CHAPTER 2

Adam Clarke: Methodism's First Old Testament Scholar

Introduction

Adam Clarke (1762–1832), who was born in Ireland, has been called "Methodism's first Old Testament scholar,[1] and he was the most prominent Bible expositor in the founders' period of Methodism. He is primarily known today by the Bible commentary he wrote, which is still being published. His writings are much more extensive, however, and include a *Christian Theology* and *Discourses on Various Subjects*, a four-volume set of sixty sermons.

One of Clarke's early assignments was as a missionary to the French-speaking Channel Islands. For three years Clarke served there with remarkable results.[2] Although there is evidence that he accepted this assignment reluctantly, his later missionary activity suggests this reluctance was not from a lack of interest. During his ministry Clarke was assigned to a number of important circuits in the Methodist movement, including Dublin, Liverpool, Bristol, and London, some of them more than once. He was known as an exceptional preacher who was much more expository in his approach than many of his time. Some of his published sermons will be examined in this study. But it should be noted that in the pulpit Clarke preached without notes, so the sermons we have were those he reconstructed for publication after they had been preached.

1. See pamphlet by that name written by Dawes, *Adam Clarke: Methodism's First Old Testament Scholar*.

2. For an account of this missionary experience see Etheridge, *Life of the Rev. Adam Clarke, Ll.D*, 91–114. Of interest to this study is an account of Clarke's initial ministry on the island of Alderney, where, in one of his initial presentations of the gospel, he preached on Prov 12:26. See Etheridge, *Life of the Rev. Adam Clarke, Ll.D*, 99.

Clarke, however, was not simply a preacher. He was a linguist of notable skill, with knowledge of more than 20 languages. His knowledge of the biblical languages made him one of the authorities of his day and allowed him to do his own translation of the entire Bible prior to writing his commentary. The commentary took him forty years to complete. Clarke was a member of various historical and literary societies in Ireland and England, and he received two honorary degrees from the University of Aberdeen.

His influence in the Methodist movement of his day can be seen in his being elected three times as president of the Methodist conference. In his first year as president the first Methodist missionary societies were formed—in Leeds in 1813, then in London a year later. Clarke presided at the London meeting and delivered the inaugural address entitled, "A short Account of the Introduction of the Gospel into the British Isles; and the Obligations of Britons to make known its Salvation to every Nation of the Earth."[3] Upon the death of Coke, Clarke became one of the principal advocates of foreign missions in the Methodist societies.[4]

But it is likely that Clarke's foundational influence in the Methodist movement can best be attributed to his writings. In addition to the sermons, a *Christian Theology* was developed from his writings and published in 1861. Its continued use is a testimony to Clarke's enduring influence.[5] Unfortunately, for our purposes, the editors of this volume included very few biblical references, making its contribution as an Old Testament theology source quite limited.

The conference of 1807 appointed Clarke, along with Coke and Joseph Benson, to develop a compendium of Methodist teachers, with the goal of preserving the teachings of John Wesley.[6] That these men were chosen for this task is a powerful indication of their influence within the Methodism of their day.

Clarke's lifelong literary project, however, was his commentary on the Holy Scriptures. This work became the standard in Methodism for two centuries in America as well as Britain. Until 1902 it was a part of the course of

3. Clarke, *Short Account of the Introduction of the Gospel into the British Isles*.

4. Etheridge, *Life of the Rev. Adam Clarke, Ll.D*, 338.

5. Clarke, *Christian Theology*, new ed.

6. This is according to Etheridge, *Life of the Rev. Adam Clarke, Ll.D*, 220. According to the minutes of the 1806 conference the three were "appointed to draw up a Digest or Form, expressive of the Methodist Doctrines, with sufficiency of texts of Scripture to explain them respectively; and with extracts out of Mr. Wesley's Works, to prove that everything before advanced exactly coincides with his judgment and public declarations." Exactly which of these men was involved in writing each of the sections is not clear. See *Publications of The Wesley Historical Society: Number 2—Articles of Religion Prepared By Order of the Conference of 1806*, 1897.

study of the Methodist Church South.[7] From this work, along with Clarke's published sermons, this chapter will explore his development of an Old Testament missiology.

Clarke and Old Testament Missiological Issues

The writings of Clarke, like those of Coke and Bunting, show that Clarke was concerned about many of the issues being explored today in biblical missiology. For example, the universal rule of God is a common theme in Clarke. On Ps 68:32 he writes, "All the inhabitants of the earth are invited to sing unto God, to acknowledge him as their God, and give him the praise due to his name."[8] God is seen to have a broad right to command all of humanity. In part this universalism, for Clarke, is the direct result of God being the Creator. He writes: "Thou alone art the Author of all its grand *geographical* divisions . . . Thou hast appointed that peculiarity in the poise and rotation of the earth, by which the *seasons* are produced."[9] But God's rule also issues from the fact that he is the sustainer of all things. In Ps 75:3 Clarke understands God to be speaking; God states how dependent the earth and all its inhabitants are upon him. Clarke pictures God as saying, "They all depend upon me; and whenever I withdraw the power by which they exist and live, they are immediately dissolved . . . By the word of my power all things are upheld; and without me nothing can subsist."[10] Clarke affirms in prayer to God: "Thou are the Governor of all things, and the Disposer of all events."[11] These unique works of God are understood by Clarke to be of missiological significance. Because the works of God are unlike the works of any other god, Clarke concludes that "thy word shall be proclaimed among all the Gentiles; they shall receive thy testimony, and worship thee as the only true and living God (Ps 86:9)."[12]

Clarke was also aware of the apparent exclusiveness of the Old Testament. In spite of the fact that much of the Old Testament is focused on the nation of Israel, Clarke clearly believed that God was still interested in all nations.

7. Patterson, "Ministerial Mind of American Methodism," 391.
8. Clarke, *Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments,* New ed., 3:434.
9. Ibid., 3:456.
10. Ibid., 3:457.
11. Ibid., 3:498.
12. Ibid., 3:488.

> From the nature and perfections of God it may be most conclusively argued that, having made all human beings of the same blood . . . and all human spirits of the same nature, he must have designed them for the same happiness; not preferring any family or individual to another, as he had made them all equal.[13]

On the contrary, Clarke repeatedly argues for the inclusion of those outside the chosen race. For example, Abraham's intercession for Sodom was not a selfish concern for the welfare of his relative, but was, says Clarke, the result of "God's own love in the heart of his servant."[14] God sent Joseph to Egypt, Clarke argues, not only for the good of Jacob and his descendants, but as an expression of care for the Canaanites and Egyptians.[15]

In addition to these examples of inclusivism, there are numerous references in Exodus through Deuteronomy of how Israel was to care for "strangers." Clarke does not comment on each of these. However, Clarke does comment on Num 15:14, which allows for strangers to participate in bringing offerings to God. He writes: "All *strangers*—all that came to *sojourn* in the land, were required to conform to it [what Clarke calls "one form of worship"]; and it was right that those who did conform to it should have equal rights and privileges with the Hebrews themselves."[16] Clarke sees adequate evidence in the Pentateuch that strangers did receive "equal rights and privileges," if they equally participated in the worship of God.[17]

Another area where Clarke's interest paralleled that of current writers is the destruction of the Caananites. For Clarke, a proper understanding of Deut 7:7, 8, 12; and 9:5, which comes in the midst of a broader discussion on the subject of election, is crucial.

> It was no good in them that induced God to choose them at this time to be his peculiar people; he had his reasons, but these sprang from his infinite goodness. He intended to make a full discovery of his goodness to the world, and this must have a commencement in some particular place, and among some people. He chose that time, and he chose the Jewish people; but not because of their goodness or holiness."[18]

13. Clarke, *Discourses on Various Subjects*, 4 vols., 3:441. This sermon, entitled "The High Commission," and based on Hab 2:14 and Isa 11:9, is Clarke's most comprehensive treatment of the equal standing of Jews and Gentiles before God.

14. Clarke, *Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments*, 1:122.

15. Ibid., 1:279.

16. Ibid., 1:167.

17. Clarke does clarify that there were two different categories of strangers; *strangers of the gate* and *strangers of the covenant*. See the related comment in Ibid., 1:359.

18. Ibid., 1:758–59.

Clarke adds on v. 12, "If they would rebel, though God had chosen them through his *love,* yet he would cast them off in his *justice*. The elect, we see, may become unfaithful, and so become *reprobates*. So it happened to 24,000 of them . . . "[19] By extension this provides, for him, the reason for the destruction of the Canaanites.

> It was not by any *sovereign* act of God that these people were cast out, but for their *wickedness* . . . The Israelites were to possess the land, not because *they* deserved it, but first, because they were *less* wicked than the others; and secondly, because God thus chose to begin the great work of his salvation among men.[20]

Not only did Clarke see God's judgment of the Canaanites as a matter of justice rather than election, it was a necessary part of the salvation process.[21] This is in contrast to Coke who argued that the destruction of the Canaanites was national and not individual.

Clarke also observed that the Old Testament was concerned about mission. Perhaps his comments on Gen 12:1–3 best summarize his viewpoint in this regard. For Clarke, the missionary thrust of this commission begins only after the coming of the Messiah. On 12:3, "In thy posterity, in the *Messiah* (italics are Clarke's), who shall spring from thee, shall all families in the earth be blessed."[22] The implication is that the Old Testament period is a time of preparation for mission, not a time for the practice of mission. On the "blessing to the nations" Clarke comments, "We have the authority of St. Paul, Gal. 3:8, 16, 18, to restrain this to our blessed Lord, who was the seed through whom alone all God's blessings . . . should be conveyed to the nations of the earth."[23] Thus, Clarke concludes that the primary missiological function of the Old Testament is to prepare all—Jew and Gentile—for the salvation that would be made available to all in the Messiah.

Still Clarke did see examples of individuals engaging in mission in the narratives of the Old Testament. Like Coke, Clarke saw missionary activity in the work of the spies sent to Jericho. Clarke saw them as "instructing" Rahab in the Jewish faith to the point that she became a proselyte.[24] And, like Coke, Clarke interpreted the accounts of the Israelite maid in Naaman's

19. Ibid., 1:759.

20. Ibid., 1:763–64.

21. Coke reasoned that the Canaanite *nations* were to be destroyed, and "all power taken from them . . . to teach the Israelites to do after their abominations." See his comments in Coke, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 1:706–9.

22. Clarke, *Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments*, 1:94.

23. Ibid., 1:141.

24. Ibid., 2:12.

house,[25] and the story of Jonah, as missionary engagements.[26] Other notable examples seen by Clarke (and not Coke), as involving cross-cultural mission are David with King Achish[27] and Daniel with King Darius.[28] Each of these could be interpreted as centrifugal mission.

But Clarke, like Coke, also believed that the entire Old Testament believing community, not just random individuals, had a responsibility to witness for God. For example, Clarke interpreted Ps 96 as a communal call for missiological engagement. His exegetical outline reads: "All the inhabitants of the earth are invited to praise the Lord, 1–3; . . . The tribes of Israel are invited . . . to proclaim him among the heathen, 10;"[29] This is a call to centrifugal witness; an understanding that this is a part of service to God. Verse 2 seems to play a large role in Clarke's understanding of the missionary aspect of the psalm. He writes: "Verse 2. *Show forth his salvation from day to day.* The original is very emphatic . . . [he quotes from the Hebrew text and translates], 'Preach the gospel of his salvation from day to day.' To the same effect the Septuagint. 'Evangelize his salvation from day to day.'" From v. 3 Clarke understands that part of this "evangelizing" is to take place among the Gentiles, ("declare his glory among the heathen").

In his analysis of this psalm Clarke comments, "Salvation was a glorious work, full of wonders. And this was to be evangelized, as before to the *Jews* by the prophets, so now to all peoples by the apostles."[30] Here Clarke seems to distance himself from the idea that Old Testament evangelism is being expressed. Evangelism in the Old Testament, he says, was the work of the prophets, not the common people, and was only to the Jews. But later in the analysis, commenting on the statement, "Say among the heathen the Lord reigns," Clarke writes, "Be heralds; and proclaim with the sound of the trumpet, *God reigns, He is King.*"[31]

The problem for Clarke, as it was for Coke, was the difficulty of determining which texts were speaking of the messianic kingdom and which texts described the normal activity expected of an Old Testament believer. This is clear from his comment in the analysis: "The prophet begins to set for the amplitude of Christ's kingdom . . . Before, it was confined to Judea,

25. See ibid., 2:496.
26. See ibid., 4:703.
27. Ibid., 2:300.
28. Ibid., 4:582.
29. Ibid., 3:524.
30. Ibid., 3:526.
31. Ibid., 3:527.

but is now enlarged."[32] Clarke's commitment to a literal interpretation of Scripture and to the Christocentricity of Scripture often create for him a hermeneutical tension, especially when dealing with mission.

In the prophets this tension becomes even more pronounced. Clarke prefaces his comments on Isa 40 with a long treatise in which he emphasizes both his sympathies with a spiritual interpretation of these chapters—they refer to the Messiah—and to a literal interpretation, in which case they relate to the return from Babylon. He seems at pains to make sure the literal understanding is maintained, as distinct from the spiritual one. But ultimately the spiritual interpretation seems to emerge as dominant. In his exegetical outline for Isa 40 he writes, "In this chapter the prophet opens the subject respecting the restoration of the Church with great force and elegance . . . "[33]

This same tension is still present in Clarke's treatment of the servant passages of Isaiah. Clarke clearly believes that the servant is being sent to the nations, but in most cases the servant is not the believing community, but the Messiah. Thus, commenting on Isa 42:1 Clarke writes, "It (*mishpat*) certainly means in this place the law to be published by Messiah, the institution of the Gospel."[34] The implication is that, while centrifugal mission was not foreign to the Old Testament, a more general winning of the Gentiles to God awaited the coming of the Messiah.

In contrast to Bunting and Coke, who saw centripetal witness in the Old Testament historical books, Clarke's clearest statements about centripetal mission come from the prophets. On Jer 4:2, Clarke comments, "They (the nations) shall be so fully convinced of the power and goodness of Jehovah in seeing the change wrought upon thee, and the mercies heaped upon thee, that their usual mode of benediction shall be, *May the God of Israel bless thee!*"[35] On Ezek 36:36, "They [the heathen] shall see how powerful Jehovah is, and how *fully he saves* those who come unto and worship him."[36]

Summary

This review of the writings of Clarke argues that, like Coke and Bunting, Clarke was convinced that the Old Testament was a book about mission. For Clarke, God is concerned about all nations. He made provision for the inclusion of "strangers" in the camp of Israel. Even Abraham's intercession

32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., 4:156.
34. Ibid., 4:167.
35. Ibid., 4:264.
36. Ibid., 4:522.

for Sodom is understood as the personal concern of this patriarch for the nations. But for Clarke, unlike Coke and Bunting, the primary missionary message of the Old Testament is predictive of the Messianic kingdom. As noted, Clarke does find very few examples of missionary activity in the Old Testament. But even in Clarke's comments on Jonah there is no effort to interpret that book as centrifugal witness. Instead, beginning with Gen 12:1–3, Clarke interprets the Old Testament as predicting that the nations will come to faith in Yahweh through the ministry of the Messiah. It would be the Servant who would inaugurate a new day for the evangelization of the Gentiles.

Mission is a concern that can be seen throughout the Old Testament. But Clarke seems to have understood that the fulfillment of that mission could not be realized until the final sacrifice for sin had been made.

The Old Testament as a Motivating Force for Mission

The works of Adam Clarke provide ample evidence that he used the Old Testament as a motivating force for mission. In his work *Clavis Biblica* Clarke included a statement of faith under the title "Principles of the Christian Religion." In section XLIV Clarke shows that, in his mind, a connection exists between the Wesleyan distinctive of "Christian Perfection" and mission. He writes:

> As this religion positively commands its professors to love God with all their hearts, souls, minds, and strength, and their neighbor, any, and every human being, as themselves; hence it is the duty of all Christian nations and people to exert themselves in every possible and reasonable way, to send this glorious light of Revelation to all the nations of mankind who have not yet received it . . . [37]

Clarke proceeds to list twelve references which contain "precepts and promises" connected with world evangelism. Of interest for this study is that six of the twelve come from the Old Testament. They are Gen 22:18; Mal 1:11; Joel 2:28, 32; Ps 136:9; Isa 52:7, 10; and Isa 45:22. Inasmuch as Clarke himself adds no commentary concerning the reasons for including these specific texts in this list, suggestions must be tentative. Two observations, however, can be made. First, for Clarke the Abrahamic covenant is crucial

37. Clarke, *Principles of the Christian Religion*. It should be noted that the *Preacher's Manual*, also printed by John Mason in 1837, includes the same "Principles," but stops with XLII. Only Pamphlet #222 contains the complete section on missions.

to missions, even though Clarke here cites the restatement of the covenant after Abraham's faithfulness on Mt. Moriah rather than citing the original promise in Gen 12:3. In his commentary on both texts Clarke emphasizes the messianic element of this promise. On Gen 22:18 he writes:

> We have the authority of St. Paul, Gal. 3:8, 16, 18, to restrain this to our blessed Lord, who was THE SEED through whom alone all God's blessings of providence, mercy, grace, and glory, should be conveyed to the nations of the world."[38]

That comment provides the foundation for the second observation. Each of these texts is prophetic in nature. For Clarke, "cross-cultural," global mission is present in the Old Testament but only in the context of the future kingdom of the Messiah. So while Clarke sees isolated examples of the Old Testament community of faith being involved in cross-cultural mission, the motivational value of the Old Testament for the New Testament community of faith is inextricably connected to the Old Testament's vision of the messianic age. It is in the sermons of Clarke that the practical implications of this principle can be seen.

From 1840 to1845 four volumes of Clarke's sermons were printed, including a total of sixty sermons—a very small number in light of the estimated fifteen thousand or more sermons he preached in his lifetime.[39] Clarke himself explains the reason for the small number when he writes in the "advertisement to the first edition" of his sermons that, "during my long ministerial life I have written but very few sermons."[40] His preaching style was extemporaneous, without notes. (This is a significant accomplishment given the lexical and scientific detail often seen in his written sermons.) Consequently it must be understood that the written sermons are reconstructions of sermons already preached from the pulpit, and therefore may not give a true picture of Clarke as pulpiteer.

An editorial comment in the fourth volume of his sermons also provides a helpful insight.

> During the latter part of [Clarke's] life, he rarely preached without a collection being made at the close of the service. He was either specifically invited for the purpose, or the friends took good care to fix their more regular collections on the day on which he was appointed to be at the place.[41]

38. Clarke, *Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments*, 1:141.
39. See Tracy, *When Adam Clarke Preached, People Listened*, 39.
40. Clarke, *Discourses on Various Subjects*, 1:vii.
41. Ibid., 4:205.

When, therefore, we examine "missionary sermons," it should be remembered that in most cases the purpose of preaching them was, in part, to motivate congregations to donate to the missionary cause.

The most complete analysis of Clarke's sixty written sermons has been done by Wesley Tracy. He identified eight sermons in which the major theme was missions.[42] Tracy does not identify those sermons by number, and an examination of the sermons actually yields only five in which a missionary context/purpose is stated. Clearly in these sermons the purpose is motivation.

#	Title	Text	Date
4	God's Willingness to Save All Men	1 Tim 2:3–6	May 2, 1824
45	Discourse on Nebuchadnezzar's Dream	Dan 2:41–45	no date
50	The Love of God to Man	1 John 4:8–11	April 28, 1820
51	The Necessity of Christ's Atonement	Luke 24:46–48	April 30, 1820
63	God's Love in Jesus Christ . . .	1 John 3:1, 2	April 27, 1832

While sermon 4 is taken from a New Testament text, when Clarke begins the motivational part of the address he turns to an Old Testament text. The transition begins from the emphasis in 1 Timothy that Jesus gave himself *a ransom for all*. Clarke then argues that such a purpose requires that "every man should hear, understand, and acknowledge"[43] the message. This, Clarke continues, requires either supernatural agency or human means. The Old Testament—Jonah—and the New—St. Paul—show that God has chosen the latter. While Clarke acknowledges that God has his part in this process—calling and preparing the messenger—"yet it is the duty of his *people* to equip him for his journey . . . to bear his expenses, and support him in his works."[44]

42. Tracy, *When Adam Clarke Preached, People Listened*, 50.
43. Clarke, *Discourses on Various Subjects*, 1:100.
44. Ibid., 1:104–5.

Clarke's appeal then becomes very strong:

> There is a maxim in law, "that he who neglects to save life, when it is in his power to do it, is a murderer, as well as he who violently takes it away." What then must God and considerate men think of us, if we permit Satan to murder those souls, which, by the grace of God, it is in our power to snatch from the sides of the pit, and pluck as brands from the burning?"[45]

Clarke finds the answer in Ezek 33:6–8. His hearers are the watchmen God has set upon the wall to warn the wicked. It is in their power to reach them.

> Many excellent men, full of the Holy Ghost, and power, are on tiptoe . . . saying "*Here are we, send us!*" Send us . . . to the uttermost parts of the earth, where God is not known . . . Constrained by the love of Christ we will freely go.[46]

Clarke then reaches a climax.

> After such offers . . . these men will be guiltless, if not *sent*. But what a reckoning must those have with the great Head of the church, who neglect these calls, and will not join hands with God to make the wretched live?[47]

Divine judgment awaits those who either refuse to go, or refuse to assist those who are called to go. Such is the missionary motivation of the Old Testament.

The text from Daniel is used in a similar manner. The missionary center of the passage is Dan 2:34. According to Genesis 49:24 Clarke sees the stone as Christ "and his governing influence."[48] It is the task of the followers of Christ to break down the governing influences that went before them. Just as in the previous sermon, it is "the duty, therefore, of every soul professing Christianity to lend a helping hand to send forth the Bible; and . . . a missionary."[49] The urgency is created, however, eschatologically. The eternal rest of God—his Sabbath—is about to begin.

> Are we so near the eve of that period, when "they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the starts for ever and ever?" What sort of persons should we then be in all holy conversation

45. Ibid., 1:106.
46. Ibid., 1:108.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid., 4:49.
49. Ibid., 4:55.

> and godliness! Where is our zeal for God? . . . Let us beware, lest the stone that struck the motley image, and dashed it to pieces, fall on us, and grind us to powder.[50]

For Clarke, the coming of the kingdom brings both opportunity and responsibility. Believers will either join the King in building his kingdom, and enjoy the benefits, or build their own kingdom, and suffer the judgment that comes from failing to promote the King. Clarke clearly is as assured preaching missions from the Old Testament as he is from the New.

Missiological Implications of Wesleyan Theological Distinctives As Seen in the Old Testament

Image of God in Humanity

As was stated in chapter 1, theological anthropology is usually focused upon the questions of the nature of humanity when first created and how completely the fall changed the human condition. Wesleyans also ask to what degree human beings can regain or be restored to what they were when first created.

In answer to the first question Clarke follows the lead of Wesley in seeing the image of God as composed of three different aspects. In his commentary on Gen 1:26, Clarke focuses primarily on the "moral" image. Man, "was created after the image of God; and that image, St. Paul tells us, consisted in *righteousness, true holiness,* and *knowledge,* Eph 4:24; Col 3:10. Hence man was *wise* in his *mind, holy* in his *heart,* and *righteous* in his *actions.*"[51] The focus here is not on the capacities given to humanity, but their correct use.

Clarke separates himself from Coke, and Wesley, when the political image is considered. For him "dominion was not the image."[52] The two clauses in v. 26 then are not synonymous. Instead, for Clarke, "let him have dominion" is a result of the image of God. Human capacities, what Wesley called the "natural image," are, for Clarke, a part of the divine image.

> The contrivance, arrangement, action, and re-action of the different parts of the body, show the admirable skill of the wondrous Creator; while the various powers and faculties of the mind, acting on and by the different organs of this body,

50. Ibid., 4:56–57.
51. Clarke, *Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments*, 1:138.
52. Ibid., 1:38.

> proclaim the *soul's* Divine origin, and demonstrate that he was made in the image and likeness of God . . . [53]

Thus the image of God is at the same time moral, political, and natural.

To answer our second question—How did the fall change human beings?—Clarke turns to the Psalms. He states that Psalm 14:3 is "the state of the *whole inhabitants of the earth*, till the grace of God changes their heart. By *nature*, and from nature, by *practice,* every man is sinful and corrupt. He *feels* no good; he is *disposed* to no good; he *does* no good."[54]

A more extended treatment of the fallen condition of humanity is found in Clarke's treatment of the comparison of Israel with impure metals, particularly silver, in Jer 6:27–30. Clarke describes the process of removing impurities from the silver and the risks involved. But the impurities are so engrained in the metal that "the assayer gives up the process—will not institute one more expensive or tedious *process*," and the silver is pronounced "reprobate" (v. 30). Clarke then applies the analogy to the human condition: "The people are here represented under the notion of *alloyed silver* . . . having neither the image nor the superscription of the Great King either on their hearts or in their conduct."[55] While Clarke does not use the language of depravity here, the suggestion is that the people of Israel were so completely sinful as to make their salvation impossible as a nation.

In answer to the third question above, Clarke, like Coke and Bunting, argues that God's chief design for men and women is their "happiness." In Clarke's *Discourses* we have two sermons on this topic—one from the Old Testament and one from the New. The Old Testament sermon is titled "True Happiness, and the Way to Attain It," and is an exposition of Ps 40:16, 17. The clearest definition, however, comes from the New Testament sermon. After discussing definitions from such varying sources as Hooker, Locke, and Paley, Clarke summarizes his own definition by stating that happiness is "the approbation of God in the conscience, and the image of God in the heart."[56] In the Old Testament sermon Clarke suggests that happiness exists when "man derives from his Maker all that he needs, and gives to his Maker all that he (the Maker) requires."[57] Clarke argues that this kind of happiness is not only possible in this life, but essential if we want to "see God."

53. Ibid., 1:39.

54. Ibid., 3:255.

55. Ibid., 4:272.

56. The New Testament sermon is from Philippians 4:4, and is titled, "Genuine Happiness The Privilege of the Christian in This Life." See Clarke, *Discourses on Various Subjects*, 1:231.

57. Ibid., 3:417.

> Those who have a clean heart must have inward happiness: and, because they resemble God, they can never be forsaken by him.[58]

> Without this holiness there is no happiness here, and without it none shall ever see God.[59]

In the Wesleyan context, then, a discussion about the image of God was, in part, a discussion about what God intends human beings to be, even now. It should be observed that the language of the intention of God for humanity has significant similarity with the fourth distinctive—the perfecting of Christian character. The moral perfections of Adam can be restored in this life. For this reason Clarke addresses his readers:

> It is true that thou are fallen; but he has found out a ransom . . . Believe on HIM; through him *alone* cometh salvation; and the fair and holy image of God in which thou wast created shall again be restored; he will build thee up as at the first . . . [60]

Wesleyan writers of the period did not focus merely on a theological examination of the nature of humanity, but on the glorious message of renewal. Bernard Semmel, writing from a secular point of view on *The Methodist Revolution*, emphasized the point. He contrasted the "pessimistic fatalism" of high Calvinism with the "optimistic liberty" which Wesleyans championed.[61] John Walsh echoed that conclusion. For the Wesleyan

> The deep evangelical pessimism about man was always balanced by an Enormous Optimism about grace. Man was fallen—but he could be restored: society was debased, but it could be transformed . . . Logical Calvinism paralysed human effort, encouraging despair in the unconverted and sloth in the Christian. Wesley . . . held that the natural man was not 'dead as stone,' or unable to cooperate with the grace of God which sought to redeem him. In each man there was a talent of free-will to do good or evil, to choose life or death.[62]

58. Clarke, *Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments*, 3:450.

59. Ibid., 3:535.

60. Ibid., 1:40.

61. Semmel, *Methodist Revolution*, 90. While Piggin ("Halevy Revisited," 22) correctly challenges Semmel's thesis, he acknowledges that Semmel is "right in his facts."

62. Walsh, "Methodism at the End of the Eighteenth Century," Davies, Rupp, and George, *History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, 1:314.

An example of the "pessimistic fatalism" mentioned by Semmel is the teaching of election and reprobation supported by John Gill, whose commentary is cited negatively by Clarke.[63] In a printed response to Wesley, Gill clearly stated his belief in both election and reprobation. He asserts that Wesley wants a doctrine of election that does not include reprobation, a doctrine that, in Gill's view, is impossible. "If some are appointed to eternal happiness, then others must be left out of that choice, and rejected." He goes on to define what he means by reprobation:

> Reprobation . . . is an immutable decree of God . . . by which he had determined to leave some Men in the common mass of mankind . . . to punish them for sin with everlasting destruction, to the glory of his power and justice. This decree consists of two parts, a negative and a positive; the former is by some called *preterition,* or a passing by . . . which is no other than non-election; the latter is called *pre-damnation*, being God's decree to condemn or damn men for sin.[64]

Gill "rejected making indiscriminate calls to 'evangelical repentance' and the universal offer of salvation,"[65] suggesting that the preacher must look for "signs of election in the hearer" before he could make an offer of salvation to that person. William Gadsby (1773–1844), another High Calvinist and a contemporary to Clarke and Coke, argued that spiritual struggle, not spiritual transformation, was a sign of a spiritual life.

> Remember, poor soul, thou hast a carnal inclination still lodging in thee . . . It is your spiritual life and light that make you see and feel, and groan, under the detestable nature of sin, and make temptation to commit it so painful.[66]

Although Jonathan Edwards was not a High Calvinist, his comments in his sermon on "God's sovereignty in the salvation of men" from Rom 9:18[67] sound similar to Gill's. In answering the question of what the sovereignty of God implies, Edwards answers that "God can either bestow

63. "Dr. John Gill, an eminent divine of the Baptist persuasion, is author of a very diffuse commentary on the Old and New Testaments . . . He was a very learned and good man, but has often lost sight of his better judgment in spiritualizing his text." Clarke, *Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments*, 1:10.

64. Gill, "Doctrine of Predestination Stated, and Set in the Scripture-Light in Opposition to Mr. Wesley's Predestination. By John Gill, D.D."

65. Shaw, *High Calvinists in Action*, 15.

66. Ibid., 118.

67. Edwards, Williams, and Parsons, *Works of President Edwards*, 10:201–16.

salvation on any of the children of men, or refuse it, without any prejudice to the glory of any of his attributes."[68]

Summary

Albert Outler wrote that "the recovery of the defaced image of God is the axial theme in Wesley's soteriology."[69] Clarke concurred. In looking at this distinctive Clarke did not linger on the subject of how evil human nature is, although he clearly believed that it is evil.[70] Instead Clarke focused on the positive message that "happiness" can be restored. For Clarke, the missionary message began with hopeful possibilities.

Prevenient Grace

As we have seen, Wesleyans have believed that, although the image of God was lost and/or diminished by the fall, at least the moral aspect of that image can be restored through what has been called "prevenient grace."[71] Clarke was definitive in his rejection of human works as a solution to the problem of sin. Human effort has no saving merit. "No man can illuminate his own soul; all understanding must come from above."[72] "If there be any good wrought in us, or done by us, we are indebted for it solely to the saving grace of God."[73] But, like Coke, Clarke also rejected the position of Goodwin, Dick, and Edwards cited in the previous chapter that restoration is the result of divinely bestowed "irresistible grace." "No man is lost," wrote Clarke, "because he had not *sufficient grace to save him*, but because he abused that grace."[74] Clarke sees this principle at work as early as the life of the patriarch Enoch. Commenting on Gen 5:22–24, Clarke wrote. "Here we may consider Enoch receiving a pious education, and the Divine influence through it; in

68. See also George Whitefield's clear statement on reprobation in Whitefield, "Letter to the Reverend Mr. John Wesley in Answer to His Sermon, Intituled, Free-Grace. By George Whitefield."

69. Wesley, Baker, and Cragg, *Works of John Wesley*, 2:185.

70. See Clarke's comments on Jer 17:9 in Clarke, *Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments*, 1:138; 4:300.

71. The term "preventing grace" is not unique to Wesley. "Regeneration is the effect of preventing grace, or of grace that precedes our endeavor, and operates alone." See Dick et al., *Lectures on Theology*, 2:158.

72. Clarke, *Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments*, 3:335.

73. Coke, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 3:28.

74. Clarke, *Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments*, 4:453.

consequence of which he determines to be a worker with God . . . *that he might not receive the grace of God in vain*."[75] (Italics mine.)

The account of Noah begins in Gen 6:3 with the statement "my Spirit will not always strive with man." Clarke understands this "striving" as prevenient grace that can be rejected. "Those who willfully resist and grieve that Spirit (of grace) must be ultimately left to the hardness and blindness of their own hearts."[76] The same point is repeated in his comments concerning Hos 12:10. "*[I have also spoken]* I have used every means, and employed every method, to instruct and save you . . . And alas! all is in vain; you have not profited by my condescension."[77] For Clarke each of these examples emphasizes that the call to repentance is universal, but can be rejected. This entreating grace can come in a variety of forms. In its most general form it could be referred to as "general revelation." "All things are full of God; and the mind disposed to contemplate, every object around him proclaims the glory of the great Creator . . . If even there were no Bibles, the eternal Power and Godhead are sufficiently visible in the works of creation and providence."[78] Clarke does not address the question of whether or not the grace available through "general revelation" is sufficient to bring a person to salvation.

Like Coke, Clarke understood that prevenient grace might also take the form of providence, God's especial care of the events of people's lives to bring them to a point of understanding their need of salvation and making a choice concerning that need. An unusual example of Coke's, from Ezek 21:3, may be used to illustrate the idea. The verse states that both righteous and wicked Jews were taken to Babylonian captivity. The reason, according to Clarke, is the providence of God.

> Again, if God had permitted *none* to be carried off captive but the wicked, the case of these would be utterly hopeless, as there would be none to set a good example, to preach repentance, to reprove sin, or to show God's willingness to forgive sinners. But God, in his mercy, permitted many of the *righteous* to be carried off also, that the wicked might not be totally abandoned, or put beyond the reach of being saved.[79]

75. Ibid., 1:68.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid., 3:44 and 4:649.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid., 4:479.

The suffering of the righteous then has a redeeming, missiological purpose. It is a part of God's prevenient grace to the wicked, designed to catch their attention and draw them back to him.

A third form prevenient grace might take is judgment and/or a troubled conscience. For example, Clarke's view is that the plagues in Egypt were both punishment and correction, designed to show Egyptians the futility of clinging to their own gods.[80] Other examples of judgment as prevenient grace include Samuel's return from the dead to confront Saul,[81] and the insanity of Nebuchadnezzar.[82] The writer of Proverbs says that the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, and Clarke comments: "God has given to every man a mind, which he so enlightens by his own Spirit, that the man knows how to distinguish good from evil; and conscience, which springs from this, searches the inmost recesses of the soul."[83] Even the rebukes or judgments of God are seen as being evangelistic in their purpose.

More positively prevenient grace, for Clarke, can take the form of God teaching,[84] blessing,[85] or restraining evil.[86] But whether expressed positively or negatively, the purpose of prevenient grace is always the same—to lead men and women to repentance and/or restoration. In one of the few references in which Clarke actually uses the words "prevenient grace" he emphasizes this point. "All the references to God and Israel as his vine may be seen as prevenient grace. These things were done for Israel to bring her to her God" (Psalm 80:6).[87] The dead bones of Ezek 37 provide another example for Clarke.

> The prophet is commanded to *prophecy upon or over these bones*, and to call on them to attend; *Oh ye dry bone, hear the word of the Lord*. And since, without a divine energy accompanying his word, their restoration to life could not have been accomplished, he is ordered to pray unto the Spirit for his quickening influences . . . [88]

Even in such a dreadful situation hope is not dead; Clarke views God as concerned and active on behalf of his creation.

80. Ibid., 3:44; 1:362.
81. Ibid., 2:299.
82. Ibid., 4:582.
83. Ibid., 3:759.
84. Ps 25:8 in ibid., 3:302.
85. Isa 19:23–25 in Coke, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 3:561.
86. Gen 20:6 in ibid., 1:95.
87. Clarke, *Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments*, 3:239; 3:474.
88. Coke, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 4:343.

Prevenient grace not only leads people to faith and/or restoration, it preserves them until they are awakened to their sin. It is due to the influence of the Holy Spirit, Clarke argues, "that man is preserved in a salvable state. Were God to withhold them, there would be nothing in the soul of man but sin, darkness, hardness, corruption, and death."[89] It is the Holy Spirit, he contends, who prepares the heart of a person to cry to God, for "no man ever had a cry in his heart after salvation, but from God."[90]

Summary

The message and impetus of the missionary, according to Clarke, was that in prevenient grace God was already at work in every life. The importance of the distinctive of prevenient grace to Clarke may be stated in his own words at the end of his comments on Leviticus 15. "3. Preventing grace is not less necessary than that which saves and which preserves."[91] It may come in general revelation, providence, judgment, or a variety of others means. But its purpose is always the same: to bring a person to an awareness of salvation and make it possible for that person to receive salvation. Clarke saw many examples of this grace at work in the Old Testament. But he also saw many examples in the Old Testament where individuals and nations rejected this grace—to their own destruction. A part of the missionary message, he argued, is to make people aware of this grace, and to warn against its rejection.

Salvation as Healing

An analysis of Clarke's interpretation of the healing language of the Old Testament shows that Clarke divides this language into three categories: healing language that is literal, or medical; healing language that is figurative but not spiritual/moral; and healing language that is figurative and spiritual/moral. Examples of literal healing occur in various sections of the Old Testament. For example, the reference to "all these diseases" and "the Lord who heals you" in Exod 15:26 is interpreted by Clarke as literal healing for physical diseases.[92] The reference to healing in Ps 30:2 is seen by Clarke as having been written in connection with the plague of 2 Sam 24,

89. Clarke, *Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments*, 3:239.
90. Ibid., 3:247.
91. Ibid., 3:239.
92. Ibid.

and the healing mentioned here is interpreted as relating to that plague.[93] Likewise the references to health and cure in Jer 33:6 are, for Clarke, literal. "I will repair the losses of families by numerous births, and bless the land with fertility."[94] Thus in the law, wisdom literature, and the prophets Clarke sometimes interprets healing language as literal.

In other places, however, Clarke interprets healing language as figurative, although not spiritual, in nature. The best example of this category is in Clarke's commentary on Hos 5:13, "When Ephraim saw his sickness . . ." Clarke interprets, "When both Israel and Judah felt their own weakness to resist their enemies . . ." Sickness here is neither physical nor spiritual, but more political.[95]

But more often than not Clarke interprets healing language as referring to the spiritual condition. Clarke finds his exegetical basis for a spiritual understanding of healing in the leprosy chapters of Lev 13, 14. "Leprosy," says Clarke, "has by general consent been considered a fit emblem of sin, in whatever concerns its nature, its operation, and its cure."[96]

Clarke develops this analogy between leprosy and sin extensively in a sermon entitled, "The Disease and Cure of Naaman." Seven comparisons are made under the heading of the "operation" of leprosy. They may be summarized as follows:

Leprosy	Sin
1. Begins with a single spot, but spreads.	There is a contagion in the human nature.
2. The obvious spot develops into a deeper problem.	Sin is always developing, growing.
3. It spread to every part of the body.	Sin diffuses itself through the whole life.
4. It contaminated everything around it.	Sin infects everything.
5. It left the victim unfit for normal life.	Sin makes any righteous act impossible.
6. The victim is a danger to society.	Good men abhor sin.

93. Ibid., 3:315.
94. Ibid., 4:343.
95. Ibid., 4:634.
96. Clarke, *Discourses on Various Subjects*, 1:175.

Leprosy	Sin
7. The victim is a danger to society, and is expelled.	Sinners are not expelled from society because sin is so universal.
8. The leper had to wear a humiliating mark.	Sinners must humble themselves to God in order to be healed.[97]

This same emphasis can be seen in his commentary. Reflecting upon the content of Lev 13 Clarke observed,

> He that wishes to be saved from his sins must humble himself before God and man, sensible of his own sore and the plague of his heart; confess his transgressions; look to God for a cure . . . and bring that Sacrifice by which alone the guilt can be taken away, and his soul purified from all unrighteousness.[98]

And at the end of chapter 14 Clarke writes, "The disease of sin, inflicted by the devil, can only be cured by the power of God."[99]

Clarke clearly believes that this leprosy/sin analogy is a helpful word picture for conveying what the grace of God can do in the human heart, and thus it has missiological implications. For him "healing" seems to be a more comprehensive term than "forgiveness." And the difference is significant to the Wesleyan message of transformation. Grace is not just imputed; it is implanted. Thus the "optimistic liberty" mentioned above surfaces again. The message is that change is possible; not merely through self-discipline or self-help programs, but as a result of divine activity.

Numerous psalms are also interpreted by Clarke as presenting salvation as healing. The phrase "heal my soul" in Ps 41:4 provides the impetus for the commentary, "Extract the sting of sin, and all inward corruption."[100] The words "thy saving health" in Ps 67:2 yield this commentary. "The great work which is performed in God's way, in destroying the power, pardoning the guilt, cleansing from the infection, of all sin; and filling the soul with holiness, with the mind that was in Christ" is designed so that "the whole Gentile world, know thy *way* and thy *salvation.*"[101] Here salvation as healing is interpreted by Clarke as a centripetal witness to the nations. And the

97. Summarized from ibid., 1:178–83.
98. Clarke, *Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments*. 1:553.
99. Ibid., 1:557.
100. Ibid., 3:355.
101. Ibid., 3:430.

extent of this healing is also emphasized by Clarke. Not only is the power of sin broken, but it is replaced by a new infilling of holiness.

Another Psalm that is similarly interpreted as including salvation as healing is Ps 103. In this Psalm, however, Clarke seems to waver between whether to interpret the healing language as literal or figurative. For example, he states that some of the "benefits" promised in the text are "temporal, such as "health and long life" from the phrase "Thy youth is renewed like the eagles."[102] But he also describes spiritual benefits in the following terms.

> *First spiritual* benefit—*justification;* "He forgiveth all thine iniquities."
>
> *Second spiritual* benefit—*regeneration* or *sanctification:* "Healeth all thy diseases."[103]

From the context of Clarke's comments here, diseases are being interpreted spiritually rather than physically.

It is Clarke's comments on the prophets, however, that have many references to healing as spiritual. On Isa 1:5, "*The whole head is sick,*" Clarke comments, "The king and the priests are totally gone away from truth and righteousness."[104] When considering the unfaithful shepherd of Ezek 34, Clarke observes, "And is any man fit for the *pastoral office* . . . who is not well acquainted with the *disease of sin* in all its *varieties*, and the *remedy* for this disease . . . ?"[105] On Mic 1:9 he writes, "*Her wound is incurable* . . . Nothing shall prevent their utter ruin, for they have filled up the measure of their iniquity."[106]

This appeal to the prophets climaxes with the words "with healing in his wings" from Mal 4:2.[107]

> As the *sun*, by the rays of *light* and *heat*, revives, cheers, and fructifies the whole creation . . . so Jesus Christ, by the influence of his *grace* and *Spirit*, shall quicken, awaken, enlighten, warm, invigorate, heal, purify, and refine every soul that believes in him . . . [108]

102. Ibid., 3:546.

103. Ibid., 3:546.

104. Ibid., 4:20.

105. Ibid., 4:514.

106. Ibid., 4:712.

107. Other references that are not discussed here but include "salvation as healing language" include Isa 42:7; Jer 17:14; Hos 6:2; 7:1; 14:4; Mic 7:18; and Hab 3:13.

108. Clarke, *Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments*, 4:805.

The suggestion by Clarke is that this "sun of righteousness" will indeed provide the total cure the fallen condition of humanity requires.

Summary

In Clarke's thinking about this distinctive, while he sees examples of healing language in the Old Testament that are not spiritual, most texts that include healing language are interpreted by him as spiritual/moral. The basis of this interpretation is his understanding that leprosy is a type of sin, but his spiritual usage of healing language extends to wisdom literature, and abounds in the prophets. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of this healing language as employed by Clarke is the extent to which he suggests the moral condition of fallen humanity may be returned to its original state. He argues for the Wesleyan view that righteousness can and must be *imparted* as well as *imputed.* The healing that God provides, for Clarke, is not just a change of legal position, but a total transformation of character. The missionary message is that God is willing and able to provide wholeness to the human condition.

Perfecting Of Christian Character

Clarke's commentary on the Old Testament presents far too many references which he interpreted as related to this fourth distinctive to be individually discussed. Suffice to say that examples can be cited from virtually every genre of Old Testament text—narrative, metaphor, prayer, law, and prophecy. A few examples will represent the larger collection.

The first example from narrative is Enoch in Gen 5:22–24. Clarke marvels concerning him,

> The astonishing *height of piety* to which he had arrived; being cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and having perfected holiness in the fear of God . . . Hence we learn that it was *then* possible to live so as not to offend God, consequently to live so as not to commit sin against him . . . and if it was possible *then*, it is surely, through the same grace, possible *now* . . .[109]

It is remarkable for Clarke that a man living without written revelation could be characterized as "cleansed from all filthiness" and living without sin. Clarke refers to similar language used of Noah.[110]

109. Ibid., 1:67.

110. Ibid., 1:67.

But Clarke's language concerning Abraham is, if possible, even stronger. Basing his comments on Gen 17:1, and God's command to Abraham to "be perfect," Clarke comments:

> *Be thou perfect* . . . Be just such as the *holy* God would have thee be, as the *almighty* God can make thee and live as the *all-sufficient* God shall support thee; for he alone who makes the soul holy can preserve it in holiness . . . But what does this imply? Why, to be saved from all the power, the guilt, and the contamination of sin. This is only the *negative* part of salvation, but it has also a *positive* part; to be made *perfect*—to be filled with the fullness of God, to have Christ dwelling continually in the heart by faith, and to be rooted and grounded in love. This is the state *in* which man was created, for he was made in the likeness and image of God. And this is the state *into* which every human soul must be raised . . . [111]

Clarke seeks to show that to be "raised" is a reference to a state possible in this life. He enters into discussion with those who might disagree with him, and argues that the meaning of "perfect" here is "sincere." "*Sincere* . . . is a metaphor taken from clarified honey, from which every atom of the comb or wax is separated. Then let it be proclaimed from heaven, *Walk before me, and be Sincere*! Purge out the old leaven that ye may be a new lump unto God; and thus ye shall be perfect, as your Father who is in heaven is perfect."[112] Clarke is one of the first Wesleyan writers to present the negative and positive aspects of this distinctive. But it became a common theme. Martin Wells Knapp, a later spokesman, published a book by A. M. Hills in 1898 entitled *Holiness and Power*.[113] The thesis statement of both Clarke and Hills is that purity is required for effective witness.

The narrative of the call of Isaiah is also worthy of notice. Interestingly, Clarke makes no comment on Isa 6:7, "Thy iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." But he does comment on 6:5.

> *Woe is me! I am undone]* "There is something exceedingly affecting in this complaint. I am a man of unclean lips; I cannot say, Holy, holy, holy! which the seraphs exclaim. They are holy; I am not so: they see God and live; I have seen him and must die, because I am unholy. Only the pure in heart will see God, and they only can live in his presence for ever.[114]

111. Ibid., 1:113.
112. Ibid., 1:113.
113. Hills, *Holiness and Power for the Church and the Ministry.*
114. Clarke, *Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments*. 4:49.

Further, Isaiah "was unworthy, either to join the seraphim in singing praises to God, or to be the messenger of God to his people."[115] The clear implication is that both Isaiah's impurity and unworthiness was remedied by what happened in 6:7. Again we see the emphasis in Clarke that purity is connected with service.

Metaphors too play an important role in Clarke's understanding of this distinctive. One is connected with circumcision. In Gen 17:11 circumcision is made the sign of the Abrahamic covenant. But Clarke believed it was more than a sign of a covenant.

> The circumcision made in the flesh was designed to signify the purification of the heart from all unrighteousness, as God particularly showed in the law itself. See Deut. 10:16 . . . That some of the Jews had a just notion of its *spiritual* intention, is plain from many passages in the Chaldee paraphrases and in the Jewish writers.[116]

An example then is given from the Jewish book of *Zohar*. Clarke is even more emphatic when he comes to the Deut 10:16 passage he cites above.

> *Circumcise—the foreskins of your heart]* A plain proof from God himself that this precept pointed out spiritual things, and that it was not the *cutting away a part of the flesh* that was the object of the Divine commandment, but the *purification of the soul* . . . Loving God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, the heart being circumcised to enable them to do it, was . . . the end, design, and fulfillment of the law.[117]

The theme of circumcision is picked up again in Jer 4:3–4, where Clarke seems to suggest the text supports two works of grace, a Wesleyan theme.

> *Break up your fallow ground]* "Let true repentance break up your fruitless and hardened hearts." *Circumcise yourselves]* "Put away every thing that has a tendency to grieve the Spirit of God, or to render your present holy resolutions unfruitful."[118]

In each of these references circumcision is interpreted by Clarke as symbolic of a spiritual act that brings purity to the heart.

Typology is common in Clarke's work in relation to this distinctive. Thus "the land of Canaan was a type of the kingdom of heaven."[119] The

115. Ibid., 4:50.
116. Ibid., 1:115.
117. Ibid., 1:767. See also Clarke's commentary on the same subject in Deut 30:6.
118. Ibid., 4:264.
119. Ibid., 1:746.

importance of this typology will become plain later in this book, in the examination of Martin Wells Knapp's book about the life of holiness, a book totally based upon this typology.[120] Clarke himself seems to anticipate the development of this theme. Commenting on Num 13, the sending of spies to Canaan, he writes.

> Canaan was a type of the kingdom of God; the wilderness through which the Israelites passed, of the difficulties and trials to be met with inn the present world. The promise of the kingdom of God is given to every believer; but how many are discouraged by the difficulties of the way! . . . Here and there a Joshua and a Caleb, trusting alone in the power of God . . . [121]

That this Canaan typology is intended to refer to the perfecting of Christian character is made clear in Clarke's comments at the end of Deut 1.

> If every Christian were thus to call his past life into review, he would see . . . equal proofs of eternal mercy in providing for his deliverance from the galling yoke and oppressive tyranny of sin, as the Israelites had in their deliverance from Egypt . . . [122]

Egypt is seen as deliverance from sin, while Canaan is the state of living according to God's expectations in this life.[123]

Also worthy of notice when considering metaphors of holiness in the Old Testament is Clarke's comments on the ashes of the red heifer ceremony of Num 8.

> If it required so much legal purity to fit the Levites for their work in the tabernacle, can we suppose that it requires less spiritual purity to fit ministers of the Gospel to proclaim the righteousness of the Most High . . . Without holiness none shall see the Lord; and from this decision of the Divine justice there shall never be any appeal.[124]

Arguably the most notable Old Testament example of prayer for holiness is in Ps 51, especially verses 10–12. In Clarke's four volumes of sermons this is the only text from the Old Testament used to support this

120. Knapp, *Out of Egypt into Canaan.*

121. Clarke, *Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments.* 1:662.

122. Ibid., 1:741.

123. See also comments made at the end of Clarke's comments on Num 33 (ibid., 1:725) and Josh 11 (ibid., 2:55–56).

124. Ibid., 1:646.

distinctive.[125] The sermon follows the parameters established in Clarke's commentary on these same verses. Commenting on Ps 51:5 he writes:

> *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity.]* "The light that shines into his soul shows him the very source whence transgression proceeds; he sees his fallen nature, as well as his sinful life; he asks *pardon* for his transgressions, and he asks *washing and cleansing* for his inward defilement . . . I believe David to speak here of what is commonly called *original sin*; the propensity to evil which every man brings into the world with him."

Then in 51:10 David asks for the creation of a new heart. Clarke comments: "*Mending* will not avail; my heart is altogether corrupted; it must be *made new*, made as it was from the beginning."[126] It is noteworthy that Clarke interprets David as praying for both forgiveness and cleansing at one and the same time. Here he is typical of Wesleyans in their argument for two distinctive works of grace, usually received at separate times.[127]

The Law of Moses is replete with references that Clarke links with the perfecting of Christian character. In answer to the question about the meaning of "sanctify," Clarke answers from Exod 13:2.

> To sanctify (kadesh) signifies to *consecrate, separate,* and *set apart* thing or person from all secular purposes to some religious use, and exactly answers to the import of the Greek *agios* . . . Hence a *holy person* or *saint* is . . . one who lives a holy life, entirely devoted to the service of God.[128]

This was God's purpose for his people, as Clarke also saw in Exod 19:6.

> They should be a holy nation, saved from their sins, righteous in their conduct, holy in their hearts; every external rite being not only a significant ceremony, but also a means of conveying light and life, grace and peace, to every person who conscientiously used it.[129]

At the end of Clarke's commentary on Lev 11, which deals with what is clean and unclean, the application is similar.

125. Clarke, *Discourses on Various Subjects*. 4:99–114.

126. Clarke, *Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments*. 3:384.

127. Other psalms that Clarke interpreted as relating to the perfecting of Christian character include Ps 24; 37:37; 40:2; 68;1; 84:11; 95:10; 97:12; and 99:9.

128. Clarke, *Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments*. 1:363.

129. Ibid., 1:398. See also Clarke's comments at the end of Exod 20, comments 6 and 7, in which Clarke argues against sinning in "word, thought, and deed," and in favor of holy living and a pure heart. (ibid., 1:409.).

> The grand scope and design of all was that they *might be a holy people*, and that they might resemble him who is a holy God . . . and this is the eternal reason why all his people should be holy—should be purified from all *filthiness* of the *flesh* and *spirit*, perfecting holiness in the fear of God . . . We must be saved from our sins—from the corruption that is in the world, and be made holy *within* and righteous *without*, or never see God.[130]

Similarly, at the end of Levi 21 concerning the conduct of priests, Clarke observes,

> As none who had a blemish could enter into the holy of holies, and this holy of holies was a type of the kingdom of God, so nothing that is defiled can enter heaven; for he gave himself for the Church, that he might purify it to himself . . . [131]

The Law of Moses, it seems, leaves no ambiguity. The perfecting of Christian character is, for Clarke, essential.

The message of the prophets is considered by Clarke to be consistent with the rest of the Old Testament. The difference for him is that while, in the rest of the Old Testament this grace is presented as an expectation, in the prophets it is presented as a part of the New Covenant. That is why the strongest prophetic texts to which Clarke appeals are Jeremiah and Ezekiel on the New Covenant. Clarke's commentary on Jer 31:33 may summarize his understanding of the teaching of Jeremiah in connection with this distinctive.

> *After those days]* When vision and prophecy shall be sealed up, and Jesus will have assumed that *body which was prepared for him* . . . and, having ascended on high shall have obtained the gift of the Holy Spirit to purify the heart; then God's law shall, by it, be *put in their inward parts, and written on their hearts;* so that all *within* and *without* shall be holiness to the Lord . . . and they shall be *his people*, filled with holiness, and made partakers of the divine nature, so that they shall perfectly love him and worthily magnify his name.[132]

A few verses later Clarke adds, "*I will give them one heart]* And that a *clean one. And one way]* And that a *holy and safe one*: and to have this *clean heart*, and to *walk in this clean way, will be for the good of them* . . . [133] Clarke is an-

130. Ibid., 1:546.
131. Ibid., 1:582.
132. Ibid., 4:337.
133. Ibid., 4:341–42.

ticipating not just a change of position—"in Christ"—but a total renovation of the human condition.

Clarke interprets Ezek 11:19 to be connected to the broader New Covenant passage of 36:25–30. Thus on the earlier passage he comments, "The holiness of their lives shall prove the work of God upon their hearts."[134] On the broader passage Clarke states,

> Here is the salvation that God promises to restored Israel; and here is the salvation that is the birthright of every *Christian believer: the complete destruction of all sin in the soul, and the complete renewal of the heart;* no *sin* having any place *within*, and no *unrighteousness* having any place *without*.[135]

Summary

In every section of the Old Testament, whatever genre of literature he may be dealing with, Clarke's words are strong, clear, and concise. God has always expected his people to be holy in heart and life. He gave examples of this in Enoch and Abraham. He argues that God taught this truth in symbols and historical events, and commanded it in his law, and that he predicted in the prophets that the church age would experience this holiness of heart and life. Since this is so clearly the message of God, Clarke clearly believes that this message must be a part of the mission of God's people.

Conclusion

This chapter began by noting that Adam Clarke has been called "Methodism's first Old Testament scholar,[136] and the most prominent Bible commentator of the founders' period. As such his writings have added significance in the attempt to determine whether or not Wesleyans have considered the Old Testament as an integral part of their theology of mission. Clarke, as an early Methodist Old Testament scholar, anticipated the issues that have engaged biblical missiologists. God is shown to be not merely a local god of the Israelites, but the universal ruler of all nations, who designed all peoples to be part of his kingdom. However, Clarke, more than Coke or Bunting, believed that it would be the coming of Messiah that would make that pos-

134. Ibid., 4:452.

135. Ibid., 4:521.

136. See pamphlet by that name written by Dawes, *Adam Clarke: Methodism's First Old Testament Scholar*.

sible. So while Clarke saw limited missionary activity in the Old Testament, he considered that the message of mission permeated the Old Testament as God is seen ordering events of history toward the coming of Messiah. This same predictive element is seen in missionary sermons Clarke preached from the Old Testament, as Clarke sought to convince his listeners that "today" is the time anticipated in the Old Testament when the nations will be drawn to worship God.

This chapter has also shown that the Old Testament was an integral part of the distinctive Wesleyan aspects of Clarke's message. Rather than emphasizing the lostness of humanity, Clarke presents from the Old Testament the positive message that "happiness" can be restored to fallen creatures. This happiness is possible because—as Clarke interpreted the Old Testament—God is at work in every life attempting to bring every person to repentance. Many, like Pharaoh, reject God's efforts, but still opportunities are given to every person to find wholeness as a remedy for the sickness of sin. The leprosy of sin is considered by Clarke to require not only forgiveness, but healing, if the human nature is to be restored to its intended happiness. Clarke finds abundant examples in the Old Testament that wholeness leads to holiness in heart and life. Old Testament metaphors and typology are used more extensively by Clarke than by Coke and Bunting to seek to show the nature and possibility of this perfecting of Christian character. There is less emphasis, however, in Clarke than in Coke, on the connection between holiness and service, although there are occasions where the connection is made. The chapter argues, therefore, that, for Adam Clarke, the scope of mission, motivation for mission, and message of mission, are all deeply affected by the Old Testament text.