



John Wesley Calmly Considered

Characters in History

Who is John Wesley?

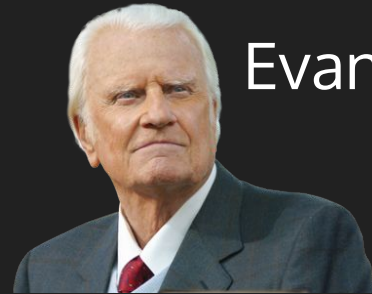


Well-known itinerant
preacher

Travelled 250,000 miles
on horseback

Preached over 40,000
sermons over 66 years

Often confronted by angry
mobs



Evangelist



Scholar

taught and studied
Scriptures in original
languages

one of 12 fellows @ Oxford

moderated debates



Evangelist



Scholar

a home-group of 4 grew to over 71,000 members in England and over 43,000 in colonies when Wesley died



Evangelist



WILLOW CREEK
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Multi-site community leader



Scholar

Organized and provided aid to poor and prisoners

One year earned 1400 pounds but kept only 30



Promoted Social Justice



Evangelist



WILLOW CREEK
COMMUNITY CHURCH

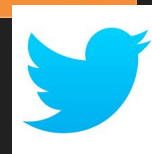
Multi-site community leader



Scholar



Author



Promoted Social Justice



Evangelist

Published over 400 works
including translation of
NT and notes on entire
Bible



WILLOW CREEK
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Multi-site community leader

John Wesley

1703-1791

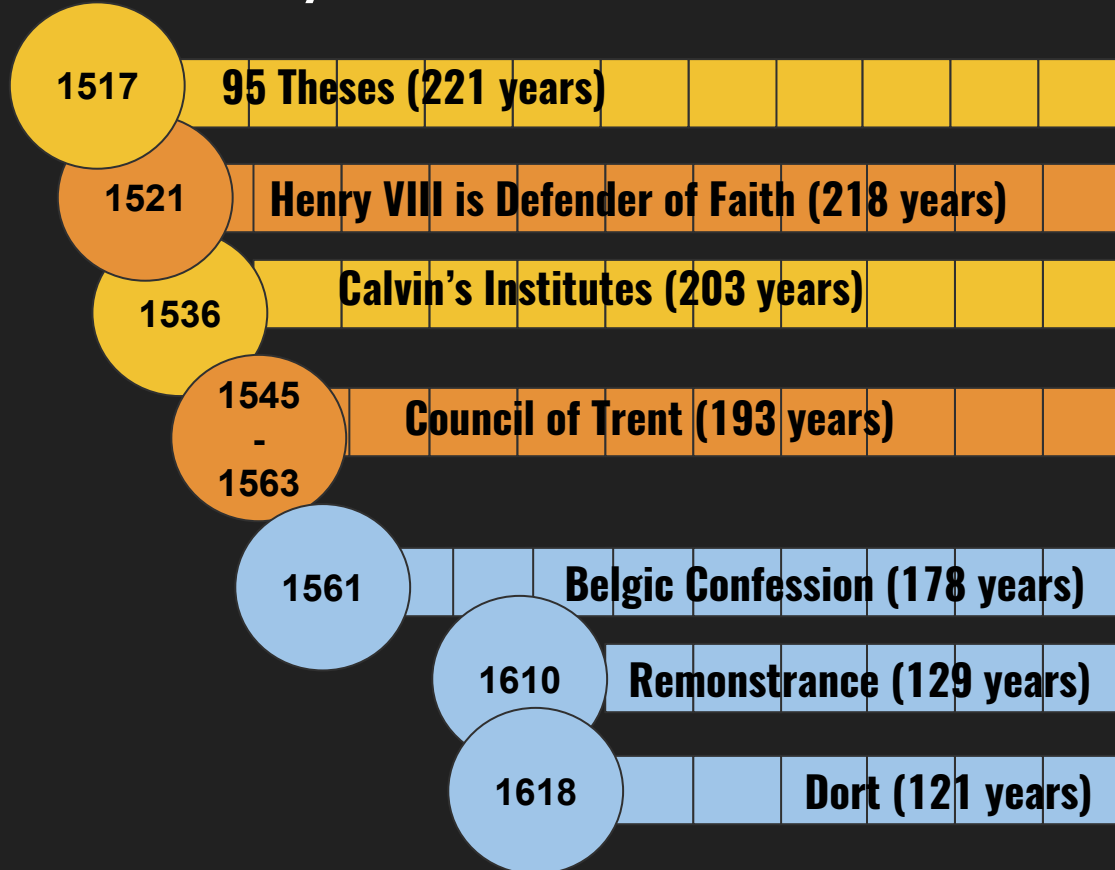
On a review of the character of this extraordinary man, it appears, that though he was endowed with eminent talents, he was more distinguished by their use, then even by their possession...



for in every respect, ... he must be considered as one of the most extraordinary characters this or any age ever produced

Gentleman's Magazine (1791)

John Wesley and the Reformation



Aldersgate
May 24, 1738

John Wesley and the English Reformation

1521

Henry VIII is Defender of Faith (218 years)

1534

Henry VIII Act of Supremacy (201 years)

1549
&
1552

Book Common Prayer (190 years)

1559

Elizabethan Settlement (180 years)

1571

Thirty Nine Articles (168 years)

1620

Plymouth Colony (118)

1648

WCF (90)



Aldersgate
May 24, 1738

Brand Plucked from Fire

**Aldersgate
(1738)**

Recalls events in Journal in 1750
and suggested phrase be inscribed
on tombstone in 1753

Born in 1703 in Epworth,
England to Rev. Samuel
& Susanna Wesley

Rescued from a fire on
Feb. 9, 1709 in Epworth

Made lasting impression
that God saved him for a
reason

Fire broke out between eleven and twelve
at night ... all were safe save John...left in
bed fast asleep....The Rector tried to rush
through the flames, [but] the fire beat him
down. ... [a] spectator ...suggested that a
light man should be set on his shoulders,
so as to lift the little fellow out of the
window.... Just as they rescued him the
whole roof fell in.

Influence of Susanna Wesley

Ran a strict home,
teaching kids Latin,
Greek, and classics

Demonstrated
disciplined life

John often wrote for her
advice and cared for her
after father passed

Found replacement while
husband in London
wanting (1710-12) so she
sang and read sermons to
family Sunday evening in
kitchen.

Grew in popularity and
soon exceeded morning
service attendance.



Influences as Student at Oxford

Studied @ Christ Church,
Oxford from 1720-1724

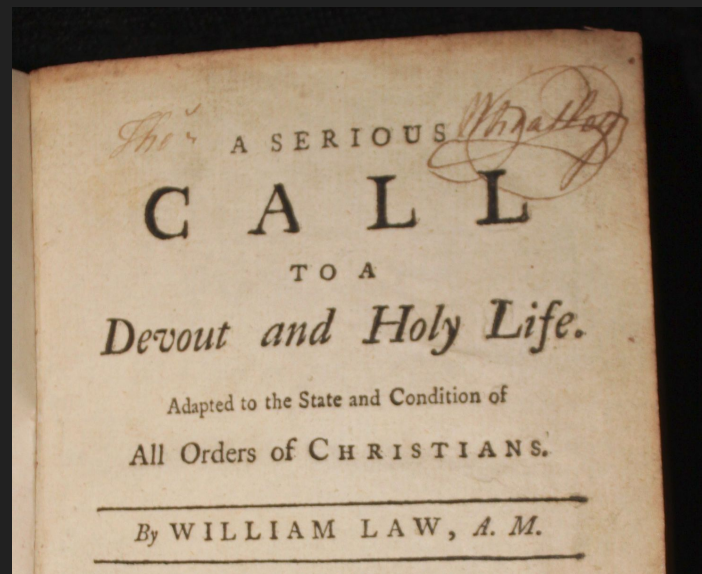
Made a fellow @ Lincoln
College, Oxford in 1726
teaching logic, Greek &
NT

Earned Masters in 1727

The Imitation of Christ
by Thomas à Kempis

*Holy Living and Holy
Dying*
by Jeremy Taylor

*Treatise on Christian
Perfection (1726)*
by William Law



John Wesley and William Law

William Law (1656 - 1761) was known as an enthusiast devoted to holy living and dedicated to helping the poor.

Wesley introduced to Law @ Oxford. He and Law would meet and exchange letters often until 1738.

Wesley frustrated after Aldersgate with Law's lack of emphasis on faith and openly rebuked his turn to mysticism

He therefore is a devout man who lives no longer to his own will, or the way and spirit of the world, but to the sole will of God, ...

it is thus plain that this, and this alone, is Christianity, a uniform, open, and visible practice of all these virtues, yet it is as plain, that there is little or nothing of this to be found...

Pastor / Holy Club

**Aldersgate
(1738)**

22 Questions of the Holy Club

Ordained a priest in
Church of England (1728)

Helped father pastor
church in Epworth &
Wroot (1725-1729)

Returned to Oxford in
1729 to continue
teaching.

Joined **the Holy Club**
started by brother
Charles & led group due
to organization skills
(1729-35). Met member
George Whitefield

Introduced to prison
ministry by William
Morgan (member)

Turned down opportunity
to replace father as rector
of Epworth to remain in
Oxford (1734)



Holy Club / Methodists

There is a Society of gentlemen, consisting of seven members, whom the world calls Methodists...

And to that end they read prayers every day in the common jail, preach every Sunday, and administer the sacrament once every month. They almost starve themselves to be able to relieve the poor and buy books for their conversion.

... They meet at each other's rooms at six of the clock five nights in the week, and from seven to nine read a piece of some religious book.



Storms lead to Doubt

**Aldersgate
(1738)**

Charter established
colony of Georgia in 1732
for dissenters & debtors
by Oglethorpe

Trustee @ Oxford
recommends Holy Club to
serve in Savannah

Set sail in Oct. 1735

*At noon our third storm began ... I went to the
Moravians. I had long before observed the great
seriousness of their behaviour. ... In the midst of
...their service the sea broke over, split the
mainsail in pieces, covered the ship, and poured in
between the decks ... they calmly sung on*

*I could not but say to myself, "How is it that thou
hast no faith?" being still unwilling to die.*

Pastor in Savannah

**Aldersgate
(1738)**

John Wesley serves as
minister to colony
(1735-1737)

Despite full schedule
studies with Moravians

Forms relationship with
Sophia Hopkey (niece to
Thomas Causton)

Causton is the chief
magistrate and keeper
of supplies

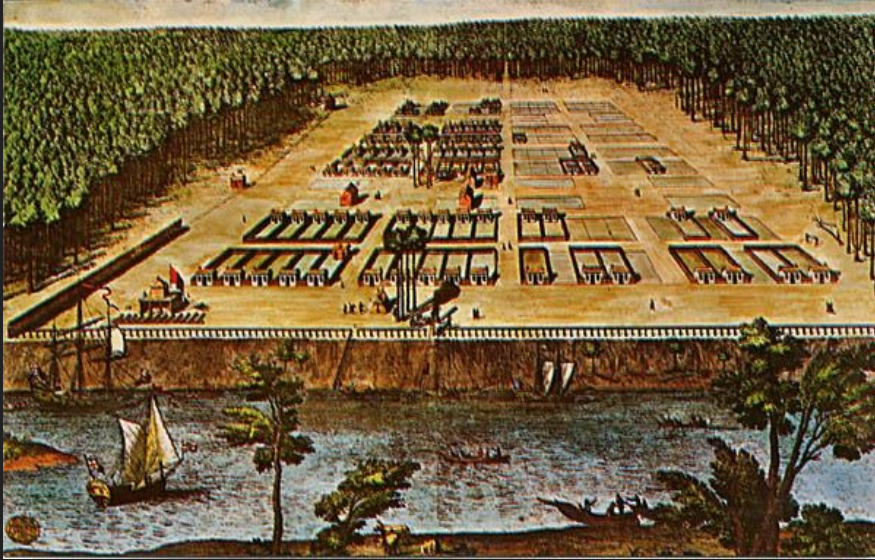
Abuses his power and
drove colony into debt

Wesley decides not to
marry Sophia & denies
her Lord's Supper after
she gets married

Causton takes Wesley to
court, resulting in his
leaving the colony in
Dec. 1737

Wesley reports to
trustees, and after
investigation Causton is
removed from office

Whitefield on Wesley's time in Georgia



The good Mr. John Wesley has done in America is inexpressible. His name is very precious among the people, and he has laid a foundation that I hope neither men nor devils will ever be able to shake. Oh that I may follow him as he has followed Christ!



Wesley in 1738 torn by doubt

*I went to America to convert the
Indians, but oh! who shall convert me?*

*I can talk well; nay, and
believe myself, while no
danger is near; but let death
look me in the face, and my
spirit is troubled.*

*... clearly convinced of unbelief, of the
want of that faith whereby alone we are
saved*



Preach faith till you have it

Meets Peter Boehler a German Moravian staying in England

They travel and study together.

Encourages Wesley to remain in ministry and keep preaching



Immediately it struck into my mind, "Leave off preaching. How can you preach to others, who have not faith yourself?"

I asked Bohler whether he thought I should leave it off or not.

He answered, "By no means." I asked, "But what can I preach?" He said, "Preach faith till you have it; and then, because you have it, you will preach faith."

The Aldersgate experience

Peter Boehler leaves England to minister in the Carolinas

Wesley continues to study and meet with others

Wesley would shock others saying he was not a Christian before this time



*In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, **I felt my heart strangely warmed.** I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation*

Being altogether a Christian



Being altogether a Christian

What more than this is implied in the being altogether a Christian?



he who uniformly practises this outward religion (prescribed in the Gospels), has the form of godliness.

There needs but one thing more ... and that is, sincerity.

Being altogether a Christian

*What more than this is
implied in the being
altogether a Christian?*



*The right and true
Christian faith is not
only to believe that Holy
Scripture and the
Articles of our Faith are
true, but ... a sure trust
and confidence ... that,
by the merits of Christ,
his sins are forgiven,
and he [is] reconciled to
God*

Being altogether a Christian

What more than this is implied in the being altogether a Christian?



By salvation he means holiness of heart and life. And this he affirms to spring from true faith alone.

Is the love of God shed abroad in your heart ?

Being altogether a Christian

*What more than this is
implied in the being
altogether a Christian?*



*the faith which bringeth
not forth repentance,
and love, and all good
works, is not that right
living faith, but a dead
and devilish one.*

Influence of George Whitefield

Returns from Georgia after 4 months to raise money for an orphanage (1738)

Meets up with Wesley and encourages him to join him in preaching the Gospel.

When they are barred from preaching in churches, Whitefield introduces Wesley to field preaching in 1739

I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he set me an example on Sunday; having been all my life (till very lately) so

tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church.



The World is my Parish

Aldersgate
(1738)

Wesley begins itinerant ministry initially in Bristol, Kingswood, and London

Expands to include much of England, Ireland, and Scotland

Often confronted by angry mobs

I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation.

Wesley and Whitefield split over Calvinism

Wesley preaches the sermon
Free Grace teaching against
Calvinism (1740)

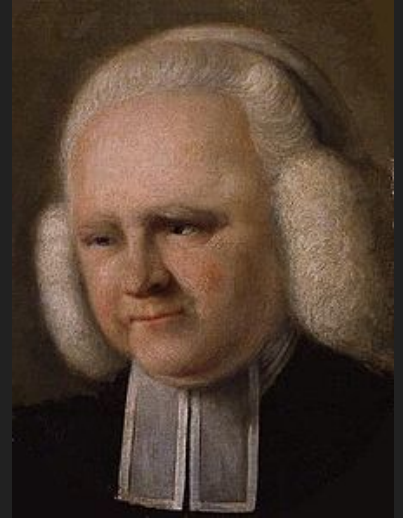
After trying to resolve
differences, Wesley and
Whitefield split in 1741

Did still respect each other, and
Wesley preached at Whitefield's
funeral in 1770 encouraging
people to imitate his life

*To Whitefield: "We
won't see John Wesley
in the heaven, will we?"*

*Whitfield humbly
replied "Yes, you're
right, we won't see him
in heaven.*

*He will be so close to the Throne of God
and we will be so far away, that we won't
be able to see him!"*



On Calvinism

it represents the most holy God as worse than the devil, as both more false, more cruel, and more unjust.

More false; because the devil, liar as he is, hath never said, "He willeth all men to be saved:"

... you say that God condemned millions of souls to everlasting fire, ... for want of that grace he will not give them



We think it our duty to oppose predestination with our whole strength, not as an opinion but as a dangerous mistake

To the Colonies

**Aldersgate
(1738)**



Thoughts upon Slavery
(1774) argues against the
slave trade

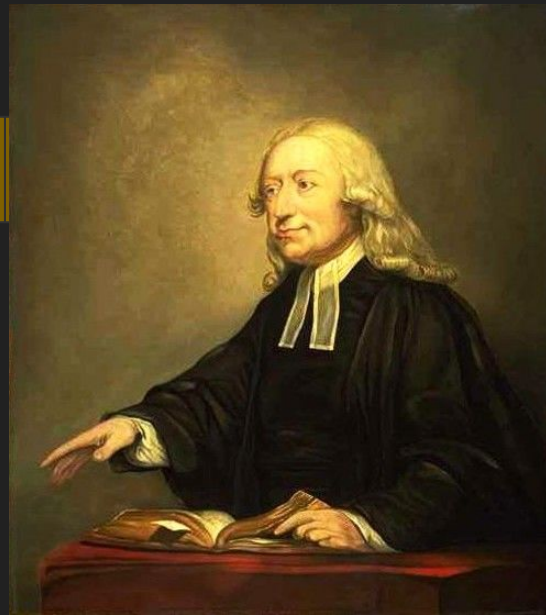
*Let none serve you but
by ... his own voluntary
choice. Away with all
whips, all chains, all
compulsion!*

*Calm Address to Our
American Colonies*
(1775) argues against
revolution

*the English Parliament
has undoubted right to
tax all the English
colonies*

Methodist Societies

Aldersgate
(1738)



Forms societies of disciples as he gain converts to insure they are cared for and disciplined

Trains lay pastors to oversee the groups as he travels and preaches

Establish class meetings and form societies wherever you preach and have attentive hearers; for, wherever we have preached without doing so, the word has been like seed by the wayside

Church of England in Wesley's day

And the first Message of
all our Preachers is, to
the lost Sheep of the
Church of England

- John Wesley

the mass of people remained
uneducated, and were Christians
but in name, and by virtue
of their baptism

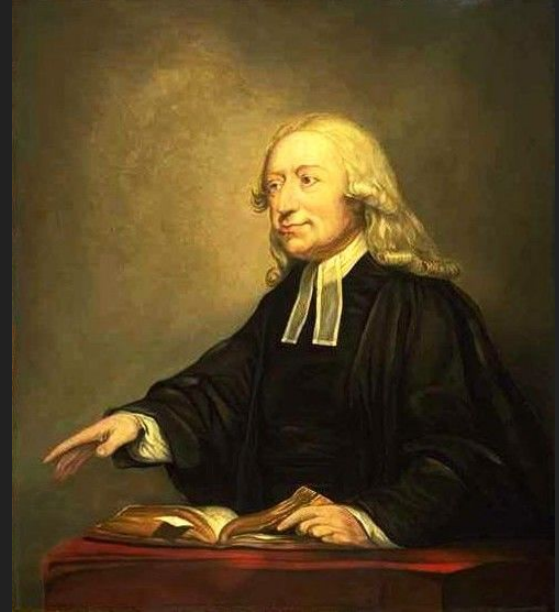
- William Law

[Seeing the] wickedness
which covers them as a
Flood, then do we feel
the [that] with which our
blessed LORD beheld
Jerusalem, and wept and
lamented over it

- John Wesley

[Sunday service is] the only point in
which one sees that the English
profess to be Christians

- Von Uffenbach



Answering objections to Methodist Societies

Is not this making a schism? Is not the joining these people together, gathering Churches out of Churches? ...

These were not Christians before they were thus joined. Most of them were barefaced Heathens.

Neither are they Christians, from whom you suppose them to be divided.



Answering objections to Methodist Societies

Who watched over them in love?

Who marked their growth in grace?

Who advised and exhorted them from time to time?

Who prayed with them and for them, as they had need?

This, and this alone, is Christian fellowship



Against Separation from Church of England

Resisted numerous calls to breakaway from Anglican Church from many in Methodist movement

Wrote *Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England* (1758)

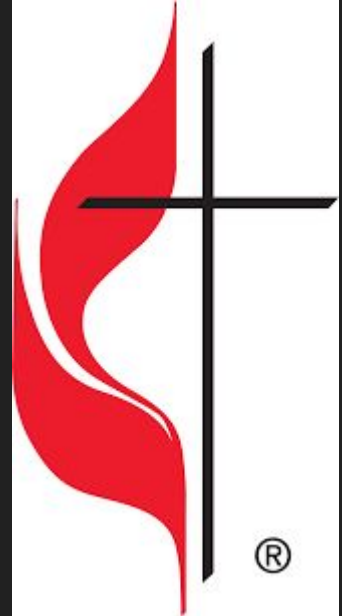
Wrestled with "legality" of lay-preachers teaching and administering sacraments but "could not obey it with a good conscience"



Methodism splits from Church of England

After Revolution, there were not enough Anglican ministers in America to oversee societies. In 1784, Wesley began ordaining ministers *outside Anglican church*. These men were *authorized to offer sacraments* and sent to US

Deed of Declaration appointed Conference of 100 Methodist pastors to govern Societies after Wesley died. They broke away in 1795.



Man of One Book

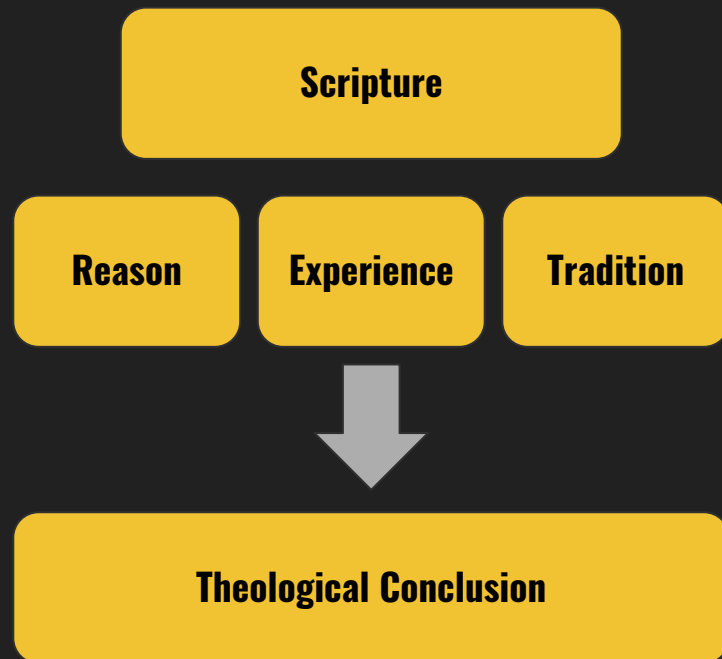


Wesleyan Quadrilateral

Methodology for interpreting
Scripture and making theological
conclusions

Derived from Wesley's writings
and formulated in 20th century by
Albert Outler

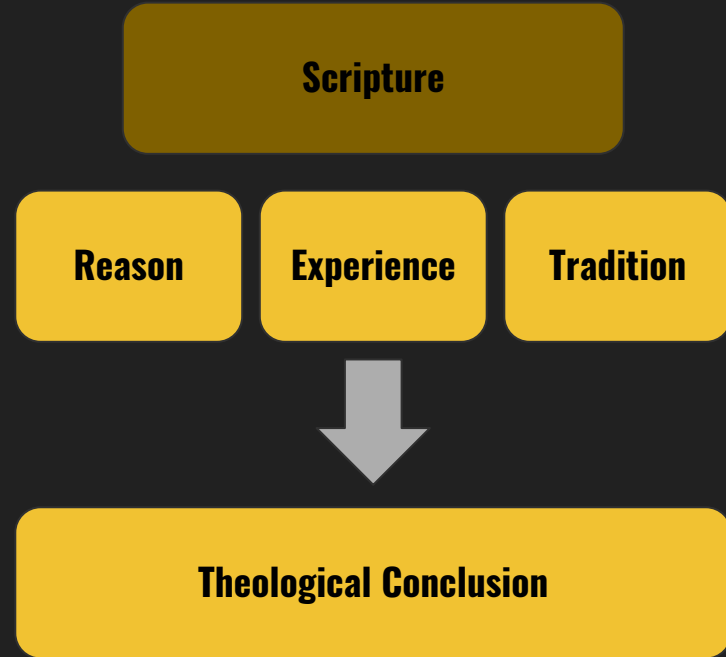
It is how we all go about "doing
theology". Differences are a
matter of emphasis and what
tradition we use



Wesley and Scripture

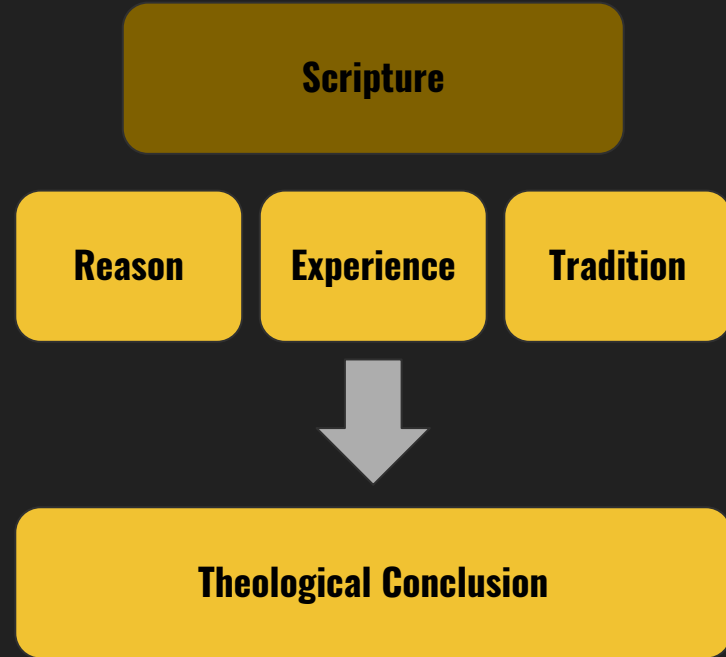
I want to know one thing--the way to heaven; how to land safe on that happy shore.

God Himself has condescended to teach the way; for this very end He came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God!



Wesley and Scripture

The Scripture therefore of the Old and New Testament is a most solid and precious system of Divine truth. Every part thereof is worthy of God; and all together are one entire body, wherein is no defect, no excess. It is the fountain of heavenly wisdom, which they who are able to taste, prefer to all writings of men, however wise, or learned, or holy.



Preface to Wesley's translation
and Bible Notes (1754)

Wesley and Scripture

Would to God that all the party names, and unscriptural phrases and forms, which have divided the Christian world, were forgot: and that we might all agree to sit down together, as humble, loving disciples, at the feet of our common Master, to hear his word, to imbibe his Spirit, and to transcribe his life in our own!

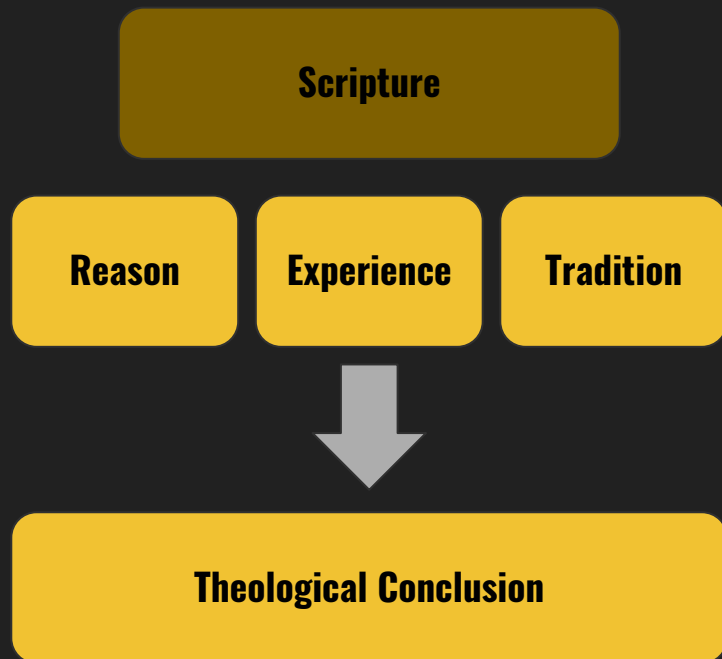


Preface to Wesley's translation
and Bible Notes (1754)

Wesley and Scripture

The Scripture, therefore, being delivered by men divinely inspired, is a rule sufficient of itself: So it neither needs, nor is capable of, any further addition. Yet the Papists add tradition to Scripture, and require it to be received with equal veneration.

... Rome not only adds tradition to Scripture, but several entire books.

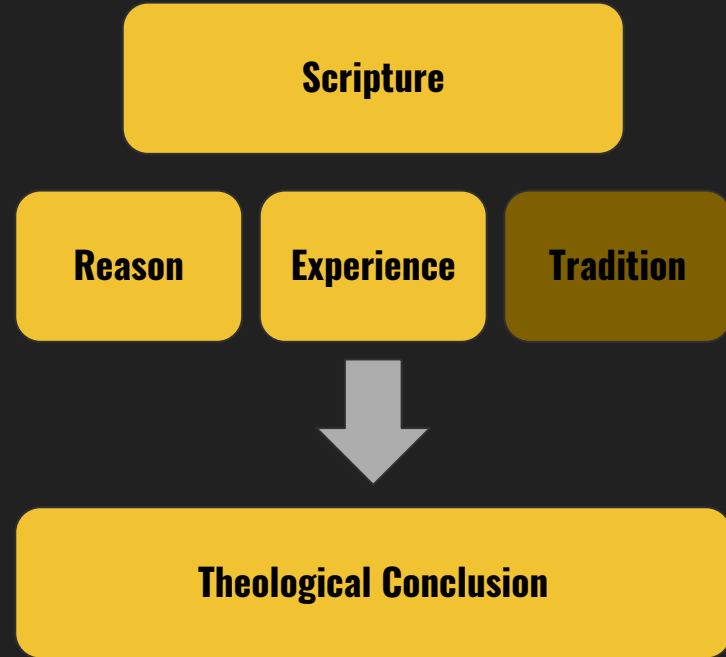


Wesley and Tradition

The esteeming of the writings of the three first centuries, not equally with, but next to the Scriptures, never carried any man yet into dangerous errors... But it has brought many out of dangerous errors...

...I have nothing to do with the fourth or fifth century...

Do not undervalue traditional evidence. Let it have its place and its due honour. It is highly serviceable in its kind, and in its degree...



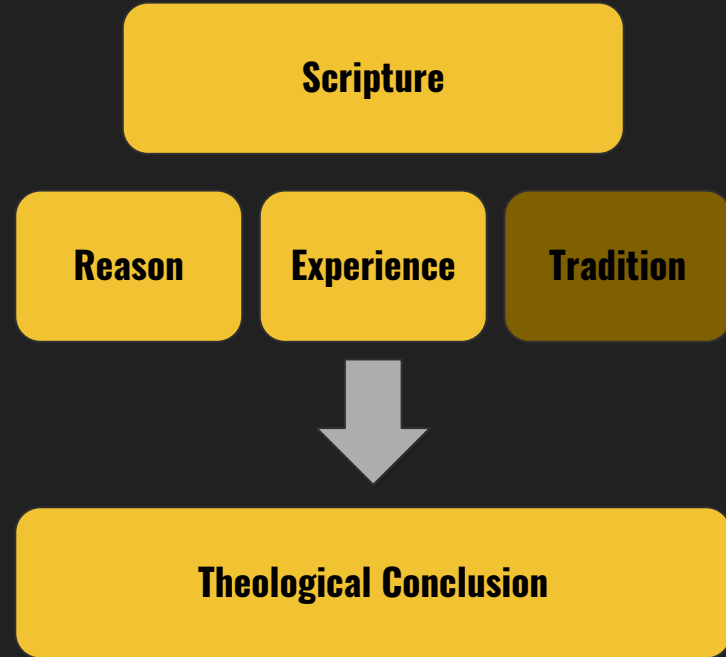
Letter to Dr. Middleton (1748)
Defense of Christianity

Wesley and Tradition

the knowledge of the Fathers the most authentic commentators on Scripture, as being both nearest the fountain, and eminently endued with that Spirit by whom all Scripture was given. It will be easily perceived, I speak chiefly of those who wrote before the Council of Nicea.

Address to Clergy (1756)

Wesley also was influenced by the Church of England and Anglican standards



I consult ... the writings whereby, being dead, they yet speak
Preface to Sermons (1771)

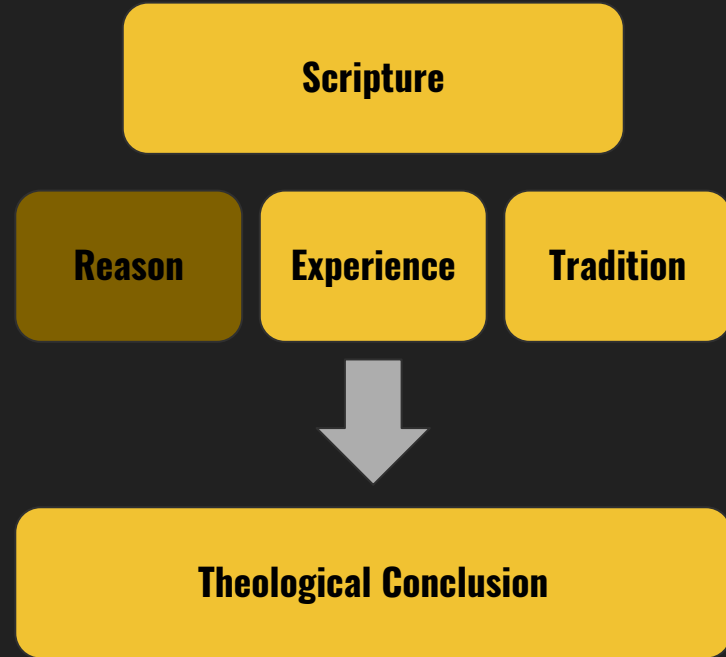
Wesley and Reason

well-meaning men ... imagined that reason was of no use in religion

God has given us our reason for a guide.

We prove the doctrines we teach by Scripture and reason; and, if need be, by antiquity.

You believe not one word of what you say. You cannot possibly, if you believe what you said before. Who can believe both sides of a contradiction?

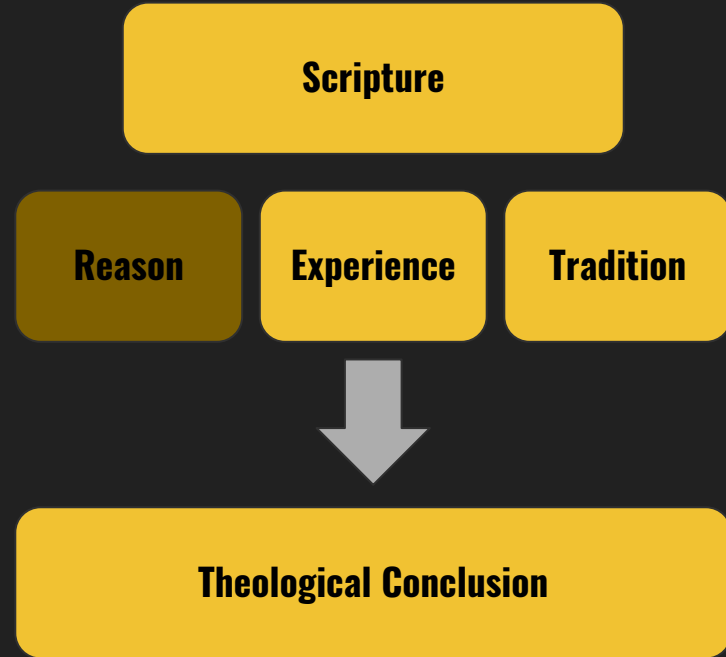


Sermon 70
Farther Appeal to Men of Reason & Religion
Letter to Dr. Middleton (1748)

Wesley and Reason

Unless you wilfully shut your eyes, you cannot but see of what service [reason] is ... under the guidance of the Spirit of God

The foundation of true religion stands upon the oracles of God. ... Now, of what excellent use is reason, if we would either understand ourselves, or explain to others, those living oracles! And how is it possible without it to understand the essential truths contained therein?

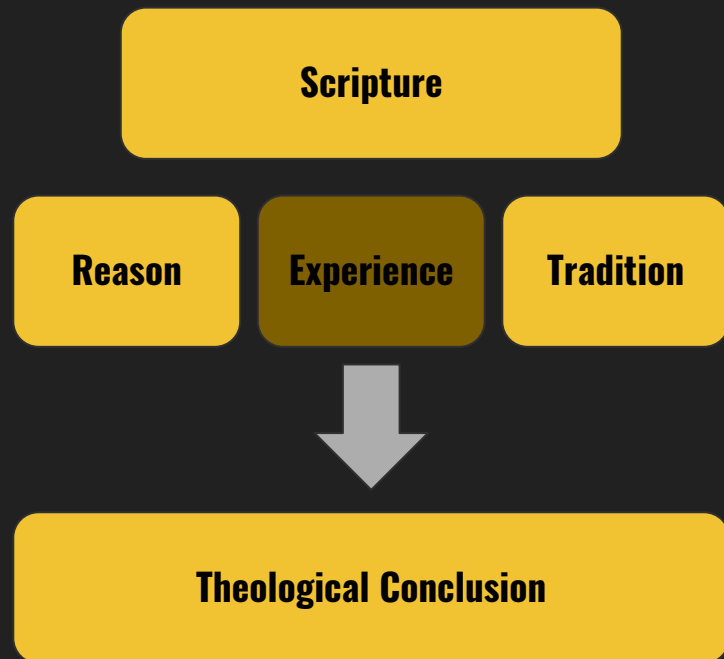


Wesley and Experience

My heart strangely warmed...

I now am assured that these things are so, I experience them in my own breast. What Christianity promised, is accomplished in my soul.

... And this I conceive to be the strongest evidence of the truth of Christianity. ... No length of time can possibly affect the strength of this internal evidence.



Wesley in a Nutshell: Faith must be lived out!

And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure - 1 John 3:3

the faith which bringeth not forth
repentance, and love, and all good
works, is not that right living faith,
but a dead and devilish one.



What is the Church of England?



the English Reformation and Church of England



1534

Henry VIII - Act of Supremacy
break away from Rome

**1549
&
1552**

Edward VI - Book Common Prayer & 42 Articles
Lean toward Protestantism



Mary I - Repeals Protestant Acts
Return to Rome & Heresy laws



1553

1559

Elizabeth I - Elizabethan Settlement

Restores Protestantism & repeals Heresy laws

1571

Thirty Nine Articles

the English Reformation and Church of England



1649
-
1660

Commonwealth and Protectorate (interregnum)

Presbyterianism supersedes Church of England
WCF replaces 39 Articles & Book Common Prayer

1660

Charles II - Restoration

Restores Church of England to
Elizabethan Settlement
Increased toleration for Catholics
and Dissenters

1689

William III - English Bill of Rights

Catholics barred from being Monarch

Toleration Act

Allows more freedom for Dissenters (not Catholics) to worship outside
of Church of England, hold offices and escape penalties



Church of England as a via media



Rejects

Bishop of Rome/Pope
Purgatory & Indulgences
Transubstantiation
Immaculate Conception
Acknowledges
Deuterocanonical books
w/o affirming them as
Scripture

Affirms

Salvation is in Christ and
available through faith
not works
Nicene/Athanasian
Creeds
Only 2 sacraments
(baptism & Lord's
supper)

Head of the church is the
Monarch of England

Changes to worship or
governance must be
passed by Parliament

Ecclesiastical structure

Preaching & sacraments
only performed by clergy

Many Conflicts over direction of Church of England



**Book Common
Prayer**

**39
Articles**

