistent with Methodism. Methodism was first founded as a movement, and as such, there was initially no Methodist Church. Instead, small companies of about twelve people, called classes, came together to form Methodist societies.<sup>127</sup> John Wesley described the nature of a Methodist society thus:

A company of persons, who [...] are seeking the Power of GODLINESS: United, in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their Salvation.<sup>128</sup>

Members of a society had an *individual* responsibility to continually 'evidence their desire of Salvation'.<sup>129</sup> This was to be achieved:

By doing good; by being in every kind merciful after their power, as they have opportunity; doing good of every possible sort, and as far as possible, to all men. To their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping those that are sick or in prison.<sup>130</sup>

However, members of a society also had a *collective* responsibility to one another. They were not only responsible for their own salvation, but had a duty to encourage *each other* in their quest for salvation. This collective responsibility was a requirement of Scripture, Wesley argued: 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ'.<sup>131</sup> (Galatians 6:2, KJV) At times, the way in which members were required to 'bear one another's burdens' could be said to resemble the practices of a collectivist state, rather than a Christian movement. For example, a leader of a meeting house which was heavily in debt argued that the society had a collective responsibility to pay the debt. Rather than instigate a fundraising campaign, Captain Foy suggested to Wesley that they introduce what could be described as a sort of tax: 'Let every member of the society give a penny a week till all are paid'.<sup>132</sup>

---

<sup>127</sup> See, in general, John Wesley, *The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the Methodist Societies. Established by the Rev John Wesley. To which are added The Rules of the Band Societies.* (London: G. Story, 1800), p. 4.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>129</sup> Wesley, *The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the Methodist Societies*, p. 6.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>132</sup> Anon, *John Wesley the Methodist: A Plain Account of his Life and Work* (New York, 1903), §IX.



It is this vision of the faith, established by Wesley himself, which has since formed the consciences of Methodists today. A vision of individual and collective duty to God, and to ones neighbour. Mrs Thatcher failed to express the importance of collective responsibility in tandem with the responsibility of the individual. Therefore, it is difficult to argue that Mrs Thatcher's idea can be justifiably described as a Christian principle according to Wesleyan Methodism. Whilst her idea may in part reflect distinctive aspects of Wesleyan Methodism, it fails to ground itself completely. In other words, it is the *truth* but not the *whole truth*.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Shortly after leaving office, Mrs Thatcher was invited to reflect on her premiership, and was given the opportunity to respond to her critics, who had suggested that her policies had given rise to selfish individualism. She responded, in perhaps the only way she knew how, by drawing on her own religious convictions. Quoting John Wesley, Mrs Thatcher said: 'Do not impute to money the faults of human nature'.<sup>133</sup> Throughout her premiership, Mrs Thatcher was committed to the liberty of the individual, believing it to be a Christian principle. She laid the foundations for society to be free, to thrive, and to embrace a spirit of generosity. Unfortunately, however, the society she had freed was becoming increasingly secular. It did not share her Methodist values, and perhaps, one might argue, that she was naive in thinking they would do so. Indeed, trends in charitable giving over the period 1974 to 1993-94 demonstrate 'a long-term decline in the number of households given to charity'.<sup>134</sup> In the end, Mrs Thatcher herself recognised this failure: 'I cut taxes and thought we would get a giving society and we haven't'.<sup>135</sup>

This thesis has sought to offer a critique of Mrs Thatcher's idea of liberty with reference to Methodism. To do so fairly has not been an easy task. All Methodists, whether liberal or conservative, would like to claim John Wesley for themselves. Indeed, scholars have argued that Wesley was both a Tory, and 'proto-marxist'. Claiming Wesley for Thatcherism, however, was not the aim of this thesis. To have done so would have been an abuse of Wesleyan Methodism, as The Rev. J. Ernest argues: 'nothing has characterised Wesleyan Methodism more than its determination not to support a particular party'.<sup>136</sup> Therefore, this essay has attempted to discern where there is 'discord' or

---

<sup>133</sup> Margaret Thatcher, 'TV Interview for ITN' (1991), accessed February 18, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/110849>.

<sup>134</sup> See, in general, Cathy Pharoah and Sarah Tanner, 'Trends in Charitable Giving', *Fiscal Studies* (1997) vol. 18, no. 4, pp. 427-443

<sup>135</sup> Margaret Thatcher, cited by Filby, *The Battle for Britain's Soul*, p. 348.

<sup>136</sup> *Methodist Recorder*, 8 June 1922.

‘harmony’ between Mrs Thatcher’s idea of individual liberty and the insights of Methodism. It has argued that there are elements of Mrs’s Thatcher’s idea which can be clearly justified as Methodist, and others which do not resonate so well.

For example, freedom of choice is at the heart of the Methodist movement which has always emphasised the individual’s role and responsibility in working out his or her own salvation. Wesley believed that from its earliest moments humanity was endowed with freedom. Mrs Thatcher defended this freedom, and she argued that it was duty of the individual freely to choose good. For Wesley, however, grace was essential. Without grace, it was not possible for a man to choose to do good. This thesis suggests that Mrs Thatcher failed to recognise the function of grace.

Furthermore, for Wesleyan Methodists a free market encouraged individuals to work hard, and created the opportunities necessary to ‘gain all you can, save you can’. Yet Wesley discouraged people from becoming and remaining rich. He argued that individuals should ‘give all they can’, something which Mrs Thatcher perhaps failed to emphasise. Finally, Wesleyan Methodism, like Mrs Thatcher, emphasised the role of individuals, and their duty to serve their families and one another, but one of the hallmarks of Methodism is the commitment to collective responsibility. Historically, this is evinced by the attitudes of the Methodist societies and the role of Methodists in the Trade Union Movement.

According to Campbell, ‘Alf Roberts would have been appalled by Thatcherism’.<sup>137</sup> Antonio Weiss suggests that Campbell misses the point: ‘Roberts may well have been “appalled” by certain aspects of Thatcherism—notably its materialistic dimension—but it is unlikely that he would be been “appalled” by Thatcher herself’.<sup>138</sup> The purpose of this thesis has been to assess whether or not Mrs Thatcher was justified in claiming her idea of individual liberty as a Christian principle. It has argued that whilst many (including Methodists) would claim that Thatcherism ushered in an era of selfish individualism, her idea of individual liberty can, on the whole, justifiably claim to be a Christian principle according to Wesleyan Methodism. In other words, John Wesley may well have been “appalled” by Thatcherism—but it is *unlikely* that he would have been “appalled” by her idea of individual liberty.

---

<sup>137</sup> Campbell, *Grocers Daughter*, p. 30.

<sup>138</sup> Anthony Weiss, ‘The Religious Mind of Mrs Thatcher’, (2011), accessed February 18, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/112748>.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anselm, 'De Concordia Praescientiae et Praedestinationis et Gratiae Dei cum Libero Arbitro', trns. by Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson', *Complete Philosophical and Theological Treatises of Anselm of Canterbury* (Minnesota: The Arthur J. Banning Press, 2000).

Anon, *John Wesley the Methodist: A Plain Account of his Life and Work* (New York, 1903).

Augustine, 'On Nature and Grace', *The Fathers of the Church* vol. 86, trns. by John A. Mourant and William J. Collinge (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992).

Baillie, D. M., *God Was in Christ* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948).

Campbell, J., *The Iron Lady: Margaret Thatcher: From Grocer's Daughter to Iron Lady* (London: Vintage, 2012).

\_\_\_\_\_, *Margaret Thatcher, Volume Two: The Iron Lady* (London: Vintage, 2008).

Clark, M. T., *Augustine* (London: Continuum, 2005).

Clements B., and Spencer, N., *Voting and Values in Britain: Does religion count?* (London: Theos, 2014).

Coats, G. R., *Politics Strangely Warmed: Political Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2015).

*Conservative Party Manifesto* (2010).

Crabbe, G., *The Poetical Works of George Crabbe* (Paris: A. and W. Galignani and Co., 1829).

Crines, A. S., and Theakston, K., 'Doing God' in *Number 10: British Prime Ministers, Religion and Political Rhetoric*, accessed February 10, 2014, <http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/82330/15/theakstonv2.pdf>.

Crossley, J. G., *Harnessing Chaos: The Bible in English Political Discourse since 1968* (x: x, y).

Daley, J., *Death of a Revolutionary* (Channel 4, 2013)

Davies, R., *Methodism* (London: Epworth Press, 1963).

Dreyer, F., 'Faith and experience in the thought of John Wesley', *American History Review* 88.1 (1983), pp. 12-30.

Edwards, M., *After Wesley: A Study of the Social and Political Influence of Methodism in the Middle Period (1791-1849)* (London: Epworth Press, 1935).

Evans, E. J., *Thatcher and Thatcherism* (Oxford: Routledge, 2013).

Filby, E., 'God and Mrs Thatcher: Religion and Politics in 1980s Britain', Ph.D. diss. University of Warwick.

\_\_\_\_\_, *God and Mrs Thatcher: The Battle for Britain's Soul* (London: BiteBack, 2015).

Fletcher, J., *The Works of the Revered John Fletcher: Late Vicar of Madeley, Volume 2* (New York: T. Mason and G. Lane, 1835).

Flew, R. N., *The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology* (London, 1934).

Friedman, M., *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

Gamble, A., 'Hayek and Liberty', *Critical Review: A Journal of Politics and Society* (2013) 25:3-4, pp. 342-363.

Gummer, J. S., *Faith in Politics: Which Way Should Christians Vote?* (London: SPCK, 1987).

Hawker, P., *Poles Apart: A critique of Methodism and Politics for the XXIst Century from Right of Centre* (Essex: Robert Odcombe Associates, 1988).

Hempton, D., *Methodism and Politics in British Society 1750-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1984).

Jenkins, D., *Not Just and Autobiography: The Calling of a Cuckoo* (London, 2002).

Jennings, T. W., *Good News to the Poor: John Wesley's Evangelical Economics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990).

King, P., *The New Politics: Liberal Conservatism or Same Old Tories?* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2011).

*Methodist Recorder*, 8 June 1922.

'Minutes of Several Conversation', *The Works of John Wesley* vol. 8 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978).

Nullens, P., and Michener, R. T., *The Matrix of Christian Ethics: Integrating Philosophy and Moral Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Colorado Springs: Paternoster Publishing, 2010).

Pharoah C., and Tanner, S., 'Trends in Charitable Giving', *Fiscal Studies* (1997) vol. 18. no. 4. pp. 427-443.

Taylor, E. R., *Methodism and Politics 1791-1851* (New York, 1975).

Thatcher, M., 'Leader's speech, Blackpool' (1975), accessed February 1, 2015, <http://www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech-archive.htm?speech=121>.

\_\_\_\_\_, 'Speech to Conservative Central Council' (1975), accessed February 10, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/102655>.

\_\_\_\_\_, 'Confrontation with reality', *Speech to Conservative Party Conference* (1977), accessed February 10, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/103443>.

\_\_\_\_\_, 'Speech to Zurich Economic Society', *The New Renaissance* (1977), accessed February 10, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/103336>.

\_\_\_\_\_, 'Address to the St Lawrence Jewry', (1978), accessed February 18, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/103522>.

\_\_\_\_\_., 'Moral basis of a free society', *Daily Telegraph* (1978), accessed February 18, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/103687>.

\_\_\_\_\_., 'World: An Interview with Thatcher', *Time* (1979), accessed February 11, 2015, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,916774,00.html>.

\_\_\_\_\_., 'Interview for Woman's Own' (1987), accessed February 11, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106689>.

\_\_\_\_\_., 'TV Interview for London Weekend Television', *Weekend World* (1980), accessed February 11, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104210>.

\_\_\_\_\_., *The Woman at No. 10*, (ITV, 1983).

\_\_\_\_\_., 'Speech to General Assembly of Scotland' (1988), accessed February 1, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107246>.

\_\_\_\_\_., 'TV Interview for TV-AM' (1988), accessed February 10, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/speeches/displaydocument.asp?docid-107022>.

\_\_\_\_\_., *Speech to Conservative Party Conference* (1989), accessed February 10, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107789>.

\_\_\_\_\_., 'TV Interview for ITN' (1991), accessed February 18, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/110849>.

\_\_\_\_\_., *The Path to Power* (London: Harper Collins, 1995).

'Margaret Thatcher's copy of the Methodist Catechism', accessed February 17, 2015, <http://margaretthatcher.org/document/109910>.

Ranelagh, J., *Thatcher's People: An Insider's Account of the Politics, the Power, and the Personalities* (London: Harper Collins, 1991).

Roberts, A., 'Strength comes from within', accessed February 17, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/109905>.

\_\_\_\_\_, 'sermon notes b' (1941), accessed February 17, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.com/document/109899>.

\_\_\_\_\_, 'sermon notes d' (1950), accessed February 17, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.com/document/109925>.

Särlvick B., and Crewe, I., *Decade of Dealignment: The Conservative Victory of 1979 and Electoral Trends in the 1970s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

Shephard, G., *The Real Iron Lady: Working with Margaret Thatcher* (London: BiteBack, 2013).

Steven, M., *Christianity and Party Politics* (Oxford: Routledge, 2011).

Temple, W., *Christianity and Social Order* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1942).

Turner, J. M., "Methodism in England 1900-1932", *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* vol. 3, (London: Epworth Press, 1983).

Vinen, R., *Thatcher's Britain: The Political and Social Upheavals of the 1980s* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2009).

Weber, T. R., *Politics in the Order of Salvation: Transforming Wesleyan Political Ethics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001).

Weiss, A., 'The Religious Mind of Mrs Thatcher', (2011), accessed February 18, 2015, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/112748>.

Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (London, 1952).

\_\_\_\_\_, *The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the Methodist Societies. Established by the Rev John Wesley. To which are added The Rules of the Band Societies.* (London: G. Story, 1800).



\_\_\_\_\_., 'Christian Perfection', *The Sermons of John Wesley*, accessed February 17, 2015, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-40-christian-perfection/>.

\_\_\_\_\_., 'On Working Out Our Own Salvation', *The Sermons of John Wesley*, accessed February 17, 2015, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-85-on-working-out-our-own-salvation/>.

\_\_\_\_\_., 'Free Grace', *The Sermons of John Wesley*, accessed February 17, 2015, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-128-free-grace/>.

\_\_\_\_\_., 'Notes on the General Epistle of St James', accessed February 18, 2015, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/john-wesleys-notes-on-the-bible/notes-on-the-general-epistle-of-st-james/#Chapter+II>.

\_\_\_\_\_., 'The Image of God', *Works of John Wesley*.

\_\_\_\_\_., 'The End of Christ's Coming', *Works of John Wesley*.

\_\_\_\_\_., 'The Use of Money', *The Sermons of John Wesley*, accessed February 18, 2015, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-50-the-use-of-money/>.

\_\_\_\_\_., 'On Riches', *The Sermons of John Wesley*, accessed February 18, 2015, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-108-on-riches/>.

\_\_\_\_\_., 'On Family Religion', *The Sermons of John Wesley*, accessed February 17, 2015, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-94-on-family-religion/>.

Wilson, K., *Methodist Theology* (London: T&T Clark International, 2011).