

## **‘Doing All Possible Good’: Parallel Models of Social Responsibility in the Evangelical Theology of John Wesley and Hannah More**

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***Abstract:** Evangelicalism gets a lot of raised eyebrows. Nonetheless, it holds a significant place in history. Beginning in the eighteenth century, evangelicalism’s most pivotal figure was John Wesley (1703–1791), the founder of Methodism. He was known for preaching an active faith through his dynamic theology. Hannah More (1745–1833), a prominent member of England’s evangelical Clapham Sect, produced the widely successful Cheap Repository Tracts, which were largely written sermons within a fictional framework. In comparing Wesley’s sermon ‘The Use of Money’ (first preached in the 1740s) with More’s tract ‘The Two Wealthy Farmers’ (its first part published in 1795), a striking parallel emerges. Within a dichotomous age of overabundance and destitution, Wesley and More’s view of social responsibility offered an alternative perspective with its own distinctly evangelical social model. It becomes clear that they believed that implementing this model would tangibly and considerably reorganize society for the better — in a non-radical, non-revolutionary way.*

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In a century marked by burgeoning revolution, severe poverty, unchecked extravagance, and rising industrialization, evangelicalism was born.<sup>1</sup> Characterised as promoting biblicism, crucicentrism, conversionism, and activism, evangelicalism grew in strength during the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup> It sustained an aversion to competition and the pursuit of wealth, which was often identified as *vanity*; thus, this new religious ideology evinced ‘a powerful dislike of the individualism’ and liberal ideals

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<sup>1</sup> Trisha Tucker, ‘Gendering the Evangelical Novel’, *Rocky Mountain Review*, 66 (2012), p. 84. See also: Ian C. Bradley, *The Call to Seriousness: The Evangelical Impact on the Victorians* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1976), pp. 13–18.

<sup>2</sup> David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Taylor and Francis Group, 1989), p. 16.

of capitalism that were rapidly gaining traction in England.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, ideas of rights and duties became contentious.

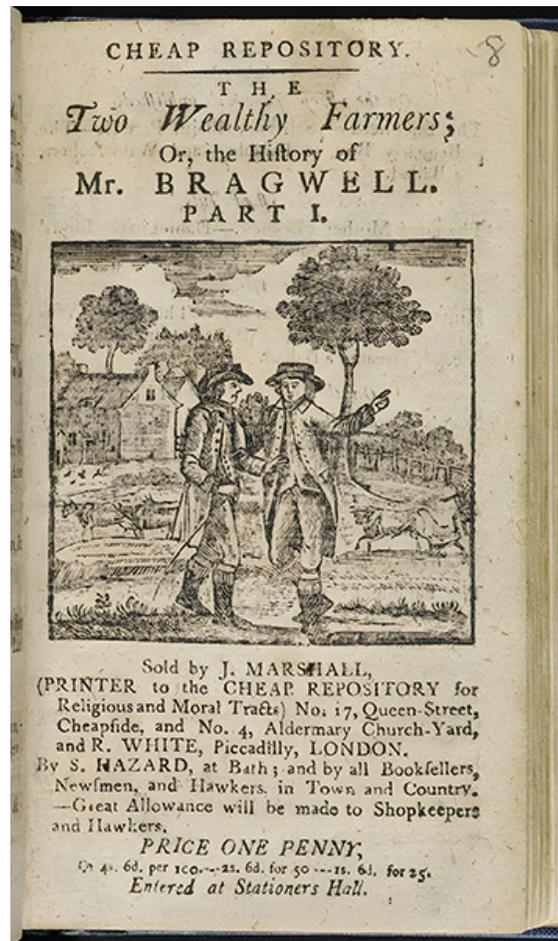


Figure 1. Hannah More, 'The Two Wealthy Farmers: Or, the History of Mr. Bragwell', The Cheap Repository Tracts. Cover from Part 1 (1797) Shelfmark: 4418.e.70. © British Library, London.

While its roots can be found in seventeenth-century pietism, the birth of evangelicalism is generally associated with the Anglican minister John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, and his desire to reform the Church of England into a 'religion of the heart'. According to Wesley, this 'true' religion necessitates 'a heart devoted to God' without which 'external worship' is 'lost labour'.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> J. Douglas Holladay, '19th Century Evangelical Activism: From Private Charity to State Intervention, 1830–50', *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 51 (1982), p. 75.

<sup>4</sup> John Wesley, *The Works of the Reverend John Wesley, A.M.*, (New York: J. Emory and B. Waugh 1831) I, p. 136.

He further explains that ‘religion of the heart’ is essentially one ruled by the law of love, which is in keeping with Jesus’s two greatest commandments: to love God and to love one’s neighbour.<sup>5</sup> The notion of a duty to one’s neighbour was vital to Wesley; therefore, it also became vital to evangelicalism, which consequently featured social activism. As Wesley explains: ‘The Gospel of Christ knows of no Religion but Social; no Holiness but Social Holiness’.<sup>6</sup>

Hannah More was a diverse writer and an evangelical Anglican who served as the editor and primary contributor to the popular *Cheap Repository Tracts*.<sup>7</sup> Through the use of fictional narratives, More’s tracts endeavoured to advance Christian moral principles, including that of ‘the neighbour’, among every class and rank in society, although her intended audience was primarily the lower classes.<sup>8</sup> Her lengthy tract ‘The Two Wealthy Farmers: Or, the History of Mr. Bragwell’ depicts two wealthy farmers, Mr. Bragwell and Mr. Worthy, whose names are reflective of their characters. The tract’s overarching themes are charity, vanity, and their connection with proper financial management; thus, the tract resembles Wesley’s fiftieth sermon on ‘The Use of Money’. In a time of socio-political upheaval and economic inequality, Wesley and More address questions of an appropriate evangelical response to the resulting social distress.<sup>9</sup>

As this article posits, these two texts promote a biblical rationale, interpreted through evangelical theology, for the rejection of individual interests over social responsibility and the rejection of rights over duty. Not only is this notion promoted through the vehement disassociation with vanity and its societal effects and through the celebration of frugality and modesty, it is also promoted through the idea of extreme charity, that is: the act of saving and giving the majority of personal earnings to

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See also: John Wesley, *The Witness of the Spirit: A Sermon on Romans Viii 16*, (Dublin: S. Powell, 1769) p. 14. *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 51 (1982), p. 75.

<sup>5</sup> Wesley, *Works*: I, pp. 135–37. See also: Matthew 22.36–40 and Mark 12.30–31. Biblical passages quoted in this article are taken from the King James Version (KJV).

<sup>6</sup> John Wesley and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 5 edn (London, 1756), p. v.

<sup>7</sup> Susan Pedersen, ‘Hannah More Meets Simple Simon: Tracts, Chapbooks, and Popular Culture in Late Eighteenth-Century England’, *The Journal of British Studies*, 25 (1986), p. 86.

<sup>8</sup> Pedersen, pp. 109–10.

<sup>9</sup> Wesley Balda, ‘Ecclesiastics and Enthusiasts: The Evangelical Emergence in England 1760–1800’, *Historical magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, 49 (1980), (p. 221).

one's neighbours for the purpose of reaching a form of financial kinship (bordering on equality) and 'brotherly love' (akin to the familiarity in the early church of Acts).<sup>10</sup> In this way, the commandment of Jesus can be actualized through the practical application of loving one's neighbour as oneself.

While Wesley's evangelicalism is largely considered to be the original form, evangelical theology varied notably in the eighteenth century (and beyond).<sup>11</sup> Due to the variation of evangelical perspectives — on an approach to poverty, among a number of other topics — the ways in which modern scholars interpret these perspectives vary, as well. This is true of More whose work, as arguably the most prominent female figure of evangelicalism, has been intensely debated. In her day, More was known for her philanthropy; however, this legacy has become overshadowed in recent times by her political affiliation with conservatism. In that political climate, this indicated that More supported the monarchy and the hierarchical British structure; Edmund Burke identified this traditional structure as the 'natural aristocracy', which often enabled the disparity between the rich and the poor.<sup>12</sup> Her affiliation also meant that she was opposed to revolutionary change. More's views on charity are regarded as being markedly more conservative than Wesley's (a fellow anti-revolutionary), who was known to be an adamant supporter of the poor and marginalized.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, More's charitable interest in the lower classes has largely been portrayed as 'a means of indoctrinating them in the principles of social submission'.<sup>14</sup>

Jane Nardin posits, however, that More 'was a less enthusiastic believer in the "hierarchical social order" than most scholars have argued'.<sup>15</sup> For example, Nardin compares More's 'surviving

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<sup>10</sup> Wesley, *Works*: I, p. 443.

<sup>11</sup> Mike Storry, 'Evangelism', in *Encyclopedia of Contemporary British Culture*, ed. by Peter Childs and Mike Storry (London: Routledge, 1999), (p. 173). See also: Janna Smartt Chance, 'Original Sin and Feminine Virtue in Hannah More's *Coelebs in Search of a Wife*', *Christianity and Literature*, 70 (2021), p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> Edmund Burke, *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, 4 edn (London: J. Dodsley, 1791), pp. 107–08.

<sup>13</sup> Richard P. Heitzenrater, *The Poor and the People Called Methodists, 1729–1999*, (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2002), pp. 31–38.

<sup>14</sup> Jane Nardin, 'Hannah More and the Problem of Poverty', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 43 (2001), p. 268.

<sup>15</sup> Nardin, p. 269.

manuscript letters’ with those that have been doctored by editors and scholars for posthumous publication, revealing that they had ‘omitted passages which cast doubt on More’s loyalty to church and state’.<sup>16</sup> Gerald Newman goes so far as to say that More ‘did much more indeed to subvert the established order than to uphold it’.<sup>17</sup> In her day, ‘high-church clerics’ accused More of ‘fostering schism, Methodism, and Jacobinism at her schools’, despite her conservatism.<sup>18</sup> Clearly, More’s political beliefs, and the perspectives she offered because of these beliefs, are complex. It is important to note this because, for both More and Wesley, their conservative affiliation and preference to preserve the traditional systems did not disqualify their charity or their desire to promote forms of equality within these systems, as seen in their texts.

Indeed, while the majority of English evangelicals identified with conservatism and the traditional order, there is a wide gradient even within this identification, though it largely leans towards progressive and paternalistic forms. Wesley himself has been identified by scholars as both a conservative and a Christian socialist.<sup>19</sup> Even some concepts of liberalism were embraced by evangelicals. Regardless, in indulging in a biblical frame of reference, it becomes evident that such ideological affiliations are not mutually exclusive. Thus, the comparison of these two texts and their approach to charity and the eradication of poverty also indicates that the political orientation of evangelicalism is not easily categorized, largely due to the fact that evangelicalism creates its own biblically based models for society. This explains the evangelical urge for reform — and often substantial reform.

In his sermon, Wesley acknowledges the socioeconomic structure of the early church within the time of Acts. This structure required those within it to share all assets and personal resources collectively. In this way, ‘no man counted anything he had his own’, and instead ‘distribution was made

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<sup>16</sup> Nardin, p. 270.

<sup>17</sup> Gerald Newman, ‘Anti-French Propaganda and British Liberal Nationalism in the Early Nineteenth Century: Suggestions toward a General Interpretation’, *Victorian Studies*, 18 (1975), p. 401.

<sup>18</sup> S. J. Skedd, ‘More, Hannah (1745–1833), Writer and Philanthropist’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19179>> [accessed 10 February 2022].

<sup>19</sup> William Henry Meredith, ‘John Wesley, Christian Socialist’, in *The Real John Wesley*, (Cincinnati: Jennings and Pye, 1903), pp. 105–10.

to everyone as he had need', both those inside and outside of the church (which was essentially a commune at this point).<sup>20</sup> Even personal real estate was sold off in order to better provide for the local poor.<sup>21</sup> Wesley refers to this model as ideal and equates it to that which is employed among 'the inhabitants of heaven'.<sup>22</sup> However, in witnessing the eighteenth-century wage gap continuously widen, Wesley laments that 'the present state of mankind' does not exhibit or desire the moral 'innocence' necessary to support such a shared system within a culture continuously advocating for individualism. Consequently, Wesley proposes the 'three plain rules' of 'gain all you can', 'save all you can', and 'give all you can' as a practical blueprint for a community run by and for the 'good' of all.<sup>23</sup> Wesley breaks these concepts down, offering relevant examples and practical applications for each of them. It is in this breakdown that a parallel between Wesley's sermon and More's tract becomes evident.

Wesley begins his sermon by retelling the parable of a rich man and his unjust steward.<sup>24</sup> Wesley reflects on this odd parable, which, unlike other parables, does not include the quintessential 'good' character who represents God. Instead, both figures represent the harsh reality of a world run by greed and shrewd business practices; thus, in this parable, money (i.e., mammon) is referred to as the 'mammon of unrighteousness' due to 'the unrighteous manner' in which it is both 'frequently procured' and 'generally employed'.<sup>25</sup> In other words, money in hand has either been corrupted or it will corrupt. Jesus addresses the dangers of money at length within the gospels and concludes this parable by stating that one 'cannot serve God and mammon'.<sup>26</sup> Wesley's sermon echoes I Timothy 6.10 in declaring that 'the love of money is the root of all evil'. Consequently, Wesley argues that there is a particular emphasis that is often overlooked: it is not money itself but the love of it that corrupts. He explains that 'in the hands of his children, [money] is food for the hungry, drink for

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<sup>20</sup> Wesley, *Works*: I, p. 441. See also: Acts 2.42–47.

<sup>21</sup> Acts 4.32–35.

<sup>22</sup> Wesley, *Works*: I, p. 441.

<sup>23</sup> Wesley, *Works*: I, pp. 441–448.

<sup>24</sup> Found in Luke 16.

<sup>25</sup> Wesley, *Works*: I, p. 441.

<sup>26</sup> Luke 16.13.

the thirsty, raiment for the naked’, and as such, the mammon of unrighteousness is redeemed. This notion is reflected in the moral of the parable: gain and use whatever is in your grasp for ‘all possible good’ — for your good but, equally, for the good of others.<sup>27</sup>

The concept of gain is a regular topic of conversation between Bragwell and Worthy, More’s two wealthy farmers. More’s tract takes aim at economic liberalism and the notion of individuals labouring to increase their capital exclusively for their own benefit (and perhaps their own vanity). Within the text, Bragwell’s beliefs share some similarities with the political economist Adam Smith and his idea of ‘pursuing [one’s] own interest’.<sup>28</sup> Apostle Paul also addresses this idea, albeit somewhat differently, in stating that individuals should ‘look out not only for [their] own interests, but also for the interests of others’.<sup>29</sup> This is echoed in Wesley’s sermon. Thus, while personal interest and gain are not problematic in and of themselves, they are meant to accompany the ‘good’ of neighbourly duty.

Bragwell and Worthy first substantially address the concept of gain through their discussion of the eighth commandment: ‘Thou shalt not steal’.<sup>30</sup> Worthy, who is depicted as the model of integrity within this didactic text, advances a concept of gain that is closely aligned with Wesley’s in expressing its prerequisite as not ‘hurting [one’s] neighbour’.<sup>31</sup> Specifically, Worthy asserts that it is one’s duty to never ‘hide the faults of the goods you sell’, ‘heighten the faults of those you buy’, or ‘ask more for a thing than it is worth’. To prey on the ‘distressed circumstances of a man’ for one’s ‘own unfair benefit’ is not only ‘unjust’, Worthy equates it with ‘stealing’.<sup>32</sup> To this, Bragwell

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<sup>27</sup> Wesley, *Works*: I, p. 441.

<sup>28</sup> Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, (London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1776), II, p. 35.

<sup>29</sup> Philippians 2.4.

<sup>30</sup> Exodus 20.15.

<sup>31</sup> Wesley, *Works*: I, p. 443.

<sup>32</sup> Hannah More, ‘The Two Wealthy Farmers: Or, the History of Mr. Bragwell’, in *Cheap Repository Tracts*, (London: F. and C. Rivington, 1799), p. 36.

responds, ‘Pooh! these things are done every day. [...] I don’t set up for a reformer. — If I am as good as the rest of my neighbours, no man can call me to account’.<sup>33</sup>

In the above passage, it is evident that Bragwell, a traditional Anglican, is associating a ‘reformer’ mentality with Worthy’s evangelical theology. Worthy is attempting to use this theology to educate Bragwell on the immorality of intentionally disadvantaging one’s neighbour. He does this by attacking the concept of *custom*, a word that he identifies as ‘dangerous’ in that it has been ‘invented to reconcile corruption with credit, and sin with safety’, as seen in Bragwell’s apathetic justification for gaining financial advantage.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, the business practices of Bragwell resemble those that Wesley decries as ‘sinful trade’.<sup>35</sup> Bragwell explains that ‘a thing can’t be any great bargain both to the buyer and the seller too’; thus, ‘as a man of sense’, he expresses that it is ‘fair enough’ to ‘secure the bargain to [him]self’,<sup>36</sup> therein echoing the political economist Adam Smith and his belief in ‘pursuing [one’s] own interest’. Consequently, Bragwell represents individualism and the embodiment of one’s rights superseding their duties. Worthy goes on to explain that, while Bragwell’s position is both customary and legally permissible, it opposes evangelical convictions.

Instead, evangelical convictions teach that ‘a truly honest’ individual is not one shrewdly endeavouring ‘to see how far custom and the law will bear him out’; rather, one who is ‘honest on principle’ relies on both the ‘law of his conscience’ and the ‘written law of God’.<sup>37</sup> Thus, evangelicalism presents a belief system that overrules the law of the land and defies what More refers to as ‘monopolizers’ and proponents of capitalist greed, rendering evangelical beliefs complexly countercultural.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, in situating *custom* within a negative light, More highlights the nuances and contradictions within her own conservative beliefs.

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<sup>33</sup> More, *Wealthy Farmers*, pp. 36–37.

<sup>34</sup> More, *Wealthy Farmers*, p. 82.

<sup>35</sup> Wesley, *Works*: 442.

<sup>36</sup> More, *Wealthy Farmers*, p. 76.

<sup>37</sup> More, *Wealthy Farmers*, p. 83. See also: Wesley, *Works*: I, p. 442.

<sup>38</sup> Nardin, p. 273.

Wesley emphasizes the concept of ‘save all you can’ stating, ‘Do not throw [money] away in idle expenses [...] Expend no part of it merely to gratify the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life’.<sup>39</sup> In More’s tract, this concept is linked up with the application of the tenth commandment: ‘Thou shalt not covet’.<sup>40</sup> The term *covetousness* is contemporized through both Wesley’s and More’s use of the term *vanity*, which becomes an underlying theme throughout their respective sermon and tract. In an age dichotomized by an abundance of both fashion and want, vanity was considered to be a particularly base practice within evangelicalism. It was characterised as anything ‘expensive in diet, or apparel, or furniture’ that was used not only ‘to please [one’s] appetite, or to gratify their eye, their imagination, but their vanity too’.<sup>41</sup> Thus, Worthy rightly adopts the viewpoint that a ‘wealthy farmer’, as a businessman, should be ‘an example of simplicity, sobriety, and plainness of manners’.<sup>42</sup>

Vanity is a trait that Bragwell and his family not only exhibit but also one in which they ‘delight’. Earnings are saved up for the purpose of preparing elaborate meals and throwing extravagant parties, all while both wearing and being surrounded by the most fashionable. This practice ensures the Bragwells’ association with those of ‘larger fortune’.<sup>43</sup> Whatever personal finances remain after such extravagancies, Bragwell saves for his two daughters, Polly and Betsy, in order that they might marry above their station.<sup>44</sup> Likewise, Mrs. Bragwell and her daughters make no attempt to hide their vanity. The daughters ‘despised their plain neighbours’<sup>45</sup>, and ‘the first wish of [Mrs. Bragwell’s] heart was to set them above their neighbours’.<sup>46</sup>

Sadly, due to the family’s misuse of money and penchant for vanity, tragedy ensues, including the bad marriages of both Polly and Betsy and the death of both sons-in-law. This is followed by the

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<sup>39</sup> Wesley, *Works: I*, p. 445.

<sup>40</sup> Exodus 20.17.

<sup>41</sup> Wesley, *Works: I*, p. 445.

<sup>42</sup> More, *Wealthy Farmers*, p. 79.

<sup>43</sup> More, *Wealthy Farmers*, p. 5.

<sup>44</sup> More, *Wealthy Farmers*, p. 48.

<sup>45</sup> More, *Wealthy Farmers*, p. 9.

<sup>46</sup> More, *Wealthy Farmers*, p. 6.

death of Betsy and her stillborn child and the near starvation of Polly and her young son George. More blends this cautionary tale with a preferred model: Worthy's two daughters who are the opposite of Bragwell's in nearly every respect. Worthy's daughters maintain a 'disgust for vanity and waste' and, therefore, favour food and dress that is 'plain but neat'.<sup>47</sup> Their desire is not to be considered fine or fashionable women; rather, 'their pleasure is bound up with their duty', that is: their duty to God and their neighbours.<sup>48</sup>

The question then arises: if the money that is earned is not meant to be saved for vain purposes, for what is it to be used? Wesley answers this question by proposing and defining the concept of 'give all you can'. Specifically, he explains that one should 'provide things needful for [one]self; food to eat, raiment to put on, whatever nature moderately requires for preserving the body in health and strength'. Next, these 'needful' things are to be provided for one's household, followed by those of the 'household of faith'. He concludes by stating that the remainder should be utilized to 'do good unto all men' and to 'give all you can; nay, in a sound sense, all you have'.<sup>49</sup>

Wesley's purportedly biblically based model validates the customary and reasonable concept of providing first for oneself and household, followed by those in one's social circle. However, what makes Wesley's model remarkable is his proposal of how the money should be used after having provided for the aforementioned basic necessities. It is a call for all residual earnings to be expended on the poor — to neighbours in need. After all, Wesley explains, in giving away all you have, you merely 'render unto God the things that are God's'.<sup>50</sup> That is, whatever is reserved for doing 'good unto all men' is actually that which belongs to God and not to the individual.

In returning to Wesley's advocacy for a religion of the heart — one of full devotion to God — there is an implication that 'full' devotion involves the giving of everything to God, including

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<sup>47</sup> More, *Wealthy Farmers*, p. 11,54..

<sup>48</sup> More, *Wealthy Farmers*, p. 58.

<sup>49</sup> Wesley, *Works: I*, p. 447.

<sup>50</sup> Wesley, *Works: I*, p. 447.

finances. This ‘devotion’ naturally prompts a desire and a sense of duty towards charity, which can be seen as a giving away of what God has already given. However, Wesley’s model of giving transcends the concept of *noblesse oblige* in that he feels extreme charity should be applied by all classes in society, irrespective of background and personal finances. This promotes the concept that generous giving transcends socioeconomic class — whatever one is able to give to a neighbour in need, be it but ‘two mites’, they should give it.<sup>51</sup> Wesley espouses the following ‘rule’: ‘Let our conveniences give way to our neighbour’s necessities; and our necessities give way to our neighbour’s extremities’.<sup>52</sup>

According to Worthy, ‘He who does his duty to God, will be likely to do his duty to his neighbour also’.<sup>53</sup> Bragwell is insistent that, despite his ‘customary’ faults, he is an ‘honest man’ who does his ‘duty to God and [his] neighbour’.<sup>54</sup> In order to better fulfil his Christian duty, Bragwell decides that, in his ‘old age’, he will engage in charity since ‘at present he really had little to spare’; however, the text makes it clear that Bragwell’s dearth of charity is not due to a lack of funds but, rather, a lack of self-denial as the ‘true, grand source of charity, self-denial, never came into his head’.<sup>55</sup> More reproduces the fusion of ‘charity and self-denial’<sup>56</sup> in her book *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* and furthers the notion of an ‘active charity’,<sup>57</sup> which evangelical theology professes to be ‘so ornamental to a Christian Profession’.<sup>58</sup>

Worthy makes another significant assertion regarding to whom these moral and biblical laws of charity and financial management apply. In echoing Galatians 3:28, Worthy states: There are no exceptions there in favour of any one class of men. The same restraints which are necessary for the people at large are equally necessary

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<sup>51</sup> Wesley, *Works*: II, p. 334. See also: Matthew 22.15–22, Mark 12.13–17, and Luke 20.20–26.

<sup>52</sup> Wesley, *Works*: II, p. 334; Heitzenrater, p. 28.

<sup>53</sup> More, *Wealthy Farmers*, p. 27.

<sup>54</sup> More, *Wealthy Farmers*, p. 25.

<sup>55</sup> More, *Wealthy Farmers*, pp. 44–45..

<sup>56</sup> Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, (London: Cadell and Davies, 1799), p. 71.

<sup>57</sup> More, *Strictures*, p. 56.

<sup>58</sup> Philip Doddridge, *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, (London: J. Waugh, 1745), p. 205.

for men of every order, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, learned and ignorant. If Jesus Christ died for no particular rank, class, or community, there is no one rank, class, or communion, exempt from the obedience to his laws enjoined by the Gospel.<sup>59</sup>

This squarely affirms the popular evangelical belief that religion is classless and that equality is not merely a lofty ideal; rather, it an ideal for which to actively and practically strive. This can be seen not only in the substantial evangelical push to abolish slavery (which More and Wesley strongly supported) but also in the evangelical push for extreme charity and, consequently, a financially equitable society. In order to foster such a society, many evangelicals expressed that giving must be widely practiced and abundantly applied. In the words of Worthy, ‘If he has money, let him spend prudently, lay up moderately for his children, and give liberally to the poor’.<sup>60</sup> In this way, he can ‘do much good [...] especially in these hard times’.<sup>61</sup> If this advice were practically applied, a distinct societal shift would ensue.

While this would not result in a mirroring of the early church model of shared resources, it would bring society remarkably closer to this ideal. Wesley’s more contemporary model was one created in light of a world driven by financial rights as opposed to financial duties. Thus, in Wesley’s model, individual assets are retained as opposed to being held in common; however, the implementation of this model — gain all you can and save all you can in order to give all you can — would lead to comparable results in that while private property is preserved, it is continuously being given away. As seen in More’s tract, association with this model is alive and well fifty years later, still advocating for honest trade, frugal living, and extreme charity. In the midst of socio-political strife, ideas between conservatism and equality within Wesley’s sermon and More’s tract find harmony in their evangelical response to ideas of duty and social responsibility. For them, implementation of

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<sup>59</sup> More, *Wealthy Farmers*, p. 64.

<sup>60</sup> More, *Wealthy Farmers*, p. 79.

<sup>61</sup> More, *Wealthy Farmers*, p. 78.

these ideas could result in a peaceful but widespread transformation of society through a sonorous outpouring of the religion of the heart.

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