

John Wesley and the Early Methodist Revival

Dr. Andrew C. Thompson
First Methodist Church, Tulsa OK
Spring 2024

Course Texts

Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013).

Albert C. Outler & Richard P. Heitzenrater, *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991).

Class Schedule

January 17

Topic: "Introduction to the Course: The Anglican and Pietist Roots of Methodism"

- Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, pp.1-35

January 24

Topic: "The Three Rises of Methodism: Oxford, Savannah, and London"

- Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, pp.37-103
- Wesley, "The Circumcision of the Heart" (Anthology, pp.23-32)

January 31

Topic: "The Revival Begins: Aldersgate Street, the Moravians, and the Means of Grace"

- Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, pp.107-129
- Wesley, "The Almost Christian" (Anthology, pp.61-68)

February 7

Topic: "The Revival Grows: Playing Offense and Defense"

- Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, pp.129-161
- Wesley, *The Character of a Methodist* (PDF)
- Wesley, *The General Rules of the United Societies* (PDF)
- Wesley, "Justification by Faith" (Anthology, 111-121)
- Wesley, "The Great Privilege of Those That are Born of God" (Anthology, 183-191).

February 14

Ash Wednesday – No Class

February 21

Topic: "The Methodist Society: Classes, Bands, and Select Societies"

- Wesley, *A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists* (PDF)

February 28

Topic: "The Means of Grace: Instituted, Prudential, and General"

- Wesley, "The Means of Grace" (Anthology, pp.157-171)
- Wesley, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, IV" (Anthology, pp.193-206)
- Wesley, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, VII" (PDF)
- Wesley, "The Duty of Constant Communion" (Anthology, pp.501-510)
- Wesley, "On Visiting the Sick" (PDF)
- Wesley, "Self-denial" (PDF)

March 6

Topic: "The Way of Salvation I: The Doctrine of God and the Problem of Sin"

- Wesley, "The Unity of the Divine Being" (Anthology, pp.531-539)
- Wesley, "On the Omnipresence of God" (Anthology, pp.523-529)
- Wesley, *The Image of God* (Anthology, pp.13-21)
- Wesley, *Original Sin* (Anthology, pp.325-334)

March 13

Topic: "The Way of Salvation II: The Nature of Grace and the Meaning of Salvation"

- Wesley, "The Way to the Kingdom" (Anthology, pp.123-132)
- Wesley, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation" (Anthology, pp.485-492)
- Wesley, "The New Birth" (Anthology, pp.335-345)
- Wesley, "The Marks of the New Birth" (Anthology, pp.173-182)
- Wesley, "The Scripture Way of Salvation" (Anthology, pp.371-830)

March 20

Spring Break – No Class

March 27

Holy Week – No Class

April 3

Topic: "What is Christian Perfection?"

- Wesley, "On Zeal" (Anthology, pp.465-473)
- Wesley, "The More Excellent Way" (Anthology, pp.511-521)
- Wesley, "On Perfection" (PDF)

April 10

Topic: "Publishing, Preaching, and Itineracy"

- Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, pp.163-222

April 17

Topic: "The Ethics of the Christian Life"

- Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, pp.223-290
- Wesley, *Letter to Miss March* (PDF)
- Wesley, "The Use of Money" (Anthology, pp.347-357)
- Wesley, "The Good Steward" (Anthology, pp.420-430)

April 24

Topic: "The Beginnings of American Methodism"

- Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, pp.291-361
- Wesley, *Letter to Our Brethren in America* (PDF)



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AND THE EARLY METHODIST REVIVAL



A Kingswood Course

From Civil War to Restoration to Revolution

Events:

- English Civil War (1642-1649)
- Interregnum (1649-1660)
- Restoration (1660)
- Glorious Revolution (1688)

Major Figures:

- James I (1603-1625)
- Charles I (1625-1649)
- Oliver Cromwell (1653-1658) / “Lord Protector”
- Charles II (1660-1685)
- James II (1685-1688)
- William III (1688-1702) and Mary II (1688-1694)



“King Charles I” by Anthony Van Dyck (1641)



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Facets of Restoration-era England (post 1660)

- Desire to avoid a return to the turmoil and bloodshed of the the Civil War period (1642-49)
- Exhaustion over the religious extremism and experimentation of the Interregnum (1649-1660)
- Attempt to rally behind the later Stuart monarchs
 - Charles II (1660-1685)
 - James II (1685-1688)
 - William III (1689-1702) and Mary II (1689-1694)
 - Anne (1702-1714)
- Emphasis on unity in the Church of England, while allowing for non-conformists (or dissenters) after 1689

Non-Conformists and the Act of Toleration (1689)

A dissenter was someone who was not willing to conform to the Church of England by subscribing to the 39 Articles of Religion.

They were legally allowed to exist so long as they:

- Registered their meeting houses
- Licensed their ministers
- Were not Roman Catholic or Unitarian

In addition, they could not:

- Attend a university (Oxford; Cambridge)
- Vote
- Serve in the military
- Hold positions in government

Continental Pietism

- Movement in the second half of the 17th century to combat a perceived lax or lukewarm attitude in the church: by clergy, laity, and civil government.
- Advocated a “Reformatio Pietatis” to complete the “Reformatio Doctrinae.”
- Leading figure was the Lutheran pastor Philip Jacob Spener, who wrote the influential “Pia Desideria” in 1675.
- Connection with English religion comes through the figure of Anthony Horneck, who was from a Reformed background but traveled to England to study and ended up being ordained in the Church of England. He introduced the concept of “religious societies” to the C of E during his ministry at the Savoy in London.
- The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (the SPCK), the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), and the Society for the Reformation of Manners (SRM) were outgrowths of the religious society movement in England.



Philip Jacob Spener



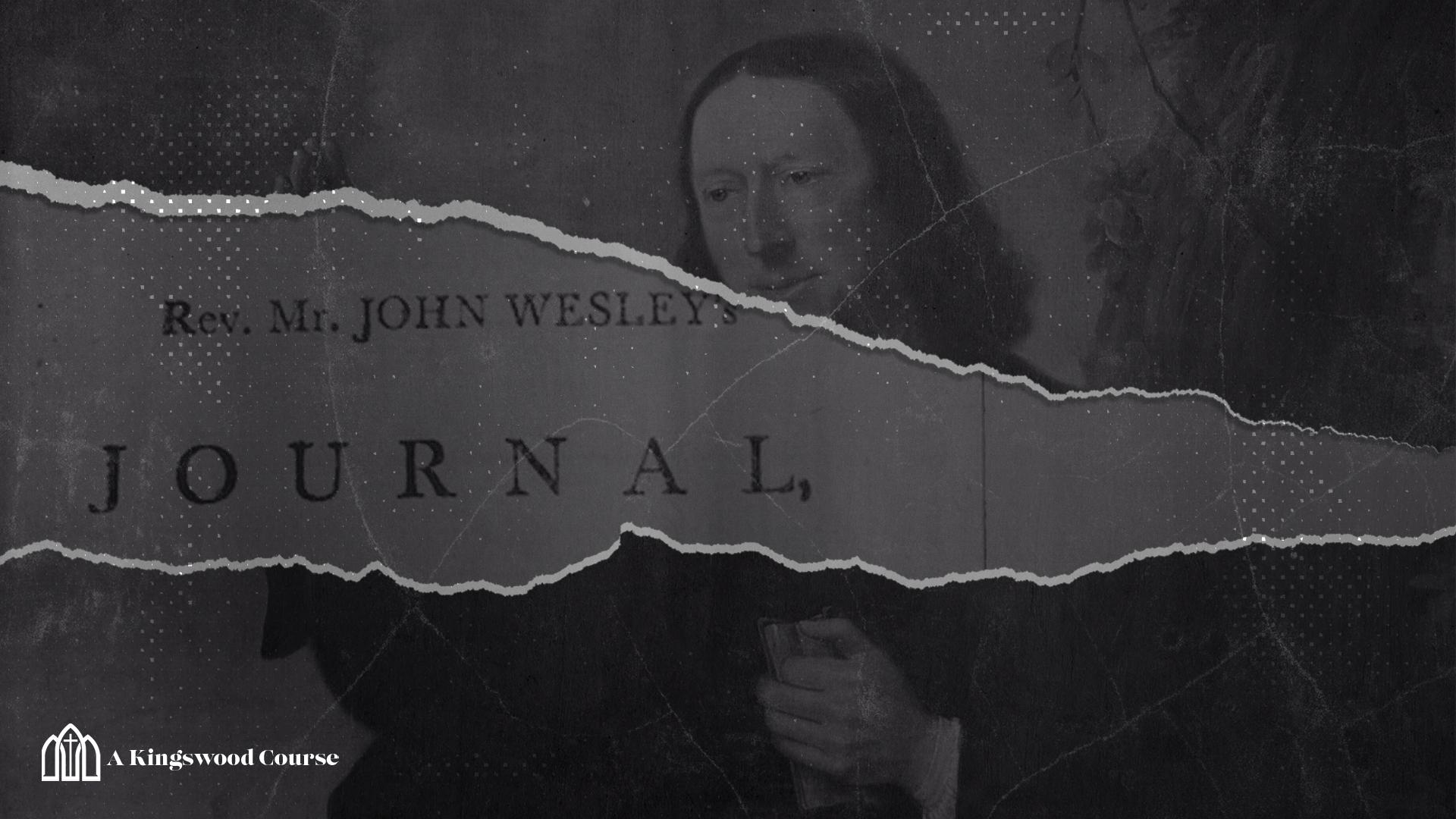
Pia Desideria

Spener's Critiques

- Defects in the Civil Authorities – They are ignorant of Christian doctrine and care nothing about living a Christian life. They do not rule in such a way as to advance the Kingdom of God. When ministers act in a way to promote faith vigorously, they use their authority to obstruct it.
- Defects in the Clergy – They exhibit a “worldly spirit” marked by lust and pride. They judge right and wrong according to doctrinal agreement rather than the quality of their piety. They are not good role models for their congregations. They care more for philosophical speculation than practical Christian living. Those who are zealous are automatically suspected of being heretics.
- Defects in the Common People – With such bad models in the civil authorities and clergy, is it any wonder that the common people are in bad shape as well? Drunkenness, lawsuits, greedy business practices, lack of charity and care for the poor, etc., etc. They do not love!

Spener's Proposals

- More extensive study and use of Scripture
- Need to recognize and encourage the priesthood of all believers
- Need to put faith into practice as a way of life (i.e., Christian love)
- Understand our responsibility to correct those who are in error, but to do so through love
- Reform theological education as a practical discipline (“...since theology is a practical discipline, everything must be directed to the practice of faith and life.”)
- Improve ministerial formation, especially in the area of teaching good preaching that is practical and aimed at helping to form the “inner man.”



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