John Wesley and the Christian ministry: the sources and development of his options and practice

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JOHN WESLEY

AND

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

:

The Sources and Development of his

Opinions and Practice

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Albert Brown Lawson 1959.

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PREFACE

"It is by no means easy to construct a self-consistent doctrine out of Wesley's words and actions about the Christian Ministry", declares W. J. Sparrow-Simpson.[1] The writer of the present work entirely agrees with him. It is easy to wish that Wesley had left a complete and reasoned statement of his conception of the ministry. Had he done so, there would, of course, have been no need for this study. After his evangelical conversion, Churchmanship seems to have taken a subordinate place in Wesley's thinking. It did not, as some have supposed, become unimportant. Rather it must be flexible enough to be adapted to changing circumstances and never be in opposition to his evangelistic endeavours. Because of this, the present study includes, as far as possible, every reference made by Wesley and his helpers, to the subject of the ministry. It will be noted how few of Wesley's writings, personal or published, deal exclusively with the ministry. In most cases they deal with the ministry as a secondary issue.

It is hoped that a perusal of this work will show that it is the record of a changing conception of the Christian Ministry, the most important change being due to the influence of the two books, viz: King's 'Primitive Church' and Stillinglfeet's 'Irenicum', which are dealt with in

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1. "John Wesley and the Church of England". p.50.

detail. It seems that Wesley's outlook is always intensely practical, and therefore he is much more concerned with what a Christian minister should do, rather than what he is. From the time of his reading the two works referred to, he seems to be in a dilemma. As an Anglican clergyman, he becomes inconsistent - but he obviously regards his inconsistency as being to the glory of God.

One most important fact that is made quite plain in a study of this subject is that no particular phase of Wesley's position regarding the ministry, was taken up by his successors at his death. The conception of the ministry held by the Methodist Church from the death of Wesley to the present day is certainly not one which he held at any time.

It is a keen interest in, and a deep concern for, the present conversations between the Methodist Church and the Anglican Church on the subject of re-union, which have occasioned this work. The conception of the ministry will, indeed, be one of the greatest problems to be solved, - a problem brought about by Wesley's changing opinions and practice, complicated further by post-Wesley Methodism. Yet, during such conversations, no such problems will be solved successfully, unless Wesley's chief concern be given priority, viz: the building up of the Kingdom and having " a single eye to the greater glory of God."

A.B.L.

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B O O K O N E.

THE

DOCTRINE OF THE MINISTRY

IN THE

ANGLICAN CHURCH

OF THE

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER ONE.

INTRODUCTION.

(a) Condition of the Church in the 18th Century.

Much has already been written regarding the moral and spiritual poverty of eighteenth century Anglicanism. Little doubt can be entertained that most of what has been recorded is the unvarnished truth. Yet, in all fairness, account must be taken of that unfortunate trait in human nature which causes even historians of repute, to dwell a little overmuch upon, and sometimes exult in, the shadier side of the events which they describe. Nevertheless, let one of the outstanding contemporary writers speak for himself. Joseph Butler, Bishop of Durham and late of Bristol, refused the primacy when offered to him, making the pessimistic remark that it was "too late for him to try and support a falling church".[1]

As Canon Overton has pointed out, the Church of England had not, since the Reformation, been given "so fair a promise of a useful and prosperous career as she did at the beginning of the eighteenth century".[2] The promise, however, was not fulfilled and she did not accomplish her destiny.

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1. Although doubt has been expressed as to the truth of this incident, Somervell (A Short History of our Religion) maintains that the fact of its being generally believed, is evidence of its authenticity.
2. The English Church in the 18th Century.

Many reasons have been put forward to account for the Church's failure, both to heal herself and to stem the incoming tide of vice, social injustice and irreligion amongst the common people. Significant enough in this present study, is the fact that the greater part of the trouble in the Church seems to have been connected with the clergy, abuses among whom, were numerous. Included among these were pluralities of sees and livings, absenteeism, neglect of cures and ignorance of both catechism and Scriptures, whilst cases of immorality were not unknown.

Southey says "the clergy had lost that authority which may always command at least the appearance of respect; and they had lost that respect also by which the place of authority may sometimes so much more worthily be supplied. In the great majority of the clergy zeal was wanting ..... they would never regain the influence which they had lost, till they lived better and laboured more."[1] "Christianity", observes Archbishop Secker, "is ridiculed and railed at with very little reserve, and the teachers of it without any at all".[2] Another writer admits that the Anglican Church was "an ecclesiastical system under which the people of England had lapsed into heathenism, or a state scarcely distinguished from it."[3]

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1. Life of Wesley p. 202 (Bohn's Edition).
2. Eight Charges, 1738.
3. Taylor's "Wesley and Methodism, pp. 51 & 54.

The effect on the ordinary people was obvious. Again, indebted to Southey, one reads "the greater part of the nation were totally uneducated - Christians no further than the mere ceremony of baptism could make them, being for the most part in a state of heathen, or worse than heathen ignorance, in truth they had never been converted".[1] That the nation was, on the whole, indifferent to spiritual religion, needs little effort to be fully understood.

Perhaps the main cause of the apparent deadness in the National Church was the results of the Non-Juror controversy. Believing in the Divine Right of Kings, certain of the clergy, numbering some four hundred, felt they could not conscientiously offer allegiance to William and Mary who had been placed on the throne after the deposition of James IInd. To the latter, whilst by no means in agreement with much that he did, they had an unswerving loyalty. Consequently the defaulters were ejected from their respective sees and livings and also their homes. Without embarking upon a discussion as to the wisdom of their actions, the most unfortunate result of this controversy was the loss to the church of some of the most earnest and scholarly of its ministerial servants, who were joined by a similar number of laymen.

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1. "Life of Wesley" p. 206 Bohn's Edition 1864.

Those who remained at their posts in the church were mainly men of latitude who could quite conscientiously accept the new order of things. Among such were those who vascillated with every change of public and governmental opinion. For many years they were assailed by their ejected opponents by satirical libels and doggerel verse, such as the Jacobite song "The Vicar of Bray".[1] The situation, however, remained the same throughout the reigns of George I to IV - a period sometimes referred to as the "siesta of the English Church". Yet, to complete the picture of the eighteenth century conditions, credit must be given to those clergy, most of whom were country incumbents, who still went about their work with sincerity and honesty of purpose like the one immortalized by Goldsmith:

> "Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride
> And e'en his failings leaned to virtue's side,
> But in his duty prompt at every call,
> He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all;
> And, as a bird, each fond endearment tries
> to tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
> He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
> Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.."[2]

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1. In actual fact, the then Vicar of Bray was not of this type at all!
2. "Deserted Village".

(b) The Definition of Contemporary Anglican Doctrine.

"Two Testaments, Three Creeds, Four Councils, Five Centuries and the series of Fathers in that period, determine the boundaries of our Faith" writes Bishop Andrewes (1555-1620). To these must be added the Book of Common Prayer of Edward the Sixth, including as it does, the Thirty-Nine Articles "agreed upon by the Archbishop and Bishops of both Provinces and the Whole Clergy".

The prayer-book of 1552, which is still in general use, was the well-balanced work of Cranmer and his associates, who carefully avoided the extremes of its predecessors. Cranmer had taken pains to ensure that it expressed all that was necessary, in a language which was, at once, dignified and beautiful. It gave to the Church, as John Keble was later to point out, - 'a sober standard of feeling.'

Likewise, the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, compiled in 1571, are the product of the revision of former doctrinal standards, and, more immediately, the Forty-Two, framed by Cranmer in 1553. It is to be expected, these articles, drawn up in the sixteenth century, bear the mark of their age, guarding as they do, all that the Reformation was intended to protect. There is little doubt that the Thirty-Nine Articles were designed

so as to include the maximum number of subscribers. Quite soon, however, it was to be seen how elastic they were, allowing a greater latitude of interpretation than would have been expected or intended. It was a discovery which was made long before the days of John Henry Newman and the Tractarian Movement. A similar questioning about the validity of sixteenth century articles in eighteenth century times, arose when Hoadley, a favourite Court preacher and Bishop of Bangor insisted that sincerity was the only necessity for a clergyman and that Articles and tests were useless and reactionary. This 'Bangorian Controversy' produced many replies[1] and incurred the condemnation of Convocation. The Church, on the whole, was against Hoadly, as it was felt that much of Catholic tradition was at stake. On the other hand there were those who were only too ready to declare openly that they had never literally believed in the articles to which they had subscribed. Waterland, in 1721 put the case against 'trifling with the Articles' very forcibly. An attempt was made in 1772 to petition Parliament to abolish subscription to the Articles of Religion, but it failed. This was a clear indication that the Church felt obliged to maintain the ancient catholic faith at all costs.

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1. The most important of these opponents being William Law e.g. "Three Letters to the Bishop of Bangor".

Hoadly was condemned by Convocation, but that body was prorogued by the Crown and did not meet for one hundred and thirty years. Thus the Church, as a whole, was left voiceless. The Church itself may or may not have prospered as a result of such controversy, but it is an important fact that the nation was affected hardly at all. Howbeit, F. E. Hutchinson[1] is quite correct when he claims that "... the religious life of the English people has been far more influenced by their familiarity with the Prayer Book than by the Articles ...."

(c) The Authority of the Church: Its Doctrine based upon Scriptures.

> "The Articles of the Church of England (which had been allowed and authorized heretofore, and which our Clergy generally had subscribed unto) do contain the true Doctrine of the Church of England agreeable to God's Word ...."

is the claim made in His Majesty's Declaration in the Book of Common Prayer. Affirming that Holy Scripture contains all that is necessary to salvation, Article VI goes on to maintain that:

> "whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought necessary to salvation".

Thus, adds Article XX

> "It is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness

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1. "Cranmer and The English Reformation (E.U.P.) p. 183

> and a keeper of Holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree anything against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of salvation ....."

It has an authority of order only, not one that is absolute, founded on infallibility.[1] Moreover, warns the following Article, the General Councils have no authority to promote anything contrary to Scripture.

Remembering this, it can be seen that the Church has authority to decree what she will, with regard to ritual, polity and ordinances, provided, always, that no clash occurs with Holy Writ. Hooker says:[2]

> "So I trust that to mention what the Scripture of God leaveth unto the Church's discretion in some things, is not in anything to impair the honour which the Church of God yieldeth to the sacred Scriptures' perfection. Wherein seeing that no more is by us maintained than only that Scripture must needs teach the Church whatsoever is in such sort necessary as hath been set down; and that it is no more disgrace for Scripture to have left a number of other things free to be ordered at the discretion of the Church, than for Nature to have left it unto the wit of man to devise his own attire, and not to look for it as the beasts of the field have theirs...."

Scripture, he maintains, sets forth only the principal points of religion and contains no clearly stated rules for church government, though no polity can be good unless God is the author of it. Therefore the Church,

> "being a body which dieth not hath always power, as occasion requireth, no less to ordain that which never was, than to ratify what hath been before. To prescribe the order of doing in all things, is a peculiar

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1. Burnet "An Exposition of the 39 Articles p.258
2. Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity Bk3 IV p.303.

prerogative which wisdom hath, as queen or sovereign commandress over other virtues."

Scripture has the final authority, but the Church has the best of all inferior authorities. He declares:

"That which the Church by her ecclesiastical authority shall probably think and define the true and good, must in congruity of reason overrule all other inferior judgements whatsoever..... Might we not think it more than wonderful, that nature should in all communities appoint a predominant judgement to sway and overrule in many things; or that God Himself should allow so much authority and power unto every poor family for the ordering of all which are in it; and the city of the living God, which is His Church, be able neither to command nor yet to forbid anything, which the meanest shall in that respect, and for her sole authority's sake, be bound to obey?".[1]

Inevitably, we touch here, one of the major points in the 'Bangorian Controversy'. Replying to the sermonic assertion of Hoadly, Bishop of Bangor, that sincerity was all that was required of the clergy, and that 'articles and tests' were useless, for no-one had Absolute authority to act on behalf of Christ; William Law (1686 - 1761) argues thus:[2]

"Your Lordship seems to think all is lost as to Church Power; because the Doctor[3] does not claim and Absolute one; but allows it to be subject to Scripture; as if all authority was Absolute, or else nothing at all. I shall therefore consider the Nature of this Church Power; and shew, that tho' it is not Absolute, yet it is a Real Authority, and is not such a mere Nothing as your Lordship makes it.

An Absolute Authority, according to your Lordship, is, what is to be always obey'd by every Individual that is subject to it, in all Circumstances. This is an

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1. Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity Bk. 5 ch viii (1. 2 & 3) pp. 30 and 31.
2. The First Letter to the Bishop of Bangor on his Later Sermon published 1717
3. i.e. Dr. Andrew Snape 1675 - 1742.

> Authority that we utterly deny to the Church. But, I presume, there may be an Authority inferiour to this, which is nevertheless, a Real Authority, and is to be esteemed as such ....."

Potter (1674? - 1747, Archbishop of Canterbury)[1] declares:

> "No society can long subsist without power to do all things which are necessary to its own preservation and well-government; and therefore, it having appeared that the church is a society instituted by God, and designed to last till the world's end, there can be no doubt but that he has invested it with all the power which the nature of such a society requires".

It is not a civil, but a spiritual power, not over men's bodies but over their souls. Proceeding to deal with the subject of these powers, Potter remarks:

> "Since it has already appeared, that God has appointed officers to govern His Church, it follows by plain and necessary consequence, that the powers, which he has committed to the church for its well-government, must ordinarily be executed by them. For every office implies power; and to say that the officers of the church have no power; and to say that the officers of the church have no power but what all private Christians may lawfully exercise, is all one as to say there are no such officers."

Potters definition of the 'powers of the church' is ninefold. Some he says are decidedly based upon Scripture and the rest, in accordance with the articles, are 'not repugnant to it'. They are:

> "The preaching of the Gospel, of prayer; of Baptizing; of Confirming persons who are baptized; of celebrating the Lord's supper; of ordaining ministers; of making canons; of jurisdiction and of demanding maintenance."

The next few pages therefore, are devoted to a study of the necessity for those persons in whom is invested these powers of Christ's Church on earth, their orders, and qualifications.

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1. A Discourse on Church Government.

CHAPTER TWO.

THE NECESSITY AND NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

"The people .....", says Sir Wm. Blackstone, "are divisible into two kinds; the clergy and the laity; the clergy comprehending all persons in holy orders and in ecclesiastical offices."[1]

> "Indeed," confirms Jeremy Taylor[2] (1613 - 1667;) Bishop of Down and Connor), "it were a great disreputation to religion that all great and public things, and every artifice and profitable science, should, in all the societies of men, be distinguished by professors, artists, and proper ministers; and only religion should lie in common, apt to be bruised by the hard hand of mechanics, and sullied by the ruder touch of undiscerning and undistinguished persons; for although the light of it shines to all, and so far, every man's interest is concerned in religion, - yet it were not handsome that every man should take the taper in his hand; and religion is no more to be handled by all men, than the laws are to be dispensed by all by whom they are to be obeyed; though, both in religion and the laws, all men have a common interest ..... The very natural design of religion forces us to a distinction of persons, in order to the ministration; for besides that every man is not fit to approach to God with all his "sordes", and adherent indispositions and assignment in reason must be made of certain persons, whose calling must be holy, and their persons taught to be holy, by such a solemn and religious assignment; that those persons - being higher than the people by their calling and religion, and yet our brethren in nature, - may be intermedial between God and the people, and present to God the people's needs, and be instrumental to the conveying God's blessing upon those whose fiducaries they are ...."

A little previous to Taylor's teaching, Babington,[3] successively Bishop of Llandaff, Exeter and Worcester had warned that: ".....there is an error which beguileth many who much entangle both themselves and others, by not distinguishing (see next page)

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1. Commentaries on the Laws of England. 12th edition 1793 p.376
2. "Clerus Domini", "The Divine Institution of the Office Ministerial". Sections 9 and 10.
3. "Notes upon every chapter of Genesis" p. 121 (cap. 17 v 7) 1592 - 6.

services, offices and orders ecclesiastical; the first of which three, and in part, the second, may be executed by the laity; whereas none have, or can have, the third, but the clergy....."

Without this ministry, Hooker declines[1] to believe that religion could be able to plant itself,

"the fruits thereof not possible to grow of their own accord ..... .Ministerial actions tending immediately unto God's honour and man's happiness are either as contemplation, which helpth forward the principal work of administration itself, which work consisteth in doing the service of God's house and in applying unto men the sovereign medicines of grace, already spoken of the more largely to the end it might thereby appear that we owe to the guides of our souls even as much as our souls are worth, although the debt of our temporal blessings should be stricken off....."

(a) <u>The Powers of the Ministry</u>.

The Ministry of things divine is a function which as God himself did institute, so neither may men undertake the same but by authority and power given them in lawful manner, declares Hooker,[2] God, he continues,

"hath in the like abundance of mercies ordained certain to attend upon the due execution of requisite parts and offices therein prescribed for the good of the whole world, which men thereunto assigned do hold their authority from Him ..... ministers of God as from Whom their authority is derived, and not from men ..... For in that they are Christ's ambassadors and His labourers, who should give them their commission but He Whose most inward affairs they manage?" [3]

Beveridge (1637- 1708), sometime Bishop of St. Asaph, touching upon this same theme of the ambassadorial service of the ministry, and based on the relevant text,[4] says in a sermon:

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1. Ecc. Polity, Bk. 5. 76. 9 & 10 (p. 416)
2. Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity Book 5. 77 (pp. 416/7)
3. See Article 23.
4. Sermon on 2 Cor. 5 v. 20. "Ministers of the Gospel - Christ's Ambassadors". (Works Vol 1. p. 195f.) (Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology).

"He (Our Lord) delegated some men to supply His place upon earth, and to carry on the great work which He had begun amongst men; these He called His Apostles or Ambassadors, because they were sent by Him, and empowered to act in His Name and stead, and according to the instructions that He gave them ..... And all such on whom they who regularly succeed the Apostles received immediately from Christ Himself, hath been handed down from them to others, and so to others successively to this day, and will be to the end of the world."

By no means unimportant, is Wheatly's[1] (1686- 1742) contribution on this same subject. Writing on the first Rubric, he makes appeal to the usage of the ministry in the Old Testament, of the example of Our Lord Himself, as he sent out the Apostles and the practice of the Apostles themselves in ordaining others. The ministers of religion are God's representatives, publishing His Laws, passing His pardons, and presiding in His worship. They are the stewards of the mysteries of God, and the dispensers of his holy word and sacraments; "in a word", he says -

"they are the ambassadors of heaven; ..... none but God can give them their commission. For who dares, without the express orders of Heaven, undertake an office which includes so many and such great particulars? Should any one take upon him the character of an ambassador; should he offer terms of peace to enemies, pretend to naturalize foreigners, and grant pardons, without a commission from the supreme magistrate; as all his acts would be null and void ....."

The execution of these ambassadorial duties, Beveridge[2] reminds us, depends upon the performance of the promise made by Our Lord, namely, that he would be with them alway, even

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1. A Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer.
2. Sermon on Matt. 28 v. 20. "Ministers of the Gospel - Christ's Ambassadors". Vol.1. (Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology.)

unto the end of the world. It is an Apostolic office, which cannot exist, he maintains, unless there are Apostles, or those invested with the Apostolic office, unto the end of the world. But to such Apostles or their successors, is given that ambassadorial power by which to govern Christ's Church on His behalf, a power which is granted in the very charter to which is annexed the promise of His abiding presence with them.

An even more important claim put forward by the same writer, again, by way of a sermon,[1] is that there is no salvation in the Church except under such a ministry. Without the ministry there can be no preaching of the Gospel, therefore the people cannot hear it and profit thereby. Nor could there be the celebration of the sacraments, and thus there could be no means of grace for God's people. All that is necessary by way of instruction in those things leading to man's salvation are to be found in Christ's Holy Catholic Church, and nowhere else.

The next stage is an examination of the nature of these Apostolic powers. Emphasis has been laid by contemporary authorities upon the 'power of the keys of the kingdom', based literally on Matt. 18 v.18., - 'binding and loosing' and John 20.v.23 'Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.' Added, is Our Lord's word to Peter (Matt. 16.v.19). Taylor[2] stresses that the power of remitting and retaining sins could not pass out with the immediate Apostles, unless the future

1. Sermon on Acts.2.v.47. (Works. Vol.1.p.59.).
2. 'Clerus Domini' : A Discourse on the Office Ministerial. Section.II.

church was to be without government, or that there would be an absence of sin in subsequent generations. To him, Paul's statement " God hath reconciled us to himself by Christ Jesus, and hath given to us the ministry of reconcilation, " is but a confirmation of Christ's commission to his Apostles to remit or retain sins, for, he says, " it follows 'now then we are ambassadors for Christ'. " [1] Furthermore, to prove that this power was definitely handed down, James' advice to the sick members of the Church, that they should send for the Elders to pray over them is used to imply that there would be some confession of sins, followed by forgiveness. Conversely, these viceregents of Christ have the identical power to retain, or refuse to forgive the sins even to the point of excommunication, of evil-doers or those at variance with the Church's standards of doctrine and conduct. [2]

Next in importance, is the commission to preach the Gospel. Commenting on Article XIX, Hooker strongly denies that sermons are produced by the 'wit of man'. Of Preaching, he declares " sith speech is the very image whereby the mind and soul of the speaker conveyeth itself into the bosom of him that heareth, we cannot choose but see great reason

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1. Pearson (An Exposition of the Creed, p.525) says :"To deny the Church this power of absolution is the heresy of Novatian, who acknowledged but one repentance which was available. After this, if any man sinned, there was no mercy remaining for him."
2. Potter : Discourse on Church Government ('Spiritual Jurisdiction') p.243.

wherefore the word that proceedeth from God, Who is Himself very truth and life, should be (as the Apostle to the Hebrews noteth) lively and mighty in operation, 'sharper than any two-edged sword. '" [1]

Jeremy Taylor asserts that 'preaching' is the second power vested in the Apostles and their successors, [2] the commission having been given immediately before Christ's ascension. [3] The Apostles were thus created 'doctors of the word', that is, they ' had power given them over the understandings of their disciples, and they were therefore fitted with an infallible spirit, and grew to be so authentic, that their determination was the last address of all enquiries in questions of Christianity. ' By this power, claims Taylor, they were given an eminence of their own. Proceeding to deal with the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, he asserts that these in themselves did not constitute authority to preach. Ability and authority are both required before a man attempts to preach. As a final argument he maintains " ' For God hath ordained that those that labour in the Gospel should live of the Gospel.' This argument will force use to distinguish persons, or else our purses will; and if all will have a right to preach the Gospel that think themselves able, then also they have a right to be maintained too. "

Speaking on the same theme, Beveridge complains that too many in the churches place little importance on preaching.

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1. Ecclesiastical Polity. Book 5. P.92. MS.note.
2. Works (Heber ed.) Vol.14 p.431. Sect.II 'Clerus Domini': 'A Discourse on the Divine Institution of the Office Ministerial.'
3. Matt.28.vs.19-20.

" If they really believed and considered, that the Word they hear, is the Word of God Himself; and that he who preacheth it, preacheth not in his own name, but God's and accordingly received it as the Thessalonians did, 'not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the Word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe,' they would soon find it 'working effectually' also upon them ; it would 'cut them to the heart.' , and make them cry out as St. Peter's hearers did, - 'Men and brethren, what shall we do ,.' "[1]

Baptism, according to the twenty-seventh Article of Religion, is a sign of Regeneration or New Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are ingrafted into the Church; the promises of the forgiveness of sins, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; Faith is confirmed, and Grace increased, by virtue of prayer unto God. It is a sacred ministry, affirms Taylor:[2] " a sacrament and a mysterious rite, whose very sacramental and separate nature requires the solemnity of a distinct order of persons for its ministration; yet if the laity may be admitted to the dispensation of so sacred and solemn rites, there is nothing in the calling of the clergy that can distinguish them from the rest of God's people, but they shall be holy enough to dispense holy offices without

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1. Works of Beveridge. Vol.1. p.196. Sermon on 2.Cor.5.v.20. (Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology).
2. 'Clerus Domini'. Section III. 'Baptism'.

the charges of paying honour and maintenance to others to do what they can do themselves...."

Nevertheless these contemporary authorities have to admit that, in the case of necessity, baptism can, and needs must, be administered by anyone, even women, a fact agreed upon centuries before, in the early days of the church.

The fourth power to be noted is that of celebrating the Eucharist. " As Christ is pleased to represent to His Father that great sacrifice as a means of atonement and expiation for all mankind, and with special purposes and intendment for all the elect, all that serve Him in holiness; so he hath appointed that the same ministry shall be done upon earth too, in our manner, according to our proportion; and therefore hath constituted and separated an order of men who, by, 'showing forth the Lord's death ' by sacramental representation, may pray unto God after the same manner that Our Lord and High Priest does." For this explanation, one is again indebted to Taylor, [1] who in another work [2] goes on to say that this is 'the most solemn, sacred and Divinest mystery ' in our religion; " that in which the clergy, in their appointed ministry, do διακονοῦντες μεσιτεύειν, ' stand between God and the people' and do fulfil a special and incomprehensible ministry, which, ' the angels themselves do look into with admiration;.....the clergy when they

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1. 'Holy Living' Cap.4. Section X (4).
2. 'Clerus Domini'. Section.5. (1,2 & 5).

officiate here, are most truly, in the phrase of St. Paul, 'dispensatores mysteriorum Dei' - dispensers of the great mysteries of the kingdom.'.....Now Christ did also establish a number of select persons to be ministers of this great sacrifice, finished upon the cross; that they should exhibit and represent to God, in the manner which their Lord appointed them, this sacrifice, commemorating the action and suffering of the great priest; and, by way of prayers and impetration, offering up that action on behalf of the people...." and again "..this being the great mystery of Christianity, and the only remanent express of Christ's sacrifice on earth, it is most consonant to the analogy of the mystery, that this commemorative sacrifice be presented by persons as separate and distinct in their ministry, as the sacrifice itself is from and above the other parts of our religion."

Confirming, but qualifying what Taylor has said, are the words of Archbishop Potter : "This office was not so strictly appropriated to the apostles but that it might lawfully be executed by the ministers of the second order. Whence we find, that the eucharist was consecrated in the church of Corinth when no minister above the order of prophets, who were next below the apostles, was there.....It might be inquired, why deacons, who were allowed to administer baptism, never consecrated the Lord's supper. To which this might be a sufficient answer, that baptism was always reckoned one of the lowest ministries, and, therefore, was usually committed by the apostles to ministers of the lower orders, as was before

observed.....there was yet a farther reason why none but bishops and presbyters have ever consecrated the Lord's Supper; viz: because the Lord's supper was always believed to succeed in the place in the place of sacrifice; consequently, as none beside the high-priest and inferior priests were permitted to offer sacrifices under the Jewish law, so the Lord's Supper was consecrated by none but bishops and presbyters, who alone are priests in the Christian sense of that name....." [1]

A further point of importance and interest is Article XXVI which teaches that the unworthiness of ministers does not hinder the efficacy of the Sacraments, because such ministers do not administer them in their own name. Burnet says that the occasion of this Article was the offence given to many at the beginning of the Reformation by the vices practised by the Roman Clergy.[2] Sacraments, he maintains, are public acts of the Church and the effect of them rests with those who receive them. He is careful to repudiate the Roman doctrine of the necessity of 'intention' on the part of the priest. [3]

Having dealt with one power of the church vested in its ministry, which can only be excercised by two of the three orders within it, one must now turn to two other powers, the use of which is reserved for only one order. They are Confirmation and Ordination.

Potter states that the rite of Confirmation was continued

1.. 'Discourse on Church Government' pp.179-183.
2. 'An Exposition of the XXXIX Articles', pp.372ff.
3. ibid. p.373.

in the church for the same end it had been instituted, namely, to confer the Holy Spirit and was generally administered by bishops, they having derived it from the practice of the Apostles. He traces the history of the act of imposing hands upon persons baptized, to the occasion when Philip the deacon and evangelist had converted and baptized the Samaritans. The Apostles which were at Jerusalem sent to them Peter and John, who, having prayed, laid their hands upon them and they received the Holy Ghost.[1] There was also the other occasion when the twelve disciples at Ephesus had been baptized by Timothy, or some other of St. Paul's assistants. Paul laid his hands upon them and they too received the Holy Spirit.[2] From these instances, Potter observes that the practice of confirmation was to be followed by the Apostles only, and therefore by their successors only. The only traceable exception was the performing of this office by Ananias, who did so at the express command of Our Lord, - a privilege not to be assumed by others.[3]

The power of ordaining ministers will be dealt with under the heading of Chapter Three: " Episcopacy and Ordination : Their Dependance upon Apostolic Succession."[4]

(b) <u>The Orders of the Ministry essentially threefold</u>

The authorities for this period leave one with no doubts as to the firm belief of the Anglican Church in the three-fold

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1. Acts. 8. vs. 14-17.
2. Acts. 19. vs. 6. & 7.
3. 'Discourse on Church Government' , pp. 188ff.
4. See page 26 of this work.

orders of the Christian ministry.

> "It is plain to any one who will read the Scripture without prejudice" claims Wheatly[1] "that there were three distinct orders of ministers in the Christian Church, in the Apostles' days, which were designed to continue to the end of the world. For besides those two which our adversaries allow, viz. deacons, and presbyters or elders, (which latter are also sometimes called bishops,) we read of another order, which were superior to, and had authority over, both these; such as were the Apostles, and Timothy and Titus and others. For it is plain from the epistles St. Paul wrote to the two last mentioned, that they presided over the presbyters. They had power to enforce them to their duty, to receive accusations against them, and judicially to pass sentence upon them; which proves abundantly their superiority. And several others were constituted by the Apostles to the same office; such were St. James surnamed the Just, and Epaphroditus, who were termed Apostles or bishops by all antiquity; such doubtless were those whom St. Paul calls 'Apostles of the Church', and joins with Titus. and such also were those 'Angels of the Churches', mentioned in the book of the Revelation."

Speaking of the second order of ministry, viz. presbyters, Hooker prefers that term to the word 'priest', because of the possibility of offence being given to those who were zealous for the principles of the Reformation. 'Presbyter', however, as John Milton so cleverly said, 'is but old priest writ large,'[2] or conversely, 'priest' is a contraction of the pronunciation of 'presbyter'. It was believed that the 'presbyter' (elder) of the New Testament was the office

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1. 'A Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer' pp.94ff.
2. 'On the New Forces of Conscience under the Long Parliament.'

which was later continued in the Anglican Church as 'priest', without, as Hooker is careful to point out, any idea of sacerdotalism, or 'sacrificing priesthood', for, he declares, "The Communion has properly now no sacrifice." [1]

These priests, he says, are sons of God who care for His family, the Church, by acting as their spiritual guides. According to the proper meaning of the New Testament term, a 'presbyter' is 'he unto whom our Saviour Christ hath communicated the power of spiritual procreation'. He continues:

> "St. John therefore beheld sitting upon the throne of God in heaven four and twenty presbyters, the one half fathers of the old, the other of the New Jerusalem. In which respect the Apostles likewise gave themselves the same title, albeit that namewere not proper but common unto them with others. For of presbyters some were greater, some less in power, and that by Our Saviour's own appointment; the greater they which received fulness of spiritual power, the less they to whom less was granted. [2]

The Seventy whom Our Lord sent out, were, according to Hooker, 'inferior presbyters' who received the same commission to preach and baptize as did the Apostles. History makes no mention of how presbyters were instituted in Jerusalem, but what they did, and how others were made later, elsewhere could be read about. Their main duties were preaching and administering the sacraments, but they were excluded from confirming and ordaining.

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1. Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, Book 5. (78:1) (pp428/9).
2. ibid. Book 5. (78:5) (pp433/7).

The lowest order of the ministry, the degree of 'deacon', continues Hooker, was founded, not by Our Lord, but by the Apostles, who 'annexed' them to the two existing degrees of ministry. They were stewards of the church, distributing the Church's goods and caring for the poor. They also assisted the presbyters at divine service. Whitgift [1] (1630 ? - 1704) contributes the following addition:

> "In the Primitive Church, the office of a deacon was to collect and provide for the poor; but not only, for it was also their office to preach and to baptize. For Stephen and Philip being deacons did preach the Gospel: and Philip did baptize the eunuch. Justin Martyr saith (Apol.p.98) that in the administration of the Supper, the deacons did distribute the bread and wine to the people"

Hooker, closing his teaching on the founding of the diaconate, expresses belief in the fact that it was originated primarily as a measure of expedience, so that the deacons, carrying out the 'serving of tables' and the lesser tasks, left the Apostles free to carry on with their work of teaching which was becoming a very heavy burden for the few. The extension of their privilieges by the granting of a licence to preach, followed as a natural course, though it was opposed by many. [2]

Of the first order of the Christian ministry, nothing will be said here, for the institution of the Episcopacy is of such vital importance to later sections of this study, that it

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1. Works of Whitgift (Parker Edition), Vol.3. pp.61, 64, 281.
2. Ecclesiastical Polity, Book.5. 78:5 (pp. 434/8).

will be dealt with in a separate chapter,[1] together with the idea of Apostolic Succession and the rite of Ordination.

Titles of the many offices in Scripture, were not, warns Hooker,[2] degrees of order, the latter being threefold only. A man's gifts which might make a prophet of him, like Agabus in the New Testament, did not, of necessity, include him in the official ministry. Likewise, evangelists, pastors, teachers, who were really no other than presbyters, were thus ordained, not because, but in spite of, their gifts.

Hooker has a final note on 'widows' as mentioned in the New Testament. They worked, he claims, in a similar way to deacons, but were never ordained, nor could be, to the full ministry. Deaconesses (as they might be termed) says Taylor,[3] are to be reckoned with the laity, because they have no imposition of hands. They are not admitted to any spiritual office. They were simply the good women who did the domestic offices and ministered to the temporal necessities of the churches in the days of the Apostles.

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1. See Chapter Three of this Book on pp 26ff.
2. Ecclesiastical Polity, Book 5, 78: Sections 6,7 -13. (pages 436 - 442).
3. 'Clerus Domini'. Section.3. p.435 (Vol.14.'Works').

CHAPTER THREE

EPISCOPACY and ORDINATION:

THEIR DEPENDANCE UPON 'APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION'

"I am convinced, " says A. J. Mason, " that to tamper with Episcopacy would be to throw away all that is most distinctive in the character and prospects of the Church of England.....I think that no one who follows the evidence can doubt that the Church of England stands for episcopacy with a resolution peculiarly its own...." [1]

The evidence to which he refers, insofar as it concerns Anglican thought up to the eighteenth century, is no less uncompromising.

William Law, replying to Bishop Hoadly's assertion that what " we ought not to be concerned at, is vain words of Regular and uninterrupted successions, as Niceties, Trifles or Dreams.", declares: ".. if the ordination need not be Regular, or derived from those who had Authority from Christ to Ordain, it is plain, that no particular kind of Ordination can be of any more Value than another. For no Ordination whatever, can have any worse Defects, than as being Irregular, and not derived by a Succession from Christ,.....if the succession be once broke, People must either go into the Ministry of their Own Accord, or be sent by such as have no more Power to send

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1. 'The Church of England and Episcopacy', Preface, pp viii & (ix.

others, than to go themselves.....if there be no Un-Interrupted Succession, then there are no Authorized Ministers from Christ; if no such Ministers, then no Christian Sacraments, then no Christian Covenant, whereof the Sacraments are the stated and visible seals...." [1]

In his second letter to Hoadly, he appeals to Scripture and History on behalf of episcopacy:

> "It is thus founded in Scripture. There we are taught that, the Priesthood is a Positive Institution; that no man can take this Office unto himself.....It is morally impossible that it (Apostolic Succession) should have broken in all that Terms of Years from Apostles to the present times." [2]

Dealing with the same subject, Taylor affirms that Christ did institute a government in His Church, which he first committed to the Apostles, with a power of joining others and appointing successors in the Apostolate. Quoting from Cyprian, Irenaeus, Tertullian and others, he goes on to say that it was the belief of the primitive church that bishops are the ordinary successors of the apostles and therefore episcopacy is as truly 'of Divine institution as the Apostolate, for the ordinary office both of one and the other is the same thing.' [3] In their turn, in accordance with the Divine institution, the Apostles ordained Bishops in several churches, e.g. St. Timothy at Ephesus, St. Titus at Crete, St. Mark at Alexandria and others. These facts, claims Taylor,

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1. First Letter of William Law to the Bishop of Bangor, pp. 9, 11 & 13.
2. Second Letter to the Bishop of Bangor, pp.95 & 100. Cf. Hooker: 'Ecclesiastical Polity' Bk.3:16 & 7:11 "Bishops are most agreeable to Scripture."
3. See Brett: 'An Account of Church Government and Governours' p.54 - He says the Apostles were the first bishops.

show that Episcopacy, at least, is an Apostolical Ordinance. Proceeding to deal with the duties of the bishop, Taylor reminds his readers that his was an office of power and great authority, not necessarily lessened by the assistance and counsel of Presbyters. The term 'episcopus', although promiscuously used with ' presbyter', is the one to be appropriated for the supreme church - officer, who is the only 'pastor' of the Church. He is also 'Doctor' of the Church, not that presbyters were not also 'apt to teach', but it was a requisite of the Bishop and it is he who licenses others to preach. His powers are superior to those of the presbyterate, for it is they who ordain and confirm and who have jurisdiction over the Church, judging the clergy, requiring obedience from all under him. To him is entrusted the handling of church goods, the preferment of the inferior clergy and his is the sole privilege of voting in the councils of the Church. To separate from the Bishop is schism and heresy.[1]

Potter reminds his readers that all bishops are equal. They may have different responsibilities by way of secular affairs, but spiritually their duties are the same; "One bishop might excel another in the extent of his diocese, in the number and quality of the Christians under his care, or in any outward splendour and magnificence; but to apply St. Jerome's words, 'Wherever a bishop is, whether at Rome or at Eugubium, at Constantinople or at Rhegium, at Alexandria or at Tani, he

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1. 'Episcopacy Asserted'

has the same merit and the same priesthood; neither the power of riches nor the humility of poverty makes a bishop higher nor lower but they are all successors of the apostles.' "[1] Metropolitans are only superior in place. Their office and authority are the same.

Turning now to the subject of ordination as the sole right of the Episcopate, Potter again is helpful.[2] He says that the origin of the commission is derived from God, but the person by whom this power is immediately conferred is the Holy Spirit.[3] The power of ordaining ministers belongs to the bishops who are the chief governors of the church. Even in heretical churches, he points out, the power of ordination was reserved for Bishops only.

Commenting on Article VIII (part II), Pearson says:

> "It is the office of the same Spirit to sanctify and set apart persons for the duty of the ministry, ordaining them to intercede between God and his people, to send up prayers to God for them, to bless them in the name of God, to teach the doctrine of the Gospel, to administer the sacraments instituted by Christ, to perform all things necessary for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of THE BODY OF CHRIST. The same Spirit which illuminated the Apostles, and endued them with power from above to perform personally their apostolical functions, fitted them also for the ordination of others, and the committing of a standing power to a successive ministry unto the end of the world; who are thereby obliged to take heed unto their selves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers, to feed the Church of God." [4]

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1. 'Discourse on Church Government' p.136.
2. ibid. p. 194
3. Burnet : 'Exposition of the XXXIX Articles' (pp479/81) (Article XXXVI), defends the use of the words 'Receive the Holy Ghost' at ordinations, as the Church and Churchmen are acting in the name and person of Christ.
'Exposition of the Creed' pp.472ff. & p.475.

and again:

> "The belief of the Holy Ghost is necessary for the continuation of a successive ministry, and a Christian submission to the acts of their function, unto the end of the world. For as God the Father sent the Son, and the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, because he had anointed him to preach the Gospel; so the Son sent the Apostles, saying, As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you; and when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive the Holy Ghost; and as the Son sent the Apostles, so did they send others by virtue of the same Spirit, as St. Paul sent Timothy and Titus, and gave them power to send others, saying to Timothy, Lay hands suddenly on no man, and to Titus, For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. Thus by virtue of an apostolical ordination there is for ever to be continued a ministerial succession. Those which are thus separated by ordination to the work of the Lord, are to feed the flock of God which is among them, taking the oversight thereof (I.Peter.v.2.), and those which are committed to their care, are to remember and obey them that have the rule over them, and submit themselves, for that they watch for their souls as they that must give account.(Hebrews.xiii.7 & 17).[1]

Answering the objection that there is Scriptural evidence that ordination was performed by presbyters, first in Acts.13 vsl and 2, where certain men of the Church laid their hands on Paul and Barnabas who thenceforth were called Apostles, Potter explains that they were Apostles before that time, as in Chapter 3. They were distinguished by a direct call from, and ordained by, Christ. The imposition of hands here was merely a benediction.[2] The second instance is in

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1. 'An Exposition of the Creed' p.475.

2. See similar comment on this passage by Wesley in 'Notes on the New Testament' and also in his letter to James Clark of 18th. September, 1756. See also this work, Book 4, Chapter 3 (e) where this interpretation is used to explain Wesley's intentions at Coke's 'consecration'.

I.Tim.v.14. where Paul exhorts Timothy 'neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of hands of the presbytery.' Potter explains that Timothy had already received his ordination from Paul (2.Tim.1.v.6.). The Presbytery, says Potter, would, no doubt, be referred to here as assisting.[1]

Speaking of Timothy and the power of ordination, William Law affirms that :

> "Timothy, or persons of his Order, could alone ordain in that Age; they as plainly teach, that the Successors of that Order can alone ordain in any age, and consequently the Scriptures plainly teach a Necessity of an Episcopal Succession."[2]

Agreeing, and, possibly, stating the case more strongly, is Wheatly:

> "A commission to ordain was given to none but the Apostles, and their successors. And to extend it to any inferior order, is without warrant in Scripture or antiquity. For every commission is naturally exclusive of all persons, except those to whom it is given. So that, since it does not appear, that the commission to ordain, which the Apostles received from our Saviour, was ever granted to any but such as must be acknowledged to be of a superior order to that of presbyters, which superior order is the same with that of those we now call bishops; therefore it follows, that no others have any pretence thereunto; and consequently none but such as are ordained by bishops can have any title to minister in the Christian Church."[3]

The next point to be dealt with is the nature of ordination. A minister, claims Hooker, differs from other men by his canonical ordination. " There are," he says, " in a minister of

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1. 'Discourse on Church Government' p.194.
2. 'A Second Letter to the Bishop of Bangor' p.94.
3. 'A Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer.' p.98. See also Hume: 'Sacred Succession' which deals solely with this subject. He declares that those who deny this are like an 'infidel in church' or 'a monkey in a glass shop'. (Preface p.ii)

God, these four things to be considered, - his ordination which giveth him power to meddle with things sacred, the charge or portion of the Church allotted unto him for exercise of his office, the performance of his duty according to the exigence of his charge, and lastly, the maintenance which in that respect he receiveth. All ecclesiastical laws and canons which either concern the bestowing or the using of the power of ministerial order have relation to these four." [1]

> "It is by Him (The Spirit) principally, that the person is ordained", writes Bishop Beveridge in a sermon based on Acts.1.v.26. " We have a very remarkable instance in the Acts of the Apostles, where we read how St. Paul having ordained many Elders or Bishops in Asia; he summoned them to a Visitation that he held at Miletus, and in the charge he gave them, among other things, he said 'Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers', (or bishops). For from hence it appears, that when they were ordained by the imposition of the Apostle's hands, the Holy Ghost so came upon them, that HE made them Bishops. The Apostle and whosoever else might join with him in laying on of hands, were only His instruments, the Holy Ghost was the principal agent, and so questionless, He is, and always will be, in all such ordinations. So that all who are regularly ordained, may be truly and properly said to receive their power and commission from the Holy Ghost, that is then conferred upon them, and so from Christ Himself." [2]

Similarly, William Law teaches that "by means of a Human Benediction, and the Imposition of the Bishop's Hands, the Holy Ghost is supposed to be conferred on Persons towards consecrating them for the work of the Ministry.....We find it constantly taught by the Scriptures,

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1. Ecclesiastical Polity, Book 5:80.(12).(p.457).
2. 'The Institution of Ministers'. Cf.Hickes (Sermon III.p.64ff) The Episcopal office and government the institution of Christ.

that all Ecclesiastical Authority, and the Graces whereby the Clergy are qualified and enabled to exercise their Functions to the Benefit of the Church, are the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit."[1]

Let Law continue to describe the ritual of ordination : "...Agreeable to the Sense of Scripture and Antiquity; our Church uses this Form of Ordination: ' The Bishop laying his hands on the person's head, saith "Receive the Holy Ghost, for the office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God, committed unto thee, by the Imposition of our Hands". From this Form, it is plain, first, that our Church holds, that the Reception of the Holy Ghost is necessary to constitute a Person a Christian Priest. Secondly, the Holy Ghost is conferred through Human Hands. Thirdly, it is by the Hands of a Bishop that the Holy Ghost is conferred. "

Dealing with the conditions of ordination in greater detail, Beveridge in a sermon, the text for which is I.Cor.4.v.1. describes it thus: " We learn that none shall be admitted Deacon except he be twenty-three years of age, unless he have a faculty; and every man that is to be admitted Priest shall be full twenty-four years old. None may be ordained, either Deacon or Priest, who had not first a definite place[2] where he can exercise his function, nor except he subscribes to the three articles in Can.36; viz: to the king's supremacy, secondly, the Book of Common Prayer and ordering of the Bishops,

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1. Second Letter to the Bishop of Bangor, p.2.
2. See Book 2, Chapter 1 (c) - of this present work - Wesley had no such place.

Priests and Deacons; that it contains nothing contrary to the Word of God; that it may be lawfully used and that he himself will use no other; thirdly, to the Thirty-Nine Articles, acknowledging them to be agreeable to the Word of God. Furthermore, a man cannot be admitted to Holy Orders unless he give an account of his faith in Latin, according to the Thirty-Nine Articles, and is able to confirm it by sufficient testimonies from Holy Scripture. Also he has to furnish testimonials from Oxford or Cambridge as to his good life, and other testimonials from others who have known him for three years before. "[1] The Bishop or some other person deputed by him examines the candidate, after which, if passed, ordination to the order of Deacon takes place, at which a copy of the New Testament is given. Entry into the ranks of the Priesthood takes place not less than one year after entry to the diaconate. Taylor[2] calls attention to the fact that whilst Priests (or Presbyters) are ordained at the Bishop's hands, and one Bishop only being required, the ordination to the Episcopate is peculiar to itself, for he must be ordained by two or three Bishops at least. His ordination is to a place, whereas ordination to the two lesser orders, is, as Hooker says, 'unto functions'.[3]

All candidates for ordination are, as the relevant form of service for their ordering demands, must feel 'inwardly moved', and 'truly called', a calling which Hooker agrees

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1. 'Manner of their Institution with us'
2. 'Episcopacy Asserted' : Section XXX.
3. Ecclesiastical Polity, Book 5:80(6).(p.460).

'may be sought'.[1] "It is not lawful" declares Article Twenty-Three " for any man to take upon him the office of publick preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same." "There must always be ministers of different orders in the church and that no man can ordinarily exercise any ecclesiastical office or function who is not lawfully called to it." [2]

Ordination is indestructible. It is, according to Potter:

> "The solemn dedication to the service of God and His Church, the renunciation of which is tantamount to sacrilege. They thereby receive authority from God in whose name the Bishop puts his hands on them, an authority which cannot be destroyed..." [3]

A man may lapse, morally or spiritually, he might even be deposed because of immoral behaviour, but he remains still, a Deacon, Priest or Bishop. Article Twenty-Six affords a solemn reminder that even in respect of the Lord's Supper, a minister, however unworthy, makes no difference to its validity. He still remains in possession of the commission to administer it, for such ministers " do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, and do minister by His commission and authority....neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness." " Nevertheless," the Article continues, " it appertaineth to the discipline of the

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1. Ecclesiastical Polity Book 5:77(9).(p.424).
2. Potter: (Discourse on Church Government),p.194.
3. ibid. p.194.

Church, that enquiry be made of evil Ministers, and that they be accused by those that have knowledge of their offences; and, finally being found guilty, by just judgment, be deposed."

William Law provides an excellent summary:

"Admitting that not all Apostolic Practices are necessary, Divine unalterable right of Episcopacy is not founded merely on Apostolic Practice.....Episcopacy is the only instituted Method of continuing the Priesthood, therefore Episcopacy is unchangeable, not because it is an Apostolic Practice but because the Nature of the Thing requires it. A positive institution being only to be continued in that Method which God has appointed, so that it is the Nature of the Priesthood and not the Apostolic Practice alone, that makes it necessary to be continued.....The Christian Priesthood is a Divine Appointment, so it can only descend to after Ages in such a Method as God had been pleased to appoint."[1]

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1. Second Letter to the Bishop of Bangor.

B O O K T W O .

THE YOUNG WESLEY.

CHAPTER ONE

BEFORE 1738

If one looks for a startling and unusual conception of the ministry held by John Wesley before his evangelical conversion in 1738, or for that matter, for seven years or so after, the search is in vain.

The Wesley, whose career is examined during this period, is Wesley, the typical eighteenth-century Anglican clergyman, steeped in the tradition outlined in the previous section of this study, - a tradition with which, so far as one can see, he had no quarrel.

(a) His Ancestors and the Ministry

That Wesley should later deviate from this tradition and adopt irregular views of, and practices in connection with, the Ministry, comes as no surprise to those who are familiar with the record of his ancestors.

Wesley's paternal great-grandfather, Bartholemew Wesley, a University man in Holy Orders, was ejected from his living at Allington in Dorsetshire in 1662 under the Act of Uniformity. A student of medicine as well as Divinity, he found use for his knowledge of the former subject after he was silenced as a preacher. Moore writes a quaint note about him to the effect that " he used a peculiar plainness of speech, which hindered him from

becoming a popular preacher." [1]

Bartholemew's son, John, a graduate of Oxford, began to preach at the age of twenty-two and in 1658 was sent to officiate at Whitchurch in Dorset. Soon after the Restoration he was in trouble because he would not read the Common Prayer. Another offence was that he preached against Episcopacy. He was reported to the Bishop of Bristol (Dr. Gilbert Ironside) to whom he was bidden to give an account of his conduct. A few excerpts from the conversation which resulted are most illuminating:

Bishop: "By whom were you ordained ? Or, are you ordained ?"
Wesley: "I am sent to preach the Gospel."
Bishop: "By whom are you sent ?"
Wesley: "By a Church of Jesus Christ."
Bishop: "What Church is that ?"
Wesley: "The Church of Christ at Melcomb"
Bishop: "That factious and heretical Church ! "
Wesley: "May it please you Sir, I know of no faction or heresy that Church is guilty of."

And again:

Bishop: "In what manner did the Church you spake of, send you to preach ? At this rate everybody might preach."
Wesley: "Not every one. Everybody has not the preaching gifts and preaching graces. Besides, that is not all I have to offer to your Lordship, to justify my preaching."
Bishop: "If you preach, it must be according to order, the order of the Church of England, upon ordination."
Wesley: "What does your Lordship mean by ordination ?"
Bishop: "Do not you know what I mean ?"
Wesley: "If you mean that sending spoken of in Romans X., I had it."
Bishop: "I mean that : What mission had you ?"
Wesley: "I had a mission from God and man."

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1. Life of Wesley, Vol.1. p.26. See also Adam Clarke: 'Memoirs of the Wesley Family', pp25-32., and Calamy's 'Nonconformist Memorial (Vol.II.p.165).

Bishop: "You must have it according to law, and the order of the Church of England."

Wesley: "I am not satisfied in my spirit therein."

Bishop: "Not satisfied in your Spirit ! You have more newcoined phrases than ever were heard of ! You mean your conscience, do you not?"

Wesley: "Spirit is no new phrase. We read of being sanctified in soul, body and spirit."

Bishop: "By spirit there, we are to understand the upper region of the soul."

Wesley: "Some think we are to take it for the conscience: but if your Lordship like it not so, then I say, I am not satisfied in conscience, as touching the ordination you speak of."

Bishop: "Conscience argues science, science supposes judgment, and judgment reason. What reason have you that you will not be thus ordained ?"

Wesley: "I came not this day to dispute with your Lordship; my own inability would forbid me so to do."

Bishop: "No, No; but give me your reason."

Wesley: "I am not called to that office; and therefore cannot be ordained. "

Bishop: "Why have you then preached all this while ?"

Wesley: "I was called to the work of the ministry; though not to the office. There is, as we believe, Vocatio ad opus, et ad munus." [1]

Bishop: "Why may you not have the office of the ministry ? "

Wesley: "May it please your Lordship, because they are not a people who are fit subjects for me to exercise office-work among them."

Bishop: "You mean a gathered church : but we must have no gathered churches in England; and you will see it so. For there must be a unity without divisions among us: and there can be no unity without uniformity. - Well then, we must send you to your church, that they may dispose of you, if you were ordained by them ."

and again,

Wesley: "I was by the Trustees appointed amd by the Triers approved."

Bishop: "They would approve any, who could come to them and close with them. I know they approved those who could not read twelve lines of English."

1. i.e. " A Call to the work; and a Call to the Office."

Wesley: "All that they did I know not: but I was examined touching gifts and graces."

Bishop: "I question not your gifts, Mr. Wesley; I will do you any good I can: But you will not long be suffered to preach unless you will do it according to order."

Wesley: "I shall submit to any trial you shall please to make. I shall present your Lordship with a confession of my faith or take what other way you please to insist on."

and later on:

Bishop: "Well, then, you will justify your preaching, will you, without ordination, according to law ?"

Wesley: "All these things, laid together, are satisfactory to me, for my procedure therein."

Bishop: "They are not enough."

Wesley: "There has been more written in proof of preaching of gifted persons, with such approbation, than has been answered yet by any one."

Turning now to Wesley's maternal ancestors, his grandfather, Samuel Annesley, LL.D, deserves special mention. Trained at Oxford, he became first of all, a ship's chaplain and later, the minister of Cliff in Kent. From here he was appointed to the parish of St. John the Apostle in London and then to St. Gile's, Cripplegate in 1658. He was also for a while, Lecturer at St. Paul's, but was relieved of this owing to a difference with the authorities. He was ejected from St. Gile's in 1662 because of his Nonconformist principles. Later he was appointed the minister of a Dissenting meeting-house in Little St. Helens on the east side of Bishopgate Street.

When the Government passed the Act of Uniformity, one of the intentions had been to stop the practice of ordaining Presbyterian ministers in England. Whilst many Presbyterian

ministers obeyed, Dr. Annesley continued to support the custom, not only privately, but in a public service. The year 1694 marked the first public ordination among Dissenters in London and it took place at Dr. Annesley's meeting-house.

Samuel Wesley, John's father, though brought up as a Dissenter, later entered the Church of England. He received his education at the Dissenting Academy in Stoke Newington. Becoming an Anglican, he entered Exeter College, Oxford to train for Holy Orders and graduated there. He was ordained deacon and held a curacy for one year and then became a naval chaplain. A year later he returned to a curacy. He had become a High-Churchman, politically rather than sacerdotally. This was manifest particularly in his refusal to read the 'Declararation' of King James in the latter's attempt to re-introduce Popery into the country. He welcomed the Revolution and wrote in its defence. For this, Queen Mary presented him with the living of Epworth in Lincolnshire. He was as loyal to the throne as to Protestantism. Says Moore:

> "In this instance of integrity and firmness of mind, Mr. Wesley has given us an unequivocal proof, that a person of High Church principles may be a true friend to the Protestant cause, and the liberty of the subject." [1]

Whether or not his acceptance of High Church principles was a reaction against his Dissenting upbringing, one cannot say, though it is to be noted that his controversies with Dissenters were both numerous and, often for him, disastrous.

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1. Life of Wesley. Vol.1.p.41.

Mrs. Susannah Wesley, mother of John and youngest daughter of Dr. Annesley, was a Dissenter to the age of thirteen. It was then that she studied the whole controversy between the Dissenters and the Anglican Church, with the result that she decided for the latter. Her Nonconformist background was not, however, completely discarded. In the absence of her husband at Convocation in 1712 she began a small meeting in the Rectory at which she conducted prayers and read a sermon. Attendances increased, but objections to this type of meeting were inevitable. They came from both the Rector and from his curate, Mr. Inman. Replying by letter to her husband on the 6th. of February, she says:

> "As to its looking particular, I grant it does; and so does almost every thing that is serious, or that may any way advance the glory of God, or the salvation of souls, if it be performed out of a pulpit, or in the way of common conversation: because, in our corrupt age, the utmost care and diligence have been used to banish all discourse of God or spiritual concerns out of society....And though the superior charge of the souls contained in it (her family) lies upon you, as head of the family, and, as their minister, yet, in your absence, I cannot but look upon every soul you leave under my care, as a talent committed to me under a trust by the great Lord of all the families of heaven and earth."

Continuing to tell her husband of her reading of some Danish missionaries, she adds:

> "Though I am not a man, nor a minister of the Gospel, and so cannot be engaged in such a worthy employment as they were; yet if I were inspired with a true zeal for his glory, and -did really desire the salvation of souls, I might do somewhat more than I do."

She proceeds:

> "I doubt if it be proper for me to present the prayers of the people to God. Last Sunday I would fain have dismissed them before prayers, but they begged me so earnestly to stay, I durst not deny them."

As opposition grew, Susannah again wrote to her husband, requesting him to submit all her actions to pragmatical testing and to judge her solely upon the results.

The story of Wesley's immediate ancestry is the record of a remarkable period of ministerial vascillation. It could hardly be an occasion for surprise, then, if Wesley himself, was later to be found adopting methods and indulging in practices which were at once original and irregular.

(b) Wesley's Call to the Ministry

Of the two parental influences exerted over John Wesley, that of Susannah Wesley seems to have been the stronger. She was especially concerned about the spiritual upbringing of her son John. Preserved by Dr. Whitehead is one of her written meditations which mentions this matter:

> "I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child, that Thou hast so mercifully provided for, than ever I have been; that I may do my endeavour to instil into his mind the principles of Thy true religion and virtue. Lord, give me grace to do it sincerely and prudently, and bless my attempts with good success."

This care was diligently maintained throughout his school and college careers. Educated at Charterhouse School, John proceeded to Christ Church College, Oxford in 1720. Towards the close of the year 1724, John began to

think about his future and in what work he should spend it. It was quite natural that he should consider taking Holy Orders. He began to be more serious from that time onwards and took up the study of divinity subjects. He turned over in his mind the importance of the ministerial office and the qualifications necessary for it. Because of doubts arising in his mind about the motives of entering upon such a course, he confided in his father. Samuel, however, was not too encouraging in his reply. On 26th. of January, 1725, he wrote as follows:

> "As to what you mention of entering into Holy Orders, it is indeed a great work, and I am pleased to find you think so. As to the motives you take notice of, my thoughts are : if it is no harm [1] to desire getting into that office, even as Eli's sons, ' to eat a piece of bread,' yet certainly, a desire and intention to lead a stricter life, and a belief that one should do so, is a better reason: Though this should, by all means, be begun before, or ten to one it will deceive us afterwards. But if a man be unwilling and undesirous to enter into Orders, it is easy to guess whether he can say so much as, with common honesty, that he trusts he is 'moved to it by the Holy Ghost.' But the principal spring and motive, to which all the former should be only secondary, must certainly be the glory of God, and the service of his Church in the edification of our neighbour. And woe to him who, with any meaner leading view, attempts so cared a work ! "

He then mentions the qualifications necessary for Holy Orders, and answers a question which his son asked about concerning the 'best commentary on the Bible'.

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1. Henry Moore (Life of Rev. John Wesley, A.M.) Vol.1. p. 122. has a note on this : " I doubt", he says " this under the Christian dispensation."

He concludes by hinting that he thought it best for his son to wait a while before entering into Orders and encourages him to work and write while he could.[1]

In February of the same year, John's mother wrote to him encouraging him to seek ordination as soon as possible:

> "I think" she says, " the sooner you are a Deacon the better, because it may be an inducement to greater application in the study of practical divinity, which, of all other studies, I humbly conceive to be the best for candidates for Orders."

Urging him to self-examination, she continues:

> "This matter deserves great consideration by all, but especially by those designed for the ministry; who ought, above all things, to make their own calling and election sure, lest 'after they have preached to others, they themselves should be cast away."

He began to apply himself to the study of Divinity with a view to entering Orders. Three books had a great influence over his preparation at this time, viz: "Imitation of Christ" by Thomas a Kempis; William Law's "Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life", and Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying". Twice he wrote to his father on the subject of ordination. In his reply in March, 1725, Samuel informed his son that he had changed his mind and that he should take Orders that summer. He adds:

> "But, in the first place, if you love yourself or me, pray heartily..."

During his preparation for Ordination, he found some scruples in his mind regarding the damnatory clauses in the Athanasian Creed. He sought and obtained his father's

1. Telford: Life of John Wesley, p.37, says Samuel intended John to devote himself to 'critical learning'.

opinion on the matter and his mind was soon settled. He was ordained deacon in Christ Church Cathedral on Sunday, 19th. September, 1725 by Dr. Potter, Bishop of Oxford. Thursday, 17th. of March, 1726 saw him elected to a Fellowship of Lincoln College and on 7th. November of the same year he became Greek Lecturer and Moderator of the Classes. He graduated Master of Arts on the 14th. of February of the following year. On August 4th. 1727 he left Oxford to become his father's curate at Wroot, near Epworth, where he remained until 1729. He was ordained priest at Christ Church on Sunday, 22nd. September, 1728, Dr. Potter again officiating. For priest's Orders he had been examined by Dr. Hayward, one of whose questions was:

> "Do you know what you are about ? You are bidding defiance to all mankind. He that would live a Christian priest, ought to know, that whether his hand be against every man or no, he must expect every man's hand should be against him." [1]

No reason is given why Wesley should not have been ordained priest sooner. There is no evidence that he applied for it and maybe his age was the deciding factor.

(c) Oxford Days : The Beginnings of Ecclesiastical High-Churchmanship : Holy Orders do not necessitate parochial ties.

As already stated, Wesley left Oxford in order to assist in his father's parish. The quiet life here ended in 1729 as a result of a letter from Dr. Morley, Rector of

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1. Letter to his brother Samuel, 17th. November, 1731. (Standard Letters : Telford. Vol.1.p.113.)

Lincoln College who requested that John should take pupils of a curacy. During John's absence from Oxford, his brother Charles had taken up residence there and had become very serious about religion. Around him he had gathered a number of like-minded students. Immediately they were dubbed as 'Methodists'[1]. When John returned to Oxford he attached himself to the little society or 'Holy Club' and eventually became its leader. Asceticism and charitable works were noteworthy characteristics of the group.

The joining of the group by a certain John Clayton (1709 - 1773) in the spring of 1732 marks the beginning of John's ritualistic High-Churchmanship. Clayton suggested to the Wesleys that they should observe the fasts of the church, a suggestion which they straightway adopted. Clayton was a close friend of the Non-Juror, physician and former bishop, Thomas Deacon of Manchester (1697 - 1753), he himself being a Mancunian. Deacon had founded the 'True British Catholic Church' in Manchester and had compiled his own Prayer-Book, translated Tillemont's works and published a number of liturgical and theological works. His prayer-book was the result of a careful research into the forms of worship and practices of the Primitive Church, and especially the 'Apostolic Constitutions'[2] and 'Ecclesiastical Canons'[3] which Deacon sincerely believed

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1. 'Methodists' was not a new name. It was used to describe an ancient sect of physicians, also for certain Nonconformists in the early 17th. century.
2. & 3. For these, see R. D. Urlin: 'John Wesley's place in Church History', pp. 327-333. For Wesley's Notes on the Canons, see J.C.Bowmer "Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism", Appendix iv.

to be of Apostolic origin. Deacon, through Clayton, exercised a powerful influence, for the time being, over Wesley. John was induced to believe in the authority of the Constitutions, though later he was to refer to them in the following paragraph which he wrote describing his spiritual quest:

> "For many years I have been tossed by various winds of doctrine...." Speaking of extremes, he continues: " Nor was it long before I bent the bow too far the other way: 1) By making antiquity a co-ordinate rather than subordinate rule with Scripture. 2) By admitting several doubtful writings as undoubted evidences of antiquity. 3) By extending antiquity too far, even to the middle or end of the fourth century. 4) By believing more practices to have been universal in the ancient Church than ever were so. 5) By not considering that the decrees of one Provincial Synod could bind only those provinces whose representatives met therein. 6) By not considering that the most of those decrees were adapted to particular times and occasions; and consequently, when those occasions ceased, must cease to bind even those provinces..."
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> "These considerations", adds Wesley, "insensibly stole upon me as I grew acquainted with the mystic writers, whose noble descriptions of union with God and internal religion made everything else appear mean, flat and insipid. But in truth they make good works appear so too." [1]

The friendship with Clayton had another significant result, that is, the publishing, in 1733 of Wesley's first literary work - a collection of forms of prayer for every day of the week. J. S. Simon thinks that in the original edition there would be contained a series of questions for

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1. Journal. Vol.1. pp.418/9.

self - examination.[1] Richard Green further submits that the work was the conjoint effort of both Clayton and Wesley[2]

The next stage in Wesley's career is one of perplexity. His father, advanced in years and physically much weaker, desired his son John to succeed him as incumbent of Epworth, if it could be arranged. John was determined to reject the idea. He was content to stay on at Oxford. He was doing good and what was more he felt that he had experienced some measure of spiritual improvement. The question, however, was not to be so easily disposed of. His brother Samuel took up his father's case and wrote in strong terms to his wilful brother: [3]

> "You are not at liberty to resolve against undertaking a cure of souls. You are solemnly engaged to do it, before God, and His high priest, and His church. Are you not ordained ? Did you not deliberately and openly promise to instruct, to teach, to admonish, to exhort those committed to your charge ? Did you equivocate then, with so vile a reservation, as to purpose in your heart that you never would have any so committed ? It is not a College, it is not a University, it is the order of the Church, according to which you were called. Let Charles, if he is silly enough, vow never to leave Oxford, and therefore avoid orders. Your faith is already plighted to the contrary; you have put your hand to the plough, - to that plough."

Cautiously, he replies to his brother, on January 15th. 1735:

> "To it I answer, that I do not, nor ever did, resolve against undertaking a cure of souls. There are four cures belonging to our College, and consistent with a Fellowship: I do not know but I may take one of them at Michaelmas. Not that I am clearly assured that I should be

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1. 'John Wesley and the Religious Societies', pp 104/5.
2. W.H.S.Proc. 3. p.202. See also Green's Bibliography.9.
3. December, 1734.

his "parish" and the religious activity on board was a novel mixture of the Oxford 'Holy Club' and Epworth Rectory.[1]

On board the "Simmonds", Wesley encountered a band of Moravian Brethren,[2] a community who were to exert a most important influence in his life. In order to converse with these people, Wesley immediately began to learn German. Ambrosius Tackner was his tutor. It was at this point that Wesley affords a further insight into his high view of the ministry. Tackner had received only lay-baptism which, although recognised by the Church as valid[3] did not satisfy Wesley, so he re-baptised him "at his request".[4] The influence of Deacon and the Non-Jurors is obvious. The Sacrament of Baptism had to rank on an equality with that of the Lord's Supper, insomuch that it was only valid when administered by an episcopally ordained clergyman. Even stranger is the fact that on the 19th October, - only one day later, Tackner is recorded as 'having communicated', no mention having been made of any rite of confirmation, impossible as the latter would have been in any case. Simon[5] explains that inconsistency as being due to the fact that confirmation

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1. See also Stevens "History of Methodism" P. 51.
2. These were the second contingent to emigrate to Georgia. They were accompanied by their Bishop David Nitschmann.
3. Decided at the Council of Nicaea 325 A.D.
4. Journal Vol. I p. 111.
5. Studies of John Wesley Vol I p. 118.

was a rite that had been generally neglected in those days. To say the least of it, the matter could not be rectified at the end of the journey as there was no bishop in the American colonies.

The same difficulty arises over the baptism of Thomas and Phoebe Hird and their two children who were Quakers.[1] Immediately afterwards they became communicants.

After setting foot on American soil, John proceeded to Savannah where he was to minister, and Charles Wesley along with Ingham went south to Frederica. On arrival at Savannah, John found his future residence still in the possession of his predecessor, Mr. Quincey. For the time being he made his home with his German friends. According to his Diary, he engaged Spangenberg, the Moravian leader, in an interesting discussion on the "ministry".[2] The latter agreed with Wesley about episcopal form of Church Government, much to Wesley's surprise, but denied that the "apostolic succession" of the Roman Bishops had ever been proved.

The Moravians, now that they had settled at Savannah, were to be organised into a Church by the ordination of a Bishop.[3] Wesley looked forward eagerly to this event. In the Journal for Saturday, 28th February, 1736 he records the following:

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1. Journal Vol I p. 117.
2. Friday 27th February 1736.
3. For a discussion on Moravian Orders See pp. 86-95. "The Moravian Influence".

> ".....They met to consult concerning the affairs of their church; Mr. Spangenberg being shortly to go to Pennsylvania, and Bishop Nitschmann to return to Germany. After several hours spent in conference and prayer, they proceeded to the election and ordination of a bishop. The great simplicity, as well as solemnity, of the whole, almost made me forget the seventeen hundred years between, and imagine myself in one of those assemblies where form and state were not, but Paul the tent-maker or Peter the fisherman presided, yet with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power ....."

The ordinand was Anton Seifart, whom Wesley was to meet again in his eightieth year at Zeist. The ordination was carried out by Bishop David Neitschmann. "A far-seeing and humble-minded man" is Wesley's description of the new bishop. As far as we can trace, Wesley makes no comment suggesting that the Moravian ordination was invalid.

John Wesley's ministry in Georgia was, at first, attended with some measure of success. It was not so in the case of his brother Charles. Charles had a high opinion of his office as a clergyman and believed with Bishop Hall that he was raised up by God to supply His place and to be a representation of Himself. Both Charles and his brother had been influenced by George Herbert's book "A Priest to the Temple". Says the Author:

> ".....The country parson is in God's stead to his parish, and dischargeth God what he can of His promises. Wherefore there is nothing done, either well or ill, whereof he is not the rewarder or punisher....."

In the ministry of the two brothers, the abiding influence of Deacon and the Non-Jurors was in evidence. Charles is seen reading over a dying girl of fifteen years "prayers for the energumens", as he believed she was possessed of a devil. Both of them refused to the Holy Communion,

all those who had not received baptism at the hands of an episcopally ordained clergyman and only such were to receive Christian burial.

Monday 13th September 1736 finds him reading with Delamotte, Bishop Beveridge's "Pandectae Canonum Conciliorum",[1] he says:

> ".....Nothing could so effectually have convinced us that both Particular and 'General Councils may err, and have erred'; (and of the infinite difference there is between the decisions of the wisest men and those of the Holy Ghost recorded in His Word;) and that things ordained by Councils as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority unless they be taken out of Holy Scripture....."

On Monday, 20th he continues -

> "We ended the Apostolical Canons, of which I must confess I once thought more highly than I ought to think. (Of them Bishop Beveridge observes that they are the decrees of the several Synods, which met at several places, and on several occasions, in the second and third age after Christ; and are therefore) called Apostolical, because partly grounded upon, partly agreeing with, the traditions delivered down from the Apostles. He further observes (That as they were enacted by different Synods, so they were collected by different persons; till, about A.D. 500, John, Bishop of Constantinople placed them at the head of the Canons, which he then collected into one Code; since which time they have been in force in the Eastern Church. But then, 'he adds) (Codex Canonum Ecclesiae Primitivae, p. 159; and why did he not observe it in the first page of the book? 'they contain the discipline used in the Church at the time when they were collected; not when the Council of Nice met, for then many parts of it were useless and obsolete'."

Although his faith in the Apostolical Canons was weakening somewhat, his strictness in observing both them and the rubrics was by no means relaxed. The Monday

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1. Journal Vol I pp. 274 - 277.

Mention must also be made at this stage of yet another noteworthy refusal to administer the communion, this time to the saintly Martin Bolzius, pastor of the Salzburghers at Ebenezer, who was visiting Wesley. His reason, of course, was that Bolzius had not been canonically baptized and so he 'dare not' administer to him. He writes:

> ".....I had occasion to make a very unusual trial of the temper of Mr. Boltzius, pastor of the Saltzburghers, in which he behaved with such lowliness and meekness as became a disciple of Jesus Christ ....."[1]

Fortunately for Wesley, Bolzius, unlike the Williamsons, made no trouble about the incident. Wesley was later to regret his action - in his comment on a letter received from Bolzius -

> ".....What a truly Christian piety and simplicity breathe in these lines! And yet this very man did I refuse to admit to the Lord's Supper because he had not been baptized by a minister episcopally ordained. Can any one carry High-Church zeal higher than this? And how well have I been beaten with my own staff?...."[2]

Mr. Bolzius' sphere of labour at New Ebenezer is referred to once again in the Savannah Journal and Curnock has a note about the Salzburghers' practice of religion in which he quotes some words of George Whitefield:[3]

> ".....They are blessed with two such pious ministers as I have not often seen. They have no courts of judicature, but all little differences are immediately decided by their ministers, whom they look upon and love as their fathers....."

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1. Journal 17th July 1737 Vol 1 p. 370.
2. Journal September 28th 1749 Vol 3 p. 434.
3. Vol I p. 404. footnote.

The ministry in Georgia was by no means a failure even when later, opposition became so strong that he was compelled to return to England. He had been brought into contact with other sects and practices and it is no wonder that some of his prejudices were beginning to melt.

The Journal for 2nd January 1737[1] tells of one experience which was new to him:

> ".....We came to the settlement of the Scotch Highlanders at Darien (about twenty miles from Frederica). I was surprised to hear an extempore prayer before a written sermon. Are not then the words we speak to God to be set in order at least as carefully as those we speak to our fellow worms? One consequence of this manner of praying is, that they have public service only once a week. Alas, my brethren! I bear you record, ye have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. (Yet it must be owned that in all instances of personal or social duty this people utterly shames our countrymen: and openness of behaviour; in justice and mercy of all kinds, being not content with exemplary kindness to one another, but extending it, to the utmost of their ability, to even the stranger that is within their gates.) Mr. McLeod, their minister, is a serious, prudent, resolute, and (I hope) a pious man....."

One feature of his ministry which might well be regarded as prophetic is his employment, when occasion demanded it, of lay-readers. A layman conducted a communicants' class in his absence. Deaconesses were appointed by him. Being familiar with the Apostolical Constitutions[2] he would feel that he had a traditional right to follow this course. Bishop Wilberforce in his "History of the American Church" says that "it frequently happened that a

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1. Vol I. Journal pp. 309 - 310.
2. "Let him that teaches, although he be one of the laity, yet, if he be skilful in the word and grave in his manners, teach; for they shall be all taught of God"(This may have

benefice was kept unfilled in order to prolong the more acceptable services of an unordained reader.[1]

A second discussion took place between Wesley and his Moravian friends on the subject of Church Order and practice. He records this in his Diary:

> Wesley: "What is the visible Church ?"
> Answer: "Where there is a society of men united together in apostolic order and discipline and endued with the Spirit of Christ, there is a visible Church. Such was once that of Rome, Corinth and others.
> Wesley: "Are the ministrations of a man not episcopally ordained valid ?"
> "Does the wickedness of a man episcopally ordained make his ministrations invalid ?"
> Answer: "I dare neither affirm nor deny either of these questions universally." [2]

On Friday, 2nd. December, 1737, after the institution of legal proceedings arising out of his refusal to administer Holy Communion to Mrs. Williamson, together with many other grievances, Wesley left Savannah to return to England. It was obvious that he had outstayed his usefulness and the authorities were only too glad to be rid of him.

(e) The Return to England : The Influence of Cyprian

His ambition to found a church, based on primitive church practice, was not realised. His return home was, as it has been portrayed by all biographers, marked by sadness, frustration and inner conflict.

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1. p.141.
2. Editor's note, Journal, Vol.1. p.373.

Some biographers of Wesley think that he discarded a number of his High-Church views prior to his conversion. There is, however, no evidence of this, though he may well have begun to doubt some of them.[1]

Miss Julia Wedgewood is surely mistaken when she writes:

> "Wesley's homeward voyage in 1738 marks the conclusion of his High-Church period...He abated nothing of his attachment to the ordinances of the Church, either then or to the last day of his life; and he did not so soon reach that degree of independence of her hierarchy and some of her rules which marks his farthest point of divergence; but his journals during his voyage chronicle for us that deep dissatisfaction which is felt wherever an earnest nature wakes up to the incompleteness of a traditional religion; and his after-life, compared with his two years in Georgia, makes it evident that he passed at this time into a new spiritual region."[2]

She is right about the deep dissatisfaction of Wesley about his experience, but there is no new spiritual region for him until 24th. May, 1738.

Whatever doctrines they were of which Wesley had his doubts, they certainly did not include that of the ministry. During his homeward voyage, he records in the Journal[3] that God had 'thrown him' upon reading the works of Cyprian.[4] Simon reminds his readers that Cyprian has been hailed as the 'father of modern High-Churchmen'.[5]

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1. The Editor of the Standard Journal (Vol.1.p.167), -describes Wesley as a High-Churchman of the early type. The Georgia Journal and Diary suggest a devout, somewhat antiquated High-Church Protestant with little in common with later Oxford Tractarianism.
2. John Wesley and the Evangelical Revival of the 18th.Cent.
3. Journal for 9th. January,1738 onwards. Vol.1.p.416.
4. It would be interesting to know which text Wesley used.
5. 'John Wesley and the Religious Societies', pp.174-5.

Wesley was always an admirer of Cyprian, especially during this period of his experience. Cyprian's views on Church government and episcopacy would appeal to him. In his letter to Dr. Conyers Middleton - written 4th. January, 1749, he defends Cyprian against the recipient's attack.[1]

Cyprian, (Bishop of Carthage, 248-258), held that the Catholic Church was founded from the first by Christ on St. Peter alone and that while the apostles possessed equal power, the unity of the Church might still be maintained.[2] She has ever since remained one in unbroken succession, and out of this Church with its order of bishops and its centre in Rome, there can be no Christianity.

According to Cyprian, episcopacy is represented as sacerdotal.[3] It is the channel through which grace is conveyed to the Church. The Holy Spirit was given by Christ to His apostles; by the apostles to bishops whom they ordained; and by these bishops to their successors. An unbroken episcopal succession is thus necessary to give efficacy to all religious exercises:

> "You should know that the bishop is in the Church and the Church in the Bishop, and if any one be not with the Bishop he is not in the Church"[4]

Speaking of the Eucharist and those who celebrate it, Cyprian affirms:

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1. Standard ed. Letters. Vol.2.p.320f.
2. 'De catholicae ecclesiae unitate' (251.A.D.).4-6.
3. Ep.xxxiii.1.
4. Ep. lxvi.7.

CHAPTER TWO

THE YEARS 1738 - 1745.

(a) The Effect of Wesley's Conversion

The question now arises : " Did Wesley's conversion alter his conception of the Christian Ministry ? " Consideration of this point inevitably leads one on to controversial ground. Regarding Wesley's Churchmanship generally, there are two schools of thought. Scholars including Dr. Rigg, G. J. Stephenson, Miss Wedgewood, Tyerman and others maintain that Wesley adopted a new sense of churchmanship as a result of his evangelical awakening. Other authorities such as Dr. J. E. Rattenbury, R. D. Urlin, F. Hockin, J. C. Bowmer, trace various aspects of his earlier views remaining with him to the end of his days. The position adopted by the first group is illustrated in the following quotations:

> "We see evidences of the essential change in ecclesiastical bias which had passed upon Wesley. Henceforth his dominant tendency was altogether different from what it had been before. His face was now set in an opposite direction. Wesleyan writers take their stand here. None have shown so distinctly and fully the rigid and excessive Churchmanship of Wesley up to the date 1738. But they insist that, from that date, everything was essentially different, and that the essential difference very swiftly developed into striking results." [1]

> "Wesley's homeward voyage marks the conclusion of his High-Church period" [2]

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1. J. H. Rigg: 'The Churchmanship of John Wesley'.pp.57-8.
2. Julia Wedgewood: 'John Wesley and the Evangelical Revival of the 18th. Century.'

Both are careful to allow that Wesley did not give up all his High-Church principles immediately, or, as Rigg puts it : " cast all his grave-clothes off at once", but rapidly did get rid of them !

Tyerman [1] has referred to Wesley's extremes as " silly, popish practices, not only unauthorised and useless, but too much resembling the pernicious nonsense of the high church part of the present day to receive the approval of those who have learned to be thankful for the inestimable blessings of the great Protestant Reformation." Whilst not so insistent as Rigg, he likes to demolish as much as possible of Wesley's High-Churchmanship when recording the post-conversion period.

Whatever these scholars maintain, there is little in the record of his life between 1738 and 1745 to show that Wesley altered his views on the Christian Ministry as a result of his conversion.[2]

John was converted at a meeting of a Religious society in Nettleton Court, Aldersgate Street, London on 24th. May 1738. His brother Charles entered into a similar experience a few days previously, at the home of a Mr. John Bray in Little Britain.

The immediate effect of this conversion was not, as some endeavour to prove, a change in doctrine, but rather, an overwhelming urge to proclaim the Gospel whenever and wherever

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1. Life and Times of John Wesley, Vol.1. p.95.
2. Cf. Simon: Studies, Vol.1. 'John Wesley and the Religious Societies', p.324: "John Wesley's conversion changed his view of the neglected doctrines of the Church and modified his ecclesiastical position."

the opportunity afforded itself. Far from their being a radical change in his ecclesiastical views, one may note with interest the reason why Wesley was summoned before Dr. Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London on the 20th. of October, 1738, almost five months after his conversion. Wesley had been insisting again on the re-baptism of Dissenters, - a practice which His Lordship quite justifiably condemned! This incident can hardly be regarded as indicative of a departure from his previous position. [1]

(b) Field Preaching - Wesley's first irregularity of practice.

Although there is no indication of a change in his conception of the ministry, it must be admitted that, from his conversion, he indulged in two notable irregularities of practice. Unauthorized preaching was his first departure from orthodoxy during this period. Because of it, he inevitably came into conflict both with the ecclesiastical authorities and secular officials. The canons of 1603 had said that "neither the minister, churchwardens, nor any other officers of the church shall suffer any man to preach within their churches or chapels, but such as, by showing their licence to preach, shall appear unto them to be sufficiently authorized thereunto."

There was no want of criticism of Wesley and his friends:

> "They had the boldness to preach in the fields and other open places, and by public Advertisements to invite the Rabble to be their hearers !" complains

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1. Charles Wesley also found himself in trouble for the same reason.

> Dr. Gibson,[1] " How big with mischief that practice in particular is may be abundantly seen"

Let is be said that Wesley's decision to violate this law was not taken without due consideration, neither was this tendency a new one. Looking back one can recall his reluctance to be tied to parochial spheres of duty - a fact proved in his reasons for declining his father's living at Epworth.

On the 20th. March, 1739 he replies to one of his critics and a former pupil, James Hervey:

> "If you ask on what principle, then, I acted, it was this: A desire to be a Christian.... As to your advice that I should settle in college, I have no business there, having now no office and no pupils. And whether the other branch of your proposal be expedient for me, viz. 'To accept of a cure of souls', it will be time enough to consider when one is offered to me....But in the meantime you think I ought to be still; because otherwise I should invade another's office if I interfered with other people's business and intermeddled with souls that did not belong to me.....You accordingly ask ' How is it that I assemble Christians, who are none of my charge, to sing psalms and pray and hear the Scriptures expounded ? ' and think it hard to justify doing this in other men's parishes, upon catholic principles." [2]

He continues:

> "Permit me to speak plainly. If by catholic principles you mean any other than scriptural, they weigh nothing with me. I allow no other rule, whether offaith or practice, than the Holy Scriptures; but on scriptural principles

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1. 'On the observations on the conduct and behaviour of a certain sect distinguished by the name of Methodists'p.2.
2. Letters, Vol.1. pp.285-6.

> I do not think it hard to justify whatever I do. God in Scripture commands me, according to my power, to instruct the ignorant, reform the wicked, confirm the virtuous. Man forbids me to do this in another's parish; that is, in effect, to do it at all; seeing I have now no parish of my own, nor probably ever shall. Whom then, shall I hear, God or man ?...Suffer me now to tell you my principles in this matter. I look upon all the world as my parish..."

In spite of his insistence on continuing his 'field-preaching', it must be admitted that Wesley was not easily reconciled to it, "having been", he says, " all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church." [1]

Confronted by well-to-do Beau Nash at Bath on 5th. June, 1739., who was horrified at Wesley's irregularity, the latter replied that his authority to preach there was:

> "of Jesus Christ, conveyed to me by the (now) Archbishop of Canterbury, when he laid hands on me, and said, 'Take thou authority to preach the Gospel' " [2]

Writing to his brother Charles on 23rd. June. of the same year, he says:

> "If any man (bishop or other) ordain that I shall not do what God commands me to do, to submit to that ordinance would be to obey man rather than God. And to do this I have both an ordinary call and an extraordinary. My ordinary call is my ordination by the Bishop: 'Take thou authority to preach the word of God.' My extraordinary call is witnessed by the works God doeth by my ministry, which prove that He is with me of a truth in this exercise of my

1. Journal. Vol.2.p.167. Sat.31st. March, 1739.
2. Journal. Vol.2. p.212.

of my office.

Perhaps this might be better expressed in another way : God bears witness in an extraordinary manner that my thus exercising my ordinary call is well-pleasing in His sight.

But what if a bishop forbids this ? I do not say, as St. Cyprian, ' Populus scelerato antistite separare se debet ' [1]

But I say, God being my helper, I will obey Him still; and if I suffer for it, His will be done." [2]

Interviewed on the 18th. August, 1739 by the celebrated Joseph Butler, Bishop of Bristol, he declares:

"My Lord, my business on earth is, to do what good I can. Wherever, therefore, I think I can do most good, there must I stay, so long as I think so. At present, I think I can do most good here; therefore, here I stay. As to my preaching here, a dispensation of the Gospel is committed to me, and woe is me if I preach not the Gospel, wherever I am in the habitable world. Your Lordship knows, being ordained a Priest, by the commission I then received, I am a Priest of the Church universal; And being ordained a Fellow of a College, I was not limited to preach the word of God in any part of the Church of England. I do not therefore conceive, that, in preaching here by this commission, I break any human law. When I am convinced I do, then it will be time to ask 'Shall I obey God or man ?' But if I should be convinced in the meanwhile, that I could advance the glory of God, and the salvation of souls in any place more than in Bristol; in that hour, by God's help, I will go hence; which till then I may not do" [3]

In 1743, Wesley published his 'Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion' in which he denies leaving the Church, even if he has to leave the church walls. Having in mind his unfortunate encounter with the Rector of Epworth, his home parish, he argues thus:

"A Clergyman so drunk he can scarcely stand or speak, may, in the presence of a thousand people,

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1. i.e. 'The people ought to separate'.
2. Letters, Vol.2. pp.322/3.
3. Henry Moore : Life of Rev. John Wesley, A.M., -.465.

> set upon another clergyman of the same church, both with abusive words and open violence. And what follows ? Why, the one is still allowed to dispense the sacred signs of the body and blood of Christ. But the other is not allowed to receive them - Because he is a field - preacher! " [1]

Answering, on the 22nd. December, 1744, [2] the pamphlet written by Dr. Gibson, Bishop of London, entitled: ' The Case of the Methodists briefly stated, more particularly in the point of field-preaching', he declares :

> "Your argument in form runs thus:
> 'That preaching which is contrary to the laws of the land, is worse than no preaching at all;
> But field preaching is contrary to the laws of the land.
> Therefore it is worse than not preaching at all." [3]

Wesley emphatically denies that such preaching is contrary to the laws of the land. The bishop, apparently sets out to prove field-preaching unlawful on the grounds that the Methodists should have their places of assembly licensed under the Act of Toleration. John replies that Methodists are not Dissenters, but loyal members of the Established Church.

Writing to a clerical friend on the 11th. March, 1745, he affirms that to desist from preaching in private houses or in the open air is the same as not to preach at all. [4]

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1. Works (ed. Benson). Vol.12.pp.32ff.
2. 'Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion'. Part I. (Works. Vol.12.pp.123ff.) Written, 22nd. December, 1744.
3. For a similar defence see letter to Westley Hall, his brother-in-law, 30th. December, 1745.(Letters.Vol.2.pp55-57)
4. Letters. Vol.2. pp.29-30. See also pp.49-50 (Letter to 'John Smith' dated 28th. September, 1745) in which Wesley attributes the faat thąt so many Anglican pulpits were closed against him, to his preaching 'salvation by faith'. It is generally believed that 'John Smith' was Thomas Secker, successively Bishop of Bristol, Oxford and Archbishop of Canterbury. This, however, is disputed by Simon (Wesley Studies, Vol.2. 'John Wesley and the Methodist Societies'. pp.279-80.).

Returning to his 'Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion' Wesley states in the Third Part that his preaching in unusual places is not of choice but of necessity. He asks:

> "But what need is there (say even some of a milder spirit) of this preaching in fields and streets ? Are there not Churches enough to preach in ? No, my friend, there are not; not for us to preach in. You forget; we are not suffered to preach there; else we should prefer them to any places whatever.....Suppose field--preaching to be....ever so expedient, or even necessary, yet who will contest with us for this province ? - May we not enjoy this quiet and unmolested ? Unmolested, I mean by any competitors. For who is there among you, brethren, that is willing (examine your own hearts) even to save souls from death at this price ? Would not you let a thousand souls perish rather than you would be the instrument of rescuing them thus ?
>
> Brethren, do you envy us this honour ? What, I pray, would buy you to be a Field--Preacher ? Or what, think you, could induce any man of common sense, to continue therein one year, unless he had a full conviction in himself, that it was the will of God concerning him ? [1]

From this considerable amount of evidence, one is left in no doubt that, in field-preaching, Wesley did not see, or did not own up to seeing, any irregularity. It had evidently come to stay - a distinguishing characteristic of early Methodism.

(c) Lay-Preaching : Wesley's second irregularity of practice.

The inevitable result of Wesley's preaching was the formation of societies for the converted. Local oversight

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1. Works. Vol.12. pp.258-261. Written. 18th. December, 1745.

of these was an obvious necessity and so assistants from among the people were appointed, one oftheir duties being 'to expound'.[1]

In the case of one of these, a certain Thomas Maxfield, a precedent was forthcoming for lay-preaching among the Methodists. Having to leave London, Wesley left him in charge of the society there. Maxfield, however, took it upon himself to exceed his privilege and began not only to expound to the classes, but to preach to the whole congregation. Hearing of this, Wesley hastened back to London to correct him. "Thomas Maxfield" he said to his mother, abruptly, " has turned preacher, I find. " Susannah replied : "John, you know what my sentiments have been. You cannot suspect me of favouring readily anything of this kind. But take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear him also yourself." [2]

To this, Wesley could but say "It is the Lord; Let him do what seemeth good." Whether or not the fact that Lady Huntingdon had previously urged Maxfield to 'use his gifts', had any influence over Wesley's decision, as well as his mother's advice, one cannot tell. Lady Huntingdon

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1. See page 58 of this study. A similar practice had been adopted in Georgia and had led to the employment of lay-preachers where necessary.
2. Henry Moore: 'Life of Rev. John Wesley, A.M.' Vol.1. pp.505/6.

later wrote to Wesley describing at length the gifts and grace of Maxfield, declaring that he was "one of the greatest instances of God's peculiar favour that I know - highly favoured of the Lord." [1]

Charles Wesley, though, was not so ready to admit of a divine call in this case, but he was quickly answered by John on the 21st. April, 1741:

> "I am not clear that Brother Maxfield should not expound at Greyhound Lane, nor can I yet do without him. Our clergymen have miscarried full as much as the laymen; and that the Moravians are other than laymen, I know not." [2]

Denny-Urlin is careful to point out that Wesley did not <u>invent</u> lay-preaching - he simply permitted it, through force of circumstances.[3] There were many lay-preachers, too, who began on their own in his absence. Wesley said later, when quite an old man, that Joseph Humphreys was his first lay-assistant, having begun in 1738.[4] This cannot be correct. Stevens explains [5] that Humphreys preceded Maxfield and if Wesley was perturbed at the latter's preaching, he would certainly not have tolerated that of the former. Probably he was referring to Humphreys as an exhorter or expounder. Furthermore, John Cennick, who later joined the Moravians, was the only lay-preacher whose work Wesley sanctioned from the very beginning. By the Conference of 1744, thirty-five such preachers were at work

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1. Henry Moore: 'Life of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.', p.509.
2. Letters, Vol.1.p.353.
3. ' A Churchman's Life of Wesley', pp.137-8. Wesley had said 'To touch this point was to touch the apple of my eye'
4. Journal.Vol.8.p.9. At the 1766 Conference, Wesley had said that Maxfield was the first lay-helper.

in the itinerant ministry and three local lay-preachers.[1] Lay - preaching had been definitely established as another characteristic of Methodism.

Lay-preaching is not to be regarded as being so irregular as field-preaching. There was, as Wesley of all people, would know, a precedent for it in the Primitive Church. In the early days of Christianity, selected and approved laymen were permitted to preach in the church and sometimes in the presence of the clergy, providing the latter desired it.[2]

Furthermore a precedent was provided in the Established Church. Moorman says[3] that in Elizabeth's reign, in order to supplement the clergy, the order of 'reader' was revived, though it did not last long. According to the 'Injunctions to be confessed and subscribed by them that shall be admitted Readers'[4] and interpreted by the Bishops (1560-1561), the rules for these lay-preachers were not dissimilar from those which Wesley imposed on his own helpers. They were not to administer the sacraments but could bury the dead and purify women after childbirth. Their reading of the services must be distinct and audible. A reader must give place to any minister who would later be appointed to that parish. A report must be furnished within six months

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1. Myles : Chronological History of the People called Methodists. 4th.ed. pp.446/9.
2. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (Hastings) Vol.7. p. 771. Article on Lay-preaching. See also Bingham: 'Antiquities'. Bk.4.Ch.4.
3. History of the Church of England.p.218.
4. The Petyt MSS. 'Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the period of the Reformation. Vol.III. 1559-1575. edited by Walter Howard Frere D.D. of the Community of the Resurrection. Pub.1910. Longman-Greens & Co.London.

from the commencement of his work, by the 'honest' of the parish whence he came. His work was to be confined to the poorer parishes[1] except in the case of an incumbent's sickness. He could never appoint anyone in his place and must not expect much more financially than his expenses. Each day he was to read a chapter from both the Old and the New Testaments for the increase of his knowledge.[2]

Although Wesley, as a loyal member of the Church of England and a lover of early church practices, would be aware of these precedents, his employment of lay-preachers was still irregular, for two reasons. Firstly, the practice of using lay-preachers had lapsed and secondly he had not received Episcopal sanction.

Inevitably then, as in the case of field-preaching, Wesley was not to introduce these novel measures without courting opposition from his critics. The third part of the 'Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion'[3] includes a spirited defence of his lay-labourers. Some had criticised their youth and lack of education. To this, Wesley replies by asking if God is bound by age of man and also, how much the average candidate for holy orders knows about the subjects he is supposed to have studied for his life's work. Some critics had said that the Methodist preachers 'make themselves like the Apostles'. He retorts:

> "Why must not every man, whether Clergyman, or layman, be in some respects, like the Apostles,

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1. The Rochester Injunctions forbid a reader to serve in 'any great cure'.
2. Their preaching really consisted of reading prescribed works.
3. Works. Vol.12. pp.248.ff. Written 18th.December. 1745.

> or go to hell , Can any man be saved, if he be not holy like the Apostles ,..... I am bold to affirm, that these unlettered men have help from God, for that great work, the saving of souls from death; seeing he hath enabled, and doth enable them still, to turn many to righteousness. Thus hath he -'destroyed the wisdom of the wise, and brought to nought the understanding of the prudent:.... Indeed in the one thing which they profess to know, they are not ignorant men. I trust there is not one of them who is not able to go through such an examination, in substantial, practical, experimental Divinity, as few of our Candidates for Holy Orders, even in the University (I speak it with sorrow and shame, and in tender love) are able to do.
>
> 'But they are laymen. You seem to be sensible yourself, of the strength of this objection. For as many as you have answered, I observe you have never once so much as touched on this.' I have not. Yet it was not distrust of my case, but tenderness to you which occasioned my silence.....The Scribes of old, who were the ordinary preachers among the Jews, were not Priests; they were not better than laymen. Yea, many of them incapable of the Priesthood, being of the tribe of Simeon, not of Levi. Hence probably it was, that the Jews themselves never urge it as an objection to Our Lord's preaching (even those who did not acknowledge or believe, that he was sent of God in an extraordinary character) that he was no priest after the order of Aaron." [1]

Wesley continues his argument by quoting the invitation to Paul and Barnabas by the Ruler of the Synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia to give a word of exhortation to the people, the former being absolute strangers to the town, and men without ordination. Furthermore, was

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1. Works. Vol.12. pp.248ff.

Calvin ordained ? asks Wesley. The majority of the Reformers were unordained men and the Roman Catholics seldom, if ever, use this fact as an objection against them. In all the Protestant Churches, he maintains, ordination is not held to be necessary in order to preach. In Sweden, Germany, Holland, and in every reformed church in Europe, it is not only permitted, but required, that before any one is ordained (before he is admitted even into Deacon's orders, wherever the distinction between Priests and Deacons is retained) he should publicly preach a year, or more, ad probandum facultatem. In England, it has been objected, there is nothing of this kind, but Wesley immediately points out that in many parish churches, the parish-clerk reads the lessons and sometimes the whole service. If this is not preaching, then asks the writer, what is preaching? but praedicare Verbum Dei? - To publish the Word of God? The whole business of employing lay-help is the result of the indifference of the local clergy, who not content with being careless, now set themselves up in opposition. Cautious to remind his readers that his helpers were called to preach only and not to exercise the privileges of the priesthood. They do not, he says, take this honour to themselves.

> "..... The honour here mentioned[1] is the Priesthood. But they no more take upon them to be priests than to be kings. They take not upon them to administer the sacraments, an honour peculiar to the priests of God. Only according to their power, they exhort their brethren, to continue in the grace of God....."

As for their preaching being a violation of all order, Wesley retorts:

> ".....What is this order of which you speak? Will it serve instead of the knowledge and love of God?..... If not, how should I answer it to God, if rather than violate I know not what order, I should sacrifice thousands of souls thereto? I dare not do it. It is at the peril of my own woul."

If, by 'order', true Christian discipline were meant, Wesley would reverence it because it is of God, but he pertinently asks where it is to be found, - in what diocese and in what parish?

Replying to a long letter from Westley Hall, his brother-in-law, in which he has received criticism concerning his field-preaching and employing lay-preachers as being contrary to law, he says:[2]

> ".....Field preaching ..... a contrary to no law which we profess to obey ..... the allowing of lay-preachers? We are not clear that this is contrary to any such law. But if it is, this is one of the exempt cases; one wherein we cannot obey with a safe conscience. Therefore, be it right or wrong on other accounts, it is, however, no just exception against our sincerity ....."

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1. See also Sermon on the 'Ministerial Office'(Korah), pp. 158 ff. of this present work.
2. Dated 30th December 1745.

(d) Conference, 1744: Officers of Methodism defined.

Monday 25th June 1744, saw the opening of the first Conference of Methodism. The previous day, the regular clergymen and lay preachers who had responded to the call took the Lord's Supper together. On the morning of the opening session, Charles Wesley preached before them. Besides John and Charles, there were present four ordained ministers of the Church of England: John Hodges, Rector of Wenvo, Wales, Henry Piers, the Vicar of Bexley, Samuel Taylor, Vicar of Quinton and John Meriton, a Clergyman from the Isle of Man. Among the lay preachers present were Thomas Maxfield, Thomas Richards, John Bennett and John Downes. Jackson, in his life of Charles Wesley[1] says that all the members were episcopally ordained, but he was mistaken. Admitted the clergymen met together on their own in the morning and decided which of the laymen they should invite to the Conference for that day.

The first day was spent considering questions of doctrine and the second likewise. On Wednesday, the 27th June points of discipline were raised. The constitution and membership of the Church of England were defined.

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1. Vol I. p. 387.

Q. How far is it our duty to obey the Bishops?
A. In all things indifferent. And on this ground of obeying them, we should observe the canons, so far as we can with a safe conscience.[1]

After a discussion on the prevailing accusation against the Methodists, that they were schismatics and had separated from the Church, it was stated that no such separation had even been contemplated. The Methodist people were urged to attend their local parish churches for worship and the sacraments. Further disciplinary matters were dealt with on Thursday, the 28th. The Rules for the Societies and the Bands were read out. Then came the question, "What officers belong to these societies?" The answer was:-

"The ministers, Assistants, Stewards, Leaders of Bands, Leaders of Classes, Visitors of the Sick, Schoolmasters, Housekeepers."

Q. What is the office of a Christian Minister?
A. To watch over the souls whom God commits to his charge, as he that must give an account.
Q. What is it to be moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon yourself this office?
A. It can mean no less than to be immediately convinced by the Spirit of God that it is His Will.
Q. Is field-preaching unlawful?
A. We do not conceive that it is contrary to any law, either of God or man. Yet (to avoid giving any needless offence) we never preach without doors, when we can with any conveniency preach within.
Q. Where should be endeavour to preach most?
A. 1. Where we can preach in the Church. 2. Where there is an open door, quiet and willing hearers. 3. Where there is the greatest increase of souls.

The position of Lay-Assistants was discussed on the Friday. Henry Moore, in his account of the Minutes of the Conferences,[2] records a question with answer not given

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1.Bennett Minutes p. 13.
2.Life of Wesley Vol 2. p. 55 top. This record is badly arranged chronologically, in fact, no dates, are given in the text. They have only been arrived at by comparison with Bennett and Benson's edition of the 'Works' the latter being in an even worse condition than Moore's account

in the Bennett Minutes, -

> Q. In what view may we and our helpers[1] be considered?
> A. Perhaps as extraordinary messengers, (i.e. out of the ordinary way,) disigned, - (1) To provoke the regular ministers to jealousy, - (2) To supply their lack of service, towards those who are perishing for lack of knowledge.

The Bennett Minutes continue:[2]

> Q. Are Lay Assistants allowable?
> A. Only in cases of necessity.
> Q. What is the office of our Assistants?[3]
> A. In the absence of the Minister to feed and guide, to teach and govern the flock. 1. To expound every morning and evening. 2. To meet the United Societies, the Bands, the Select Societies and the Penitents every week. 3. To visit the classes (London (and Bristol)[4] excepted) once a month. 4. To hear and decide all differences. 5. To put the disorderly back on trial, and to receive on trial for the Bands or Society. 6. To see that the Steward and the Leaders, Schoolmaster and Housekeepers faithfully discharge their several offices. 7. To meet the Stewards, the Leaders of the Bands and Classes weekly, and overlook their accounts."

Moore's record shows an extra question and answer preceeding the above:[5]

> Q. "Who is the Assistant?"
> A. "That preacher in each circuit, who is appointed, from time to time, to take charge of the Societies and the other preachers therein."

To this he supplied a footnote: "By the Assistant was meant the chief preacher in a circuit, who immediately assisted Mr. Wesley in the regulation of the Societies. The preacher who has not the care of the circuit is called, The Superintendent[6] "

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1. Note that Moore substitutes the term 'helper' for 'Assistant'. So does the 1812 edition of 1744 Minutes, p. 14.
2. P. 15 f.
3. Henry Moore: Life of John Wesley Vol 2 p. 55 top. He omits "....in the absence of the minister." - an important discrepancy in a study like this. For a similar list of duties see the letter to Vincent Perronet in 1748. (Letters Vol 2 pp. 304 ff.)
4. This addition is made in Wesley's handwriting.
5. Vol 2. p. 57.
6. Moore's work is dated 1825.

Returning to Bennett's record, the next question to receive an answer was: "What are the Rules of an Assistant ?"

A.1. Be diligent, never be unemployed a moment, never be triflingly employed, (never while away time) spend no more time at any place than is strictly necessary.

2. Be serious. Let your motto be, 'Holiness unto the Lord.' Avoid all lightness as you would avoid hell-fire, and laughing as you would cursing and swearing.

3. Touch no woman; be as loving as you will, but hold your hands off 'em. Custom is nothing to us.

4. Believe evil of no one. If you see it done, well; else take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on every thing. You know the judge is always allowed (supposed)[1] to be on the prisoner's side.

5. Speak evil of no one; else your word especially would eat as doth a canker. Keep your thoughts within your (own) breast, till you come to the person concerned.

6. Tell everyone what you think wrong in him, and that plainly, and as soon as may be, else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste, therefore, to cast the fire out of your bosom.

7. Do nothing as a gentleman : you have no more to do with this character than with that of a dancing-master. You are the servant of all, therefore.

8. Be ashamed of nothing but sin : not of fetching wood, or drawing water, if the time permit; not of cleaning your own shoes or your neighbour's.

9. Take no money of any one. If they give you food when you are hungry, or clothes when you need them, it is good. But not silver or gold. Let there be no pretence to say, we grow rich by the Gospel.

10. Contract no debt without my knowledge.

11. Be punctual : do everything exactly at the time; and in general do not mendour rules, but keep them, not for wrath but for conscience sake.

12. Act in all things not according to your own will, but as a son in the Gospel. As such, it is your part to employ your time in the manner which we direct : partly in visiting the flock from house to house (the sick in particular);

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1. Corrected in Wesley's handwriting.

partly, in such a course of Reading, Meditation and Prayer, as we advise from time to time. Above all, if you labour with us in Our Lord's vineyard, it is needful you should do that part of the work (which) we prescribe (direct)[1] at those times and places which we judge most for His glory.

Q.Should all our Assistants keep journals ?
A.By all means, as well for our satisfaction as for the profit of their own souls. [2]

Q.Shall we now fix where each labourer shall be (if God permits) till we meet again ?
A.Yes: (Which was accordingly done).

The Office and Rules for Stewards were then confirmed, followed by the duties of Band-Leaders and Sick visitors. After this:

Q.Can we have a seminary for labourers ? [3]
A.If God spare us until another Conference.

Following this non-committal answer, a list of books for the information of the 'Assistants' is appended.[4]

(e) Conference, 1745 : Church Government defined

The second Conference took place at Bristol on Thursday 1st. of August. Present were John and Charles Wesley and another clergyman, John Hodges. With them were eight 'Assistants' : Thomas Richards, Samuel Larwood, Thomas Meyrick, James Wheatley, Richard Moss, John Slocombe,

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1. Corrected in Wesley's handwriting.
2. The Journals and Diaries of these men have been of inestimable value to Methodist historians.
3. Actually, the Orphan House at Newcastle was, for a while, used as a centre in which young Methodist preachers could be instructed in the 'efficient discharge oftheir ministerial duties.'
4. Wesley offered books to the value of £5 to each preacher so that their could be no excuse that a man had no books. If he had no taste for reading he had to 'contract one' or return to his trade. Reading the Bible alone was not sufficient. See Works. Vol. 6. p.354.

Herbert Jenkins, Marmaduke Gwyne (Gwynne).

The disciplinary session commenced on the Saturday. The first considerations were theological: [1]

Q.Can he be a spiritual governor of the church, who is not a believer, not a member of it ?
A.It seems not : though he may be a governor in outward things, by a power derived from the king.
Q.What are properly the laws of the Church of England ?
A.The Rubrics : and to those we submit, as the ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake.
Q.But is not the will of our governors a law ?
A.No. Not of any governor, temporal or spiritual. Therefore if any Bishop wills that I should not preach the Gospel, his will is no law to me.
Q.But what if he produce a law against your preaching ?
A.I am to obey God rather than man.

Q.Is Episcopal, Presbyterian, ir, Independent church-government most agreeable to reason ?
A.The plain origin of church-government seems to be this. Christ sends forth a preacher of the Gospel. Some who hear him repent and believe the Gospel. They then desire him to watch over them, to build them up in the faith, and to guide their souls in the paths of righteousness. Here then is an independent congregation, subject to no pastor but their own, neither liable to be controlled in things spiritual by any other man or body of men whatsoever.

But soon after some from other parts, who are occasionally present while he speaks in the name of Him that sent him, beseech him to come over and help them also. Knowing it to be the will of God he consents (complies), yet not till he has conferred with the wisest and holiest of his congregation, and with their advice appointed one who has gifts and grace to watch over the flock till his return.

If it please God to raise another flock in the place, before he leaves them he does the same thing, appointing one whom God has fitted for the work to watch over these souls also. In like manner, in every place where it pleases God to gather a little flock by his word, he appoints one in his absence to take the oversight of the rest, and to assist them of the ability which God giveth. These are Deacons, or servants of the church, and look on their first pastor as their common father. And all these congregations regard him in the same light, and esteem him still as the shepherd of their souls.

1. Bennett Minutes, pp.24 ff.

These congregations are not strictly independent. They depend on one pastor, though not on each other.

As these congregations increase, and as the Deacons grow in years and grace, they need other subordinate Deacons or helpers; in respect of whom they may be called Presbyters, or Elders, as their father in the Lord may be called the Bishop or Overseer of them all.

Q. Is mutual consent absolutely necessary between the pastor and his flock ?
A. No question : I cannot guide any soul, unless he consent to be guided by me. Neither can any soul force me to guide him, if I consent not.
Q. Does the ceasing of this consent on either side dissolve the relation ?
A. It must in the nature of things. If a man no longer consent to be guided by me, I am no longer his guide , I am free. If one will not guide me any longer, I am free to seek one who will.

Q. But is a shepherd free to leave his sheep ? Or the sheep to leave their shepherd ?
A. Yes; if one or the other are convinced it is for the glory of God and the superior good of their souls.
Q. How shall we treat those who leave us ,
A. Beward of all sharpness or bitterness, or resentment. 2. Talk with them once or twice at least. 3. If they persist in their design, consider them as dead, and name them not unless in prayer.

Later, in the same session,[1] the question of the Lay-Assistants was considered in the light of the 1744 decisions[2]. There appear to have been fourteen such assistants[3] at this stage and a difference had been made between 'special' and 'ordinary' assistants, the former having charge of the newly formed circuits.

It was decided that one rule only should be added to the existing 'Twelve Rules of a Helper', viz: "You have

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1. Bennett's Minutes, p.27.
2. By the 1744 Conference, there were 35 itinerants and 3 local helpers or 'assistants'.
3. See pages 72 and 73 of this work.

nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those who want you, but to those who want you most. " [1]

Q. "Who are our present Assistants ?
A. (Fourteen were named): Jonathan Reeves, James Wheatley, Jno. Nelson, Jno. Bennet, Jno. Trimbath (Trembath), Francis Walker, Thos. Maxfield, Thos. Richards, Jno. Downes, Thos. Westal (Westell), James Jones, Samuel Larwood, Hen. Millard, Thos. Meyrick.

Q. What general method of spending their time may our Assistants have ?
A. They may spend the mornings (from 6 to 12) in reading, writing, and prayer; from 12 to 5, visit the sick and well; and from 5 to 6, use private prayer.

Again the question " Can we have a Seminary for labourers?" came up, but again it met with the non-committal answer: "Not until God gives us a proper tutor."

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1. Henry Moore : 'Life of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.', Vol. II, pp.55-6, has the addition: "Observe, it is not your business to preach so many times, or to take care of this or that society; but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance; and with all your power, to build them up in that holiness, without which they cannot see the Lord."
He has also the following footnote: "This is a special duty and high privilege, of an Itinerant Preacher among Methodists. He does not receive support from the Societies because he can preach better than those who are supported by their own labour, but because he is called out from all worldly avocations. Can such a man ever turn to them again, with a pure conscience, excepting only by the visitation of God, rendering it impossible for him to continue in his high calling ?"
Apparently by this time, 'local preaching' was also firmly established as a custom in Methodism.

(f)
The Moravian Influence Negligible.

It is necessary, before closing this period, to ascertain what was the precise, if any, influence exerted over Wesley by the Moravians. That they exercised an incalculable influence over John Wesley spiritually, there is no doubt whatsoever. Whether or not they had any influence over him, ecclesiastically, is another matter.

The Moravian Church, or Unitas Fratrum as it was known, belongs to the historic Churches of Christendom, holding throught its existence, to the historic episcopate, the three orders of the ministry preaching the word and administering the sacraments according to apostolic custom. It began in 1457, being founded by followers of John Hus the Reformer. They formed themselves into a community which was run on New Testament lines, being ruled by elected elders. At the Synod of Lhota in 1467, they elected their own ministers, obtaining ordination from the Waldenses whose bishop, Stephen, consecrated Michael Bradacius the first bishop of the 'Unitas'. The succession, it is to be noted, came from the Eastern Church, not the Western, possibly being transmitted through such sects as the Euchites, Paulicians and the Cathari. There does not seem to have been any objection to the validity of these orders by any

party at any time. Whilst their orders were Espiscopal, their Church government was Presbyterian, the Synod being the supreme court. The church grew and later consisted of three divisions, viz. The Bohemians, Moravians and Polish. Owing to bitter persecution breaking out, the Church almost became extinct. The sole surviving bishop, John Amos Comenius, fled from Bohemia, visiting Poland, Holland and England. It is to be remembered that financial help was afforded the refugees by the Church of England during this period.

The Episcopal Succession was preserved by Comenius having his son-in-law Peter Jablonsky consecrated bishop by Bishop Bythner at Milenezyn in Poland.

In 1722, the community was revived under Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf at Herrnhut in Saxony. The first bishop of the restored community was David Nitschman who received his consecration from Bishop Daniel Ernst Jablonsky whose father had consecrated as outlined above.

The bishops of the Moravian Church have no administrative powers by virtue of their appointment. There episcopal functions are purely of a spiritual nature. Only bishops can ordain, though confirmation may be administered by presbyters.

The relationships between the Moravians and the Anglican Church are of great interest. Zinzendorf, being pressed to receive the office of bishop by his brethren declined to

to do so until he could be persuaded that Moravian orders were valid. In order to do this he came to England in January 1737, to enquire about this from Anglican leaders. Both Doctor Potter, Archbishop of Canterbury and Doctor Secker, Bishop of Oxford assured him that Moravian orders were valid because they were in the regular order of "succession". Charles Wesley[1] was actively associated with Zinzendorf's interview with Potter. Because of the latter's decision in favour of Moravian validity, Charles felt he could speak intimately with Zinzendorf about his own spiritual condition.

Returning to Germany, Zinzendorf received episcopal consecration, and was recipient of congratulations from the Archbishop of Canterbury:[2]

> "....Most sincerely and cordially, I congratulate you upon your having been lately raised to the sacred and justly-celebrated episcopal chair of the Moravian Church (by whatever clouds it may be now obscured), by the grace of divine Providence, with the applause of the heavenly host: for the opinion we have conceived of you does not suffer us to doubt it. It is the subject of my ardent prayer, that this honour, so conferred, and which your merit so justly entitles you, may prove no less beneficial to the Church, than at all times acceptable to yourself and yours. For insufficient as I am, I should be entirely unworthy of that high station in which Divine Providence has placed me, were I not myself always ready to use every exertion in my power for the assistance of the universal Church of God: but to love and embrace even preferably to others, your Church, united with us in the closest bond of love; having hitherto, as we have been informed, invariably maintained both the pure and primitive faith, and the discipline of the first church; being neither intimidated by dangers, nor seduced by the manifold temptations of Satan. I request, in return, the support of your prayers;

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1. Jackson's Life of Charles Wesley Vol I pp. 114 - 116.
2. op.cit. pp. 116 - 117.

> and that you will salute in my name your brother Bishops, as well as the whole Christian flock over which God has made you an overseer. Farewell. Given at Westminster, the 10th day of July, 1737."

The first episcopal act of Zinzendorf's was the ordination of Peter Boehler who was sent out as a Missionary to Georgia. The first stage of his journey brought him to England where he met Charles Wesley from whom he began to learn the English language. As we have already seen, John Wesley's first encounter with the Moravians was during his voyage to Georgia. "They are",[1] says Benjamin Ingham, Wesley's co-traveller, "more like the Primitive Christians than any other Church now in the world; for they retain both the faith, practice and discipline delivered by the Apostles. They have regularly ordained bishops, priests, and deacons. Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist are duly administered. Discipline is strictly exercised without respect of persons. They all submit themselves to their pastors, being guided by them in everything."

Whilst at Savannah, Wesley had a conversation[2] with Spangenberg on Apostolic Succession, with the disappointing results for the former. Spangenberg, whilst he agreed with Episcopal church government, denied that the succession of the Roman bishops had ever been proved.

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1. Overton: John Wesley p. 49.
2. Journal Vol I. p. 169. 27th February 1736.

The next day, 28th February 1736, Wesley witnessed an event full of interest to him and to which he had looked forward for some time - the 'ordination' of a Moravian Bishop.[1] He says of this ceremony:

> ".....The great simplicity as well as solemnity, of the whole, almost made me forget the seventeen hundred years between, and imagine myself in one of those assemblies where form and state were not, but Paul the tent-maker or Peter the fisherman presided, yet with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power"

There is no mention of any doubts about the validity of such a consecration. Wesley's knowledge of early Church practices would be unsurpassed and there was nothing here that conflicted with it. He would also know of Bishop Potter's remark that 'only those ignorant of church history could doubt the validity of Moravian orders and all objections to them were trivial.' [2] Trivial or not, Wesley must have watched this ceremony with some reservations because not long after he refused the sacrament to Martin Bolzius, one of the Moravian ministers.[3]

Back home in England, having experienced an evangelical conversion in which the influence of Peter Boehler had played no small part, Wesley visited Herrnhut, the Moravian settlement in Germany. Here he was impressed by much that he saw. But being impressed and allowing himself to be changed from all his beloved Church of England stood for, were two different matters.

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1. Journal Vol.1. p.170. Anton Seifart was the candidate. Why 'ordination' of a bishop instead of 'consecration' ?
2. Hasse : 'The Moravians' p.25.
3. See Journal for September 1740 (Vol. 2 pp.432/4)

A story recorded by Benham illustrates this :

> "On the 13th. June, John Wesley and Benjamim Ingham went to Germany, in company with Tölschig, and reached Matienborn on the 4th. July, where Ingham was admitted to partake of the Holy Communion. But when the congregation saw Wesley to be homo perturbatus, and that his head had gained an ascendancy over his heart, and being desirous not to interfere with his plan of effecting good as a clergyman of the English Church when he should become settled - for he always claimed to be a zealous English Churchman - they deemed it not prudent to admit him to that sacred service." [1]

Doubts have been cast on the authenticity of this anecdote, but the point is that Wesley's strict observance of church rule would make him hesitate to take the communion there, whether or not in was refused him. One thing is certain ; He had no intention whatsoever of becoming a Moravian.

At Herrnhut, Wesley noted[2] that the community was divided into officers and people. The chief of the officers was the "Eldest" of the whole church. There was also an 'eldest' of every branch of it. Another eldest presided over the young men and another over the boys. Female 'eldests' looked after the spiritual interests of the women in general, special ones being appointed over the unmarried women and others over the girls. The second class of officer was the teacher, being four in number. 'Pastor' seems to be another title for the 'teacher'. They baptized the children and brought them up in the 'nurture and admonition of the Lord' and received them into the Church. They conducted the

1. Memoirs of James Hutton p. 40.
2. See Journal Vol 2 pp. 49 - 53.

marriages and administered the communion and performed the last rites for the dead. There were Deacons or Helpers whose work it was to instruct members in religious conduct. Certain other deacons were appointed to care for the poor, the orphans and the sick, two in number having the especial care of public stock and entrusted with the community's accounts. There were eleven Overseers or Censors. As their designation suggests, they reported to the Deacons "what they observe", meaning, no doubt, breaches of conduct. Monitors[1] there were, whose appointment was secretly made, being eleven in number. There work was to admonish in the love of Christ, even the rulers of the Church. In addition to these officers, there existed eleven 'Almoners', seven 'Attenders on the Sick' and then the 'Servants' or lowest class of Deacon.

The people were divided into five classes, viz. little children, middle children, big children, young men and married, for the males, the females being similarly divided. Secondly they were divided into eleven classes according to the houses where they live. In each class there was an Helper, Overseer, a Monitor, an Almoner and a Servant. Thirdly they were divided into ninety bands, meeting at least twice a week for prayer and mutual confession of faults.

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1. See Letters Vol I p. 270 -1:To James Hutton, in which Wesley mentions 'Monitors' as being in his bands stating that every member is a 'monitor.'

The Rulers of the Church, i.e. the Elders, Teachers and Helpers had a weekly conference to consider the state of souls. A daily one was held for things relating to the Church. The Overseers, Monitors, Almoners, Attenders on the sick, Servants, Schoolmasters, young men and children had a conference once a week respecting duties. A weekly conference was also held for 'strangers' for questions and discussion of problems.

The method dividing the people into 'bands' seems to be Wesley's sole adoption from the Moravian tradition. No other Methodist institution can be traced to these practices.

Wesley duly separated from the Moravians on account of differences which do not concern this study. The breach was not Wesley's desire, but controversies had arisen around the doctrines of Christian Perfection and the mistaken notions of 'Stillness' in which one of the Moravians, Molther had advocated that a man should not take advantage of any of the public ordinances <u>until</u> he had experienced conversion.

In his letter to the Moravians at Herrnhut[1] Wesley gives a clear indication of his real estimate of their church order:

> ".....Your Church discipline is novel and unprimitive throughout. Your Bishops are such as mere shadows, and are only so termed to please those who lay stress upon the Threefold Order. The Eldest is (in fact) your

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1. Letters Vol I. pp. 249 - 50. 8th August 1740.

> Bishop, as far as you have any; but he is only half an ancient Bishop. The ancient Presbyter you have split into Sympresbyters, Lehrers, Aufsehers, and Ermahners; the ancient Deacon into Hilfers, Krankenwarters, Dieners, and so on.
>
> The ordination (or whatever it is termed) of your Eldest plainly shows you look upon Episcopal ordination as nothing; although it is true you make use of it at other times, 'that you may become all things to all men.' But the Constitution of your Church is indeed congregational, only herein differing from others, - (1) that you hold neither this nor any other form of Church government to be of divine right: (2) that the Count has, in fact, the whole power which was ever lodged, either in the Bishops and priests of the ancient Church, in the King and Convocation in England, the General Assembly in Scotland, or the Pope in Italy; nay, there is scarce an instance in history of such a stretch of episcopal or royal or papal power, as his causing the Lot to be cast over again in the election of the Eldest at Herrnhut....."

The same spirit is evidenced in a letter to his brother Charles in the following April in which he affirms ".....

> Our clergymen have miscarried full as much as the laymen I know not. As yet I dare in no wise join with the Moravians ..... because their general scheme is Mystical, not scriptural, - refined in every point above what is written, immeasurably beyond the plain doctrines of the gospel ....." [1]

However he softens his tone in a further letter, to the point of contradicting his previous epistle[2] of August 1740:

> ".....I love and esteem you for your excellent discipline, scarce inferior to that of the apostolic age; for your due subordination of officers, every one knowing and keeping his proper rank; for your exact division of the people under your charge, so that each may be fed with food convenient for them;

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1. 21st. April, 1741. Letters. Vol.1. p.353.
2. 8th. August, 1740. Letters, Vol.1. pp.349/50.

> for your care that all who are employed in the service of the Church should frequently and freely confer together; and, in consequence thereof, your exact and seasonable knowledge of every member, and your ready distribution either of spiritual or temporal relief, as every man hath need." [1]

The fact remains that Wesley and the Moravians separated in 1741 and any attempts towards union between the two proved abortive. The spiritual influence of the Brethren over Wesley and his brother is inestimable. The ecclesiastical influence is much easier to define ; it can be described as negligible.

(g) Belief in the Nature of the Ministry unaltered

Two letters of John Wesley during this period have been reserved for this paragraph to illustrate this heading. The first was written at the beginning of the period - on 27th. November, 1738. It is addressed to James Hutton: [2]

> "I believe bishops, priests, and deacons to be of divine appointment, though I think our brethren in Germany do not. Therefore I am tender of the first approach towards 'pastors appointed by the congregation.' And if we should begin with appointing fixed persons to execute pro officio one part of the pastoral office, I doubt it would not end there....I believe you don't think I am (whatever I was) bigoted either to the Ancient Church or the Church of England. But have a care of bending the bow too much the other way. The National Church, to which we belong, may doubtless claim some, though not at implicit obedience from us. And the Primitive Church may, thus far at least, be reverenced as faithfully delivering down

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1. Letters, Vol.1.p.22. 24th. June, 1744.
2. Letters, Vol.1.p.274.

for two or three hundred years the discipline which they received from the Apostles, and the (Apostles) from Christ."

At the other end of the period, 1738-45, was written the other letter, this time addressed to Wesley's brother-in-law, Westley Hall,[1] dated 30th.December, 1745:

"You think first, that we undertake to defend some things which are not defensible by the Word of God. You instance in three; on each of which we will explain ourselves as clearly as we can.
(1) ' That the validity of our ministry depends on a succession to be from the Apostles, and a commission derived from the Pope of Rome and his successors or dependants.'

We believe it would not be right for us to administer either baptism or the Lord's Supper unless we had a commission so to do from those bishops whom we apprehend to be in a succession from the Apostles. And yet we allow these bishops are the successors of those who were dependent on the Bishop of Rome.

But we would be glad to know on what reasons you believe this to be inconsistent with the Word of God.
(2) 'That there is an outward priesthood, and consequently an outward sacrifice, ordained and offered by the Bishop of Rome, and his successors or dependants, in the Church of England, as vicars and viceregents of Christ.'

We believe there is, and always was, in every Christian Church (whether dependent on the Bishop of Rome or not), an outward priesthood, ordained by Jesus Christ, and an outward sacrifice offered therein, by men authorized to act as ambassadors of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

On what grounds do you believe that Christ has abolished that priesthood or sacrifice ?
(3) 'That this Papal hierarchy and prelacy, which still continues in the Church of England, is of apostolical institution, and authorized thereby, though not by the written Word'

We believe that the threefold order of ministers (which you seem to mean by Papal hierarchy and prelacy) is not only authorized by its apostolical institution, but also by the written Word.

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1. The Wesley's regarded their brother-in-law as being 'as unstable as water'.

> Yet we are willing to hear and weigh whatever reasons induce you to believe the contrary."

He then refers to the Church of England :

> "We profess (1) that we will obey all the laws of that Church (such we allow the Rubrics to be, but not the customs of the Ecclesiastical Courts) so far as we can with a safe conscience : (2) that we will obey, with the same restriction, the bishops as executors of those laws; but their bare will, distinct from those laws, we do not profess to obey at all." [1]

"This, says the Editor of the Standard 'Journal', "is probably the last formal statement of Wesley's original position with reference to Apostolical Succession." [2]

Wesley's belief in the nature of the Christian ministry is seen to be exactly the same at the end of the year 1745 as it was prior to 1738. He still held to the Anglican principle of a three-fold ministry and the necessity for Episcopal ordination for valid sacraments, the true Episcopacy involving a succession from the Apostles through the Roman bishops.[3]

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1. Letters. Vol.2. pp.54/7. Tyerman has the following comment on this letter : "His doctrine of apostolical succession was a figment. His language concerning Church of England priests still offering an outward sacrifice savoured of the popish doctrine which all true Protestants reject....His belief in the 'threefold order of ministers' was changed a few weeks afterwards."
2. Journal, Vol.4.p.229.
3. Cf. 'A Prayer for the Bishops' (Poetical Works, Vol.2. pp.341 - 2):

> " The worthy Successors of those
> Who first adorned the Sacred Line,
> Bold let them stand before their foes,
> And dare assert their Right Divine."

Furthermore, he continues to believe , for example, in the teaching of Article Twenty-Six, that the sacraments administered by an unworthy minister are valid, provided he is in regular orders. [1]

Although there is at this stage, ample evidence of Wesley's loyalty of belief as an Anglican clergyman, there may well be cause for doubt about his loyalty in practice. Loyalty to bishops, he now feels, is more a matter of conscience than slavish obedience. If the bishops command him to do what is prescribed in Scripture, he will obey, but not otherwise. Preaching outside one's own parish, or, in his case, preaching anywhere, for he had no parish, is also a matter of conscience. Whether or not he has a Bishop's licence does not seem to matter and he proceeds in spite of episcopal disapproval. He thereby breaks one of the fundamental laws of the Church of England. Moreover, he employs lay-preachers, a practice for which he finds a precedent in a little used institution in the early church and a lapsed office in the Anglican system. Regardless of any precedent, his lay-helpers are still to be considered irregular for they are not lieensed by a bishop.

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1. He affirms this in a sermon delivered on January 30th. 1743, based on Matt.5.vs.15-20. He says: ",,considering the validity of the ordinance doeth not depend on the goodness of him that administers, but on the faithfulness of Him that ordained it....The bread which they break, we have experimentally known to be 'the communion of the body of Christ'; and the cup which God blessed, even by their unhallowed lips, was to us the communion of the blood of Christ." Sugden: Sermons of John Wesley. Vol. II.p.19.(Sermon XXVII). See also Works. Vol.8.p.111. (Sermon XXXIV).

These are two practices which are obviously inconsistent with his affirmation of loyalty to the Establishment. Again and again he insists that he has no intention of separating from the Church of England and Methodism was intended to be an organization within it. The necessary machinery was provided for close working with local incumbents. But it was a hope cherished in vain. Although he does not seem to have realised it at this point, he had provided, in these two irregular methods, the very grounds for an ultimate separation from the Church of his birth.

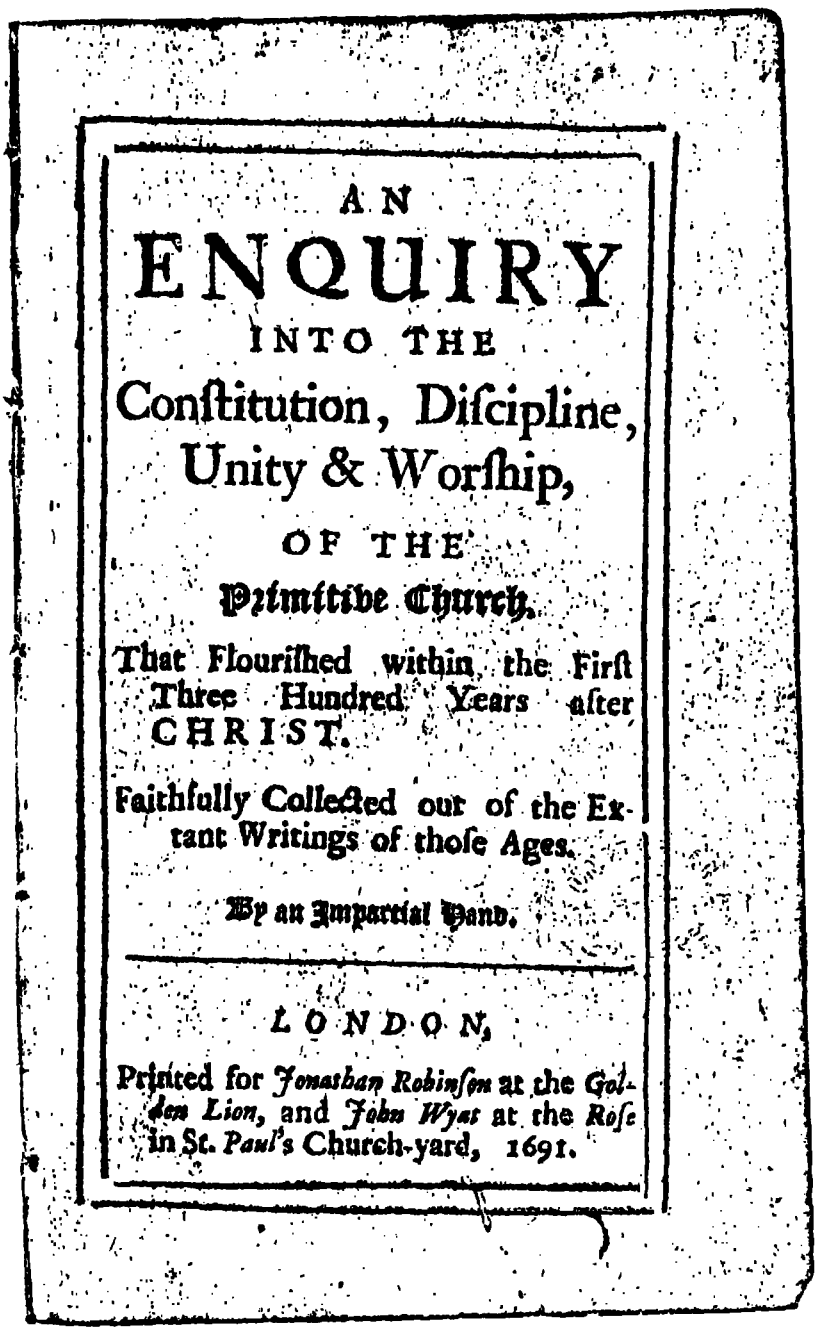
B O O K T H R E E

THE

INFLUENCE

OF

TWO BOOKS



AN

ENQUIRY

INTO THE

Conſtitution, Diſcipline, Unity & Worſhip,

OF THE

Primitive Church.

That Flouriſhed within the Firſt Three Hundred Years after CHRIST.

Faithfully Collected out of the Extant Writings of thoſe Ages.

By an Impartial Hand.

LONDON,

Printed for *Jonathan Robinſon* at the *Golden Lion*, and *John Wyat* at the *Roſe* in St. *Paul's* Church-yard, 1691.

Frontispiece of the first edition of Lord King's 'Primitive Church'

CHAPTER ONE

" KING'S PRIMITIVE CHURCH "

(a) Introduction

Tyerman's comment on Wesley's letter to Westley Hall dated 30th. December, 1745 is correct:

> "His belief in the threefold order of ministers was changed a few week's afterwards..." [1]

The Journal for Monday, 20th. of January, 1746 reads as follows:

> "I set out for Bristol. On the road I read over Lord King's 'Account of the Primitive Church'. In spite of the vehement prejudice of my education, I was ready to believe that this was a fair and impartial draught; but, if so, it would follow that bishops and presbyters are (essentially) of one order, and that originally every Christian congregation was a church independent of all others ! " [2]

This was an influence which was to remain. In 1784, in a letter to 'Our Brethren in America' he declares:

> "Lord King's Account of the Primitive Church convinced me many years ago that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain." [3]

A careful and impartial study of the relevant parts of this work must now be made in an attempt to do four things, viz:

(1) Examine the career of the author and the teaching of this work.
(2) To find if and where Wesley may have differed from him
(3) To enquire if King altered his views later in life, and, if so, what effect this had on Wesley.
(4) To reply to criticisms of Wesley's use of this work.

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1. See p.97 of this study.
2. Journal Vol. 3.p.232. 3. Letters. Vol.7.p.238.

(b) Biographical Note

Peter King, the author of this work, was born in Exeter in 1669. His father, Jerome King was a grocer and drysalter and it was his intention that his son should follow him in his business. His son, however had a strong desire for learning. A nephew of the celebrated John Locke, he had been educated at the Nonconformist Academy of Joseph Hallett (1656-1722) and brought up in the Presbyterian tradition. Encouraged by his illustrious uncle, his father sent him to Leyden to continue his education. King's particular interest at that time was in the early history of the Christian Church. In 1691 he published, at the early age of 22, the first part of the work 'An Enquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, Unity and Worship of the Primitive Church, which flourished within the first three hundred years after Christ, faithfully collected out of the extant writings of those ages, By an Impartial,hand.' [1] With true modesty, he requested in the preface to the second part, which he published in 1713, that any errors or wrong conclusions to be found in it, should be pointed out to him. The request was complied with by Mr. Edmund Elys in 1692 and by Mr. W. Sclater, a non-juring divine in 1717.

In 1694 he was called to the Bar, having spent three years as a student at the Inner Temple. He afterwards pursued such a successful legal career, that he was knighted in 1708 and raised to the peerage in 1725. He became chief justice of common pleas in 1714, a Privy Councillor in 1715 and finally Lord-Chancellor in 1725, a post which he held until 1733, a year before his death. His other theological work was his "History of the Apostles Creed" which he published in 1702, it being the first attempt to trace the evolution of the Creed.

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1. The first Edition of Part I (1619) and the first Edition of Part II (1713) have been used here.

(c) The Church and its Ministry.

King's view of the Church is that its constituent parts are twofold, viz the clergy and the laity. His thesis deals with the acts of the clergy as differing from those of the laity and then the joint acts of both. The peculiar acts of the clergy, he asserts, should be discussed according to their several orders. Beginning with the order of bishops, he points out that they were first appointed by the Apostles from the converts in the newly evangelized area, apportioning one bishop to one church. Referring to the succession of the bishops from the Apostles, he writes:

> ".....it may not be impertinent to remark this by the way, that the διαδοχαί of succession of bishops, from those bishops who were ordained by the apostles, the orthodox were wont to prove the succession of their faith, and the novelty of that of the heretics."[1]

Proceding to the second chapter, King goes on to say that each had one church only and his cure was always referred to as a 'parish' and not as a diocese, being no larger than the parishes of his (King's) own day. Being careful to obtain patristic proof of his statements, King cites Justin Martyr and Ignatius in his assertion that the bishop must have possessed only one church because "All the people of a diocese did every Sunday meet

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1. Ibid. p. 12.

alltogether in one place to celebrate divine service. Thus saith Justin Martyr, 'On Sunday all assemble together in one place, where the bishop preaches and prays,' for, as Ignatius writes, 'where the bishop is, there the people must be,' since, 'it is unlawful to do anything without him'". Furthermore, "the bishop had but one altar or communion-table in his whole diocese, at which his whole flock received the sacrament from him. 'There is but one altar', says Ignatius, 'as there is but one bishop'. Referring again to Justin Martyr, King mentions that if any should be absent from the Eucharist, he used to send it to them by the deacons. Therefore the diocese or parish could not be a very large one. Also, with regard to baptism, according to Tertullian, Cyprian and Fortunatus, it was the prerogative of the bishop only. So says King:

> "....the bishops did ordinarily baptize all the persons that were baptized in their dioceses; and if so, it is not probable, I may say, possible, that their dioceses were extended beyond the bulk of single congregations."[1]

Added to this is the fact that bishops were to be found, not only in the cities but in the country villages, provided there were enough believers to constitute a congregation.

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1. Ibid pp. 17 - 42.

Referring to the episcopal duties in the early Church, Peter King enumerates them as follows - Preaching the Word, praying with his people, administering the two sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, taking care of the poor, ordaining of ministers, governing his flock, excommunicating of offenders, absolving of penitents, and 'in a word', he concludes, "whatever acts can be comprised under those three general heads of preaching, worship, and government were part of the bishop's function and office".[1]

Speaking of the election of the Bishop, Lord King describes how, upon the death of the incumbent of the parish, both the clergy and the laity met together and chose a suitable successor. After making their choice, the candidate was next presented to neighbouring bishops for their approval, consequent upon which was his ordination or instalment, carried out in his own church by the same bishops. It appears that three was the minimum number but the more there were, the more did the ordination appear valid.[2]

(d) <u>The Order and Office of Presbyter and Bishop - Their Relationship</u>.

Turning next to the subject of presbyter, King feels "it will be both tedious and needless to endeavour to prove, that the ancients generally mention presbyters distinct from bishops. Everyone, I suppose, will readily

1. Ibid p. 43.
2. Ibid pp. 44 - 51.

own and acknowledge it. The great question which hath most deplorably sharpened and soured the minds of too many, is what the office and order of a presbyter was: about this the world hath been, and still, is, most uncharitably divided; some equalize a presbyter in everything with a bishop; others as much debase him, each according to their particular opinions, either advance or degrade him. In many controversies, a middle way hath been the safest; perhaps in this, the medium between the two extremes may be the truest; whether what I am now going to say, be the true state of the matter, neither my years, nor abilities, exempt me from mistakes and errors: But this I must needs say, that after the most diligent researches, and impartialest enquiries, the following notion seems to me most plausible, and most consentaneous to truth; and which, with a great facility and clearness, solves those doubts and objections, which, according to those other hypotheses, I know not how to answer. But yet however, I am not so wedded and bigotted to this opinion, but if any shall produce better, and more convincing arguments to the contrary, I will not contentiously defend, but readily relinquish it, since I search after truth, not to promote a particular party or interest."[1]

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1. Ibid pp. 51 - 53.

His definition of 'presbyter' is:

"... a person in holy orders, having thereby an inherent right to perform the whole office of a bishop; but being possessed of no place or parish, not actually discharging it, without the permission and consent of the bishop of a place or parish. But lest this definition should seem obscure I shall illustrate it by this following instance; as a curate hath the same mission and power with a minister, whose place he supplies; yet being not the minister of that place, he cannot perform there any acts of his ministerial function, without leave from the minister thereof; so a presbyter had the same order and power with a bishop, whom he assisted in his cure; yet being not the bishop or minister of that cure, he could not there perform any parts of his pastoral office, without the permission of the bishop thereof; so what we generally render bishops, priests, and deacons, would be more intelligible in our tongue, if we did express it by rectors, vicars, and deacons; by rectors, understanding the bishops; and by vicars, the presbyters; the former being the actual incumbents of a place, and the latter curates or assistants, and so different in degree, but yet equal in order."[1]

Lord King confirms his understanding of the term 'presbyter' by the following two facts:

I. "That the presbyters were the bishops, curates and assistants, and so inferior to them in the actual exercise of their ecclesiastical commission.

II. That yet, notwithstanding, they had the same inherent right with the bishops, and so were not of a distinct specific order from them.

Or more briefly thus:

1. That the presbyters were different from the bishops in <u>gradu</u>, or in degree; but yet,

2. They were equal to them <u>in ordine</u>, or in order."

Recalling the warning of Ignatius[2] -

"Let nothing be done of ecclesiastical concerns, without the bishop for whoseever doth any thing without the knowledge of the bishop, is a worshipper of the devil."

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1. Ibid pp. 53 - 54.
2. " p. 55. King traces back to Ignatius, the first occasion of the use of the distinct terms 'presbyter' and 'Bishop'.

King says that presbyters, with the permission of the bishop, may baptize, administer the Lord's Supper and preach. Furthermore, presbyters had equal power in the government of the churches wherein they lived, but exercised it only insomuch that they were invited to do so by their superior, the bishop. They presided with him in the church consistories and composed the executive part of the Ecclesiastical Court.

In addition to these permissible duties, the presbyters of the early Church were able to excommunicate persons and also restore returned penitents to the church's peace.

> "Where Churches had been regularly formed under the jurisdiction of their proper bishops, it had been unaccountable impudence and a most detestable act of schism, for any one, though never so legally ordained, to have entered those parishes and then to have performed Ecclesiastical Administrations, without the permission of, or which is all one, in defiance to the Bishops, or Ministers thereof." [1]

King maintains that:

> "Not only the bishop, but also his presbyters or curates did by his permission, and, in his absence, confirm; for if confirmation always succeeded baptism, then whenever baptism was, there was also confirmation."

In the case of the absence of the bishop, King writes, and as baptism and confirmation are regarded as being necessary to salvation, it would seem a little hard to deprive those souls of salvation because episcopal confirmation was impossible.

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1. Ibid.p.57.

> "That Presbyters did confirm", he continues, will appear most evidently from this very consideration, viz. that the imposition of hands on persons just after baptism, which we call confirmation, and the imposition of hands at the restitution of offenders, which we call absolution, was one and the self same thing, confirmation and absolution being only terms that we make use of to distinguish the different times of the performance of the same ceremony." [1]

In fact, he says, when the Fathers declare that the Presbyters performed the whole office of the Bishop, it naturally ensues that they ordained, confirmed, baptized etc, [2] "whatever a bishop did, the same did a Presbyter."

(e) Presbyteral Ordination

Did Presbyters ordain ? King sets forth his own findings on this vexed question in Chapter Four of his work.[3] It may well be that one could trace back to Wesley's reading of this portion, the radical change in his views which led to a wider breach with the Anglican Church, and, ultimately the separation of Methodism from its communion.

> "As for ordination" he states," I find but little said of this in antiquity; yet, as little as there is, there are clearer proofs of the presbyters' ordaining than there are of their administering the Lord's Supper: ' All power and grace', saith Firmilian, ' is constituted in the church, where seniors preside, who have the power of baptizing, confirming, and ordaining; ' or as it may be rendered, and perhaps more agreeable to the sense of the place: ' who had the power as of baptizing, so also on confirming and ordaining.' What

1. Second Part, Chapter 5. (p.91).
2. p.64. ibid.
3. Section. 3(9).

these seniors were will be best understood bya parallel place in Tertullian; for that place in Tertullian, and this in Firmilian, are usually cited to expound one another by most learned men, as by the most learned Dr. Cave [1] and others. Now the passage in Tertullian is this: in the ecclesiastical courts 'approved elders preside'; [2] now by these approved elders, bishops, and presbyters, must necessarily be understood, because Tertullian speaks here of the discipline exerted in one particular church or parish, in which there was but one bishop; and if only he presided, then there could not have been elders in the plural number; but there being many elders to make out their number, we must add the presbyters to the bishop, who also presided with him....Now the same that presided in church-consistories, the same also ordained; presbyters, as well as bishops ordained. And as in those churches where there were presbyters, both they and the bishop presided together, so also they ordained together, both laying on their hands in ordination, as St. Timothy [3] was ordained by the laying on of hands of the Presbytery; that is, by the hands of the bishop and presbyters of that parish where he was ordained, as is the constant signification of the word presbytery in all the writings of the ancients." [4]

Qualifying this, King admits that whilst he feels he has proved that a presbyter could perform any office normally carried out by a bishop, he admits that it could not be proved particularly that a presbyter did actually discharge <u>every one</u> of them. He could only do so with the Bishop's permission.

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1. 'Primitive Christianity', part.3. Ch.5.p.379.
2. Apol.C.39.p.709.
3. I. Tim.iv. verse.14.
4. 'Primitive Church' pp.60/2.

(f) The Order and Office of Deacon.[1]

King defines the order and office of 'deacon' in Chapter Five of the 'primitive Church', stating that little needs to be said about it as no great controversy has arisen about the matter. In Acts. vi.2. they were to serve tables and be in attendance at the Lord's Table. They also cared for the poor, dispensing to them the church's money:

> "As for their attendance at the Lord's Table, their office with respect to that consisted in preparing the bread and wine, in cleansing the sacramental cups, and other such like necessary things; whence they are called by Ignatius, deacons of meats and cups, [2] assisting also, in some places at least, the bishops or presbyters in the celebration of the Eucharist, delivering the elements to the communicants.[3] They also preached.....in the absence of the bishop and presbyters, they baptized.[4] In a word, according to the signification of their name, they were, as Ignatius calls them, the church's servants, [5] set apart on purpose to serve God, and attend on their business, being constituted, as Eusebius terms it, for the service of the public."[6]

(g) Ordination in the Early Church

King puts forward the following definition of primitive ordination:

> "That ordination I shall speak of, is this, the grant of a peculiar commission and power, which remains indelible in the person to whom it is committed, and can never be obliterated or erased out, except

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1. ibid.pp.79/80.
2. Ep. ad.Tralles.p.48.
3. Justin Martyr : Apol.p.9.7.
4. Tertullian : de Bapt.p.602.
5. Ep.ad.Tralles.
6. Lib.2.C.1.p.30.

> the person himself cause it by his heresy, apostacy, or most gross and scandalous impiety. Now this sort of ordination was conferred only upon deacons and presbyters, or on deacons and bishops, presbyters and bishops being here to be considered as all one, as ministers of the church universal." [1]

He says little about the ordination of deacons, except that, in accord with Acts.vi.6, they were ordained to their office, 'by prayer and fasting'. Of presbyters, however, he has much more to say. Those who desired to be admitted to this order, had to propose himself to the presbytery of the parish where he lived, not to the bishop only, who had no authority to confer these orders by himself. [2] All clerical ordinations were performed by the common counsel of the whole presbytery. This council examined the candidate's application and enquired as to whether or not he had those gifts and qualifications which were necessary, viz; his age, his condition in the world, his conversation, and his understanding. As for his age, he was required to be of a ripe and mature age. Regarding his condition in the world, he was not to be "entangled in any mundane affairs, but to be free from all secular employments, and at perfect liberty to apply himself wholly to the duties of his office and function." As for the conversation of the party to be ordained, he was to be "humble and meek; of an unspotted and exemplary life". [3]

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1. 'Primitive Church' p.83.
2. Cf. Cyprian. Epist.24.p.55.
3. Cyprian.Ep.66. par.1,2.p.195.

Furthermore, the understanding of the candidate meant that he was to be "of good capacity, fit and able duly to teach others."[1]

Most interesting is King's description of the practical tests for candidates for the presbytery:

> "Upon this examination of the candidates for the ministry, and their approbation by the presbytery, the next thing that followed was their being declared capable of their desired function, to which they were very seldom presently advanced, but first gave a specimen of their abilities in their discharge of other inferior ecclesiastical offices, and so proceded by degrees to the supreme function of all, as Cornelius, bishop of Rome, did not presently leap into his office, but passing through all the ecclesiastical employments, gradually ascended thereunto. And as Aurelius, a member of the Church of Carthage 'began first with the lower most office of a lector, though by his extraordinary merits, he deserved those that were more sublime and honourable.[2]

If the people had no objection to the candidate thus proposed, and approved their fitness for the office of presbyter, the next thing that followed was their ordination. Ordination was not for or to a local church, but to the whole universal ministry. Formal ordination was by imposition of hands, usually of the bishop and presbyters of the parish where the candidates were ordained. King says:-

> "For this there needs no other proof than the injunction of Saint Paul to Timothy, I Tim. 4 v. 14: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of hands by the presbytery." As for the imposition of hands, it was a ceremony that was variously used in the Old Testament, from whence it was translated into the New, and in the primitive church used on sundry occasions." [3]

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1. Primitive Church p. 88
2. Ibid p. 95.
3. Ibid pp. 96 - 97.

The remaining relevant subject dealt with in the work is schism.[1] This, he defines, as separation from the pastor or bishop, except in cases of grave scandal or heresy. Another form is the setting up of another altar, an act which is impious and sacreligious. Again King makes us of Cyprian to support his statements.

(h) Wesley and King's 'Enquiry'.

None can deny the abiding influence over Wesley of Lord King's work. Many of the implications of it are evidenced in Wesley's future acts and utterances. King was interested in the history and practices of the early church of which Wesley was a lover and no mean scholar. That fact, in itself would be sufficient for him to attach importance to this little book. One cannot, however, leave the subject there. A few other facts must be considered.

(1). There is no proof that Wesley was familiar with the whole of King's work, or if he were, that he agreed with all the principles propounded there. Overton[2] points out, seemingly with relish, that King condemned Wesley's own conduct in the strongest possible terms. He quotes from Chapter Four of the "Enquiry":

> "...When Churches had been regularly formed under the jurisdiction of their proper bishops, it had been unaccountable impudence and a most detestable act of schism, for any one, though never so legally ordained, to have entered those parishes, and then to have performed ecclesiastical administrations, without the permission, or which is all one, in defiance to the Bishops or Ministers thereof." He asks, if Wesley read these words,

1. Chapter 9 pp. 152 - 181.
2. 'John Wesley' p. 197.

did he remember his interview with Bishop Butler and his arguments with the many clergy whose parishes he invaded?
R. Denny Urlin[1] mentions the subject more gently. He thinks that King's definition of 'schism' was too strong for Wesley because unity is so strongly emphasised.
It may well be that either Wesley did not know of this section of King's work, or if he did, he was not in agreement with it, for he certainly acted contrary to it. The latter seems possible, for, in his sermon on 'schism' he defines it, not as a separation <u>from</u> a particular church, but <u>within</u> it.[2]

Another matter on which differed, consciously or otherwise, was that of King's assertion about Christians of the same city come to one altar in one congregation. Urlin[3] refers to Wesley's sermon on 'The Church' (Eph. 4 vs 1 - 6) in which he claims that, owing to the rapid spread of Christianity in the world, each city would have a number of distinct congregations.

(2). Did Wesley know that King wrote his book when only twenty-one years of age and later altered his views? Nowhere does he mention this fact. Urlin, Hockin and Overton make much out of this. The first refers to the work as a 'juvenile essay'[4] and the latter to the writer as 'a mere boy'.
King's work was obviously intended to promote comprehension among dissenters and is certainly impartial and critical. In 1717, he was attacked by the anonymous author of "The invalidity of the Dissenting or Presbyterian Ordination" and by William Sclater, a non-juring clergyman in his "Original Draught of the Primitive Church". Charles Daubenny in his "Eight Discourses etc." (1804) declares, but, without justification, that King was converted to Anglicanism by this work.[5] The Enquiry was reprinted in 1839 and 1843 with an abridgement

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1. 'A Churchman's Life of Wesley' p 306.
2. Sermon LXXX (Works Vol 9: pp 385 - 396).
3. Op. cit. p. 308. Wesley's Sermon LXXIX. (Works Vol 9 pp. 374 - 384.)
4. Op. cit. p 70.
5. Hockin: 'John Wesley and Modern Methodism' p 61, agrees whilst Urlin (Op. cit p. 304) is noncommittal.)

> of Sclater as an antidote, and was not superseded until the publication in 1861 of the Bampton lectures of Edward Hatch on 'The Organization of the Early Christian Churches'.

King was received into the Anglican Church and experienced a change of views with respect to the early church. Thus it surprised writers like Urlin, Hockin and Overton, that Wesley should have attached so much weight to a work by so young a scholar and which later he recanted. The reply to this argument is - whatever may have been King's later views, it does not follow that his first work was necessarily error and his second opinion truth. Age and bias of education are secondary considerations.

IRENICUM.

A

WEAPON-SALVE

FOR THE

Churches Wounds.

OR THE

DIVINE RIGHT

OF

Particular Forms of CHURCH-GOVERNMENT;

Discussed and examined according to the Principles of the Law of Nature, the positive Laws of God, the practice of the Apostles and the Primitive Church, and the judgement of Reformed Divines.

Whereby a foundation is laid for the Churches peace, and the accommodation of our present differences.

Humbly tendered to Consideration.

By *Edward Stillingfleete*, Rector of *Sutton* in *Bedfordshire*.

Let your Moderation be known unto all men; the Lord is at hand. *Phil.* 4. 5.

Si ad decidendas hodiernas controversias — jus divinum à positivo seu Ecclesiastico candidè separaretur; non videretur de iis quæ sunt absolutè necessaria, inter pios aut moderatos viros longa aut acris contentio futura. Isaac. Casaub. ep. ad Card. Perron.

Multum refert ad retinendam Ecclesiarum pacem inter ea quæ jure divino præcepta sunt, & quæ non sunt, accuratè distinguere. Grotius de Imper. sum. Potestat. circa sacra. cap. 11.

London, Printed by *R. W.* for *Henry Mortlock*, at the *Phœnix* in St. *Pauls* Church-yard near the little North door. 1661.

Frontispiece of the second edition of Stillingfleet's 'Irenicum'

CHAPTER TWO

STILLINGFLEET'S 'IRENICUM'

(a) Introduction

The second book which had a lasting influence on Wesley was 'The Irenicum' (or 'Irenicon') by Edward Stillingfleet, D.D. There is no trace anywhere of the date when Wesley read this book. The first mention of it is in a letter to James Clark, clergyman, written on the 3rd. of July, 1756:

> "As to my own judgement, I still believe 'the Episcopal form of Church government to be both scriptural and apostolical' : I mean, well agreeing with the practice and writings of the Apostles. But that it is prescribed in Scripture I do not believe. This opinion (which I once heartily espoused) I have been heartily ashamed of ever since I read Dr. Stillingfleet's Irenicon. I think he has unanswerably proved that neither Christ nor His Apostles prescribed any particular form of Church government, and that the plea for the divine right of Episcopacy was never heard of in the Primitive Church" [1]

A previous mention of Stillingfleet, without a direct reference to his work is made im an earlier letter to his brother Charles on the 16th. July, 1755.[2] Whether or not the 'Irenicum' is referred to, it is difficult to say. According to Telford's editing of the letter, Charles had expelled a man from the Society

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1. Letters. Vol.3.p. 182.
2. Letters, Vol.3.p. 135.

for not attending church and not for the moral offence of drunkenness. Telford seems to think that John in this letter is criticizing his brother's attitude to ordination. If this is so, no doubt the 'Irenicum' is the work referred to. He says :

> "You are by no means free from temptation. You are acting as if you had never seen either Stillinglfeet, Baxter or Howson....Whoever is convinced or not convinced, ordination and separation are not the same thing. If so, we have separated already. Herein I am the fifteenth..."

'Fifteenth', according to Telford, suggests that Wesley is referring to his Nonconformist ancestry on both paternal and maternal sides.

Other references to Stillingfleet's work are to be found in Wesley's letters of 10th. April, 1761 [1] to the Earl of Dartmouth and to his brother Charles dated 8th. of June, 1780. [2]

The first defends his employment of unordained preachers:

> "They subscribed it (The Twenty-Third Article is referred to) in the simplicity of their hearts, when they firmly believed none but Episcopal ordination valid. But Bishop Stillingfleet has since fully convinced them this was an entire mistake."

The second letter advises Charles to

> "Read Bishop Stillingfleet's Irenicon or any impartial history of the Ancient Church, and I believe you will think as I do."

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1. Letters. Vol.4.p.150.
2. Letters. Vol.7.p.70.

According to the letter to Charles of 16th. July 1755, Wesley assumes Charles has already done so.

The next few pages are devoted, therefore, to an examination of the career of Stillingfleet and a summary of the relevant portions of his book. Similar questions to those asked in connection with King's work, will need to be answered.

(b) Biographical Note : Title and Preface

Edward Stillingfleet was born at Cranborne, Dorset on 17th. April, 1635, being the seventh son of Samuel Stillingfleet of Stillingfleet, Yorkshire. Educated at Cranborne Grammar School (for Lynne exhibitions), he was admitted to St. John's College, Cambridge, having won a scholarship on the nomination of the Earl of Salisbury. He graduated B.A. in 1649, becoming a Fellow in 1653. He proceeded to M.A. in 1656 and was incorporated at Oxford, 1677. He was made a tutor in 1654 and was ordained by Ralph Brownrig, later deprived bishop of Exeter. His posts included the preacher at the Rolls chapel and reader at the Temple; prebendary of St. Paul's, London, 1667; canon of Canterbury, 1669; chaplain to Charles IInd; archdeacon of London, 1677; Dean of St. Pauls, 1678; prolocutor of lower house; bishop of Worcester, 1689-99. He was a member of the commission to revise the prayer-book and consider 'comprehension'. When Tenison became Primate, Stillingfleet acted as his adviser. At one point he engaged in controversy with Locke on the subject of the Trinity (1696-7) and was also

responsible for the reformation of the consistory court. His literary works include his 'Irenicum', 1659 (2nd. ed. 1662); 'Origines Sacrae' (1662) regarded as his most oustanding work; and in 1685, he published 'Origines Britannica' which deals with jurisdiction of bishops in capital cases.

The 'Irenicum' was written to prove that neither Christ nor the Apostles left any precise orders for any particular form of church government. In this work, the author suggests a compromise between the Church of England and the Presbyterians. He later dissented from his own work, but it took a prominent place among the writings of the 'latitude' men of the times. The argument is directed against Nonconformity which is regarded as indefensible. There are clear traces in this book of the influence of Hobbes. Bishop Burnet, writing of Stillingfleet and his 'Irenicum' says: [1]

> "He in his youth writ an Irenicum for healing our divisions, with so much learning and moderation, that it was esteemed a master-piece. His notion was, that the Apostles had settled the Church in a constitution of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, but had made no perpetual law about it, having only taken it in, as they did many other things, from the customs and practice of the synagogue; from which he inferred, that certainly the constitution was lawful since they had made no settled law about it. This took with many; but was cried out upon by others as an attempt against the Church. Yet the argument was managed with much learning and skill, that none of either side ever undertook to answer it."

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1. 'History of His Own Times'. Vol.I. pp.264/5.(1766 ed.)

He continues:

> "The writing of his 'Irenicum' was a great snare to him: For, to avoid the imputations which that brought upon him, he not only retracted the book, but he went into the humours of a high sort of people, beyond what became him, perhaps his own sense of things."

The detailed title of the 'Irenicum' outlines the purpose of the thesis:

> "A Weapon - Salve for the Churches Wounds, OR the Divine Right of Particular forms of Church Government: Discussed and examined according to the Principles of the Law of Nature, the positive Laws of God, the practice of the Apostles, and the Primitive Church, and the judgment of Reformed Divines. Whereby a foundation is laid for the Church's peace, and the accommodation of our present differences,
> Humbly Tendered to Consideration."

In his preface,[1] he states that he writes "not to increase the controversies of the times, nor to foment the differences that are among us; the one are by far too many, the other too great already. " and concludes:

> "My ambition of the public tranquility shall willingly carry mee through this hazard; let both beat me, so their quarrel may cease; I shall rejoyce in those blows and fears which I shall take for the Churches safety."

(c) <u>No one form of Church Government prescribed by Christ</u>

He begins Chapter One of the first part of his book by affirming that Christ never intended any one form of church government. "However," he says, "in matters of meer decency and order in the Church of God, or in any

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1. pp.A.2-A.5.

other civil action of the lives of men, it is enough to make things lawful, if they are not forbidden. " [1] Nothing binds unalterably but by virtue of a standing Law and that twofold, viz: The Law of Nature and the positive Laws of God.

With regard to the Law of Nature, Church government is founded upon this insomuch that there must be a society of men for the worship of God and this must be maintained and governed in the most convenient manner. It is necessary, therefore, to have a distinction of persons and a superiority of power and order in some over others. Otherwise every man will be sui juris and confusion will reign. [2] He distinguishes 'power' from 'application of power' which is called 'Title to government'. By 'Order' he implies 'right to govern' - the superiority of some as rules and the subordination of others as ruled. The application of power, he declares, is not binding from any law of nature, but is permissive, and therefore restrained. Governing power in the Church may thus be by selection or by succession. The honour of such power and position passes through the persons appointed, to God.

Another thing dictated by the Law ofNature is the 'solemnity of all things to be performed in this Society, which lies in the gravity of all Rites and Ceremonies, in the composed temper of minde'. God's worship, however is rational and is not opposed to reason.

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1. ibid. Part 1. Ch.3.p.7.
2. ibid. Part.1. Ch.4.p.85.

(d) Stillingfleet on 'Schism'

The Law of Nature also dictates that there should be a way to end controversies which arise, which tend to break the peace of the society, being either differences of practice or different opinions. The former, Stillingfleet terms 'schism' and the latter 'heresy'. Schism, if it comes from no just or necessary cause results in total separation from the society, and is defined by the writer as 'Ecclesiastical sedition'. Both, he maintains, are 'seldome seen out of each others company'. [1]

> "When they are together, they are like the blind and lame man in the Fable, the one lent the other eyes, and the other lent him feet: one to find out what they desired, the other to runaway with it when they had it. The Heretick he useth his eyes to spye out some cause or pretence of deserting communion; the Schismatic he helps him with his legs to run away from it; but between them both, they rob the Church of its Peace and Unity." [2]

Qualifying this, Stillingfleet agrees that the Church has no direct immediate power over men's opinions. As long as a man keeps his opinions to himself, no harm is done. "Heresie and Schism" he says, " as they are commonly used, are two Theological Scarecrows, with which, they who use to uphold a part in religion, use to fright away such, as making enquiry into it, are ready to relinquish and oppose it, if it appear either erroneous or suspicious." [3] Schism itself is not evil. It is the grounds of schism which may be either good or evil. He asserts that every Christian is under an obligation to

1. ibid.Ch.6.p.106.
2. ibid.Ch.6.p.106
3. ibid. p.108.

join in Church society with others, and is so long bound to maintain society with them until his communion with them becomes sin. Corruption in established churches is not really sufficient to justify schism. There is difference between corruption of doctrine and corruption of practice. Also a distinction is to be made between corruptions that have crept into a church and those which are definitely stated to be professes and avowed by the Church. In the latter case, such corruption would be binding upon each member and thus schism would be justified. [1]

Turning to the positive laws of God, Stillingfleet declares that the ground of Divine Right implies a certain knowledge of God's intention to bind men perpetually. Arguments drawn from tradition and the practice of the Church in later ages are proved invalid. To argue for the validity of any form of Church government from Apostolic practice, one must prove:

> "that such things were unquestionably the practice the practice of those ages and persons; that their practice was the same with the Apostles; that what they did was not from any prudential motives, but by virtue of a Law which did binde them to that practice." [2]

Furthermore, Apostolic practice in itself is not sufficiently binding on later ages unless it can be proved that it was God's intention so to bind the Church. Again,

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1. ibid. pp.113-117.
2. ibid. p.152.

if God's binding laws about the government of the Church are not absolutely made clear in the Scriptures, then they must become a matter of Christian liberty.

(e) Necessity for some form of Church Government : No fixed type in Scripture

Some form of church government is necessary and

> "That such Church government must be administered by officers of Divine appointment and that there must be a standing perpetual Ministry in the Church of God, whose care and imployment must be to oversee and govern the people of God and to administer Gospel ordinances among them, and this is of Divine and perpetual right". [1]

The question, says Stillingfleet, is not whether any type of government comes nearest to primitive practice, but whether any are absolutely determined by a jus divinum:

> "The forms of government in controversie, the Question being thus stated, are only these two; the particular officers of several Churches acting in an equality of Power, which are commonly called a Colledge of Presbyters; or a superiour order above the standing ministry, having the Power of jurisdiction and ordination belonging to it by vertue of a divine institution. Which order is by an Antonomasiae called Episcopacy." [2]

If Christ left a positive law authorizing either of these forms of government, all the churches are bound to observe it. Stillingfleet dismisses at once the assertion that the Christian church is bound by the Mosaic idea of the priesthood. Christ, he says, instituted no fixed laws for the church's government and only general rules are to be found in the Scriptures.

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1. ibid. pp.157/8.
2. ibid. p.170.

If standing laws for church government are equally applicable to several distinct forms, then no one form is prescribed in the Scriptures. He admits that from the Epistles,[1] both forms can be substantiated ; Apostolic Succession can find a basis.

Episcopacy then, is lawful, according to Scripture, but not necessary. It can be based upon the rules given in Scripture, but not proved thereby.

(f) Right of the Church to prescribe its own government : Power of Church Officers vested in the Church as a Whole

If the form of church-government is not laid down in Scripture, has not the church power to make officers which Christ never made ? Stillingfleet answers:

> "Those officers are only said to be new, which were never appointed by Christ, and are contrary to the first appointments of Christ for the regulating of His Church; such it is granted the Church hath no power to institute; but, if by new officers bee meant only such as have a charge over more than one particular congregation by the consent of the Pastors themselves, then it is evident such an office cannot bee said to be new;"

There was nothing extraordinary about the power of of the Apostles, nor did that power cease at their death. The extending of ministerial power,

> "is not the appointing of an New Office; because every Minister of the Gospel hath a relating in actu primo to the whole Church of God; the restraint and inlargement of which power is subject to positive determinations of prudence and conveniency in actu secundo; and therefore if the Church see it fit for some men to have this power enlarged for better government in some, and restrained in

1. e.g. I.Tim.5. vs. 13-14 could be a basis for the notion of 'Apostolic Succession'.

> others, that inlargement is the appointing no new office, but the making use of a power already joined for the benefit of the church of God." [1]

The power belonging to Church Officers is twofold, i.e. a power of order and a power of jurisdiction. The power of order implies the preaching of theGospel, the visitation of the sick and the administration of the sacraments. These are functions which are inseparably joined to the office of presbyter. However, there are other things which a presbyter may do, but the power of which, belongs to the church as a whole, and only the church may delegate that power. Such power is that of visiting churches, taking care that particular pastors discharge their duty, ordaining and church censuring and making rules for decency in the Church. This is the power of jurisdiction. Both these powers may be exercised by the presbyter but the power of jurisdiction may only be executed by those who are appointed by the Church. Episcopacy then, is thereby proved to be lawful and expedient, but still not proved essential.

In the second part of the 'Irenicum', chapter five, Stillingfleet considers whether any of Christ's actions determined the form of Church Government. Calling the Apostles was the first act respecting a form of government. He differentiates between 'disciple' which was a follower, and 'apostle' who was commissioned. All the apostles were of equal standing. Peter had no primacy over his colleagues and the twelve had the same commission as the

1. ibid. pp.193/5.

Seventy and nothing further. It was only in later times that they possessed a superior office when they supervised the pastors of the individual churches. There was then an inequality but it was not unlawful. [1]

(g) Diocesan Episcopacy in the Early Church defined: Presbyteral Ordination

Stillingfleet next attempts to find out if there is any ground in Scripture for determining the form of church government in Apostolical practice. When Christ gave them all power and authority, he did not mention any particular form of government. Thei first act was to appoint an apostolic successor to Judas, - Matthias. Stillingfleet contradicts that the Apostles divided the country into 'episcopal' provinces as one of their first duties. Too often, he says, men look at primitive practice through the 'glass of their own customs'. The Apostles, did, however, form local churches, and, to some extent, on the design of the Jewish synagogues. Bishops and priests are the equivalent to the Jewish priests and elders. The Deacons are the successors to the Levites. Differentiating the Jewish system of ordination by laying on of hands, from the Christian pradtice, Stillingfleet agrees that presbyters in the Jewish Church, once ordained, had the right of ordaining others to the same order. Just so, he says, the presbyters of the early Church enjoyed the same privilege. He explains

1. pp.214-220.

that there came a time when it was judged more convenient to have this privilege restrained by an act of the whole church, not that it made presbyteral ordination unlawful, but that they were not essential. The writer denies that Bishops have any superiority by Divine right, but simply for convenience.[1]

> "Every presbyter and Presbyters did ordain indifferently, and thence arose schisms: thence the liberty was restrained and reserved peculiarly to some persons who did act in the several presbyteries, as נשיא or Prince of the Sanhedrin, without whose presence no ordination by the Church was to be looked on as regular. The main controversie is when this restraint began, and by whose act; whether by any act of the Apostles, or only by the prudence of the Church itself, as it was with the Sanhedrin. But in order to our peace, I see no such necessity of deciding it." [2]

(h) Origin of Episcopacy

Stillingfleet traces the origin of episcopacy to the schisms which arose between equal, but rival Presbyteries in the Primitive Church. The choice of these leader-presbyters as he calls them, was not the act of the Apostles themselves, but made by the presbyters themselves. He bases this assumption on the evidence of Jerome who defines Apostolical tradition as the practice of the Church in former ages, though not coming from the Apostles themselves.

> " I only wish" he cries, " with all that are of his judgement for the practice of the Primitive Church, were of his temper for the practice of their own; and while they own not Episcopacy as necessary by a divine right,

1. pp.275ff.
2. p.276.

> yet (being duly moderated, and joyned with Presbyteries) they may embrace it, as not only a lawful, but very useful constitution in the Church of God." [1]

A further word is said about ordination. In the Jewish synagogue, it was always carried out by at least three persons, this number being fixed at the Council of Nicaea as the Christian minimum also.

The term 'presbyter', Stillingfleet traces back to the Jewish synagogal officers (ז ק נ). To the Jews, 'presbyter' or 'elder' implied not only age, experience and dignity, but judiciary power. Thus, the Christian Church, in order to retain both the name and manner of ordination, but without implying the power, chose a different name ἐπίσκοπος , denoting duty rather than power, though not a title above 'presbyter', but qualifying the power implied in 'presbyter';

> "Therefore to shew what kind of power and duty the name Presbyter imported in the Church, the office conveyed by that name is called ἐπισκοπή and Presbyters are said ἐπισκοπεῖν , I. Peter.5.v.2. where it is opposed to that κατακυριεύειν τῶν κλήρων , Lording it over the people, as was the custom of the Presbyters among the Jews. So that if we determine things by importance of words and things signified by them, the power of ordination was proper to the name πρεσβύτερος and not ἐπίσκοπος because the former name did then import that power, and not the latter. " [2]

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1. p.285.
2. p.286.

(i) Early Church Government difficult to define : Apostolic Succession not proved

> "We cannot arrive " says Stillingfleet, " to such an absolute certainty what course the Apostles took in governing churches, as to infer from thence the only Divine Right of that one form which the several parties imagine comes nearest to it." [1]

Quoting Acts.20.v.28., Phil. 1.v.1., Titus.1. v.5., he shows that the term 'Bishop' and 'Presbyter' are synonymous and that the name 'Bishop' always denotes a singular Bishop, whilst the name 'presbyter' is taken promiscuously both for 'Bishop' and 'Presbyter'. Both the names in Scripture imply only one thing in the Church, viz. the office of a singular Bishop in every Church. Similar confusion is evident in Revelation.2.v.4. over the term 'angel'.

Whether or not the churches were governed by a bishop only and deacons, or by a College of presbyters, is a question that cannot be answered. The 'defectiveness, ambiguity, partiality and repugnancy of the records of the succeeding ages which sought to give information about what Apostolic practice was' makes it impossible to determine what form of church-government was used in the Early Church.

The proving of the idea that the Apostles instituted any in a superior order to 'presbyter' , insists the author, will require three things:

> "First, the Personal Succession of some persons to the Apostles in Churches by them planted;

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1. p.287.

> secondly, the appropriating of the name ἐπίσκοπος to Bishops in a superior order to Presbyters, after the Apostles decease, thirdly, the Churches owning the order of Episcopacy as of Divine institution. If now we can make these three things evident; First, that personal succession might be without such superiority of order; Secondly, that the names of Bishop and Presbyters were common after the distinction between them was introduced; and Thirdly, that the Church did not own Episcopacy as a Divine institution, but Ecclesiastical; and those who seem to speak most of it, do mean no more; I shall suppose enough done to invalidate the testimony of antiquity as to the matter in hand." [1]

He continues, with commendable wit:

> "Come we therefore to Rome, and here the succession is as muddy as the Tiber itself....Certainly if the Line of Succession fail us here, when we most need it, we have little cause to pin our Faith upon it as to the certainty of any particular form of church-government settled in the Apostles' time." [2]

There was no fixed government in the Apostles' time. The type was varied according to the need of each church. What is more, whatever Apostolic practice was, it was definitely not binding upon subsequent ages.[3] One of the most important facts which Stillingfleet brings to light is that when Episcopacy was settled as a form of government, ordinations previously carried out by presbyters were still considered to be valid.[4]

He concludes his work by showing that the 'most eminent Divines' of the Reformation, English or Continental did not claim Divine Right for any particular form of church government.[5]

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1. ibid. p.321.
2. p.322.
3. pp.341-7.
4. pp.383 ff.

Stillingfleet main concern is the peace of the Church. His last paragraph runs thus:

> "All who appeal to the practice of the Primitive Church, must condemn themselves, if they justifie the neglect of them...What form of Government is determined by lawful authority in the Church of God, ought so far to be submitted to, as it contains nothing repugnant to the word of God. So that let mens' judgements be what they will concerning the Primitive form, seeing it hath been proved, that that Form doth not bind unalterably and necessarily, it remains that the determining of the Form of Government, and what is so, may be determined by that authority, doth bind men to obedience..." [1]

(j) Stillingfleet's Later Views

Like King, Stillingfleet, in later years, recanted his views. Denny-Urlin, Overton and Hockin, as with King, are keen to point out that this work was written when the author was but a very young man, - actually twenty-four years of age. The 'Irenicum' was answered by Archdeacon Parker (later Bishop of Oxford) in 1680, despite Burnet's statement that no one replied to it. Years after, Stillingfleet is reported to have said:

> "There were many thing in it, which, if he were to write again hewould not say; some which show his youth and want of consideration; others in which he yielded too far in hopes of gaining the Dissenting parties to the Church of England."

Hockin [2] accuses him of deliberately misrepresenting Cranmer's words regarding Church government and only

1. 'Irenicum' p.416.
2. 'John Wesley and Modern Methodism' pp.63/4.

half-citing St. Jerome in order to appear that the latter favoured presbyteral ordination. He is supposed to remedy this mistake in his 'Unreasonableness of Separation' (1681 : p.380), by asserting that the priests elected but the bishops consecrated.

In 1684 in an Ordination Sermon he says:

> "The universal consent of the Church being proved, there is a great reason to believe the Apostolic Succession to be of Divine institution as the canon of Scripture or the observation of the Lord's Day." [1]

In a Charge to the Clergy of his Diocese, as Bishop of Worcester, he writes:

> "His (St. Jerome's) reasons are very much for the Advantages of Episcopal Government... .....nothing but Faction and Disorder followed the Government of Presbyters, and therefore the whole Christian Church agreed in the necessity of a higher Order." [2]

He then refers to Apostolic Succession:

> "I can see no medium, but that either the Primitive Bishops did succeed the Apostles (which Irenaeus expressly affirms) or else those who governed the Apostolical Churches after them, out-went Diotrephes himself; for he only rejected those whom the Apostles sent, but these assumed to themselves the Exercise of an Apostolical Authority over the Churches planted and settled by them..... .....They who go about to Unbishop Timothy and Titus may as well Unscripture the Epistles written to them and make them only some particular and occasional Writings, as they make Timothy and Titus to have been only some particular and occasional Officers.... .....We have no greater assurance that these Epistles were written by St. Paul, than we have that there were Bishops to succeed the Apostles in the Care and Government of Churches.." [3]

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1. In the Epistle Dedicatory to Bishop Crompton prefixed to this, he says he sees no cause why he ought to recant — his 'Irenicum' views !
2. 'Of the Duties and Rights of the Parochial Clergy' p.4ff.

Thus a careful study of the 'Irenicum' will reveal that the work was intended to reach a working compromise between the Dissenting Presbyterians and the Established Church. [1] It is clear too, that there was later a substantial change in Stillingfleet's own views on Church government in spite of conflicting evidence.

(k) King, Stillingfleet and Wesley

Whilst most biographers do nothing more than make a casual reference to either King or Stillingfleet, it would appear that, of the two, King exerted a greater influence over Wesley than Stillingfleet. After a close examination of both works, it is hard to understand why. King convinced Wesley that, in the early Church, presbyters and bishops were of the same order, - but so does Stillingfleet. Both admit that the terms 'presbyter' and 'bishop' were used indiscriminately but later, the 'bishop' became superior to the 'presbyters'. Stillingfleet surely does more than King, for he persuades Wesley that in the early Church, there was no fixed form of government, and, consequently there were no fixed orders ? King convinces him about a detail; Stillingfleet about the whole question of church government. Moreover, Wesley, by his various acts, seems to have agreed far more with Stillingfleet's definition of 'schism' than King's. Whatever may have been the later views of these two youthful writers, their first position proved to be Wesley's last as the next book of this work is intended to show.

1. A hope cherished in vain, of course.

B O O K F O U R

WESLEY

AND

THE MINISTRY

AFTER

1746.

CHAPTER ONE

WESLEY'S CONCEPTION OF THE MINISTRY

Commenting on Wesley's letter of 30th. December, 1745 to his brother-in-law, Westley Hall, the Editor of the Standard edition of the 'Journal' says of the former's reading of King's Primitive Church' :

> "It cannot be denied that from this time Wesley's views on ecclesiastical polity were slowly, perhaps, but seriously modified. He did not become a Dissenter, nor did he lose his affection for the Church of England. Both his enemies and his admirers have quoted words and deeds of his, during the long transition period, that seem to justify the charge of inconsistency; but it was the inconsistency of a man emerging out of darkness into light, and who saw men as trees walking." [1]

As stated in the previous section of this present work, his conversion effected little or no change in his churchmanship or ideas of ecclesiastical polity. His reading of King's 'Primitive Church' and Stillingfleet's 'Irenicum' certainly did. It is the purpose of this latter part of the study to determine the extent to which Wesley's views were modified and to assess his alleged inconsistencies.

(a) His Own Ministry : The Purpose of Any Ministry.

Whatever changes may have taken place in his ecclesiastical views, his conception of the purpose and work of the Christian ministry remains unaltered.

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1. Journal, Vol.4.p.229, footnote.

The gospel minister is commissioned to work for the salvation of the souls of men and in that work he must spend and be spent. Moreover a minister requires a good grounding in secular as well as spiritual knowledge, but, above all, he requires soecial gifts from God:- "single intention, affection for those to whom he ministers, the practice of a good life. His life is lived for 'Bringing many to Glory'" He is an envoy - an ambassador. [1] Recalling the words of the ordaining Bishop "Receive the Holy Ghost", he reminds hisfellow clergy that whilst they minister the word and sacraments before God, he gives the Holy Ghost to those who duly receive them, so that through their hands, likewise the Holy Ghost is given. [2] Such a minister, Wesley himself strove to be.[3] "Your business as well as mine, " he reminds his brother Charles, " is to save souls. When we took priest's orders, we undertook to make it our one business. I think every day lost which is (mainly at least) employed in this thing; sum totus in illo."[4]

In an epistolatory argument with Dr. Thomas Church, Vicar of Battersea on 17th. June,1746,[5] he maintains that he is still a minister of the Church of England. Church had declared that Wesley cannot be regarded as her minister

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1. Works. Vol.11.pp.251ff. 'Address to the Clergy'.
2. Works. Vol.11.p.267.
3. See Journal for May.12th.1759. Wesley hints that the work of a minister includes spiritual healing. A physician, he says, should be an experienced Christian. By co-operating they can heal both mind and body.
4. 26th. April, 772. Letters, Vol.5, p 316.
5. Letters Vol.2.pp.233ff.

since he has broken her rules. No ! said Wesley, he can only cease if he is formally deprived. His only possible faults are that he has sometimes had to preach and sometimes pray, extempore. It is the unpermitted preaching in other mens' parishes which has angered Church. Wesley argues, as usual, from practical considerations, though, quite naturally, this does not satisfy his opponent. He mentions, as he has done on previous occasions, that ordination does not involve parochial ties and therefore he is free to officiate where he is needed. He was only once appointed to 'a single congregation' he says, and that was in Georgia. His sincerity cannot be doubted, but his argument from the Anglican position, is extremely weak. He continues:

> "If I am in Orders, if I am a minister still, and yet not a minister of the Church of England, of what Church am I minister?, Whoever is a minister at all is a minister of some particular Church. Neither can he cease to be a minister of that Church till he is cast out of it by judicial sentence. Till, therefore, I am so cast out (which I trust will never be), I must style myself a minister of the Church of England."

He finds an opponent with the same outlook, in Dr. Sherlock, to whom he replies:

> "My Lord,
> Several years ago the churchwarden of St. Bartholemew's informed Dr. Gibson, then Lord Bishop of London, 'My Lord, Mr. Bateman, our Rector, invited Mr. Wesley very frequently to preach in his church'. The Bishop replies, 'And what would you have me do, I have no right to hinder him. Mr. Wesley is a clergyman regularly ordained and under no ecclesiastical censure'." [1]

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1. Bishop of London (?) Letters. Vol.3.p.132. 28th. June, 1755.

In respect of his own ministry, Wesley believes he is doing the work of any true minister of the Gospel. As an Anglican clergyman, he maintains, right or wrongly, that he remains faithful to the Church of his ordination.

(b) Church Order

> "What do you mean by order ? a plan of Church discipline ? What plan ? the scriptural, the primitive, or our own,? " he enquires of 'John Smith' who accuses him of doing " a great deal of harm by breaking and setting aside order" for "order, once ever so little set aside, confusion rushes in like a torrent." [1]

Extempore prayer and field-preaching are again the point of controversy. "It were better for me to die than not to preach the gospel in the fields either where I may not preach in the church or where the church will not contain the congregation, " he declares, "and it has never yet appeared to me that any rule of the church forbids my using extempore prayer on other occasions." [2]

> "What is the end of all ecclesiastical order?" he asks, " Is it not to bring souls from the power of Satan to God, and to build them up in His fear and love ? Order, then, is so far valuable as it answers these ends."

Secondly, Church order, to Wesley, is no longer of prime importance. Rather it is more a matter of upbringing or choice:

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1. Letters, Vol.2. pp.77-78. 25th. June, 1746.
2. See also a letter dated 25th. March,1747 in which lay-preaching is added to the list of irregularities calculated to violate 'order'.(Letters.Vol.2. p.93.)

> "I know it is commonly supposed that the place of our birth fixes the Church to which we ought to belong; that one, for instance, who is born in England, ought to be a member of that which is styled the Church of England; and consequently to worship God in the particular manner which is prescribed by that Church....I dare not, therefore, presume to impose my mode of worship on any other. I believe it is truly primitive and apostolical; but my belief is no rule for another." [1]

"Your gross bigotry lies here" he accuses Charles Wesley, who had expelled a man from the society, not for drunkenness, but for not attending Church, " for putting a man on a level with an adulterer because he differs from you as to church-government." [2]

In his sermon on 'The Catholic Spirit' he pleads:

> "I ask not, therefore, of him with whom I would united in love, Are you of my church, of my congregation ? Do you receive the same government, and allow the same church officers with me ?" [3]

Thirdly, the influence of Stillingfleet was an abiding one. He is convinced that , whilst he still prefers the Episcopal order of church government, there are no grounds for believing that it is scripturally prescribed, though it is not contrary to the word of God:

> "I think he (Stillingfleet) has unanswerably proved that neither Christ nor his Apostles prescribed any particular form of Church government, and that the plea for the divine right of Episcopacy was never heard of in the Primitive Church." [4]

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1. Sermon on 'The Catholic Spirit' (Works.Vol.8.p.204.)
2. Letters, Vol.3.p.135.
3. Sermon on 'The Catholic Spirit' Works. Vol.8.p.207.
   Sugden in his comments on this sermon thinks Wesley's liberal views are the result of meeting so many godly members of other communions, e.g. Quakers,Presbyterians and Independents.
4. To James Clarke.Letters Vol.3.p.182

Fourthly, this question of government became a subject for discussion at the Conference of 1747:[1]

Q.6. Does a church in the New Testament always mean 'a single church' ?
A. We believe it does. We do not recollect any instance to the contrary.
Q.7. What instance or ground is there in the New Testament for a national church ?
A. We know none at all. We apprehend it to be a mere political institution.
Q.8. Are the three orders of Bishops, Priests and Deacons plainly described in the New Testament ?
A. We think they are, and believe they generally obtained in the churches of the Apostolic age.
Q.9. But are you assured, God designed the same plan should obtain in all churches throughout all ages ?
A. We are not assured of this, because we do not know that it is asserted in Holy Writ.
Q.10. If this plan were essential to a Christian church what must become of all the foreign Reformed Churches ?
A. It would follow, they are no parts of the Church of Christ, - a consequence full of shocking absurdity.
Q.11. In what age was the divine right of episcopacy first asserted in England ?
A. About the middle of Queen Elizabeth's reign. Till then all the Bishops and Clergy in England continually allowed and joined in the ministrations of those who were not episcopally ordained.
Q.12. Must there not be numberless accidental varieties (Variations) in the government of various churches ?
A. There must in the nature of things. As God variously dispenses His gifts of nature, providence, and grace, both the offices themselves and the offices in each ought to be varied from time to time.

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1. Wednesday, 17th. June, 1747.
Bennett Minutes pp 47/8.

Q.13. Why is it that there is no determinate plan of church government appointed in Scripture ?
A. Without doubt, because the wisdom of God has a regard to this necessary variety.
Q.14. Was there any thought of uniformity in the government of all churches until the time of Constantine ?
A. It is certain there was not; and would not have been then, had men consulted the word of God only.

To the end of his days, Wesley preferred the three-fold orders of the Episcopal ministry, allowing for the qualifying statements mentioned above. The Oxford Methodists had been zealous for the Church of England simply because they believed it to be "nearer the scriptural and primitive plan, than any other national Church upon earth" [1] Wesley still believes that its government is a fine and useful type, but no longer regards it asbeing the only one honoured by God or insisted upon in Scripture. He hates extremes, even in the doctrine of the ministry. Quite late in life, in 1785,[2] taking as his text, Hebrews 13.v.17., he preaches a sermon on 'Obedience to Pastors'. He warns against the two extreme views of the ministry: the Roman extravagance of the authority of the priesthood and the extreme Protestants who give their pastors no authority at all, but regarded them as mere servants of the congregation. There must, he says, be a medium between the two.

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1. Works. Vol.8. p.395. Sermon LIV. on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of City Road Chapel, London, April 21st. 1777.
2. Works. Vol.10. pp.232ff.

His idea of that medium position is reflected in revision of the Book of Common Prayer, styled 'The Sunday Service of the Methodists'[1] which he later published. In it he provides for three ordination services; one for Deacon, one for 'Elder' (Priest or Presbyter) and one for the ordination (not consecration) of 'Superintendent' (in lieu of 'Bishop'). He is preserving the three-fold order whilst leaving no doubts about the functions to be performed by the ordinands. Of these orders and functions, more will be said later.

That he still prefers the three-fold order of ministry is indicated in his continual prayers for the Church of England:

> "Bless all Bishops, Priests and Deacons, with apostolical graces, exemplary lives, and sound doctrine." [2]

> "Be merciful to this church and nation; give unto the Bishops a discerning spirit, that they may make choice of fit persons to serve in Thy sacred ministry: and enable all who are ordained to a holy function, diligently to feed the flocks committed to their charge, instructing them in saving knowledge, guiding them by their example, praying for and blessing them, exercising spiritual discipline in thy church, and duly administering the holy sacraments," [3]

> "Reform the corruptions of thy Catholic Church, heal her divisions, and restore to her, her ancient discipline; give to the Clergy thereof, whether they be Bishops, Priests, or Deacons, grace, as good shepherds to feed the flocks committed to their care." [4]

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1. For a comparison of these services with those of the Book of Common Prayer, see Appendix Two of this present work.
2. Works. Vol.11.p.287. 3. Works. Vol.11.p.290.
4. Works. Vol.11. p.313.

"Be gracious unto all Priests and Deacons, and give them rightly to divide the word of truth." [1]

(c) The Equality, in Essence, of Presbyter and Bishop.

Stevens sums up Wesley's attitude to Episcopacy: [2]

(i) Wesley was a decided Episcopalian
(ii) Whilst he believed in Episcopacy, he did not believe that it was a distinct order, but rather a distinct office or function, i.e. superintendence.
(iii) The word Episcopos, superintendent and bishop have the same meaning.

It is here that the chief influence of King's work is seen, and from the date of his reading it, January, 1746, Wesley's views are undisputably modified. The change did not take place, as some writers claim, either in 1738 or in his old age [3]

Whilst he had a great regard for the Sub-Apostolic Church, Wesley's first love was for Scripture. His interpretation of this, as found in his 'Notes on the New Testament' deserve careful study.

The meaning of the term 'bishop', he says, is "The kind observer, inspector, or overseer of your souls." [4] Commenting on Phil.1.v1. where Bishops and Deacons are mentioned, Wesley says :

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1. Works. Vol.11.p.316.
2. History of Methodism to the Death of Wesley.p.539.
3. e.g. Rev. Edwin Sidney, 'Life of Walker of Truro' who states that "when he (Wesley) wanted ordained preachers for America, he of a sudden in his old age, found out, by reading Lord King's account of the Primitive Church, that bishops and presbyters are of the same order." Cf. Piette:'John Wesley in the Evolution of Protestantism' p.387 where he says that Wesley only found himself equal to a bishop in 1784.
4. Comment on I.Peter.2.v.25.

> "the former properly took care of the internal state...The word ' bishops' here includes all the presbyters at Philippi, as well as the ruling presbyters : the names bishop and presbyter, or elder, being promiscuously used in the first ages." [1]

In Acts. 20.v.17, St. Paul summoned to Miletus 'elders' or 'presbyters' of the church at Ephesus, yet in addressing them immediately afterwards, appealed to them as 'bishops' or 'overseers' of the church (20.v.28). Wesley in his 'Notes' mentions the former verse in its relation to the latter :

> "These are called Bishops in the twenty-eighth verse rendered 'overseers' in our translation. Perhaps elders and bishops were then the same and no otherwise different than are the rector of a parish and his curates."

Referring to I. Tim.3.v.8. ("Likewise the deacons must be serious") he asks:

> "Where are the presbyters ? "
> "Were this order essentially distinct from that of bishops, could the Apostles have passed it over in silence ?"

So Wesley makes no objection to the function of a bishop being different to that of a presbyter. All he insists upon is that, in essence they are the same order.

Turning now to the subject of Diocesan Episcopacy, there are, seemingly, two main theories of its origin.

The first is that it was the localized successor to the apostolate, the old local ministry being represented by Elders and Deacons, the latter two never having possessed the power to hand on the ministry to others.

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1. Wesley's comment on Phil. v.1.

The second theory asserts that the diocesan episcopate was evolved by the direction of the Apostles from the presbyter-bishops, one of whom was given the power to ordain others. He was later known as 'bishop'. This shows that, at one time, all the presbyterate had this ministerial commission as in I.Tim.iv.14. "the laying on of the hands of the presbytery", which Wesley feels referred to Paul, Silas and other presbyters. But he is not satisfied that there is a scriptural basis for it:

> "I do not see that Diocesan Episcopacy is necessary", he writes to a friend, "but I do that it is highly expedient. But whether it were or no, the Spirit shown in those verses,[1] is wrong from end to end. Neither J.E. nor any other separatist can ever be expected to own prejudice, pride, or interest to be his motive. Nevertheless I do and must blame every one of them, for the act of separating. Afterwards I leave them to God.....The Apostles had not the Lordships or the revenues, but they had the office of Diocesan Bishops. But let that point sleep; we have things to think of which are magis ad nos.." [2]

An Anglican writer, Dr. Sparrow-Simpson makes the following criticism of Wesley's change of view:

> "The idea that the power of ordaining became invested in a Church officer who was superior to the Presbyters, negatives the idea that Presbyter and Bishop are identical; negatives also, the idea that all ministers are of the

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1. He refers to rhymes against the Church of England by Perronet Junior.
2. This letter is not in the Standard Edition of the Letters Similar impatience with such a discussion is recorded in the Minutes of Conference, p.179 (Conference, 1785): "If any one is minded to dispute concerning Diocesan Episcopacy, he may, but I have better work."(Wesley).

> same one kind. In other words, it excludes what is historically known as the Presbyterian conception, and brings back what is historically known as the episcopal conception of the ministry. Viewed in this light, it can be said that the Methodist doctrine neglected two distinctions. One is by assuming the identity of Bishop and Presbyter. For if a Bishop was Presbyter, it by no means follows necessarily that every Presbyter was a Bishop. That the terms are convertible is assumed, but not proved.....The other consideration is that in the Scripture record neither presbyter nor Bishop represents the highest form of Christian ministry. Above them was the Apostle. And it was the Apostle who ordained elders in every church. So long as the Apostle lived, the Bishop was subordinate. When the Apostles died it was the Bishop but not the Presbyter who succeeded to the ordainer's power. Wesley, like all Presbyterians, left the Apostle out, and reconstructed a ministerial doctrine on the assumption that Presbyter and Bishop were simply two names for the same thing.... Wesley, of course, was perfectly well aware, that, although he was personally convinced of the identity within the Scripture record of a Bishop and a Presbyter, the Church of England, which ordained him, by no means recognised the identity of these two ministries as they existed in the historic development of Christendom. How Wesley justified his individualism and independent action in spite of the Ordinal, with its very different offices for consecrating a Bishop and for ordaining a Priest, is not stated." [1]

With his characteristically practical outlook, once he established his premiss that presbyter = bishop, regardless as to who may agree or disagree, Wesley is more concerned with the work, rather than the office of the Presbyter-Bishop. His call is from God, for "no man or number of men upon earth can constitute an overseer,

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1. 'John Wesley and the Church of England', pp64/5.

bishop, or any other Christian minister. To do this, is the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost." (Acts.20.v.28.). He must be without fault or suspicion, the 'husband of one wife'(I.Tim.3.v.1.ff). The proper work of any Christian bishop (Acts.6.v.4.) is to speak to God, in prayer; to men, in preaching his word, an ambassador for Christ. Wesley draws attention to St. Paul's exhortation to Timothy in the latter's vocation as presbyter-bishop, to 'meditate' (I.Tim.3.v.21.), explaining that the Bible makes no distinction between this and to 'contemplate' whatever others do. "True meditation", he says, " is not other than faith, hope, love, joy, melted down together as it were, by the fire of God's Holy Spirit; and offered up to God in secret. He that is <u>wholly in these</u>, will be little in worldly company, in other studies, in collecting books, medals, or butterflies: wherein many pastors drone away so considerable a part of their lives."

As for 'filthy gain' (I.Tim.3.v.8.), he says, "All that is gained (above food and raiment) by ministering in holy things is <u>filthy gain</u> indeed; far more filthy that what is honestly gained by raking kennels, or emptying common sewers."

(d) <u>Rejection of Uninterrupted Apostolic Succession</u>

Wesley's letter of 30th. December, 1745 [1] has already been mentioned as being his last statement in defence of this doctrine. Before his reading of King's and

1. See p.96. of this present work.

Stillingfleet's works, no priest of the Established Church could have been a more loyal supporter of the idea.

The first statement renouncing the notion of the uninterrupted succession, was not, as might be supposed, directed against the Church of England. Rather it was contained in a reply in the 'London Chronicle' on February 19th.1759 against an article entitled 'Caveat against the Methodists', - obviously a lengthy statement in defence of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the divine right of episcopacy. [1]

Of the Roman Church, Wesley says:

> "This Church has ' a perpetual succession of pastors and teachers divinely appointed and divinely assisted.' And there has never been wanting in the Reformed Churches such a succession of pastors and teachers, men both divinely appointed and divinely assisted; for they convert sinners to God - a work none can do unless God Himself doth appoint them thereto and assist them therein; therefore every part of this character is applicable to them"

Answering the charge that the Protestant teachers are not the true ministers of Christ, being neither called or sent by Him, he continues:

> "Now for your 'farther proof'. 'The true ministers came down by succession from the Apostles'. So do the Protestant ministers if the Romish do; and English in particular; as even one of yourselves, F.Courayer [2] has irrefragably proved....But to turn the tables: I said, if, the Romish bishops came down by uninterrupted succession from the Apostles. I never could see it proved; and I am persuaded I never shall. But unless that is

1. Letters. Vol.4. pp.135ff.
2. Courayer, 1681-1776 was an R.C.professor who wrote a defence of the validity of Anglican ordinations in1723 and had to take refuge in England in 1728.

proved, your own pastors on your principles are no pastors at all."

Later, in 1785, came his reply to the Anglican teaching on the Succession, in a letter to his brother, Charles: [1]

"the uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove. But this does in no wise interfere with my remaining in the Church of England; from which I have no more desire to separate than I had fifty years ago." [2]

An Anglican, R. Denny-Urlin has tried to answer Wesley's objections on rational grounds:

"If Wesley meant that the succession of bishops is not to be proved as a problem of Euclid is proved, he was doubtless right. But probabilities enter largely into the conclusions arrived at in daily life; and even the courts of justice are accustomed to act on many presumptions. Amongst these is a presumption, having the force of a legal rule, that things are presumed to have been rightly, properly, and lawfully done. So strong is the presumption that every Christian bishop has been duly consecrated by senior bishops, that even Lord Macaulay, while quite indifferent as to the doctrine of the succession, declared the fact of it to be as well established as any other fact of history. He knew that the common sense of mankind has always rejected the notion of demanding strict proof of all the actual facts which constitute heirship, pedigree, and title to possessions. In all such inquiries, the evidence accepted is that which Bishop Butler calls probable evidence, as distinguished from

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1. Letters, Vol.7. pp.284/5.
2. Why F. Hockin ('John Wesley and Modern Methodism'.pp. 74ff. says "Wesley asserted the Apostolical Succession throughout his life, as running in the Episcopate and during the latter(italics mine) portion of his life as running in the priesthood also", is difficult to understand. Such a statement is condemned by Wesley's own words above. It would follow from Hockin that Wesley believed his right to ordain as presbyter-bishop followed on his belief that the priesthood was also in the Succession, but he denied succession in any

> Demonstrative. On evidence of the probable kind, Christianity itself, to a certain extent bases her claims to acceptance; and there are few facts in the Christian history more firmly established than the succession of bishops in office as handed down from the apostles. Whether Wesley perceived this or not is, however, of little moment, since he held most firmly to rules which are quite sufficient to uphold an episcopal system."

Put less charitably, but to the same effect, is the criticism of Southey,[1] who, obviously has Wesley's own ordinations in mind:

> "It may be suspected that this opinion upon the apostolical succession rested on no better ground than its convenience to his immediate purpose. Undoubtedly, as he says, it is not possible to prove the apostolical succession; but, short of that absolute proof, which, in this case, cannot be obtained, and therefore ought not to be demanded, there is every reason for believing it. No person who fairly considers the question can doubt this, whatever value he may attach to it. But Wesley knew its value. He was neither so deficient in feeling, or in sagacity, as not to know that the sentiment which connects us with other ages, and by which we are carried back, is scarcely less useful in its influences than than the hopes by which we are carried forward. He would rather have been a link of the golden chain, than the ring from whence a new one of inferior metalwas to proceed."

There is, however, no evidence that a literal belief in Apostolical Succession was required of an Anglican priest in Wesley's day, any more than it is to-day. Before his time, there had been notable prelates and scholars in the Church of England who could not see the necessity for this doctrine, as well as all those who were zealous for it.[2] Not only had Stillingfleet declared

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1. 'Life of Wesley' p.516 (Bohn's edition).
2. See Book I, Chapter 3 (pp.26ff.) of this present study

that the succession was as 'muddy as the Tiber', but Chillingworth earlier still, had said "I am fully persuaded there hath been no such succession." Archbishop Whateley had complained that "there is not a minister in all Christendom who is able to trace up with approach to certainty his spiritual pedigree". Hoadly chose to declare:

> "It hath not pleased God in His Providence to keep up any proof of the least probability, or of any moral possibility, of regular, uninterrupted succession, but there is a great appearance, and humanly speaking, a certainty to the contrary."

To Wesley, the conception of Apostolic Succession seems to have meant a limitation of 'free grace'. To restrict the work of the Holy Spirit by mechanical means did not appeal to him: "None but God can give men authority to preach his word" [1]

The real test of the validity of a man's ministry, he believes, is a practical one. That a man is doing the work ofan evangelist and making full proof of his

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1. Notes on Matthew 10.v.5. ('Notes on the New Testament').
Cf. his omission in his list of articles of religion, Article XXIII ' on the lawful call and mission necessary to preach publicly and administer the sacraments.'
Cf. also his omission of Article XXVI. which states that sacraments administered by unworthy ministers do not lose their efficacy. Wesley still believed in the teaching of this article as will be mentioned later in this study, insofar as it applied to the Church of England. Surely he omits it from his own list of articles, which were revised for the Methodist people, because in his own community, he would see to it that unworthy persons would not have the opportunity of administering the sacraments.

ministry is determined by his 'turning many to righteousness'.[1]

Only one writer seems to have attempted qualifying Wesley's rejection of Apostolic Succession. Dr. J. E. Rattenbury in his 'Methodism and World Problems', warns:

> "It must not be thought that Wesley believed no Apostolic Succession because he rejected episcopal succession....What he disbelieved was that Bishops and presbyters were of Orders inherently different. He thought a presbyter had the rights that a Bishop claimed. It is quite evident that he held that orders could only be given by men who had orders. Otherwise why should he have troubled to give orders himself ? He gave them because he believed that ordination, which in the Church of England was only given by bishops, was really the function of the whole presbyterate. He held that he, a presbyter, was a New Testament Bishop. There is no evidence at all that he thought orders could be given by any other persons than bishops or presbyters. He was, in this matter, not a High Church Episcopalian, but a High Church Presbyterian... There is not the least evidence that Wesley held the view of most modern Methodists, the writer included, that the power of ordination rests in the hands of the living Church, and is not dependent of any ministerial succession, episcopal or presbyteral." [2]

(e) <u>The Necessity for some kind of Ordination for Administration of Sacraments : The Priesthood of the Ministry</u>

The necessity of ordination for the administration of the sacraments was always a fixed principle with Wesley. That this ordination should necessarily be

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1. Sermon on Matt.vii.15-20 (Sermon on The Mount, Discourse 12). Sugden: Sermons. Vol.II.p.19.
2. p.60.

episcopal, he was no longer convinced. Defending the employment of unordained preachers, he says of them:

> "They subscribed it (i.e. the twenty-third article of religion) in the simplicity of their hearts, when they firmly believed none but Episcopal ordination valid. But Bishop Stillingfleet has since fully convinced them this was an entire mistake." [1]

To Wesley, preaching and administering the sacraments were two totally different acts, which could be, but not necessarily, linked together. "Modern laziness" he asserts, "had jumbled together the two distinct offices of preaching and administering the sacraments". [2] He saw no inconsistency in permitting a layman to fulfil the former office and refusing to allow him to perform the latter. They could assist, of course, if requested to do so:

> "I did desire Mr. Myles to assist me in delivering the cup" he confesses, "Now , be this right or wrong, how does it prove the point now in question - that I leave the Church ? I ask (2) What law of the Church forbids this ? and (3) What law of the Primitive Church ? Did not the priest send both the bread and wine to the sick by whom he pleased, though not ordained at all ?" [3]

But assisting and consecrating were not to be compared. For the latter, some kind of ordination, episcopal or otherwise [4], was required.

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1. Letter to the Earl of Dartmouth, 10th. April, 1761.
2. Letter to William Thompson, Feb. 2nd. 1787.(L.Vol.7.p. 372).
3. Letter to the Printers of the 'Dublin Chronicle', 2nd. June, 1789. Letters, Vol.8.pp.141ff.
4. It need not be thought that Wesley was inconsistent when, on 4th. May, 1748 he wrote thus to a clergyman in Tullamore: I believe bishops are empowered to do this (i.e. ordain), and have been so from the apostolic days". He always maintained the validity of episcopal ordination but refused to believe that it was the only kind that was valid.

Asked for his Scriptural authority for reconciling a mission to preach without administration, he replies:

> "By the authority of the very same scriptures wherein we do not find that they who then preached (except Philip alone) did so much as administer baptism to their own converts." [1]

Though they were forbidden the privilege of administering, it does not mean that they had no wish to do so, or that Wesley was blind to the disappointment they experienced because of his rule. When they promised to keep his instruction, he believed them. Charles Wesley did not. In an 'Epistle to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley', he accuses those who had given their solemn word, of insincerity. But John is quick to their defence:

> "Do you not understand that they all promised by Thomas Walsh not to administer even among themselves ? I think an huge point was given up with a clear conscience. They showed an excellent spirit in this very thing. Likewise when I (not to say you) spoke once, again spoke satis pro imperio (with authority enough). When I reflected on their answer, I admired their spirit and was ashamed of my own." [2]

His faith in their word, though, was hardly justified, when, later, some of the itinerants took the law into their own hands. [3]

In a letter to Nicholas Norton on 3rd. September, 1756, Wesley replies to the charge made against him, of inconsistency in allowing lay-preaching and not lay-administration and in not affording the brethren the

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1. Letter to John Topping, Vicar of Allendale, 11th. June, (1799.
2. Letters. Vol.3.p.129. 20th. June, 1755. The Leeds Conference had requested the preachers not to administer.
3. See pages 257-259 of this present study.

liberty of acting according to their own consciences.

> "I act" he replies " on one and the same principle still. My principle (frequently declared) is this : 'I submit to every ordinance of man wherever I do not conceive there is an absolute necessity for acting contrary to it.' Consistently with this I do tolerate lay-preaching, because I conceive there is an absolute necessity for it; inasmuch as, were it not, thousands of souls would perish everlastingly. Yet I do not tolerate lay-administering, because I do not conceive there is any such necessity for it; seeing it does not appear that, if this is not all, one soul will perish for the want of it."
>
> " I am therefore, so far from self-inconsistency in tolerating the former and not the latter, that I really should be self-inconsistent were I to act otherwise: were I to break, or allow others to break, an ordinance of man, where there is no necessity, I should contradict my own principle, as much as if I did not allow it to be broken where there is."

He answers Norton's allegation that he is persecuting the brethren in not allowing them to act according to their own consciences:

> "Some of our preachers who are not ordained think it quite right to administer the Lord's Supper, and believe it would do much good. I think it is quite wrong, and believe it would do much hurt. Hereupon I say, 'I have no right over your conscience, nor you over mind; therefore both you and I must follow our own conscience. You believe it is a duty to administer; do so, and therein follow your own conscience. I verily believe it is a sin, which consequently I dare not tolerate; and herein I follow mine.' Yet this is no persecution, were I to separate from our Society (which I have not done yet) those who practise what I believe is contrary to the Word and destructive of the work of God."

He contends that he has not expelled anyone for acting contrary to his advice. He has simply advised

them not to do that which was harmful to the societies:

> "Did I expel those preachers out of our community ? Not so. Did I forbid them to preach any more ? Not so either. Did I degrade them from itinerant to local preachers ? Not so much as this. I told them I thought the thing was wrong and would do hurt, and therefore advised them to do it no more."

> "You and Charles Peronnet aver that you have a right to administer the Lord's Supper, and that therefore you ought to administer it among the Methodists or to separate from them. If the assertion were proved, I should deny the consequence. But first, I desire proof of the assertion." [1]

A similar letter was written to Paul Greenwood on 8th. October, 1755. Greenwood and his colleagues took it upon themselves to administer the sacrament to the Methodists in Norwich in 1760. Wesley counsels him thus:

> "In a multitude of counsellors there is safety. That is a general rule. But your case is an exception. You must not consult with many persons. It would only puzzle and confound you. If you advise with another beside me, it should be he that is as myself, that is, Thomas Walsh.
>
> Unless there should a very particular call, you should not act publicly till you are ordained. Give yourself to reading, meditation, prayer; and do all the good you can in a private manner. Pride and impetuosity of temper will be apt to lead you out of the way...." [2]

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1. Letters. Vol.3.pp.185ff. In a postscript to this letter, Wesley answers Norton's report that a certain James Morris, one of his helpers had administered the Lord's Supper and that he had been disciplined as a result. Wesley denies any knowledge of this and points out that Morris is not in connexion with him.
2. Letters, Vol.3.p.147.

On the subject of Baptism, he was equally strict. As late as 1784 , he writes to John Valton:

> "I shall have no objection to Mr. Taylor if he does not baptize children; but this I dare not suffer. I shall shortly be obliged to drop all the preachers who will not drop this. Christ has sent them not to baptize but to preach the gospel. I wonder any of them are so unkind as to attempt it, when they know my sentiments." [1]

A similar letter is sent to William Percival the same year:

> "I desire Mr. Murlin (the Assistant), if any of our lay-preachers talk either in public or private against the Church or the Clergy, or read the Church prayers, or baptize children, to require a promise from them to do it no more. And if they will not promise, let them preach no more. And if they break their promise, let them be expelled the Society." [2]

The same stricture is applied to Thomas Hanby in a letter to a Rev. Mr. G-, 29th. December, 1790: "I do not approve of Mr. Hanby's baptizing children. I have wrote to him and told him my mind" [3]

It seems that some of the Assistants desired their lay-helpers to administer baptism, according to a letter sent by Wesley to Alexander Suter, whom he had ordained for Scotland and therefore cannot apply to him:

> "As we have not yet made a precedent of anyone that was not ordained administering baptism, it is better to go slow and sure." [4]

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1. January 6th. Letters Vol.7, p.203.
2. March 4th. Letters Vol.7. p.213.
3. Letters. Vol.8.p.279.
4. Letters. Vol.8.p.23.

One duty which was normally carried out by the ordained ministry, but which Wesley had no objection to being performed by his lay-preachers, was that of burying the dead. When his brother complained of the preachers conducting funerals, John explained to Charles:

> "I have often desired our preachers to bury a corpse at Wapping. I mean to give an exhortation, closed with prayer. I do not know that this is any breach of the sacerdotal office". [1]

This was written in 1755, but late in life, he holds the same view:

> "I do not, and never did, consent that any of our preachers should baptize as long as we profess ourselves to be members of the Church of England. Much more may be said for burying the dead; To this I have no objection." [2]

It is time now to turn to the classic utterance of Wesley on this subject of no administration without ordination. Significant enough that he is nearing the end

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1. 28th. June, 1755, Letters, Vol.3.p.132.

2. Letter to Joseph Benson, 5th. June, 1783, Letters, Vol.7.p.179.
   There are no grounds for believing the statement in the Pastoral Letter of 1794 (Minutes of Conference p.299) which says:
   "Baptism as well as burial of the dead was performed by the preachers long before the death of Mr. Wesley and with his consent..."
   The office of Baptism was still prohibited as late as this, except for the ' desirable ends of love and concord' - not a very exacting condition !

of his earthly days when he decides to preach a sermon on 'The Ministerial Office' based on Hebrews 5.v.4: "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron." [1]

He introduces the text by saying that there is not another which is so well used against lay-preaching. However, the text is against Aaron, who in fact, never preached, but was called to minister in holy things, i.e. executing the office of a priest. In those times the offices of preacher and priest were entirely separate. Previous to the time of Moses, the eldest of a family acted as priest, but during his leadership, a whole tribe - the tribe of Levi were appointed as priests. Dealing with the New Testament era, he says that scholars have shown that Our Lord and his Apostles built the

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1. First preached on 4th. May, 1789 at Cork (Sermons on Several Occasions, Vol.III.pp.262ff.)
Cf. his comment on this text in his 'Notes on the New Testament' : "And his posterity, who were all of them called at one and the same time. But it is observable, Aaron did not preach at all, preaching being no part of the priestly office..."
Charles Wesley has a verse based on the same text, (Poetical Works. xiii.129):

"And thus the Christian priest obtains
The gift by Elders' hands bestowed.
Ye that uncalled the power assume,
Expect the rebel's fearful doom"

It is interesting to note that Charles uses 'Elders' instead of 'Bishops'

The Sermon on 'The Ministerial Office' is often referred to as the 'Korah Sermon'.

Church as nearly as possible on the plan of the Jewish Church. He sent Apostles and Evangelists to proclaim the Gospel and then Pastors, Preachers and Teachers to build up in the faith, the congregations that were founded. He does not, however, find that the office of Evangelist was ever the same as that of Pastor, frequently called a Bishop. The latter presided over the flock and administered the sacraments; the former assisted him, and preached the word, either in one or more congregations. He cannot prove from the New Testament or any other writings in the first three centuries, that the office of Evangelist gave a right to a man to act as a Bishop or Pastor. They were distinct until the time of Constantine. It was, he alleges, in the reign of Constantine that one man took the whole charge of a congregation in order to engross the whole pay, for which the Church was greatly dependent upon the King. To-day, he continues, whilst both these offices are often combined and discharged by one person, the two are still separate in character. He quotes the Presbyterians who often license a man to preach before ordination, but he does not administer the sacraments. Similarly the Roman Catholics who send unordained men to conduct preaching missions. Even Doctors of Divinity, if not ordained (e.g. Dr. Alwood at Oxford) do not administer, although they may be allowed to preach.

Turning to the early days of the Methodist movement, Wesley mentions his helpers, beginning with Thomas

Maxfield. These helpers, he maintains, were received as Prophets, not as Priests. They were to preach, not to administer the Sacraments. Those who think otherwise, are ignorant of the constitution of either Jewish or Christian churches. If this were not understood, Maxfield nor any of the helpers would have been accepted. At the 1744 Conference none of the Methodist preachers ever "dreamed that being called to preach gave them any right to administer sacraments." They were 'extraordinary messengers'. If any preacher has administered the sacraments, when he was engaged only to preach, such an act would be regarded as a palpable breach of rule and a recantation of the connexion. The first principle of Methodism was wholly and solely to preach the Gospel. The first attempt at lay administration took place at Norwich when one of the preachers began to baptize children at his people's request. As long as there was no lay-administration there will be no separation from the Church. The preachers must not, like Korah, Dathan and Abiram, "seek the priesthood also", but be content with preaching the Gospel. "In God's name," he cries, "stop there."

The reaction to this sermon both during the remainder of his lifetime and afterwards is noteworthy. Henry Moore has an interesting note on it:

> "I was with Mr. Wesley in London when he published that sermon. He had encouraged me to be a man of <u>one</u> book and he had

> repeatedly invited me to speak fully whatever objection I had to anything which he spoke or published. I thought that some things in that discourse were not to be found in the BOOK, and I resolved to tell him so the first opportunity. It soon occurred. I respectfully observed, that I agreed with him that the Lord had always sent, by whom he would send, instruction, reproof, and correction in righteousness, to mankind; and that there was a real distinction between prophetic and priestly office in the Old Testament, and the prophetic and pastoral office in the New (where no priesthood is mentioned but that of our Lord;) but I could not think, that what he had said, concerning the Evangelists and the Pastors, or Bishops, was agreeable to what we read there; viz., that the latter had a right to administer the sacraments, which the former did not possess. I observed, 'Sir, you know that the Evangelists Timothy and Titus were ordered by the Apostle to ordain Bishops in every place; and surely, they could not impart to them an authority which they did not themselves possess' - he looked earnestly at me for some time, but not with displeasure. He made no reply, and soon introduced another subject. I said no more. The man of one book would not dispute against it. I believe he saw his love to his church, from which he never deviated unnecessarily, had, in this instance, led him a little too far" [1]

Making another observation is Dr. Rigg, ever zealous to divest Wesley of any trace of High Churchmanship and minimise his affection for the Established Church:

> "It is true that one of Wesley's latest sermons, - that on 'The Ministerial Office', preached in 1789, flames with indignation against unauthorised intruders into the office of the 'priesthood' whom he compares to Korah and his fellows. But it must be remembered that he regarded ordination by himself, conferred on one of his preachers, as equally valid with any that

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1. 'Life of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.' Vol.2.p.339. Moore is actually answering Dr. Whitehead's assertion that this sermon proved Wesley inconsistent.

> might have been bestowed by the hands of any bishop of whatever Church. What he objected to in some of his preachers was that they had presumed to administer the sacraments when he had not appointed them. 'Did we ever appoint you' he asks in his sermon, ' to administer sacraments, to exercise the priestly office?' 'Where did I appoint this ? Nowhere at all'" [1]

The Anglican biographer, R. Denny-Urlin devotes a whole chapter to this important homily. Stating that the sermon was preached not only before the Irish Conference but also before that in England, he quotes Dr. Whitehead who had said that it was more than once preached before the "assembled preachers". Defending Wesley's views about the distinction between the prophetic and priestly offices, he refers to Hooker (Ecclesiastical Polity, Book V) who describes prophets as having a "special gift of expounding scriptures" but "not therefore to be reckoned with the clergy". [2]

Urlin mentions a contemporary edition of this sermon as having a prefix written by the Rev. T. G. Stokes of Blackrock near Dublin. [3] Stokes gives an interesting history of the sermon, attributing its origin to the fact that the Dublin and Cork societies were much troubled with proposals to leave the Church and become Dissenters. Urlin refutes the criticism that this sermon was the product of Wesley's failing mind and is at pains to point out that the preacher has always maintained the distinction between the offices of priest and prophet and has been against any thought of separation from the Church of England.

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1. ' The Churchmanship of John Wesley' pp.70-71.
2. 'A Churchman's Life of Wesley' pp315ff. 3.ibid.p.325.

In passing, one may well ask why this most important utterance of Wesley's was omitted from early copies of his 'Works' and not restored until 1829 by Thomas Jackson (as Sermon CXV). Even he has to add a warning note against attributing " too much value to its principles ". On this, little comment is required, in view of developments after the death of Wesley. [1]

Although Wesley is free from the charge of inconsistency, the fact that the preachers expected to be able to administer the sacraments and that so many queried his refusal, shows that,(though wrongly), preaching and administering were linked together in the popular mind. The office of lay-preacher was foreign to his age, having existed only theoretically in the Established Church and even in the early Church had soon fallen into obsolescence.

That Wesley places such a high value on the rite of ordination as a condition for administration of the sacraments, does not imply that such ordination in itself actually makes a Christian minister. In his letter to a clergyman, 4th. May, 1748 he says that some who have had the advantages of ministerial training and received ordination are yet impotent to do the work to which they have been called, i.e. saving the souls of others. [2]

1. See Postscript of this present study, pp 275-278.
2. Letters. Vol.2. pp.147-8.

Nevertheless, Wesley will allow that the sacraments administered even by 'wicked ministers' can convey grace, because of the graciousness of God.[1] God does not allow his grace to be 'intercepted'. "The sacraments are not dry breasts, whether he that administers be holy or unholy". Neither is the word of the Lord bound, though uttered by an unoly minister.

An obvious reason why he still believes in the teaching of the twenty-eighth article of religion and impresses upon his people, is to keep them loyal to the Church of England. The same pronouncement is made in a letter to Miss Mary Bishop, 18th. October, 1778:[2]

> "There is a Romish error which many Protestants sanction unawares. It is an avowed doctrine of the Romish Church that 'the pure intention of the minister is essential to the validity of the sacraments.' If so, we ought not to attend the ministrations of an unholy man; but, in flat opposition to this, our Church teaches in the 28th. Article that ' the unworthiness of the minister does not hinder the validity of the sacraments'. Although, Therefore, there are many disagreeable circumstances, yet I advise all our friends to keep to the Church. God has surely raised us up for the Church chiefly that a little leaven may leaven the whole lump. I wish you would seriously consider that little tract Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England. These reasons were never answered yet, and I believe they never will be."

Another aspect of ordination on which he has stated his views is that it is 'sacramental'. He denies

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1. Sermon on "Attending the Church Service" (Text: I.Sam.2.v.17 'The Sin of the young men was very great') Works. Vol.10.pp.314ff.
2. Letters. Vol.6.p.327. Surely Wesley means the Twenty-Sixth Article of Religion ?

this assertion in a 'Reply to the Romish Catechism.' [1] There is a difference, he maintains, between ordination being a divine institution and its being a sacrament. Ordination implies the conveyance of a ministerial commission, not the transmission of grace: "But how necessary soever this office is to the Church, and grace for the exercise of it, yet as that grace is not promised to it, we cannot admit it to be properly and truly a sacrament. "

Arguing in a letter against the Roman Catholics, written to the Editors of the 'Freeman's Journal' in 1780,[2] he further refutes any idea of a priest having the power to pardon sins, - no more, he declares, than the Pope has.[3]

Bearing in mind the differences which inevitably took place between John and his brother, one may quite justifiably wonder how far Charles influenced him to keep to this orthodox view of no administration without ordination. Certainly, Charles provided for people called Methodists, a defence of the priesthood against possible 'intruders', in some of his poetical writings:

"Raised from the people's lowest lees, [4]
Guard, Lord, Thy preaching witnesses,
Nor let their pride the honour claim
Of sealing covenants in Thy name:

1. Works, Vol.15 pp.172/3.
2. Letters, Vol.7, p.5.
3. See pp14-15 of this present study. The Church of England did believe in the power of Absolution. This, surely, is another of Wesley's deviations.
4. Hymn on Numbers.vvi.10. from 'Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures.' Vol.ix.p.79(1762).

Rather than suffer them to dare
Usurp the priestly character,
Save them the arrogant offence,
And snatch them uncorrupted hence."

and again:

"Behold your due in Uzzah dead,
For touching an external sign,
You that the Priestly right invade,
And minister in things Divine.
Will ignorance your bodies save ?
Inquire of Uzzah in his grave !" [1]

This is intended to be from the lips of a preacher:

"None of the Sacred order I,
Yet dare I not the grace deny
Thou hast on me bestowed,
Constrained to speak in Jesu's name,
And show poor souls the atoning Lamb
And point them to His blood." [2, 3]

Turning now to Wesley's idea of the priesthood of the ministry, it is to be regretted that nowhere does he give a reasoned statement of his views, or for that matter, a definition of 'priesthood'.

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1. Verses on 2.Sam.vi.7."God smote Uzzah".
2. Poetical Works. Vol.5. p.103.
3. Cf. with these verses, Dr. Hamilton's 'Conference Sermon' of 1785, which must have had Wesley's approval. It is based on the text "Trust ye not in lying words, saying 'The Temple of The Lord..... are these'" (Jer.7.v.4.). He says: " God called a race of men named prophets who had nothing to do with the priesthood; men full of the Holy Ghost;..... the prophets were what we call laymen...." Addressing the preachers, he continues: " Your commission is the same as Paul's, not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel.....if ye set up a separate people by external distinctions and creed; if ye substitute a silken gown and sash for rough garments and a leathern girdle, and call one another 'Rabbi ! Rabbi!', then the glory will depart from you and God will raise up another people. He will call other lay preachers, no matter by what name..."

If one could be certain about the extent to which he agreed with and used, the verses of his brother, there would be no doubt about Wesley's belief in the priesthood of the ministry or what he meant by it.

Arguing negatively, as do J. E. Rattenbury[1] and J. C. Bowmer[2], Wesley continued to believe in the priesthood for the simple reason that he never withdrew his statement of belief in it. In his letter to Westley Hall,[3] he affirms hisbelief in an 'outward priesthood', an 'outward sacrifice' and apostolical succession. Apostolic Succession he renounced on more than once occasion, but nowhere does he recant his belief in the priesthood and the sacrifice, much as he fails, all along, to define these.

Secondly, Wesley must have continued to believe in the priesthood of the ministry, or else, why does he, only two years before his death, preach a sermon warning those who covet the priesthood when their commission is solely to preach.[4]

Thirdly, although his definition of these terms is not evident, it can be assumed that he refutes the idea of a sacerdotal priesthood. As already pointed out he denies the right of a priest to absolve a person from his sins. In his 'Sunday Service' he omits the declaration of Absolution in Morning and Evening Prayer and substitutes the Collect for the

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1. 'The Eucharistic Hymns of John and Charles Wesley' Chapter Five, pp.81-100.
2. ' The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism', pp.163-186.
3. 30th.Dec.1745. 4. On 'The Ministerial Office'.

Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Trinity whilst the Absolution in the Holy Communion is altered into a prayer for pardon. Moreover he seems to dislike the term 'priest', or for that matter 'bishop' as will be seen later in this study.[1] In fact, it would appear that he avoids, as much as possible, the current ecclesiastical terminology. In his 'Sunday Service', the three ordination services are for 'Superintendent,' 'Elder' and 'Deacon' instead of 'Bishop', 'Priest' and 'Deacon'.[2] In the Communion, 'Elder' is substituted for 'Priest' throughout.

Fourthly, the sacrifice that is offered by the Christian priest is commemorative of the sacrifice of Christ and not propitiatory. The sacrifice of Christ is perfect and all-sufficient, and, so, he says:

> "...there needed not therefore any repetition of it (Heb.vii.27).....To have then a perfect sacrifice daily repeated, and a sacrifice without suffering, and a propitiation and remission without blood, are alike irreconcilable to the apostle, (Heb.ix.22,25, &c.)"[3]

Rather it was a sacrifice of the lives and possessions of the people whom he represented as well as himself. He is a priest in the ambassadorial, not mediatorial, sense. He represents God, who has called him before men and represents men, who have elected him, before God. His priesthood is representative of the

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1. See Chapter Three of this book (e), pp. 215ff.
2. See Appendix Two of this present work.
3. Wesley's 'Reply to the Romish Catechism' - Works, Vol.15 pp.166/7.

priesthood of the whole church, which is a priestly community. Wesley does not use the term, but he believes in the 'Universal Priesthood of all Believers'. The people delegate their priesthood to, or 'invest' it in, him. The priesthood does not belong exclusively to a separate caste of men within the Church.

(f) Wesley's Claim, as Presbyter - Bishop, to Ordain.

"I believe", says Wesley, referring to the right to ordain, "that Bishops are empowered to do this and have been so, from the apostolic age" [1] So they had. Wesley never denies it. Rather he enlarges upon it. Since, to him 'presbyter' indicates the same office as 'bishop',[2] therefore, it followed, logically, that he believes a presbyter has the same right to ordain. As Wesley is a presbyter, he, too, has a right to ordain:

> "Read Bishop Stillingfleet's Irenicon or any impartial history of the Ancient Church" he counsels his brother Charles, in 1780, "and I believe you will think as I do. I verily believe I have as good a right to ordain as to administer the Lord's Supper. But I see abundance of reasons why I should not use that right, unless I was turned out of the Church." [3]

On 19th. August, 1785 in a further letter to Charles, after he began to use his power of ordination,[4] he compares himself to the bishops:

> "For these forty years I have been in doubt concerning that question, 'What

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1. A letter to a clergyman, 4th. May, 1748.
2. See this present study, Book.4, Ch.1.(c).
3. June 8th. 1780. Letters, Vol.7.p.21.
4. For a study of Wesley's actual ordinations, see this present work, Book 4, Ch.3.

> obedience is due to "heathenish priests and mitred infidels" ? ' I have from time to time proposed my doubts to the most pious and sensible clergymen I knew. But they gave me no satisfaction; rather they seemed to be puzzled as well as me.
>
> Some obedience I always paid to the bishops in obedience to the laws of the land. But I cannot see that I am under any obligation to obey them further than those laws require.
>
> It is obedience to those laws that I have never exercised in England the power which I believe God has given me. I firmly believe I am a spiritual ἐπίσκοπος as much as any man in England or in Europe.....I submit still (though sometimes with a doubting conscience) to 'mitred infidels'. I do, indeed, vary from them in some points of doctrine and in some points of discipline - by preaching abroad, for instance, by praying extempore, and by forming societies." [1]

Charles replies[2] that he recants his 'juvenile' line about 'heathenish priests and mitred infidels', mentioning that he knew of none, except one, about whom he took Mr. Law's word. In fact he thinks the bishops are friendly to them both, but John disagrees. Charles acknowledges that John is a spiritual ἐπίσκοπος and so ' is every minister who has the cure of souls'.

In a very important letter to the 'Brethren in America' of 10th. September, 1784, he justifies his using of the power of ordination;

> "Lord King's Account of the Primitive Church convinced me many years ago that bishops and presbyters are the same order,

1. Letters, Vol.7. pp.284/5. August 19th. 1785.
2. 8th. September, 1785.

and consequently have the same right to ordain." [1]

The same belief is expressed to Barnabas Thomas on 25th. March, 1785:

"I know myself to be as real a Christian Bishop as the Archbishop of Canterbury." [2]

Wesley, as already pointed out, whilst believing that 'bishop' and 'presbyter' were of the same order, agrees that there was, and is, a difference of function. 'Bishop' denotes a governing elder, i.e. a Superintendent. Hence, in his 'Sunday Service' he allows for the ordination of 'Superintendent' as well as for an 'Elder'. The difference is of function not of order. His claim to ordain lay not only in the fact that being a presbyter or elder, himself, he was therefore a spiritual bishop, but that he was a 'superintending elder', in fact - 'superintendent' of the whole Methodist organization. A. W. Harrison is of the same opinion:

"Though Wesley accepted the Presbyterian view of the equality of the orders of bishop

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1. Letters. Vol.7.p.203. Cf. Letter to the Printers of the 'Dublin Chronicle' 2nd. June,1789 (Letters.Vol.8. pp.141ff.). He is answering an objection - "When I said 'I believe I am a scriptural Bishop', I spoke on Lord King's supposition that bishops and presbyters are essentially one order."
2. Letters. Vol.7. p.261. Cf. Letter to Thos.Maxfield, 14th.February, 1778 (Letters. Vol.6.p.303):

" O the fathomless love,
Which has deigned to approve
And prosper the work of my hands !
With my pastoral crook,
I went over the brook,
And behold ! I am spread into bands."

and presbyter, he still maintained the need for episcopal oversight. He was therefore no Presbyterian in the full sense." [1]

(g) The Order and Function of a Deacon

Before closing this chapter, mention must be made of the order and office of 'deacon', relatively unimportant as it seems to be in Wesley's conception of the ordained ministry. The work of the diaconate was important enough, but there is little evidence that it was carried out by 'deacons in early Methodism.

Wesley is satisfied that the order and function of deacons are prescribed in Scripture. In a comment on Acts.6.v.2. ("Is it not right that we should leave the word of God and serve tables"), he states that deacons of both sexes were constituted to look after the needs of the poor, the strangers and the widows, and also to engage in works of spiritual mercy. When some of them afterwards preached the gospel, they did this, not by virtue of their deaconship, but of another commission,

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1. 'Separation of Methodism from the Church of England'.p.111 There appears to have been some misunderstanding of Wesley's claim to be a 'bishop'. See his letter to Walter Sellon, Feb.1st.1772,(Letters.Vol.5.p.303) in which he says : "You do not understand your information right. Observe, 'I am going to America to turn bishop'. You are to understand it in sensu composito (in the sense agreed). I am not to be a bishop till I am in America. While I am in Europe, therefore, you have nothing to fear. But as soon as you hear of my being landed at Philadelphia, it will be time for your apprehensions to revive."
There seems to be no satisfactory explanation of what Wesley is referring to here, unless he is refuting rumours.

that of evangelists, which they probably received, not before, but after, they were appointed deacons. And it is unlikely, continues Wesley, that others were chosen deacons, or stewards, in their room, when any of these commenced evangelists.

It is not surprising then, that the true work of deacons was performed, in Methodism, by local laymen, - the 'stewards', the 'Poor stewards' in particular. The early ministry in Methodism was itinerant, therefore the 'serving of tables' was increasingly left to local people. The itinerants were called mainly to the work of an 'evangelist'. Little time elapsed between Wesley's ordination of a man as 'deacon' and 'elder', - sometimes only a day or so. This shows the little importance attached by Wesley to the order of 'deacon' in the ordained ministry. Perhaps he ordained 'deacons' merely to keep in line with current Anglican practice, knowing very well that the 'deacon' in his day bore little resemblance in function to the 'deacon' of New Testament times.

CHAPTER TWO

WESLEY AND HIS LAY PREACHERS

The previous chapter has dealt with Wesley's latest beliefs about the Christian Ministry. This and the next chapter, are an attempt to assess his actions based upon those beliefs.

(a) Status and Discipline : His Autocracy

Wesley spares no pains in defending either his lay-preachers or his employment of them. A note of pride is detected in his letter of the 2nd. June, 1789[1] to the Printer of the 'Dublin Chronicle' in which he quotes Archbishop Potter (who had ordained him) as saying: "Those gentlemen are irregular; but they have done good, and I pray God to bless them". In the same epistle, he admits that unordained preachers have deputised for his brother and himself when they were indisposed, in their chapels, i.e. 'to preach....after reading part of the Church Prayers." Therein lies one of the two main objections lodged against them. First of all, they were not ordained.

> "Will you object" he enquires of a clergyman, "'But he is no minister, nor has any authority to save souls '? I must beg leave to dissent from you in this. I think he is a true evangelical minister, διάκονος , servant of Christ and His Church, who οὕτω διάκονεῖ , so ministers, as to save souls from death, to reclaim sinners from their sins; and that every

1. Letters Vol. 8. pp 141 ff.

> Christian, if he is able to do it, has authority to save a dying soul. But, if you only mean he has no authority to take tithes, I grant it. He takes none; as he has freely received, so he freely gives..... I am afraid reasonable men will be much inclined to think he that saves no souls is no minister of Christ .....'Oh, but he is ordained, and therefore has authority.' Authority to do what? 'To save all the souls that will put themselves under his care.' True; but (to waive the case of them that will not; and would you desire that even <u>those</u> should perish?) he does not, in fact, save them that are under his care...."[1]

Another criticism, first made by Doctor Thomas Rutherforth, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge 1745 and Archdeacon of Essex 1752, was that the Preachers were ignorant men. Wesley hotly replies:

> ".....Indeed, in the one thing which they profess to know they are not ignorant men. I trust there is not one of them who is not able to go through such an examination in substantial, practical, experimental divinity as few of our candidates for Holy Orders even in the University (I speak it with sorrow and shame and in tender love) are able to do.[2] But, oh, what manner of

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1. Letters Vol 2 pp. 147 - 8 4th May 1748.
2. Compare Cf. Journal Vol 4 p. 373. Wesley complains about the refusal of the Archbishop of York in 1758 to ordain Mr. John Newton, a tide surveyor in Liverpool. Newton at some time attended the Methodist preaching in Liverpool. Wesley says, "His case is very peculiar. Our Church requires that Clergymen should be men of learning, and, to this end, have a University education. But how many have a University education, and yet no learning at all? Yet these men are ordained! Meantime, one of eminent learning, as well as unblamable behaviour, cannot be ordained <u>because he was not at the University!</u> What a mere farce is this! Who would believe that any Christian Bishop would stoop to so poor an evasion?" In 1764 Lord Dartmouth obtained ordination for him From Doctor Green, Bishop of Lincoln, and was appointed Curate of Olney.

> examination do most of those candidates go through! ..... Most of these travelling preachers in connexion with me are not ignorant men. As I observed before, they know all which they profess to know. The languages they do not profess to know; yet some of them understand them well. Philosophy they do not profess to know; yet some of them tolerably understand this also. They understand both one and the other better than great part of my pupils at the University did..."[1]

The next critic, George L. Fleury, Archdeacon of Waterford said:

> "Another fundamental error of the Methodists is the asserting that laymen may preach, yea the most ignorant and illiterate of them, provided they have the inward call of the Spirit".

Herein lies the second objection - the 'ignorance' and 'illiteracy' of the preachers. Wesley replies:

> ".....They do not allow the 'most ignorant' men to preach whatever 'inward call' they pretend to. Among them none are allowed to be stated preachers but such as:
> (1) are truly alive to God, such as experience the 'faith that worketh by love.', such as love God and all mankind.
> (2) such as have a competent knowledge of the Word of God and of the work of God in the souls of men.
> (3) such as have given proof that they are called of God by converting sinners from the error of their ways. And to show whether they have these qualifications or no, they are a year, sometimes more, upon trial.....Now I pray, what is the common examination either for deacon's or priest's orders to this?"

Fleury has quoted the text:

> "No man taketh this honour to himself but he that is called of God, as was Aaron"

in an attempt to prove that the preachers were not sent of God to preach. John makes short shrift of this:

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1. Letters Vol 5 pp. 360 - 362.

of this:

> "Another text most unhappily applied; for Aaron did not preach at all. But if these mean are not sent of God, how comes God to confirm their word by convincing and converting sinners ? He confirms the word of His messenger but of none else. Therefore if God owns their word, it is plain that God has sent them."
>
> "But," objects Fleury, "the earth opened and swallowed up those intruders into the priestly office, Korah, Dathan and Abiram."
>
> But he receives a brief and tart reply:
>
> "Such an intruder are you if you convert no sinners to God" [1]

Wesley's main argument for employing unordained men is that of necessity, particularly, he maintains " where thousands are rushing into destruction, and those who are ordained and appointed to watch over them neither care for nor know how to help them" [2] It is no breach of the Twenty-Third Article [3]

Answering an equally puerile question posed by John Topping, Vicar of Allendale,[4] as to whether any orthodox members of Christ's church ever took upon them the public office of preaching without Episcopal ordination, and in what century ? Wesley says :

> "Yes, very many, after the persecution of Stephen in the very first century, as you may read in the 8th. chapter of the Acts. But I must likewise ask <u>you</u>, 'In what century did any drunkard take

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1. Wesley should have pointed out that his lay-preachers are not appointed to <u>any</u> priestly office.
2. Letters, Vol.4, pp.146ff. To the Earl of Dartmouth, 10th. April, 1761.
3. i.e 'On a lawful call'.
4. Letters. Vol.3.p.93.

> that office upon himself ? either with or without Episcopal ordination ? And can he who is not a member of Christ's Church be a minister of it ?'"

It is, he thinks, an idle matter to dispute about lay-preachers. A lay-preacher is surely to be preferred to a drunken, cursing, swearing preacher. [1]

He never ceases to wonder at the way in which God has used these lay-itinerants in spite of all the opposition and criticism:

> "How swift, as well as how deep, and how extensive a work has been wrought in the present age ! And certainly not by might, neither by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord'....By how unlikely instruments, has God been pleased to work from the beginning ! 'A few rawheads,' said the Bishop of London ! 'what can they pretend to do ?' They pretended to be <u>that</u> in the hand of God, that a pen is in the hand of man. They pretended (and do so at this day), to do the work whereunto they are sent: to do just what the Lord pleased. And if it be his pleasure, to throw down the walls of Jericho, the strong holds of Satan, not by the engines of war, but by the blasts of rams' horns, who shall say unto him: 'What doest thou ?'" [2]

As far as Wesley is concerned, the main consideration is the preaching the Gospel to the salvation of mens' souls. Their ecclesiastical status is a minor matter by comparison. "Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin", he cries, " and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen, such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven upon earth." [3] Where and how Wesley and his helpers preach this gospel are also subsidiary matters. The blame for their not preaching it in

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1. Letter to James Clark, 18th. September.1756.
2. Sermon:'Signs of the Times'(Matt.c.v.3.)Arminian Mag.1788.
3. To Alexander Mather. 6th. August.1763. (Letters.Vol.6.p272)

the church is laid at the door of the majority of the clergy. Those, he says, who cause irregularity should not complain about it.[1] Field-preaching has proved its worth, too well, to discard it on the grounds of irregularity. What is more, if the law forbids Christian people to hear the gospel of Christ out of their parish church when they cannot hear it within, it would be sinful for them to obey it.[2] In fact, the Conference of 1747 had felt that field-preaching had been limited too much and thereby many had been lost.[3]

Leaving now the subject of his defence of the lay-preachers in what light did he regard them? It must be stated, first of all that he regarded them as being personally responsible to him and to him alone. Both he and the preachers were to consider themselves faithful members of the Established Church, but, as preachers, they were not under episcopal authority except in points of 'an indifferent nature'. Episcopal authority must never reverse what is fixed by divine authority.[4] He alone appointed and stationed them.[5] It was a constant source of trouble to him that so many of his preachers resented this and resisted it whenever possible, assisted as they often were, by the local people who often wished them to remain stationary when Wesley desired them to move on.

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1. Letter to Henry Venn, June 22nd 1763. Letters Vol 6 p. 272.
2. Letter to the Earl of Dartmouth 10th April 1761. Letters Vol 4 pp 146 f.
3. Minutes (Bennett's) Wed. 17th June.
4. Letter to Earl of Dartmouth (See Note 2). In any case, the Church of England never recognised the lay-preachers, so therefore could not possibly exercise any authority over them
5. See letter of January 18th 1720 to Thomas Taylor re the expulsion of Alexander Mc.Nab. Preachers are to be directed by Wesley not vice-versa.

> ".....Whoever does not observe the twelth rule of a preacher (i.e. Act in all things, not according to your own wish, but as a son in the gospel, and in union with your brethren etc.) renounce connexion with me! ..... 'Each preacher is to be a fortnight in the city and in the country alternatively!.....'" [1]

> ".....I have the credit of stationing the preachers. But many of them go where they will go for all me..... They can give me twenty reasons for going elsewhere..." [2]

Wesley regarded as evil, the practice of a preacher staying two years together in the same place.[3] They should change every year and whilst in a circuit, ought to follow each other around in it.[4] "It is a shame", he says "for any Methodist preacher to confine himself to one place. We are debtors to all the world".[5] Itinerants must be itinerants if they are to remain in connexion with him.[6] The Societies would become as dead as stones if men remained in the same place too long.

Scotland seemed to be a particularly bad spot for this kind of difficulty. He threatens to send no more preachers there unless this matter is remedied.[7]

> ".....It is the Scots only whom, when they like a preacher, would choose to have him continue with them? Not so; but the English and Irish also - yea, all the inhabitants of the earth. But we know our calling.

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1. Letter to Christopher Hopper 9th Oct 1767. Lett. Vol 6 p.64. See also letter to James Oddie. Feb 14th 1768. Lett. Vol 5 p. 74. See also Lett. Vol 7 pp 294/5; p. 330; Vol 8 pp 52/3
2. Letters to George Merryweather. 7th Aug. 1770 Lett Vol 5 p196
3. Letter to Christopher Hopper 22nd Sept 1771 Lett. Vol. 5. p. 196. In a further letter 31st July 1773, Wesley allows him an extra year. Also the same is allowed Joseph Benson, letter of June 28th 1774.
4. To Christopher Hopper 7th Aug. 1773. Letters Vol 6 p. 37.
5. To Joseph Benson Dec. 11th 1772 Vol 6 p. 3.
6. To Joseph Benson Oct. 16th 1774. Letters Vol 6 p. 117.
7. Letter to John Bredin. Letters Vol 6 p. 108.

> The Methodists are not to continue in any one place under heaven. We are called to be itinerants. Those who receive us must receive us as such. And if the Scots will not, others will....."[1]

It appears from a letter to his brother Charles, dated 4th August 1775, that some preachers had actually 'settled' in one place and allowed to become 'local preachers'.[2] As early as 1747, the question "Who are those that assist us only in one place?"[3]- was asked at Conference, indicating that the office of 'local - lay-preacher', is almost as old as Methodism itself.

Marriage was no bar to a man's preaching ministry and the only records of Wesley's refusing to accept married men is purely a financial objection and that only occasional.[4] Even this was waived if it could be proved that the society concerned could maintain both man and wife.[5]

Three other instances of Wesley's autocratic handling of his preachers deserve mention. Firstly, preaching was to be undertaken only on the understanding that it was a full-time occupation. Preachers were forbidden to engage in trades, especially hawking 'drops' which their wives might sell at home, for it had 'a bad appearance' and did not suit the dignity of their calling.[6] Secondly, they may not

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1. Letter to Joseph Benson 12th dec. 1774. Letters Vol 6 p.131 See also letter to Joseph Winscom 14th Jan. 1779 re Isle of Wight. They were to change every month there.
2. Letters Vol 6 p. 170. A Mr. Saunderson of Bristol is mentioned
3. Bennett's Minutes. Thursday 18th June 1747.
4. Letter to Christopher Hopper 31st Oct. 1778. Lett. Vol 6 p.328
5. See appendix for Wesley and women in the Ministry.
6. Minutes Vol I p. 77. Conference 1768.

publish any book without Wesley's permission.[1] Thirdly, the preachers may not attend Conference unless Wesley had bidden them. His definition of Conference was "While I live, (it) is 'The preachers whom I invite to confer with me .....'"[2] It was inevitable that this attitude should be the subject of some criticism by the preachers. When John Hampson called it 'autocratic power', Wesley simply explained to Conference that it is his own power over the preachers who joined him freely and may leave at their own discretion.[3]

What status did Wesley afford his preachers? The Conference of 1747 had asked in what light should the Assistants[4] consider themselves and the answer had been that they were learners rather than teachers, "as young students at the University for whom therefore a method of study is expedient in the highest degree." Learners they

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1. Letter to Samuel Furly. 8th Sept 1761. See also Minutes of 1766.
2. Letter to Thomas Wride. 8th June 1785. Lett. Vol 7. p. 279.
3. Minutes 1766. Vol I p. 60. See also Tyerman: The Life and Times of John Wesley. Vol 3 p. 496. for Thomas Taylor's objection to Wesley's refusal to allow him to attend conference.
4. The use of 'Assistant' in the Conference Minutes of 1747 seems strange when compared with the footnote of Journal Vol 6 p. 31. which says that the term 'Assistant' was defined in the Minutes of 1763 and that before this period the assistants were called 'Helpers'! See also Myles' Chronological History p. 90.

were! Five hours of study per day was prescribed for them.[1] The intricate rules for their candidature, laid down in the 1747 Minutes implied that they were primarily preachers, and to that end was all their studies directed. They were to be regarded as "extraordinary messengers to provoke the others to jealousy". They were not to be classed as ministers nor were they to call themselves such.[2] In the Minutes Vol II published 1763, this warning was repeated and enlarged upon:

> ".....against calling our society a church or the church. Also against calling our preachers ministers, our houses meeting-houses (call them preaching-houses). Do not license them as such...."
>
> "These preachers are not ministers", he protests to Robert Marsden, "none of them undertakes the single care of a whole flock, but ten, twenty, thirty, one following and helping another, and all under the direction of my brother and me, undertake jointly what (I judge) no man in England is equal to alone".[3]

It was at this point that Wesley found himself out of line with the existing laws of the land. It was abhorrent to him to think either himself or his helpers were Dissenters. In fact, he did not want to license either his preachers or his preaching-houses at all. However, the law inclined to the view that they were Dissenters and must license themselves as such. As Wesley had a profound respect for the law, some compromise was inevitable. It is not surprising, then, that the Minutes quoted above continues thus:

> "Do not license yourself until you are constrained; and then not as a Dissenter, but as a Methodist preacher. It is time enough when you are prosecuted, to take the oaths. Thereby you are licensed."

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1. Minutes, Vol.1.p.69 (1766).
2. Minutes, 1749.
3. August, 31st.1756.(Letters, Vol.3. pp.184-5).

Wesley declares, in 1768 that the greater part of the preachers are not licensed at all, not even as Dissenters. The criticism had been made that Methodist preachers pretended to be members of the Church of England, yet, had licensed themselves as Dissenters. Writing to Thomas Adam of Winteringham in reply to this accusation, he says:

> "I instance particularly in Thomas Adams and Thomas Brisco. When Thomas Adams desired a licence, one of the Justice said, 'Mr. Adams, are you not of the Church of England, why, then, do you desire a licence ?' He answered, 'Sir, I am of the Church of England; yet I desire a licence, that I may legally defend myself from the illegal violence of oppressive men.' T. Brisco being asked the same question in London, and the Justice adding, 'We will not grant you a licence,' his lawyer replied, 'Gentlemen, you cannot refuse it : the Act is a mandatory act. You have no choice.' One asked the chairman, 'Is this true ?' He shook his head and said, 'He is in the right.' The objection, therefore, does not lie at all against the greater part of the Methodist Preachers; because they are either licensed in this form or not licensed at all." [1]

Wesley continues his argument, though it grows dangerously weak:

> "When other applied for a licence, the Clerk or Justice said 'I will not license you but as Protestant Dissenters.' They replied, 'We are of the Church; we are not Dissenters: but if you will call us so, we cannot help it.' They did <u>call</u> them so in their certificates, but this did not <u>make</u> them so. They still <u>call themselves</u> members of the Church of England; and they believe themselves so to be....." [2]

Charles Wesley of course strongly objected to the idea of the preachers licensing themselves as Protestant Dissenters, as he saw in this the occasion of separating from the Church.[3] The Preachers must become either

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1 & 2. Letters Vol 5 pp. 95ff.
3. Life of Charles Wesley (T. Jackson) Vol 2 p. 183.

Dissenting or Church Ministers.[1] But his choice is obvious. With characteristic charity he writes thus to John Nelson, 27th. March, 1760:

> "I think you are no weathercock. What think you then of licensing yourself as a Protestant Dissenter ?.....John. I love thee from my heart; yet rather than see thee a Dissenting Minister, I wish to see thee smiling in thy coffin." [2]

A further correspondence was entered into with Grimshaw of Howarth, on the same subject, though the latter shares his disgust at the situation that has arisen.

On Saturday, 3rd. November, 1787, John Wesley records in his Journal, that he had a long conversation with a Mr. Clulow "on that execrable Act called the Conventicle Act." He says that after consulting the Act of Toleration with that of the fourteenth of Queen Anne, they were both clearly convinced that it was the safest way to license all the chapels, and all the travelling preachers, not as Dissenters, but simply 'preachers of the gospel'; and they felt that no Justice, or bench of Justices, would have authority to refuse licensing either the house or the preachers.

In William Wilberforce, he found a sympathetic friend. Having mentioned the difficulties of private homes being upset and their owners fined because worship had been conducted there, he proceeds to relate how one preacher

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1. Life of Charles Wesley (Thomas Jackson), Vol.2.p.184.
2. Ibid. p.185.
3. Ibid.p.188.

was seized by the constable, although he was licensed and was not released until he had paid a fine of twenty pounds declaring his licence invalid because 'he was a churchman'. "What can Methodists do?" asks Wesley, "They are liable to be ruined by the Conventicle Act, and they have no relief from the Act of Toleration."[1]

It was hardly to be expected that the Church authorities would prove helpful. Wesley complains bitterly to the Bishop of Lincoln that the Methodists "desire a licence to worship God after their own conscience. Your Lordship refuses it, and then punishes them for not having a licence."[2]

(b) Why he refused to ordain 1746 - 1784.

There was no doubt at all in Wesley's mind that lay-preaching was essential, but that there was a need for ordination in order to obey a call to preach, he was not convinced. Nor, for that matter was ordination required for a preacher to have the pastoral care over God's people. Ordination, to Wesley, indicated the authority to administer the sacraments. Therefore it followed that, ideally, no ordination of the lay-preachers was necessary. The place where the sacraments were to be received was, for the loyal Methodist, - the parish church, to be given by the parish

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1. Letters Vol 8 p. 231.
2. Letters Vol 8 p. 224/5. To Dr. Pretyman Tomline, Bishop of Lincoln. June 26th 1790.

minister.[1]

In the second place, although he was convinced that he was a spiritual' episcopos ' with a scriptural right to ordain, he would know quite well, that as an Anglican presbyter, the Church of England recognised that he possessed no such right. Furthermore, if he used this 'right' the probable result would be the one thing he had feared more than anything else, i.e. separation from the church. He had expressed his belief that bishops had been empowered to ordain from the apostolic age[2] and as the next sub-chapter points out, in spite of his personal beliefs about his own right to ordain, episcopal ordination was preferable. Smith in his 'History of Wesleyan Methodism'[3] is careful to point out that Wesley's refusal to exercise his power to ordain was not, therefore, "from any sense of inability.....

> He fully believed, that he possessed the scriptural power and right to supply all this want, - to place his Societies everywhere in the position of Churches, and himself in the character of the scriptural bishop over the largest spiritual flock in the country..... Why did not Wesley take this course? Because he considered the orders of ministry in the Established Church reasonable and useful as human arrangements; and because he felt conscientiously bound to remain all his life in communion with this Church, and, as far as in him lay, to keep his people in the same path.."

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1. Works. Vol 10 p. 232ff. Sermon on "Obedience to Pastors". The people of the parish must be obedient to the parish minister. This sermon, incidentally was written late in Wesley's life and published in 1785 in the Arminian Magazine. He still agreed with the 26th Article of Religion which says that grace can be conveyed even through unworthy ministers.
2. Letter to a Clergyman, Letters Vol 2 pp. 147/8.
3. Vol I p. 507.

Benjamin Gregory is of the same opinion, declaring that:

> "Wesley had foregone his right to ordain, or rather postponed its exercise, simply and avowedly on the ground, that, in the actual circumstances and for the time then present, it would be rather a hindrance than a 'furtherance of the Gospel'" [1]

Henry Moore feels that Wesley's refusal for using this authority in the face of such pressure from the preachers and the almost incessant opposition and slander which he had to encounter, most strongly proves his divine commission.[2]

When, in the Conference of 1746 [3] the question was raised:

> "Why do we not use more form and solemnity in receiving a new labourer ?" the answer given was, "We purposely decline it; 1) Because there is something of stateliness in it, whereas we would be little and inconsiderable; 2) Because we would not make haste. We desire barely to follow Providence, as it gradually opens."

However, there are some accounts of special acts in connection with the receiving of new labourers. Joseph Cownley, whom Wesley regarded as one of his best preachers, was received by him as follows:

> "Mr. Cownley kneeled down and Mr. Wesley, putting a New Testament into his hand, said, 'Take thou authority to preach the Gospel. 'He then gave him his benediction." [4]

Another instance is that of Adam Clarke. Clarke had made an appointment with Wesley at Bristol and the former redords that the conversation between them was short. He says:

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1. 'Scriptural Church Principles and Wesleyan Methodist Polity and History' 1888, p.101.
2. 'Life of Rev. John Wesley, A.M., Vol.II.p.337.
3. Bennett's Minutes.p.35 for Tuesday, 14th. May, 1746.
4. Early Methodist Preachers ii.7. The fact that Cownley received a copy of the New Testament only suggests Wesley has in mind the ordination of a Deacon, though he was ordained Deacon and Presbyter by Wesley in 1788.

> "Mr. Wesley took me kindly by the hand, and asked me how long since I had left Ireland. Our conversation was short. He said 'Well, brother Clarke, do you wish to devote yourself entirely to the work of God?' I answered, 'Sir, I wish to do, and be, what God pleases.' He then said, 'We want a preacher for Bradford, in Wiltshire: hold yourself in readiness to go there. I am going into the country, and will let you know when you shall go.' He then turned to me, laid his hands upon my head, and spent a few moments in praying to God to bless and preserve me, and to give me success in the work to which I was called. I departed, having now received, in addition to my appointment from God to preach His Gospel, the only authority I could have from man in that line in which I was to exercise the ministry of the Divine word."[1]

Incidents of this kind have been described by so many as 'ordinations'.[2] This is not correct. Cownley had to wait until 1788 before he received presbyteral ordination from Wesley to administer the sacraments. What is even less justifiable is the acceptance of the mere appointment as lay-preachers by Wesley as equivalent of ordination. A. Raymond George has referred to this practice as the 'virtual ordination theory'.[3] Richard Watson is one of the defenders of this idea. He says:

> "It has, therefore, been generally supposed, that Mr. Wesley did not consider his appointment of preachers without imposition of hands, as an <u>ordination</u> to the ministry; but only as an irregular employment of laymen in the spiritual office of merely expounding the Scriptures in a case or moral necessity. This, however, is not correct. They were not appointed to expound or preach merely, but were solemnly set apart to the pastoral office, as the Minutes of the Conference show; nor were they regarded by him as <u>laymen</u>, except when in common parlance they were distinguished from the clergy of the church; in which case he would have called any Dissenting minister a layman ....whilst he evidently refers to himself, as the father and bishop of the whole of the societies, he tacitly compares his

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1. Etheridge: Life of Adam Clarke Ll.D., p. 55.
2. Etheridge speaks of this as being Clarke's 'ordination'.
3. London, Quarterly and Holborn Review, April 1951.

> 'assistant to the ancient 'presbyters', and his 'helpers' to the ancient 'deacons'. In point of fact, so fully did he consider himself, even in 1747 (whether consistently or not as a churchman, let others determine, I speak only of the fact), as setting apart or ordaining to the ministry, that he appears to have had thoughts of adding imposition of hands to his usual mode of ordination, which was preceded by fasting and private prayers, and consisted of public examination, prayer, and appointment; and he only declines this for prudential reasons." (he refers here to the minute quoted above, requesting more solemnity for receiving a labourer).[1]

Watson is wrong. No doubt some of his 'facts' may be traced to notes made in Charles Wesley's diary of which much has been made, viz:

> 1754. October, 19th. "I was with my brother, who said nothing of Perronet,[2] except 'We have in effect ordained already.' He urged me to sign the preachers' certificates; was inclined to lay on hands; and let the preachers administer."
>
> October 24th. "Was with my brother. He is wavering; but willing to wait before he ordains or separates. [3]

Charles does not say that either he or his brother believes that they have actually ordained.[4] They would be well aware, though, that many people would be only too eager

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1. Life of Wesley, p.204.
2. Perronet, with others, had taken upon himself the authority to administer the sacraments, thus incurring the displeasure of the Wesleys.
3. John replies to his brother's fears in a letter of 16th. July of the following year: "I am very calm and cool, determining nothing but to do nothing rashly. Now which is more in the temptation ? To my thought, you are in it over head and ears. Whoever is convinced or not convinced, ordination and separation are not the same thing."
4. Perhaps the ceremonies in respect of Cownley and Clarke were similar to that which is known to Modern Methodism as the Public Recognition of a Local Preacher, except in this case it was not public.

to regard this as ordination. The preachers wanted to administer and obviously some had already done so without either Wesley's knowledge or consent. They were tireless in their efforts to induce him to give them authority.

How could this appointment of men as lay-preachers be ordination ? Wesley, with his loyalty to the Established Church, his love for the practices of the Early Church and his fidelity to the Scriptures, would know that valid ordination required the outward form of imposition of hands. But imposition of hands only, does not of itself, imply ordination. Wesley's comments on Acts.13.v.2.("Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them"), settles this matter:

> "This was not ordaining them. St. Paul was ordained long before, and that 'not of men, neither by men.' It was only inducting him to the province for which our Lord had appointed him from the beginning, and which was now revealed to the prophets and teachers. In consequence of this they fasted, prayed, and laid their hands upon them; a rite which was used not in ordination only, but in blessing, and on many other occasions." 1

Lastly, there is little doubt that one of the greatest restraining influences on Wesley was Charles. Anything likely to make a breach with the mother-church meant hostility from him and he was ever watchful where the preachers were concerned lest any act on their part should cause embarrassment. More will be said of his attitude during the study of the actual ordinations. His warning message to the preachers found its

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1. 'Notes on the New Testament'. (Italics mine) See also letter to James Clark, 18th.September, 1756, where the same comments are repeated. (Letters. Vol.3.p.200).

expression in 'Hymns for the Preachers" of which the following is part:

"When first sent forth to minister the word,
Say, did we preach ourselves, or Christ the Lord?
Was it our aim, disciples to collect ?
To raise a party or to found a sect ?
No; but to spread the power of Jesu's name,
Repair the walls of our Jerusalem,
Revive the piety of ancient days,
And fill the earth with our Redeemer's praise." [1]

(c) His desire for Regular Ordination for the preachers to prevent separation

Wesley, perturbed about his position in the Church of England, and not desirous of doing anything inconsistent, refused, on the other hand, to do anything which would destroy his own work. His concern led to a lengthy and important correspondence with Samuel Walker, an evangelical clergyman who was Vicar of Truro, and with one or two others. Walker, writing to Wesley on the 5th. September, 1755 [2] says, as he sees it, that the permitting (if not appointing) of lay-preaching by him is a step to separation, an end which would, no doubt, please some Methodists. On the other hand, those of the Methodists were against separation desired ordination for the preachers and thereby preventing it. At least, a partial separation has been made, alleges Walker, because the essence of the Church of England, considered as such, consists in her orders and law and not in her worship and doctrine. But Wesley is firm. If it means a choice between giving up his lay-preachers or separation, he would choose the latter without hesitation.

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1. Poetical Works. Vol.vi.p.63.
2. C.G.B.Davies 'The Early Cornish Evangelicals,1735-60'.pp. 88-90. See also E. Sidney 'Life & Times of the Rev.S.Walker'.

In a letter to Thomas Adam dated 31st. October, 1755,[1] Wesley declares that he and his preachers will not go out of the Church of England unless they are thrust out. Separation would never be lawful unless it is absolutely necessary, and such necessity, he says, does not yet exist. They have only 'varied' from the Establishment on the points of "preaching abroad, using extempore prayer and forming converts into societies and also permitting suitable laymen to preach" :

> "I say permit, because we ourselves have hitherto viewed it in no other light. This we are clearly satisfied we may do; that we may do more we are not satisfied. It is not clear to us that presbyters so circumstanced as we are may appoint or ordain others, but it is that we may direct as well as suffer them to do what we conceive they are moved to do by the Holy Ghost. It is true that in ordinary cases both an inward and an outward call are requisite. But we apprehend there is something far from ordinary in the present case. And upon the calmest view of things we think they who are only called of God and not of man have more right to preach than they who are only called of man and not of God. Now, that many of the clergy though called of man, are not called of God to preach His gospel is undeniable.....Soul-damning clergymen lay me under more difficulties than soul-saving laymen." [2]

Walker, in his reply[3] points out to Wesley that if he leaves the Church because of its defects he will never stay in any organization because all have their defects. Sending a copy of this reply to Thomas Adam he adds this comment:-

> "Will he be able to stand his ground ? For my part I think not. I fear he has too high an opinion

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1. Thomas Adam was Rector of Winteringham, Lincolnshire. His friendship with Wesley was soon to wane. Letters.Vol.3.p.149
2. Davies,(op.cit)p.100. He blames Wesley's supporters for wanting a new loaf instead of being leaven to the old lump.
3. Davies (op.cit) p.100. October.20th.1755. (see p.193)

of Methodism, and imagines it will be lost if the preachers leave him, which I am fully confirmed they will do, if he will not go with them."

Wesley admits Walker's comments to be true but still wants to know how the work can be continued without the lay-preachers.[1]

Charles, anxious about his brother's position writes to Walker on the 7th. August, 1756, mentioning that his brother is 'almost overcome' by the preachers and asks him to write to John. Charles mentions that because of this he had urged John to sign the following agreement:[2]

"March.10th. 1752. We whose names are underwritten, being clearly and fully convinced, - 1. That the success of the present work of God, does in a great measure depend on the entire union of all the labourers employed therein. 2. That our present call is chiefly to the members of the Church wherein we have been brought up, - are absolutely determined by the Grace of God, (1) To abide in the closer union with each other, and never speak, do, or suffer, any thing which tends to weaken that union. (2) Never to leave the communion of the Church of England without the consent of those whose names are subjoined.

Chas. Wesley.	John Jones.
Wm. Kent.	John Downes.
John Wesley.	John Nelson. "

Charles declares that he would have broken off from both the Methodists and his brother, had it not been for this agreement.

"What I desire of my brother is, " he insists, "1. that the unsound unrecoverable preachers should be let depart just now. 2. That the wavering should be confirmed, if possible, and established in their calling. 3. That the sound ones as soon

1. 20th. November, 1755. Letters. Vol.3.p.153.
2. Davies (op.cit.) p.106.

as may be, prepared for orders."

Furthermore, he maintains that it is his intention to see that all the preachers know of this vow of remaining in the State Church, and also to make their intentions known to the Archbishop who is wanting to see them.

Meanwhile, Walker wrote to John hoping that he will see to it that Methodism is made 'more serviceable' to the Church.

> "I would wish", he says, " as many of your preachers as are fit for it, might be ordained, and that the others might be fixed to certain societies, and that in my judgement, as inspectors and readers, rather than preachers." [1]

Acknowledging Charles' letter, Walker still feels that lay-preaching is contrary to the discipline of the Church of England. It is setting up a church within her that is not of her. The preachers need only to administer the sacraments within the societies and then 'particular' churches are formed as a result. "When, therefore," he continues, " it is asked, shall we separate from the Church of England ? , it should rather be asked, shall we make the separation we have begun, a separation in all forms ? And if we do not think ourselves allowed to do this, shall we unite with her ? We do not, unless lay-preaching is laid aside." [2]

He continues:

> "Mr. Vivian of Cornwood is here, and bids me use his name in confirmation of my scheme; which is:
> (1) That as many of the lay-preachers as are fit for, and ca be procured ordination, be ordained.
> (2) That those who remain be not allowed to preach, but be set as inspectors over the societies, and

1. Davies (op.cit). p.109.
2. Davies (op.cit). p.110-111.

assistants to them
(3)That they be not moved from place to place, to the end they may be personally acquainted with all the members of such societies.
(4)That their business may be to purge and edify the societies under their care, to the end that no person be continued as member, whose conversation is not orderly and of good report.... .....If this should be made an objection, that hereby lay-preachers would be prevented from preaching abroad, and so much good put a stop to; I would suggest it to be inquired into, whether the many of these who have started up of their own heads (being) considered raw, disqualified, and sadly misbehaved - many of them, by the by, after having publicly appeared - whether, this considered, lay-preaching hath been so much to the honour and interest of religion or Methodism, as may be supposed ? I remember when it first began I said and thought lay-preaching would be the ruin of Methodism."

A P.S. is appended:

"If something were said to the preachers respecting a proper ministerial call, might it be amiss at a fit time ? "

Charles replies quickly,[1] to the effect that whilst lay-preaching is a partial separation, it may, but need not, become a total one. He reveals his desire that John should not employ any more new preachers until he has regulated and disciplined the old ones.

Further correspondence followed between Charles Wesley and Walker and also between the latter and Thomas Adam. All agree that the usefulness of Methodism ceases upon separation, when it would serve as a discouragement to the regular clergy who are 'standing up in the gap'. Thomas Adam in a letter to Walker, dated September 21st. 1756 is not so sure that the suggestion of ordination for some of the preachers is a good thing. To what end were they to be ordained ? "That they

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1. 21st. August, 1755.

might still go on to preach in fields, in private houses, and hold separate meetings ? This would be as great a breach upon the order of the Church as ever, and perhaps attended with great inconveniences than their present practice. J. Wesley will not, cannot, give up the point of lay-preaching; it will be giving up all; he must cry peccavi, and his heart will hold him a tug before it comes to that. Upon the whole, my judgment is, that they have embarrassed themselves past recovery; and must either go on in their present form, or separate totally and openly." [1]

Wesley, however, whilst he does not mind his preachers being ordained, cannot agree to their being fixed in one place.[2] The work will become stagnant, he protests,[3] nor will he agree to giving up his societies to the local incumbent if the latter is an evangelical. Rather than prevent a separation, it would be the direct way of causing it.[4] So he receives some very mixed advice. Meanwhile, the agitation for permission for the itinerants to administer the sacraments, both from themselves and the people they served, was growing, and in some cases was being assumed, with, or without his knowledge. Such instances will be referred to later. Regular ordination seems to be the only answer to this problem, and it will be seen that the procuring of such ordination presented an even greater problem.

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1. Tyerman. Vol.2.'Life and Times of John Wesley', p.251. Also Davies (op.cit).p.119.
2. His desire is ordination for itinerancy
3. Letter to Walker. 3rd. September.1756.(Letters.Vol.3.pp192ff)
4. Letter, 19th. September, 1757. Letters. Vol.3.pp.221ff.

(d) Methods used to secure Regular Ordination

(i) From Anglican Bishops

" Moved by our long continued cry
Some apostolic father raise,
Our want of labourers to supply
To admit the vessels of Thy grace
To lay on hands, o'erruled by Thine
And recognise the call divine." [1]

Wesley appears to have required ordination for some of his preachers to assist him personally, and for others to become either incumbents of parishes, or to assist Methodist incumbents, and thus continue to spread Methodist influence. The best example of ordination of a personal assistant of Wesley's was that of Thomas Maxfield about whom Wesley wrote to a friend in May, 1763:

"He was by me (by those who did it at my instance) recommended to the Bishop of Derry to be ordained priest, who told him then (I had it from his own mouth), 'Mr. Maxfield, I ordain you to assist that good man, that he may not work himself to death." [2]

There need be little wonder that there was such a reluctance to ordain the itinerant preachers as clergymen in the Church of England. When Wesley desired ordination, it was, in most cases, to enable them to administer the sacraments to the societies they visited and remain Methodist preachers. It was natural that any bishop would think twice about conferring ordination for this purpose.

"I can easily believe, that many, if not most, of those who shall survive you, will separate from the Church", declares Joseph Cownley, in a letter to Charles Wesley,[3]" except, as my friend Hopper says, you get them fastened where they are

1. Poetical Works. vi.p.119.
2. Letters. Vol.4.pp.208ff.When and where was he ordained deacon
3. Tyerman: 'Life and Times of John Wesley' Vol.2. p. 387.

> by prevailing on one or more of the bishops to ordain them. But then, what Bishop, either in England or Ireland, will ever do this ? will ordain a Methodist preacher, to be a Methodist preacher ? For my part, as poor and worthless a wretch as I am, I could not submit to it on the terms on which most of my brethren have hitherto got it."

Wesley was, perhaps, a little more successful in obtaining ordination for a 'settled' Methodist ministry within the Church. According to a letter dated 25th. January, 1762, [1] he has high hopes of obtaining ordination for Samuel Furly so that he could be John Fletcher's curate at Madeley. Whilst he was unsuccessful, the curate to Fletcher's successor was Melville Horne, one of Wesley's preachers. He writes thus to Mrs. Fletcher:

> "There is much Divine Providence in this, that the people (of Madeley) are permitted to choose their own curate. I believe Mr. Horne to be a sound Methodist and think he will serve them well if he can procure ordination." [2]

He did so and was appointed.

Though there were a few Methodist preachers who received ordination to serve in this way, sometimes, their Methodist connections proved a hindrance. Sometimes Anglican bishops were reluctant to ordain anyone who was a friend of Wesley's. Writing to Brian Bury Collins, an arts graduate of St. John's College, Cambridge, he says:

> "It is not at all surprising that the Bishop, though a good man, should scruple to ordain a field-preacher; and I apprehend his brethren will neither endeavour or desire to remove his his scruple, unless it should please God to

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1. Letters. Vol.4. p.168. See also letter to S. Furly, 9th. December, 1760.
2. 2nd. October.1785. Letters. Vol.7. pp.294/5.

> touch some of their hearts and employ them to soften the rest. Perhaps that humane man may aim at a middle way - namely, to ordain you upon conditions. And, if such conditions were proposed as would not entangle your conscience, I should have no objection. But in this case you will have need of all the wisdom from above, that you may yield far enough and not too far. I do not think that Presbyterian ordination would add anything to what you have already. And it seems we need not consider the matter farther till we know the Bishop's final determination." [1]

There were others who received episcopal ordination, but the list is impressive by its brevity. Lawrence Coughlan, an Irish preacher of Wesley's had, with others, secured ordination from a Greek Bishop [2] in 1764. As a result he was expelled from the Connexion. In 1768 he procured ordination from the Bishop of London and was sent as a missionary to Newfoundland. The Bishop must certainly have known of his unusual background. He still claimed to be a Methodist. On his return to England, he was, for a while minister at Holywell Mount chapel in London. He earnestly desired to resume the itinerancy, but whilst talking with Wesley in the latter's study, he died suddenly. [3] Benjamin Colley, of Tollerton, Yorkshire, joined the Methodists in 1761 and received episcopal ordination. He was invited by Wesley to London where he officiated as clergyman in Methodist chapels. He lapsed for a while, due to the influence of Bell and Maxfield who had seceeded, but he was later restored. The delay in the ordination of John Newton, a friend of the Wesleys' and a composer of a number of well known hymns, although he was not a Methodist preacher, may well have been

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1. Letter dated August 1st. 1780. (Letters Vol.7.p.29). Does this mean that Wesley implies that Anglican ordination confers something lacking in Presbyterian ordinition ?
2. See next sub-chapter. 3. See Journal Vol 4 p. 207=footnote

due to his having attended the Methodist preaching in Liverpool. [1]

One thing is certain - there were more refusals to ordain than acceptances. As will be seen later, it was the refusal to ordain preachers for America which caused Wesley to exercise his assumed power of ordination.

(e) Methods used to secure Regular Ordination

(ii) From a Greek Bishop

Thomas Maxfield, who had secured Anglican ordination from the Bishop of Derry, had for several years been stationed in London to read the liturgy and administer the sacraments in Wesley's absence. However, Maxfield left Wesley and it was now impossible to obtain any further Anglican ordinations. In 1763, there appeared in London, a Greek Bishop, Erasmus, whose presence Wesley soon discovered. In a letter to the Editor of St. James' Chronicle' on the 10th. February, 1765, [2] he explains the circumstances under which he met him:

> "A year or two ago, I found a stranger perishing for want and expecting daily to be thrown in prison. He told me he was a Greek bishop. I examined his credentials, and was fully satisfied. After much conversation (in Latin and Greek, for he spoke no English at all) I determined to relieve him effectively which I did without delay, and promised to send him back to Amsterdam, where he had several friends of his own nation. And this I did without any farther view, merely upon motives of humanity."

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1. See Journal. Vol.4.p.373, footnote.
2. Letters. Vol.4.p.289.

Wesley had one of his preachers, John Jones, marked out as Maxfield's successor, if only he could procure ordination for him. It occurred to him that this Greek bishop might oblige. John Jones was a man of exemplary piety, able and of good learning - in every way a suitable candidate. Before approaching Erasmus, he insisted that Jones should write to the Patriarch at Smyrna to find out if the bishop was genuine. The reply was that Erasmus was Bishop of Arcadia, in Crete. The testimony of several gentlemen of the bishop's acquaintance in Turkey, was added.[1] Jones was thereupon ordained. Charles Wesley took great offence at this and would not recognise the ordination. Not long after this, Jones left the Methodist Connexion and sought Anglican ordination. This he received and eventually became Vicar of Harwich, a post which he retained for many years.

A more serious situation soon developed. Several of the preachers, as soon as Wesley left town, prevailed upon the obliging prelate to ordain them. Wesley continues in the letter mentioned above:

> "When I was gone out of town, Bishop Erasmus was prevailed upon to ordain Lawrence Coughlan[2], a person who had no learning at all.
>
> Some time after, Mr Maxfield, or his friends, sent for him from Amsterdam, to ordain Mr. S-t and three other persons as <u>unlearned</u> as any of the Apostles, but I believe <u>not so much inspired</u>.

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1. See Tyerman: 'Life and Times of John Wesley' Vol.2.pp486ff. Simon: Studies Vol.4.p.120 says Jones was a medical man. Stevens 'History of Methodism to the Death of Wesley'p.330, says he was Classics master at Kingswood and refers to him as Dr. Jones.
2. Hockin: 'John Wesley and Modern Methodism' p.43, says <u>Wesley</u> procured this ordination for Coughlan. He is wrong here.

> In December last he was sent for again, and ordained six other persons, members of our Society, but every way, I think, unqualified for that office. These I judged it my duty to disclaim (to waive all other considerations) for a fault which I know not who can excuse, buying an ordination in an unknown tongue.

That much publicity had been given to the matter, is evident from a paragraph which had appeared in 'Lloyd's Evening Post' for December 7th. 1764:

> "To the article in the papers relating to three tradesmen being ordained by a Greek bishop, another may be added, a master baker. And two celebrated Methodist preachers made also an application to the same bishop, to consecrate one or both of them bishops; but the Greek told them, it was contrary to the rule of his church for one bishop to make another; yet, notwithstanding all he said, they very unwillingly took a denial." [1]

Realising Charles' anger at this step he writes to him on 11th. January, 1765:

> " On Monday morning I desired the preachers and the stewards to meet me. It was then inquired, -
> 1. Can James Thwayte, B. Russen, Rd.Perry, James Satles, John Oliver, and T. Bryant, who have bought an ordination in an unknown tongue, be received by us as clergymen ? No.
> 2. Can we receive them any longer as preachers ? No.
> 3. Can we receive them as members of our Society ? No.
>
> And this I ordered to be signified to each of them immediately. [2]

Apparently Jones must have been able to understand the

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1. See Tyerman 'Life and Times &c.' Vol.2.p.486.
2. Letters. Vol.3. p.287. N.B. Samson Staniforth was one of them.
   Erasmus also ordained a Baptist minister who then claimed to officiate in the Church of England. See footnote of Journal Vol.5.p.47.

words of the ordination rite whereas the others, due to lack of learning, did not. In J$_o$ne's case,[1] this would not be difficult if he was employed as a Classics master.

Publicly, Wesley disowns the preachers. To the Printer of the 'St. James' Chronicle' he affirms:

> "To the four questions proposed to me in your last week's paper, I answer:-
> 1. None of those six persons lately ordained by a Greek bishop were ordained with my consent or knowledge.
> 2. I will not, cannot, own or receive them as clergymen.
> 3. I think an ordination performed in a language not understood by the persons ordained is not valid.
> 4. I think it absolutely unlawful for any one to give money to the Bishop (or to any one for him) for ordaining him."

After a month's time, six of the preachers in question asked to be reinstated as local preachers, but Wesley's refusal is kind, but firm. There is a hint that his hand is being forced by his brother and, maybe other clergymen:

> "Mr. Madan, Mr. Romaine, and the good-natured Mr. Shirley are almost out of patience with me for not disowning you on the house-top. In the situation of things it would be utter madness in me to do anything which they would call contumacy. I am every way bound to my good behaviour, and obliged to move with all possible circumspection. Were I to allow your preaching now, I should be in a hotter fire than ever. That you will preach again by-and-by I doubt not; but it is certain the time is not come yet." [2]

Apparently excommunication cannot have been effected in the case of every preacher, for Tyerman records that

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1. Letters. Vol.3.p.289.
   It has been objected that Wesley by securing Jone's ordination from the Greek bishop, contravened the oath of supremacy taken by English clergy at their ordination, viz: 'that no foreign person or prelate hath any jurisdiction, power, or authority ecclesiastical or spiritual, in this (realm'.
2. Letters. Vol.3.p.291.

Staniforth had to relinquish his 'priestly' functions. He does not say that he was expelled. Thomas Bryant seems to have laboured afterwards in the Sheffield society, but, having assumed the ministerial gown, caused a division there.[1] Watson says that when "a few of the preachers received ordination from a Greek bishop, then in England.....he (Wesley) would not suffer them to administer, although he did not doubt that the Greek was a true bishop."[2]

Whether or not Erasmus was genuine, has been a matter for conjecture. A strong point in favour of the Greek prelate is the acknowledgement by Nightingale,[3] - a bitter opponent of Methodism; also the absence of a denial by Hockin,[4] whose love for the movement was never very great. On the other hand, Southey doubts that Erasmus was a real bishop. In defence of his allegation, he quotes Toplady - another aggressive critic of Wesley's:[5]

> "Toplady saw a certificate given by this vagrant,[6] as he calls him, to the persons whom he pretended to ordain. It confirmed, in his opinion, that the man was an imposter, because it was written, not in the modern Greek, but in the ancient, and of a very mean sort. This is the translation: 'Our measure from the grace, gift, and power of the all-holy and life-giving Spirit, given by our Saviour Jesus Christ to His divine and holy apostles, to ordain sub-deacons [7] and deacons, and

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1. 'Life and Times of John Wesley', Vol.2.p.487.
2. 'Life of Wesley', p. 375, footnote.
3. 'Portraiture of Methodism', p.394. Nightingale was a former friend and preacher of Wesley's.
4. 'John Wesley and Modern Methodism', pp41-47.
5. 'Life of Wesley', p.497.
6. Toplady, according to Tyerman 'Life & Times &c.' Vol.2.pp. 487/8, calls him a 'foreign mendicant' and says: " to this day, the Greek Church in Amsterdam believes him to be an imposter."
7. Wesley does not believe in any order lower than that of a 'deacon'. See 'Reply to the Romish Catechism' (Works.Vol.15 p.173).

also to advance to the dignity of a priest ! Of this grace, which hath descended to our humility, I have ordained sub-deacon and deacon, at Snow-fields Chapel, on the 19th. day of November, 1764, and at West Street Chapel, on the 24th. of the same month, priest, the Rev. Mr. W. C., according to the rules of the holy apostles and of our faith. Moreover, I have given to him power to minister and teach, in all the world, the gospel of Jesus Christ, no one forbidding him in the church of God. Wherefore, for that very purpose, I have made this present letter of recommendation from our humility, and have given it to the ordained, Mr. W. C. for his certificate and security.

Given and written at London, in Britain, Nov.24. 1764.
ERASMUS, Bishop of Arcadia." [1]

The reference here to sub-deacon raises an important question. As the ordination of Jones was the only one which had Wesley's consent, was he also ordained, first of all, sub-deacon and deacon ? If so, Wesley is amazingly inconsistent, for, as just mentioned, he did not believe in any order of sub-deacon.[2]

The acrimony thus engendered was not to stop there. Toplady, after having asked Wesley whether or not he asked Erasmus to ordain several of his lay-preachers, and also if they had not officiated as clergymen of the Church of England with his approbation, believing that these ordinations were as good as his own, continues:

"3. Did you not strongly press this supposed Greek bishop to consecrate you a bishop, that you might be invested with a power of ordaining what ministers you pleased, to

1. Tyerman, 'Life & Times &c.' Vol.2.p.487, who also gives a copy of this certificate asks if "W.C." refers to William Crab who left the itinerant ministry in 1764.
2. See footnote on previous page of this present work.

officiate in your societies as clergymen ? And did he not refuse to consecrate you, alleging this for his reason - That, according to the canons of the Greek Church, more than one bishop must be present to assist at the consecration of a new one ?

4. In all this, did you not palpably violate the oath of supremacy, which you have repeatedly taken ? part of which runs thus: 'I do declare, that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate, hath, or ought to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm'!" [1]

Wesley has stated that Erasmus never rejected any overtures made to him, [2] so that in this case, Wesley either was never consecrated a bishop, or, if he was, he remained silent about the fact. Thomas Olivers,[3] in a reply to Toplady, defends Wesley and has his consent to do so. Whether or not he requested him to write a defence is not known.[4] He says:

"But, suppose he had, where would have been the blame ? Mr. Wesley is connected with a number of persons who have given every proof, which the nature of the thing allows, that they have an inward call to preach the gospel. Both he and they would be glad if they had an outward call too. But no bishop in England will give them. What wonder then, if he was to endeavour to procure it by any other innocent means ?"

All that remains to be said about the Greek ordinations is that they could be considered valid, but because they were conferred in England by a foreign prelate, they are bound to be regarded as irregular.

1. See "Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley", quoted by Tyerman (op.cit).Vol.2.pp.487-8.
2. Works. Vol.10.p.432. Wesley would surely have known that more than one bishop is required in the consecration of another.
3. Dated.1771.p.50. See Tyerman (op.cit).Vol.2.pp.488/9.
4. Tyerman (op.cit). Vol.2.p.489. See also Myles : 'Chronological History &c.' p.88.

(f) The Benson - Fletcher alternative plan 1775.[1]

Joseph Benson attempted in 1775 to lay before Conference a plan to secure greater efficiency among the Methodist preachers of his time. It has been preserved in the manuscript "Life" by his son, Rev. Samuel Benson M.A. This is the summary of his proposals:-

1. To inquire particularly into the character, experience, and qualifications of each individual person who is now employed among us, without any exception, from the eldest to the youngest. Thus it would be discovered who were qualified, and who are not.

2. To set apart those who are judged qualified for the work of the ministry, by fasting, prayer, and imposition of the hands of John Wesley, Charles Wesley, J. Fletcher, and other presbyters of the Established Church. Thus they would be more solemnly devoted to the work, would consider themselves more seriously entrusted with it, would more heartily and confidently engage in it, and would be more united to each other and more connected together, whence they might expect more of the divine blessing, and of consequence greater success in their labours. Thus would we be furnished with an answer to those who allege we have no authority to preach for want of ordination; the minds of many, both preachers and people, who have been distressed with doubts and reasonings on that head, would be satisfied, and one main plea for seeking episcopal ordination, or that of other churches, would be quite set aside.

3. Of those who are judged unqualified to be thus set apart for the work of the ministry, to consider who are most blameable in their character and conduct, who have not had, or appear to have lost, converting grace, and who are remarkably deficient in common sense, or natural parts, or capacity for improvement, and to set these quite aside.

4. Of the rest, who, though not thought fit to be admitted into full connexion, yet are unexceptionable in their conduct, appear to be truly serious, and have a capacity for improvement, to admit part of them upon trial, and send the rest to Kingswood School. There let them stay a year (or longer if thought necessary) under the tuition of some of the ablest and most respected preachers, to study, not Latin and Greek,

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1. This is quoted from Journal Volume 8 pp. 328 - 334.

but their own mother-tongue, the Scriptures, the best English writers in Divinity, church history, and the history of their own country.

5. (Deals with the purposes and aims of Kingswood school in respect of preachers' sons.)

The editor of the Journal says that Benson consulted Fletcher on all these points, though the latter misunderstood the former's intentions with respect to the ordination of preachers. Benson's idea seems to have been that it was desirable to invest preachers with a certain authority for their work, which would enable them to go forth with greater confidence than heretofore, yet short of actual setting them apart to the work of the ministry.

This is a letter of Fletcher's to Benson concerning his proposals:-

Madeley, 12th July 1775.

....."I approve of your desire to do what you can to promote the purging of our branches, that we may bring forth more fruit. Whether the scheme of Kingswood would answer, without some men truly alive to God to inspect them and direct the preachers there, I question. Their taste might lead them to impertinent lectures and studies; and a bookish, literary emulation, or downright sloth, rather than a devotional eagerness for the wisdom and power of God. Proper men would not be found easily. I mentioned the scheme to Mr. Collins, our Assistant in this round, who says that some of the preachers who could hardly speak sense have been the means of more good than many who had matter, manner, method, and parts at command. The fact needs only to be proved to throw down your scheme of <u>improvement</u>. I wish Kingswood was so ordered as to answer the most important ends; but as matters are, I question whether it is so..... I second your request with respect to sifting of the preachers. With regard to their ordination, I see a good and a bad side in it. The good side is obvious; it would cement our union; it would make us stand more firm to our vocation; it would give us an outward call to preach and administer the Sacraments. But at the same time it would cut us off, in a great degree, from the national Churches of England and Scotland, which we are called to leaven. My own particular objection to it respects Messrs. Wesley, who could not with decency take the step of

> turning Bishops after their repeated declarations that they would stand by their mother to the last. I mention to Mr. Wesley that before he take that step, it will be expedient that he desire, in print, the Bishops to take it. It would be but form, I grant; it might, however, show that he would not break off without paying a proper deference to Episcopacy. The point is of such importance as to require the coolest deliberation; and that view of the work, and acquaintance with the preachers, which my retirement here deprives me of. A proper way would be for those who are for the step you mention, put their reason pro and con without prejudice....."

The Editor tells us that at Mr. Benson's request, Fletcher made the matter known to Wesley. What is known of Wesley's judgement is contained in a passage of one of Mr. Fletcher's letters dated 24th July:

> "I have received a letter from Mr. Wesley, who says says he will give you full leave to explain and enforce your plan and proposals. You can demand no more. Be modest, be steady, be scriptural, be rational; and when you have done your best, leave all to the Lord without anxiety."

Benson says tha preachers were closley examined and some set aside but:

> "I fear not all who ought. I much fear the Committee appointed for that purpose were too merciful to more than one...."

On the day following the Conference in Leeds he sent a letter to Wesley (Thursday afternoon, August 1st 1775). In it he says:

> "..... You love the Church of England, and yet you are not blind to her freckles, nor insensible to her shackles. Your life is precarious, you have lately been shaken over the grave; you are spared, it may be to take yet some important step towards the Reformation of the Church of England?....." He warns of separation with the Establishment and then makes 13 proposals, though No. 11 is missing from our record.

In summary they are:

1. That the growing body of Methodists in the British Isles and America should be formed into a general society - a daughter church of our holy mother.

2. That it should recede from the Church of England in nothing but in some palpable defects about doctrine, discipline, and unevangelical hierarchy.

3. That is be ready to defend the yet unmethodized church of England, against all the unjust attacks of the dissenters - willing to submit to her in all things that are not unscriptural - approving of her ordination - partaking of her sacraments, and attending her service at every convenient opportunity.

4. Publishing a pamphlet containing the 39 Articles of the Church of England with some alterations.

5. That Messrs. Wesley, the preachers and the most substantial Methodist in London draw up a petition and present it to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishops for the reform of the Church and freedom to follow the strictness of primitive discipline.....

6. That this petition contain a request to the Bishops to ordain the Methodist preachers which can pass their examination according to what is indispensably required in the canons of the Church. That instead of the ordinary testimonials the Bishops would allow of testimonials signed by Messrs. Wesley and some more clergymen, who would make it their business to inquire into the morals and principles of the candidates for order. And that instead of a title, their Lordships would accept of a bond signed by twelve stewards of the Methodist societies, certifying that the candidate for holy orders shall have a proper maintenance. That if his Grace, etc., does not condescend to grant this request, Messrs. Wesley will be obliged to take an irregular (not unevangelical) step, and to ordain upon a Church of England independent plan such lay preachers as appear to them qualified for holy orders.

7. That the preachers so ordained be the assistants in their respective circuits. That the helpers who are thought worthy be ordained Deacons, and that doubtful candidates be kept upon trial as they now are.

8. That the Methodist preachers assembled in conference shall have the liberty to suspend and degrade any Methodist preacher ordained or unordained who shall act the part of a Balaam or a Demas.

9. That when Messrs. Wesley are dead, the power of Methodist ordination be lodged in three or five of the most steady Methodist ministers under the title of Moderators, who shall overlook the flocks and the other preachers as Mr. Wesley does now.

10. That the most spiritual part of the Common Prayer shall be extracted and published with the 39 rectified articles, and the minutes of the Conferences (or the Methodist Canons) which (together with such regulations as may be made at the time of this establishment) shall be, next to the Bible, the vade mecum of the Methodist preachers.

12. That the important office of confirmation shall be performed with the utmost solemnity by Mr. Wesley or by the Moderators, and that none shall be admitted to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper but such as have been confirmed or are ready to be confirmed.

13. That the grand plan upon which the Methodist preachers shall go, shall be to preach the doctrine of grace against the Socinians - the doctrine of justice against all the world. And that of consequence three such questions as these be put to the candidates for order at the time of ordination:

I. Wilt thou maintain with all they might the scripture doctrines of grace, especially the doctrine of a SINNER'S free justification merely by a living faith in the blood and merits of Christ

II. Wilt thou maintain with all thy might the scripture doctrines of justice, especially the doctrine of a BELIEVER'S remunerative justification by good works which ought to spring from justifying faith?

III. Wilt thou preach up Christian perfection, or the fulfilling of the law of Christ, against all the antinomians of the age; and wilt thou ardently press after it thyself, never resting till thou are perfected in humble love?

Perhaps to keep the work in the Church it might be proper to add:

IV. Wilt thou consider thyself as a son of the Church of England, receding from her as little as possible; never railing against her clergy, and being ready to submit to her ordination, if any of the bishops will confer it upon thee?

14. And lastly, that Kingswood School be entirely appropriated (1) To the reception and improvement of the candidates for Methodist orders; (2) To the education of the children of the preachers; and

> (3) to the keeping of the worn-out Methodist preachers, whose employment shall be to preserve the spirit of faith and primitive Christianity in the place; by which means alone the curse of a little unsanctified learning may be kept out...."

The remainder of this correspondence is not relevant to this present study.

CHAPTER THREE.

ORDINATIONS BY WESLEY.

(a) Precedent for Presbyteral Ordination in 1783.

Tyerman tells of an incident which took place in 1783 and which may well have decided Wesley in the matter of ordination. Two seceding clergymen, Rev. Messrs. Jones and Taylor, had officiated in Spafields chapel in the parish of Clerkenwell. The Rev. William Sellon, who was minister, had insisted that he alone appointed the preachers there and the clerks. He also demanded £40 per annum for permitting two of the Countess of Huntingdon's preachers to minister there, also the sacramental collections and four collections yearly for the benefit of the charity school of Clerkenwell. Furthermore, the proprietors had to sign a bond for £1,000. His requests were refused. An action was brought in the Consistorial court and judgement went against the preachers. When the action was transferred to the ecclesiastical court the judgement was confirmed. Romaine, Venn and others had to withdraw their services from the Countess of Huntingdon. It was decided that Willis and Taylor should formally leave the Church of England and ordain others. The Archbishop and bishops were informed of their intention and on March 9th 1783 they held their ordination service in Spafields chapel. It commenced at 9 a.m. and lasted for seven hours. Six young men were ordained, viz: Thomas Jones, Samuel Beaufoy,

Thomas Cannon, John Johnson, William Green and Joel Abraham Knight. Willis gave to the congregation his reasons for believing that he, as a presbyter had a right to ordain because having been ordained presbyter he had thereby been ordained a bishop.[1]

Nowhere does Wesley mention this incident, but one can be confident that he knew of it. Within a year, Wesley himself is to do a similar thing.

(b) The American Ordinations

If necessity be the mother of invention, American need was the cause of Wesley's unique ordinations. Statistics show that Methodism had spread rapidly in America.[2] It could now boast of eighty-three travelling preachers, some hundreds of local preachers, fifteen thousand members besides many thousands of adherents. The War of Independence had almost destroyed ecclesiastical relations of the colonies with England. In America, as in England, Wesley's instruction to the Methodist people to take the sacraments at the hands of the Episcopal clergy, had applied. However, most of these clergymen had fled at the outbreak of war and the Episcopal church had almost disappeared. It had declines not only numerically, but morally, and steps to revive it

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1. Tyerman: 'Life and Times'. Vol.3.pp.430/2. See also 'Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon' and 'Authentic Narrative of Primary ordination in Spafields Chapel.1784'
2. For fuller treatment see Simon: 'Studies' Vol.5.pp.220ff. Stevens : 'History of Methodism to the Death of Wesley' pp.529ff. and Gregory: 'Scriptural Principles &c.' pp.96ff.

were opposed. The result of this was, that the large number of Methodists in the continent were deprived of the sacraments and soon a demand was made by them for their preachers to administer.[1] It is impossible to be devoid of sympathy with them, as some of them had not partaken of the Holy Communion for months and in some cases, even years. But the first American Conference of 1773 had warned:

> "Every preacher, who acts in connection with Mr. Wesley and the brethren who labour in America, is strictly to avoid administering the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.[2]

Nevertheless there was now a division within American Methodism. Thomas Rankin, one of Wesley's missionaries, presiding at the Conference of Deer Creek, Maryland, in 1777, persuaded the people to wait patiently for one more year until Wesley could be consulted. It was again postponed at the next session, there being no English preacher present on this occasion. In 1779, the preachers of the South held their own Conference at Brokenback Church, Fluvanna, whereas the northerners met at Judge White's residence at Delaware.[3] The Southern members took the schismatic step of making their own appointments and ordained themselves at the hands of

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1. In some places, Methodists had applied to the Baptists for Holy Communion, but were told they could only do so if they became members of the Baptist Church. It must also be remembered that the majority of the American Methodists were technically Anglicans as in England.
2. Robert Emory: "History of the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church". (revised 1857.)
3. Asbury's retreat.

their senior members, in order that their people should no longer be denied the sacraments. What might well have been a permanent breach was prevented by the intervention of Asbury the following year and the southern preachers agreed to await further instructions from Wesley. Asbury then wrote to Wesley, 20th. March, 1784:

> "We are greatly in need of help. A minister and such preachers as you can fully recommend will be very acceptable. Without your recommendation, we shall receive none." [1]

Meanwhile, well aware of the plight of his American followers, Wesley endeavoured to obtain ordination for a preacher to go and travel the American districts dispensing the sacraments. He had written to Bishop Lowth of London, asking for this to be done. [2] The request was refused and Wesley was stirred to write again:

> "Your Lordship observes, 'There are three ministers in that country already.' True, My Lord; but what are three to watch over all the souls in that extensive country ?..... .....I have heard that your Lordship is unfashionably diligent in examining the candidates for Holy Orders, - yea, that your Lordship is generally at the pains of examining them <u>yourself</u> ! Examining them ! In what respects ? Why, whether they understand a little <u>Latin</u> and <u>Greek</u> and can answer a few trite questions in the science of Divinity ! Alas, how little does this avail ! Does your Lordship examine whether they serve <u>Christ</u> or <u>Belial</u> ? whether they love God or the world ? whether they have any serious thoughts about heaven or hell ? whether they have any real desire to save their own souls or the souls of others ? If not, what have they to do with

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1. Tyerman: 'Life and Times &c.', Vol.3.pp.427/8. See also Methodist Magazine, 1786, p.682.
2. There is no trace of the date or contents of this first letter.

Holy Orders ? and what will become of the souls committed to their care ? My Lord, I do no means despise learning; I know the value of it too well. But what is this, particularly in a Christian minister compared to piety ? What is it in a man that has no religion ? 'As a jewel in a swine's snout'

Some time since, I recommended to your Lordship a plain man, who I had known above twenty years as a person of deep genuine piety and of unblameable conversation. But he neither understood Greek nor Latin; and he affirmed in so many words that he believed it was his duty to preach whether he was ordained or no. I believe so too. What became of him since, I know not; but I suppose he received Presbyterian ordination, and I cannot blame him if he did. He might think any ordination better than none.

I do not known that Mr. Hoskins[1] had any favour to ask of the society. He asked the favour of your Lordship to ordain him that he might minister to a little flock in America. But your Lordship did not see good to ordain <u>him</u>; but your Lordship did see good to ordain and send into America other persons who knew something of Greek and Latin, but who knew no more of saving souls than of catching whales." [2]

The climax came on September 1st. 1784 in Bristol. The Journal for the previous day records that

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1. Hoskins was a Methodist preacher who introduced Methodism to Newfoundland in 1774. He opened a school, and, as there was no religious worship, he began to read the Church's prayers and Wesley's sermons.
2. Letters. Vol.7. pp.30ff. Gregory : 'Scriptural Principles, &c.' p.100 ventures the idea that Dr. Lowth believed that Wesley himself was the proper person to make whatever arrangements might be necessary for the safety and the sustenance of the Churches which he had called into existence in the now alienated Colonies and in the Western wilds..."

"Dr. Coke, Mr. Whatcoat and Mr. Vasey came down from London in order to embark for America." On the following day, Wednesday the first, he says "Being now clear in my own mind, I took a step which I had long weighed in my mind, and appointed[1] Mr. Whatcoat and Mr. Vasey to go and serve the desolate sheep in America." On Thursday he says ("I added to them three more; which I verily believe, will be much to the glory of God!") No details are given about the extra three.

The Diary for the 2nd. September records:

> "Prayed, ordained Dr. Coke as a Superintendent, by the imposition of hands and prayer (being assisted by other ordained ministers)" [2]

This 'ordination' is of such great importance and raised some almost insuperable difficulties, that it is deal with separately in the next sub-chapter.

Whatcoat's Journal gives clearer details of the ordinations: he mentions two ordinations, viz. for deacon and elder respectively, for Whatcoat and Vasey.[3] 1st and 2nd September, and that this was done by Wesley, Coke and James Creighton, forming a 'presbytery'. This, surely is the more correct account, in view of the fact that Wesley's revision of the Book of Common Prayer provides for the ordination of both deacon and

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1. The Diary has 'ordained' - the Journal says 'set apart'.
2. It is assumed that these three ordinations took place at the residence of the late Mr. J. H. Foster, No. 6. Dighton Street, Bristol.
3. W.H.S.Proc. vii.9.

elder, corresponding to Anglican custom.

It was natural that Wesley should attempt to justify his action. No sooner had these ordinations taken place than he wrote his important letter to the 'Brethren in America'.[1] After mentioning the influence of King's Primitive Church to the effect that bishop and presbyters were of the same order and that he, thereby, had the same right to ordain, he says:

> "For many years I have been importuned from time to time to exercise this right by ordaining part of our travelling preachers. But I have still refused, not only for peace' sake, but because I was determined as little as possible to violate the established order of the National Church to which I belonged.
>
> But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction: in America there are none, neither any parish ministers. So that for some hundred miles together there is none either to baptize or to administer the Lord's Supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end; and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order and invade no man's right by appointing and sending labourers into the harvest.
>
> I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be Joint Superintendents over our brethren in North America; and also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to act as elders among them, by baptizing and administering the Lord's Supper. And I have prepared a Liturgy little differing from that of the Church of England[2] (I think, the best constituted National Church in the World), which I advise all the travelling preachers to use on the Lord's Day in all the congregations, reading the Litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays and praying extempore on all other days. I

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1. Letters. Vol.7. pp.238/9.
2. For an essay on the various editions of this publication, see W.H.S. Proc.XXXI 5 + 6.(Wesley F. Swift.)

> I also advise the elders to administer the Supper of the Lord on every day.....It has, indeed been proposed to desire the English bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America. But to this I object; (1) I desired the Bishop of London to ordain only one, but could not prevail. (2) If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings; but the matter admits of no delay. (3) If they would ordain them now, they would likewise expect to govern them. And how grievously would this entangle us ! (4) As our American brethren are now totally disentangled both from the State and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the Primitive Church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free...."

A similar letter is written to Barnabas Thomas on the 25th. March, 1785:

> "I am now as firmly attached to the Church of England as I ever was since you knew me. But meantime I know myself to be as real a Christian Bishop as the Archbishop of Canterbury. [1] Yet I was always resolved, and am still, never to act as such except in case of necessity. Such a case does not (perhaps never will) exist in England.[2] In America it did exist. This I made known to the Bishop of London and desired his help. But he peremptorily refused it. All the other bishops were of the same mind; the rather because (they said) they had nothing to do with America. Then I saw my way clear, and was fully convinced what it was my duty to do. As to the persons amongst those who offered themselves I chose those whom I judged most worthy, and I positively refuse [3] to be judged by any man's conscience but my own.."

It is apparent that the reasons given by the English Bishops for not ordaining men for America or interfering

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1. Gregory; 'Scriptural Principles &c.' p.96.sees in Wesley's ordinations the 'trampling down of the fragile fiction of Diocesan Succession as an elephant crushes with its mighty tread the brushwood of the jungle...it was like other steps, not taken till it could no longer be sinlessly be delayed.
2. Such a case seems to have existed in 1788.
3. Letters, Vol.7,p.261.

in any way, viz. that America had nothing to do with them, were the very same which Wesley gives for ordaining his own preachers.[1] They too would be outside the jurisdiction of the English Church.

It is necessary now to mention something of the progress of Anglicanism in America. Just a few clergymen had been conscientious in their calling, and, together with a few laymen, attempted, in spite of opposition [2] to revive the Church. They realised that the Church of England, as it was, was out of harmony with American life, and, after much discussion it was decided to form the 'Protestant Episcopal Church of America' and a scheme of government decided upon. Fearing the adoption of a spurious episcopacy, they desired a bishop to lead them. In order to obtain consecration in the true succession, they selected one of their members and sent him to England. Their choice was Samuel Seabury who had pursued an adventurous career as a missionary of the Gospel Propagation Society. On arrival in England he found that the see of Canterbury was vacant and the Archbishop of York declines to consecrate him on the grounds that Seabury was not a citizen of England and the oath of allegiance would be required of him. Only an Act of Parliament could dispense

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1. The Bishop of London was actually responsible for Anglican work in America.
2. The idea of American bishops was bitterly opposed in many quarters. A Congregational minister in Boston referred to them as "the mitred lordly successors of the fishermen of Galilee."

with that requirement. Turning next to the Episcopal Church in Scotland, he found the bishops there, willing to give him what he sought. Accordingly he was consecrated by the bishops of Aberdeen, Ross and Moray on the 17th. November, 1784. Returning to America he enjoyed the distinction of being the only bishop there for two years. In 1787, two presbyters of the new church in America were consecrated in Lambeth Palace chapel by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and the Bishop of Peterborough. No doubt these facts were in the mind of Overton [1] when he wishes that Wesley had been a little more patient in his desire for the ordination of his preachers, for, he says ' a real bishop' was provided soon afterwards.[2]

Nevertheless, irregular as Wesley's acts appeared to the Anglican church of his day, and, for that matter, at the present time, there is little doubt that the dilatoriness and hesitation on the part of that Church, forced his hand in a matter about which he was never too happy.

Curteis, in the Bampton lectures for 1871 shows some sympathy with Wesley on this point:

> "The Bishops at that period, must have lost all conception that it might possibly be a part of Episcopal duty to <u>suffer</u> something,

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1. 'John Wesley', p.199. Charles Wesley uses the same words - See Jackson 'Life of Charles Wesley', Vol. ii. p. (392
2. Curteis: Bampton Lectures, 1871 complains "Had he (Wesley) only been a little more humble...had he only waited ten weeks longer, the needed Episcopate....was supplied by...Bishop Seabury." Of course, had Seabury ordained the preachers, the Anglican Church would have expected to control Methodist work in America.

> and to risk something, to promote the general interests of the Church. Indeed, let any one read, with reflection, Bishop Wilberforce's History of the American Church.pp.137-181, , and he will find it absolutely impossible to speak another harsh word of Wesley's irregular proceedings in 1784." [1]

Gregory would go further and point out that if any of the Episcopalians had cause to complain of Wesley's ordinations, it was the "Moravian Bishops, who had been in America for nearly fifty years, and could trace their episcopal lineage through a far purer and far straighter channel than that which drew its descent through the prelates of the papacy." [2]

The critical situation in America and the attitude of the Anglican Church were the reasons for Wesley's ordinations for America, not, as some have maintained, his failing years.[3]

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1. 'Dissent in its Relation to the Church of England'. p.378, footnote.
2. 'Scriptural Church Principles &c.' p.99.
3. Cf. Charles Wesley's letter to Dr. Chandler, an Episcopalian minister, about to embark for America, "I can scarcely yet believe it, that, in his eighty-second year, my brother, my old, intimate ffiend and companion, should have assumed the episcopal character" (Jackson.'Life of Charles Wesley',Vol.ii.p.392). He felt the Methodists were now no more than a new sect of Presbyterians. Speaking of John's American ordinations on another occasion he declares "'Twas age that made the break not he"
   Cf. also Edith C. Kenyon: 'The Life of John Wesley', p. 377:"..the old man's mind, which, although stronger than that of most men at his age, might well be weaker than it had been - so he consented" . On p. 381, the comment is made to the effect that old age plus the influence of others are the best apology for Wesley's conduct.
   It is however, a dangerous method to argue from the effects of age.

(c) The Special Case of Thomas Coke : (i) Reasons for Wesley's act.

The question to be asked and answered here is: "Did Wesley insist on ordaining Coke, pr was it Coke who insisted on being ordained by Wesley ?"

The first reason is the evidence afforded in the correspondence which passed between the two. Southey [1] says Wesley summoned Dr. Coke to Bristol, but Overton [2] denies this by quoting Coke's letter to Wesley of the 9th. August, 1784.[3] Simon,[4] Hockin,[5] Smith,[6] Nightingale,[7] and Moore,[8] agree that Coke insisted on the ordination. Tyerman [9] is of the opinion that Coke did not require further ordination and that Wesley did not wish it, - it was Coke who wanted it. On the other hand, he quotes a manuscript memoir of Dr. Whitehead by John Pawson [10] in which the latter relates that the ordination was first proposed by Wesley himself in his select committee of consultation. Pawson was a member of that committee and was present, but says that, although Wesley's mind was quite made up, the preachers were all astonished at the proposal and opposed it. There is, however, no corroboration of this statement. The matter

1. 'Life of Wesley', p.515. 2. 'John Wesley', p.199.
3. This letter is quoted in full on the next few pages of this present work.
4. 'Studies' Vol.5.p.231.
5. 'John Wesley and Modern Methodism', p.182.
6. 'History of Wesleyan Methodism' Vol.1. pp510/511.
7. 'Portraiture of Methodism', pp402ff.
8. 'Life of the Rev. John Wesley A.M.' Vol.2.pp330ff.
9. 'Life and Times &c.' Vol.3. p.432.
10. ibid. Vol.3. p.428.

does appear to have been discussed at the 1784 Conference at Leeds, during which Wesley declared his intention of sending Coke and some other missionaries to America. This is stated in the 'Minutes' but no mention is made of ordination. Smith, alone, seems to think that Conference was in favour of the ordination of Coke,[1] and that Fletcher was among a number of ministers who thought this to be a wise decision. However, Coke, Whatcoat and Vasey were appointed missionaries to America, and, that, perhaps is all that was originally intended.

Previously, on 14th. February of the same year, Coke had taken part in a long discussion with Wesley and others in the latter's study at City Road. This is stated in the Diary for that day.[2] Inevitably the situation in America had been dealt with, and, according to Etheridge [3], Wesley had suggested ordination by the imposition of his own hands for Coke, and Coke did not feel able to agree. Wesley, according to Etheridge, was basing his suggestion on the precedent in the Church of Alexandria where presbyters had ordained.[4] Wesley, however, affords no proof that this was the origin of the suggestion, or that any suggestion was made.

In a letter of 17th. April, 1784 to Wesley[5], Coke

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1. 'History of Wesleyan Methodism'. Vol.1. p.511.
2. The meeting took place at 11.a.m.
3. 'Life of Thomas Coke' p.100.
4. See this present work , pp 108/9 and 127/9.
5. A manuscript letter quoted by Tyerman 'Life and Times &c ' Vol.3.p.428.

obviously refers to this meeting:

> "I intended to trouble you no more about my going to America; but your observations incline me to address you again on the subject.
>
> If some one, in whom you could place the fullest confidence, and whom you think likely to have sufficient influence and prudence and delicacy of conduct for the purpose, were to go over and return, you would then have a source of sufficient information to determine on any points or propositions. I may be destitute of the last mentioned essential qualification (to the former I lay claim without reserve); otherwise my taking such a voyage might be expedient.
>
> By this means, you might have fuller information concerning the state of the country and the societies than epistolary correspondence can give you; and there might be a cement of union, remaining after your death, between the societies and preachers of the two countries. If the awful event of your decease should happen before my removal to the world of spirits, it is almost certain, that I should have business enough, of indispensable importance, on my hands in these kingdoms. "

Coke then began a study of the Biblical and patristic evidence for presbyteral ordination. Included among the works he read was King's 'Primitive Church'. Within two months he had pursued an itinerary in Scotland, and J. S. Simon[1] thinks that this also influenced him in the belief that presbyters could ordain because in Scotland he would have seen that the Established Church was Presbyterian in organization. Whether or not this was so, he wrote the following letter to Wesley on the 9th. August, 1784:

> "Honoured and Dear Sir,
>
> The more maturely I consider the subject, the more expedient it

1. 'Studies' Vol.5.p.230.

appears to me, that the power of ordaining others should be received by me from you, by the imposition of your hands; and that you should lay hands on brother Whatcoat and brother Vasey, for the following reasons: (1) It seems to me the most Scriptural way, and most agreeable to the practice of the Primitive Churches. - (2) I may want all the influence in America, which you can throw into my scale. Mr. Brackenbury informed me at Leeds, that he saw a letter in London from Asbury, in which he observed, ' that he would not receive any person deputed by you to take any part of the superintendency of the work invested in him;' or words, which evidently implied so much. I do not find any the least degree of prejudice in my mind against Mr. Asbury; on the contrary, a very great love and esteem; and I am determined not tostir a finger without his consent, unless mere sheer necessity obliges me, but rather to lie at his feet in all things. But as the journey is long, and you cannot spare me often, and it is well to provide against all events, and an authority, formally received from you, will, (I am conscious of it) be fully admitted by the people; and my exercising the office of ordination without that formal authority may be disputed, if there be any opposition on any other account; I could, therefore, earnestly wish you would exercise that power, in this instance, which, I have not the shadow of a doubt, but God hath invested you with for the good of our connexion. I think you have tried me too often to doubt, whether I will, in any degree, use the power you are pleased to invest me with, farther than I believe absolutely necessary for the prosperity of the work. (3) In respect of my brethren, (brothers Whatcoat and Vasey), it is very uncertain indeed, whether any of the Clergy, mentioned by brother Rankin, will stir a step with me in the work, except Mr. Jarrit; and it is by no means certain, that even he will choose to join me in ordaining; and propriety and universal practice makes it expedient, that I should have two Presbyters with me in this work. In short, it appears to me, that every thing should be prepared, and every thing proper be done, that can possibly be done this side of the water. You can do all this in Mr. C---n's house, in your chamber; and afterwards, (according to Mr. Fletcher's advice,) give us letters

testimonial of the different offices with which you have been pleased to invest us.[1] For this purpose of laying hands on brothers Whatcoat and Vasey, I can bring Mr. Creighton down with me, by which you will have two Presbyters with you. In respect to brother Rankin's argument, that you will escape a great deal of odium by omitting this, it is nothing. Either it will be known, or not known; if not known, then no odium will arise; but if known, you will be obliged to acknowledge, that I acted under your direction, or suffer me to sink under the weight of my enemies, with, perhaps, your brother at the head of them. I shall entreat you to ponder these things.

Your most dutiful,

T. COKE.[2]

The tone of this epistle is almost dictatorial. Pinning down Wesley to accept any possible blame, should this 'secret' authorization become known, does not show Coke at his best. Another point to note is Coke's insistence upon having two presbyters to assist in the ordination of Whatcoat and Vasey and his insistence on having these two preachers to assist in his own subsequent ordinations in America. The Book of Common Prayer allows for more than one person,-either bishop or presbyters, in addition to the ordaining bishop, but does not insist on it. It may well be that he has in mind his own ordination being a 'consecration' if three 'bishops' were present, since presbyter = bishop. Also he may have been thinking of his forthcoming 'consecration of Asbury and is making sure of having three presbyter-

1. Fletcher, according to Moore 'Life of Rev. John Wesley, A.M.' Vol.2.p.332 and Smith 'History of Wesleyan Methodism' Vol.1.p.511, was one of the members of the meeting which Wesley called in order to discuss this.
2. Moore (op.cit)Vol.2.p.332 in a footnote, says: "Dr. Whitehead observes ' This letter is taken from an attested copy of the Dr's letter in Mr. Charles Wesley's handwriting'"

bishops to make up the required minimum of three. Etheridge's assertion in his biography of Coke,[1] that Wesley desired Coke to bring Creighton with him, is surely contradicted in Coke's letter to Wesley, quoted above, in which he says:" I can bring Mr. Creighton down with me." The suggestion was Coke's. There is little doubt that Coke's interpretation of Wesley's willingness to ordain him, was far beyond what the latter intended.

The second reason which can be given for Coke's insistence on 'ordination', is his ambitious nature - dangerously ambitious, as Tyerman describes him.[2] Wesley's patience with, and loyalty to, Coke, is amazing. He is the first to defend him against charges of ambition, as in the case of Charles' Wesley's criticism. "Dr. Coke is as free from ambition as from covetousness." retorts John.[3] Wesley was well aware, though, that Coke's designs for himself had involved him in trouble with his colleagues. In 1788, Henry Moore, who was Assistant of the Dublin circuit, reported to Wesley that Coke, without his knowledge, had ordered services to be held in the Whitefriars Street Chapel during church hours in order to prevent Methodists from attending Dissenting services. In this case, Wesley[4] does

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1. pp.103/4.
2. 'Life and Times &c.', Vol.3.p.433. Italics mine.
3. Letters Vol.7., p.288. See also letter to Peard Dickinson of 15th. April, 1788 in which he says "My brother never knew the value of Dr. Coke while he lived I wish I had an hundred preachers like him."
4. Letters. Vol.8. pp.58-60.

admit that an indiscretion has been committed. John, himself complains to Walter Churchey in a letter dated 20th. June, 1789, that Coke had made several alterations to his Prayer-Book without consulting him. He adds the remark that he does not believe in alterations for altering's sake. He is out for as few innovations as possible.

Coke's main objective, undoubtedly, was to become a bishop, and Wesley's commissioning ceremony suited his purpose well. On the 18th. September, 1784, Coke, with Whatcoat and Vasey embarked for America. During the voyage, Coke is reported to have read Hoadly's Treatise on Conformity and Episcopacy. Sparrow-Simpson[1] says Coke differed from Hoadly on many points, but regarded him as having proved one thing, viz: " that it was the universal practice of the Church from the latter end of the lives of the Apostles to the time of the Reformation, to invest the power of ordination in a superior Church officer to the Presbyters, whom the Church soon after the death of the Apostles, called Bishops by way of eminence."

As soon as the company landed in America on 3rd. of November, Coke sought out Asbury to 'consecrate' him a co-'bishop'. A conference of nearly sixty preachers met in Baltimore on December 24th. Three days later, Coke ordained Asbury and then the two ordained a number of elders and deacons.

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1. 'John Wesley and the Church of England' p.63.

On the occasion of Asbury's ordination,[1] Coke preached a sermon which was later published under this elaborate title:

> "The Substance of a Sermon preached at Baltimore, in the State of Maryland before the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church on the 27th. of December, 1784 at the Ordination of the Rev. Francis Asbury to the office of Superintendent. By Thomas Coke, LL.D, Superintendent of the said Church. Published at the desire of the Conference. 12mo.22 pages."

Beginning with an onslaught on the Church of England in America, he proceeds to answer the question:

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1. Coke was assisted in the ordination by Bishop Otterbein of the German Church. Asbury was ordained successively, deacon, presbyter and superintendent.

   Asbury's ordination certificate of all three ordinations, is worded as follows:

   "Know all men by these presents, That I, Thomas Coke, doctor of Civil law, late of Jesus College, in the university of Oxford, presbyter of the Church of England, and superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America; under the protection of Almighty God, and with a single eye to His glory; by the imposition of my hands and prayer, (being assisted by two ordained elders,) did on the twenty-fifth day of this month, December, set apart Francis Asbury for the office of a deacon in the aforesaid Methodist Episcopal Church. And also, on the twenty-sixth day of the said month, did by the imposition of my hands and prayer, (being assisted by the said elders,) set apart the said Francis Asbury for the office of elder in the said Methodist Episcopal Church. And on this twenty-seventh day of the said month, being the day of the date hereof, have, by the imposition of my hands and prayer, (being assisted by the said elders,) set apart the said Francis Asbury for the office of a superintendent in the said Methodist Episcopal Church, a man whom I judge to be well qualified for that great work. And I do hereby recommend him to all whom it may concern, as a fit person to preside over the flock of Christ. In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this 27th.day of December in the year of our Lord, 1784.
   "THOMAS COKE"

"What right have you to exercise the episcopal office?":

> "To me", he says, " the most manifest and clear. God has been pleased, by Mr. Wesley, to raise up, in America and Europe, a numerous society well known by the name of Methodists. The whole body have invariably esteemed this man as their chief pastor, under Christ, and we are fully persuaded, he has a right to ordain. Besides, we have every qualification for an episcopal church, which that of Alexandria possessed for two hundred years; our bishops, or superintendents (as we rather call them), having been elected by the suffrages of the whole body of our ministers through the continent, assembled in general conference." [1]

"The plan of general superintendency", he declares, "was, in fact, a species of episcopacy." [2] Neeley thinks that Coke is trying to say that whilst it was a kind of episcopacy, it was different from other kinds.[3]

What Wesley's attitude to Coke would have been if he had lived to witness his further intrigues, it would be difficult to say. On April 24th. 1791, he wrote to Dr. White, Anglican Bishop of Philadelphia, on the possibility of a union between the Methodists and the Protestant Episcopal Church in America. In it he casts doubts on the validity of his own 'episcopal' ordination, referring to it in this way:

> "He (Wesley) did indeed solemnly invest me as far as he had a right so to do, with Episcopal authority."

A similar letter was sent to Bishop Seabury on 14th. of May of the same year, this time suggesting that his

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1. Tyerman : 'Life and Times &c.' Vol.3.p.436.
2. Sparrow-Simpson: 'John Wesley and the Church of England', p. 63.
3. 'The Evolution of Episcopacy' p.285.

preachers would have to submit to re-ordination, but that this could be better effected if he and Asbury were consecrated bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church ! [1] This would, he maintains, give the preachers 'confidence'. There is, however, no record of any developments following these two overtures. On April 14th. 1813, he wrote to William Wilberforce from Leeds, suggesting that, if Wilberforce could use his influence with the Prince Regent to secure him the position of Bishop in India, he would "most gratefully accept of the same" and would forsake Methodism and return to the bosom of the Established Church. One gathers from this letter that Coke had already written in similar terms to the Earl of Liverpool and shows some surprise that he had not received a reply ! Such letters are despicable to a degree. Nevertheless, this two-fold evidence is offered in order to give some idea of Coke's character. With this in mind, one is in a better position to determine whether it was Wesley or Coke who insisted on the Bristol 'ordination', of 1784.

(d) The Special Case of Thomas Coke : (ii) The American Interpretation.

The records of the Conferences speak for themselves, and the influence of Coke is writ large. The Conference

1. Tyerman: 'Life & Times &c.' Vol.3.p.434 alleges that Coke summoned a secret meeting at Lichfield in 1794 - viz: "of the most influential preachers, and passed a resolution, that the conference should appoint an order of bishops, to ordain deacons and elders, he himself, of course, expecting to be a member of the prelatical brotherhood."

of 1784 agreed that the America Methodists should become a separate body with the name 'The American Episcopal Church'.:

> "We formed ourselves into an independent church; and following the counsel of Mr. John Wesley, who recommended the Episcopal mode of church government, we thought it best to become an Episcopal church, making the Episcopal office elective, and the elected superintendent amenable to a body of ministers and preachers." [1]

The 'Discipline' of 1787 registers the following decision:

> "The most excellent mode of church government according to our maturest judgment, is that of a moderate episcopacy,[2] and as we are persuaded that the uninterrupted succession of bishops from the apostles can be proved neither from Scripture nor antiquity, we therefore have constituted ourselves into an Episcopal Church, under the direction of bishops, elders, deacons and preachers, according to the forms of ordination annexed to our Prayer-Book, and the regulations laid down in this 'Form of Discipline'.

The same ideas are echoed in the Discipline for 1789:

Quest.1. What is the proper origin of the Episcopal authority in our church ?

Ans. In the year 1784 the Rev. John Wesley.... at the intercession of the multitudes of his spiritual children on this continent, to ordain ministers for America, and for this purpose sent over three regularly-ordained clergy; but preferring the Episcopal mode of church government to any other, he

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1. Emory : 'History of the Discipline'p.25.
2. "General Minutes of the Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America" p.50 says: "As the translators of our version of the Bible have used the English word bishop instead of superintendent, it has been thought by us that it would be more scriptural to adopt their term bishop."

> solemnly set apart, by the imposition of his hands and prayer, one of them, namely Thomas Coke, doctor of civil law, late of Jesus College, in the University of Oxford, for the episcopal office; and having delivered to him letters of episcopal orders, commissioned and directed him to set apart Francis Asbury, then general assistant of the Methodist Society in America, for the same Episcopal office, he, the said Francis Asbury, being first ordained, deacon and elder. In consequence of which, the said Francis Asbury was solemnly set apart for the said Episcopal office by prayer and the imposition of the hands of the said Thomas Coke, other regularly ordained ministers assisting in the sacred ceremony. At which time the General Conference held at Baltimore did unanimously receive the said Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury as their bishops, being fully satisfied of the validity of their Episcopal ordination." [1]

At the request of the General Conference of 1796, and, having received the implied sanction of the Conference of 1800, Asbury and Coke[2] wrote explanatory notes to the Discipline. In the first section: 'Of the Origin of the Methodist Episcopal Church', they declare:

> "The only point which can be disputed by any sensible person, is the episcopal form which we have adopted; and this can be contested by candid men, only from their want of acquaintance with the history of the church. The most bigoted devotees to religious establishments (the clergy of the Church of Rome excepted) are now ashamed to support the doctrine of the apostolic, uninterrupted succession of bishops.....And yet nothing but an uninterrupted succession, can possibly confine the right of episcopacy to any

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1. Emory: op.cit. pp.93/4. 'The Origin of the Methodist Episcopal Church'.
   See article in L.H.Q.R. April.1951 by A.Raymond George, who suggests that the arrival in America of Bishop Seabury caused this emphasis on episcopal terms.
2. When, in May.1789, Coke and Asbury presented an address to Washington, the President of the United States, they began with the words:"We, the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church".

> particular church.....It follows, therefore, indubitably, that every church has a right to choose, if it please, the episcopal plan... The late Rev. John Wesley recommended the episcopal form to his societies in America; and the General Conference, which is the chief Synod of our church, unanimously accepted of it. Mr. Wesley did more. He first consecrated one for the office of bishop, that our episcopacy might descend from himself....Now that the idea of Apostolic succession being exploded, it follows, that the Methodist Church has ever thing which is Scriptural and essential to justify its episcopacy.....Is the unanimous approbation of the chief synod of a church necessary ? This it has had.....Is the ready compliance of the members of the church with its decision, in this respect, necessary ? This it has had, and continues to have. Is it highly expedient, that the fountain of the episcopacy should be respectable ? This has been the case. The most respectable divine since the primitive ages, if not since the time of the apostles, was Mr. Wesley....." [1]

And so, Wesleyan succession was substituted for Apostolic Succession. The nature of this episcopacy is further explained by the two writers:

> "We may add.1. That a branch of the episcopal office, which, in every episcopal church upon earth, since the first introduction of Christianity, has been considered as essential to it, namely, the power of ordination, is singularly limited in our bishops. For they not only have no power to ordain a person for the episcopal office till he be first elected by the General Conference, but they possess no authority to ordain an elder or a travelling deacon till he be first elected by a yearly conference; or a local deacon, till he obtain a testimonial, signifying the approbation of the society to which he belongs, countersigned by the general stewards of the circuit, three elders, three deacons, and three travelling preachers. They are, therefore, not under the temptation of ordaining through interest, affection, or any other improper motive; because it is not in their power so to do." [2]

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1. Emory: op.cit. p.336.
2. Emory: op.cit. p.345.

The power of suspension of ordination also belongs to the bishops, but Coke and Asbury warn against the abuse of it.

Such is the origin and nature of American Methodist episcopacy,[1] but it seems far removed from the simple commissioning ceremony of No.6.Dighton Street. It does, undoubtedly, reveal the length to which Coke was prepared to go, once he was sure of Wesley's initial approval.[2]

(e) The Special Case of Thomas Coke : (iii) Wesley's Intentions.

Beginning with negative arguments, first of all, there is no doubt at all that Wesley never intended Coke to regard himself as a bishop as the result of his commissioning him, for Wesley did not like the title of 'bishop'. The best evidence for this is contained in a letter addressed to Asbury, September 20th.1788:

> "There is, indeed a wide difference between the relation wherein you stand to the Americans and the relation wherein I stand to all the Methodists: I am under God the father of the

1. Watson (Life of Wesley, pp.339ff.), defends this episcopacy thus: "Such an arrangement was highly proper for America, where many of the preachers were young; and had also to labour in distant and extensive circuits, and were therefore incapable of assisting, advising, or controlling each other. A travelling episcopacy of the office of elder or presbyter, but it, of course, created no other distinction. "
2. At the American conference of 1789, the first question to be asked was: "Who are the persons that exercise the episcopal office in the Methodist Church in Europe and America ?" The answer was: "John Wesley, Thomas Coke, and Francis Asbury, by regular order and succession." Apparently, regardless of Wesley's intentions, Coke and Asbury assume that he is fully committed to their own views of episcopacy.

> whole family.....in one point, my dear brother, I am a little afraid both the Doctor (Coke) and you differ from me. I study to be little; you study to be great. I creep; you strut along. I found a school; you a college ! nay, and call it after your own names![1] O beware, do not seek to be something ! Let me be nothing, and 'Christ be all in all !
>
> One instance of this, of your greatness, has given me great concern. How can you, how dare you suffer yourself to be called Bishop ? I shudder, I start at the very thought ! Men may call me a knave, or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content; but they shall never by my consent call me a Bishop ! For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake put a full end to this ! Let the Presbyterians do what they please, but let the Methodists know their calling better..." [2]

E. W. Thompson,[3] who believes Wesley intended the term 'bishop' to be used among the American Methodists, declares that this is Wesley's idea of humour and that he had no intention of reprimanding Coke and Asbury. This is an unecessary statement - surely Wesley meant precisely what he said.

No-one can overlook Wesley's real dislike of the name 'bishop'. He preferred the alternative rendering of 'episcopus' as 'Superintendent'. 'Bishop' conjured up before him the idea of the 'mitred infidel', - the absentee shepherd, well known to his own generation. It was, as Watson agrees, the association to which he objected.[4] Moore writes similarly:

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1. i.e 'Cokesbury' College.
2. Letters. Vol.8.p.9. His reference to the Presbyterians is strangely out of place here.
3. 'Wesley - Apostolic Man' p.66.
4. 'Life of Wesley' p.368.

> "Mr. Wesley well knew the difference between the <u>office</u> and the title. He knew and felt the arduous duties and high responsibility which attached to the one, and the comparative nothingness of the other.....I say <u>comparative</u> nothingness; for who can, with sobriety, say, that titles are nothing in a national church.....He gave to those ἐπίσκοποι whom he ordained, the modest, but highly expressive title of <u>Superintendents</u>, and desired, that no other might be used....Mr. Wesley must wonder to see the office of BISHOP made thus the head of the Christian ministry...." [1]

Also Gregory:

> "Wesley never set himself to multiply Bishops of the Anglican type. The Methodist Bishops most appropriately derived their 'orders' which were 'marching orders' from John Wesley; from whom they derived both impulse and example for their noble office and work. The American Methodist Episcopacy is not prelatical, but presbyterial; not hierarchical, but evangelistic; not diocesan, but itinerant, like that of Wesley himself. It exercises 'an itinerant general superintendence.' The American Methodist Bishops, like the Lutheran Bishops of Sweden and Denmark, are avowedly on a par with their brethren.." [2]

Secondly, he did not intend Coke to become a bishop because he would know that he was not entitled to confer orders higher than those he himself possessed.[3] Coke, as presbyter-episcopus was of the same order as Wesley himself. Being a bishop in the New Testament sense, he would, according to Wesley's own revised

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1. Life of Wesley' Vol.2. pp.333/5. On p.334, Moore refers to Wesley's dislike of Coke's use of the term 'bishop' being mentioned in a letter sent by Wesley to Mrs. Gilbert, widow of the late Nathaniel Gilbert of Antigua. It is impossible to trace this letter in the Standard Edition of the Letters.
2. 'Scriptural Church Principles &c.'p.100.
3. Horne: 'Charge to the Clergy' (Works.Vol.2.p.570)says: "If a presbyter can consecrate a bishop, we admit that a man may confer a power of which he is not himself possessed; instead of the less being blessed by the greater, the greater is blessed by the less, and the order of all things is inverted."

thinking, reequire no further ordination.

Thirdly, Wesley's regard for the Church of England is shown on Coke's ordination certificate. He appoints Coke to adhere to " the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England." How could John have insisted on this had he intended to begin a spurious episcopacy in America in opposition to Anglican influence there ? Surely Wesley realised that he could never expect his 'consecration' of Coke to be recognised when he, only a presbyter, had assumed a power which, as an Anglican clergyman, he did not possess. He had, as such, no right to ordain even a presbyter, let alone, a bishop. Furthermore, any further ordination of Coke would imply that Wesley regarded his previous ordinations as deacon and priest, null and void. [1] And to do this, would hardly be an indication of loyalty to the Anglican Church. Prelatical episcopacy was never intended. If it was, Wesley's principle of the equality in essence, of presbyter and bishop, and his practice of it, were at variance. [2]

Fourthly, supposing that Wesley had the right to 'consecrate' a bishop (incidentally, nowhere does he use the term 'consecrate' [3] - which he would have done, had he intended Coke to be a bishop according to the Anglican form), the secrecy surrounding the ceremony,

1. See Whitehead: 'Life of Wesley'.Vol.2.p.438.
2. Cf. Southey: 'Life of Wesley' p.516.
3. He speaks only of 'appointing'.(Letters. Vol.7.pp238/9. 'setting apart' (Journal) and 'ordaining'(Diary).

renders the rite invalid. Unfortunately for both Wesley and Coke, it is Lord King who proves invalidity. When a vacancy occurred in the early church, the election of the new bishop was subject, not only to the decision of the local clergy and neighbouring bishops but to the approval of the whole people. King quotes Cyprian's statement that ordination "should not be done except with the knowledge and in the presence of, the people, who, being present, the crimes of the wicked may be detected, or the merits of the good declared, and so the ordination may be just and lawful, being approved of by the suffrage and judgment of all." [1] Denny Urlin suggests [2] that it was because Charles Wesley [3] and other ardent churchmen would regard this ordination with 'sorrow, if not with scorn' that secrecy was desirable. Coupled with this point is the fact that Wesley himself had not been elected by anyone to the office of bishop,[4] secretly or otherwise. [5]

The only evidence in favour of Wesley's act being an attempt to create episcopacy is that Coke had, at least

1. King's 'Primitive Church' (1st.Edition).pp.46-53.
2. 'A Churchman's Life of Wesley' p.167.
3. Charles' feelings are summed up in his verse:
   "So easily are Bishops made,
   By man's or woman's whim,
   Wesley his hands on Coke hath laid,
   But who hath laid hands on him ?"
4. See Nightingale 'Portraiture of Methodism' pp.405ff.
5. Cf. Whitehead: 'Life of Wesley', Vol.2.p.438. He regards Coke's ordination as Wesley's 'mishapen brat'.

two Anglican presbyters to assist in his 'ordination', or 'consecration'. [1] Assuming presbyter = bishop, this would be following the primitive custom for the making of a bishop.[2]

What then, did Wesley intend to convey by this ceremony ? The solution seems to be twofold. Firstly he delegated to Coke his own personal authority in America for he could not be there himself. Rattenbury[3] and A. R. George [4] agree that this was the intention, though they feel that Wesley believed himself to be an 'episcopus' because of his special divine commission. Neeley [5] too, avers that Wesley only intended by the title 'Superintendent', to make Coke a 'presiding Presbyter' with power to oversee the work in America. According to Wesley's own belief that a presbyter was equal to a bishop, Coke would have the same right to ordain already. Harrison [6] stresses that Wesley realised that whilst Presbyter = Bishop, the latter had a different function - that of 'overseeing' or 'superintendence'. Wesley, was, he maintains, no Presbyterian in the full sense, because he believed in the need for episcopal oversight, hence his choice of the term 'superintendent'. Therefore the title 'bishop',

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1. One was Creighton. Who was the other ? The ordination certificate says 'others' assisted.
2. Stevens: 'history of Methodist to the Death of Wesley' pp.539, mistakenly believes that this point proves that Wesley intended episcopacy.
3. 'Eucharistic Hymns &c.' pp.159ff.
4. W.H.S.Proc.XXXI.Pt.2.June.1957. p.29.
5. 'Evolution of Episcopacy'.pp.213/5.
6. 'Separation of Methodism from the Church of England' p.11.

scripturally as it would be used in this case, would be most unfortunate, owing to the contemporary conception of episcopacy.

Secondly, the solution also lies in the ceremony itself. What did it imply ? Tyerman [1] says it was a mere formality of delegating Wesley's authority to Coke. If so, it was as unfortunate as it was necessary, for it gives rise to the suspicion that it was intended to be ordination. Far better, as John W. Lawson suggests,[2] would have been the appointing of Coke by legal instrument, without any ceremony that could be interpreted in the wrong way. In any case, how can ordination have been intended, at least, in the Anglican sense, when Coke's authority was localised ? When Coke returned to England, he dropped the title of 'bishop'; nor was he even known as a 'Superintendent'. Hence Charles Wesley's fears that if Coke had been ordained, he might return to England and confer ordination on many of the preachers who were clamouring for it, and so make the Methodists into Dissenters.[3] Although Hatch,[4] an authority on the ministry of the early church, supports the idea that ordination was administered for particular places, it must be remembered that Wesley was still claiming to act as a

1. 'Life and Times of John Wesley',Vol.3.p.434.
2. Proc. W.H.S. XXXI.Pt.1.pp.23/4.
3. Jackson: 'Life of Charles Wesley' Vol.11.p.394 - Letter to John Wesley.
4. 'Organization of the Early Churches'.p.137.

faithful presbyter of the Church of England which knew no such ordination.

Wesley may well have anticipated his ritual at this commissioning ceremony in his comment on Acts. 13.v.2.[1] which he repeats in a letter to James Clark on September 18th. 1756 [2]:

> "When Paul and Barnabas were separated for the work to which they were called, this was not ordaining them. St. Paul was ordained long before, and that not of man nor by man. It was only inducting him to the province for which our Lord had appointed him from the beginning. For this end the Prophets and Teachers fasted, prayed, and 'laid their hands upon them'; a rite which was used, not in ordination only, but in blessing, and on many other occasions."

Summing up, it seems that Wesley intended to appoint Coke to take over his own personal authority in America, shared, of course, with Asbury, and to be enjoyed only whilst they remained there. Urged by Coke to do this by a formal ceremony, Wesley used a method of blessing which could be wrongly interpreted as 'ordination' or 'consecration'. From ambitious motives, Coke wilfully interpreted the rite in this way, and, naturally, Asbury and the American Methodists accepted it. What can neither be proved to be 'ordination' or 'consecration', from Scripture, the Primitive Church or Anglican custom, became accepted as such and exaggerated out of all proportion. Administrative episcopacy, i.e.

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1. Notes on the New Testament.
2. Letters. Vol.3. p.200. See this present work p.30.

superintendence [1], to be exercised by a superior presbyter was all that was intended. 'Bishop' and even the term 'episcopacy' were to be avoided on account of contemporary notions of prelatical episcopacy which prevailed in the Established Church.

(f) Ordinations for Scotland.

The Journal for August 1st (Monday), 1785, records the following:

> "Having, with a few select friends, weighed the matter thoroughly, I yielded to their judgement, and set apart three of our well-tried preachers, John Pawson, Thomas Hanby, and Joseph Taylor, to minister in Scotland; and I trust God will bless their ministrations, and show that He has sent them." [2]

According to the Diary, he ordained three on Monday, and 'ordained' again (no number given) on Tuesday, 2nd. It may well be that the Monday ordinations were for the order of deacon and the Tuesday ones were those for the order of elder.

The following year, 1786, on the 28th. of July, during the 43rd. Conference, (though, apparently, not in Conference hours), according to the Diary only, one of the three ordained by him then, was Joshua Keighley. He was appointed for work in Scotland.

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1. In spite of Coke's ambitions, he was never regarded as a bishop in English Methodism. His epitaph runs thus: "After a zealous ministry of several years in the Established Church, He gave himself up, A.D. MDCCLXXVI to the direction of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A And did the work of an Evangelist with much success in various parts of Great Britain and Ireland. He was appointed A.D. MDCCLXXXIV, the first Superintendent of the "Methodist Episcopal Church" in America. (R.Watson)
2. See Smith: 'History of Wesleyan Methodism' Vol.2.p.11. He thinks, (quite wrongly) that Wesley permitted Hanby to administer the sacraments before his ordination.

A further ordination is recorded in the Diary for Saturday the 29th. of July. As the Editor of the Standard 'Journal' suggests, this would be the higher ordination to the order of 'Elder' of the deacons made on the 28th. He also adds in a footnote, that there is little doubt that about this time, Charles Atmore was ordained for Scotland, and it is just possible, also, that another ordinand was Edward Burbeck who was appointed at this Conference for Inverness.[1]

In 1787, Duncan Mc.Allum and Alexander Suter were similarly ordained, on the 3rd. and 4th. of August, the Diary only, recording this, and Mc.Allum only, is mentioned by name.

Telford in his 'Life'[2], gives a list of Wesley's ordinations, which includes for May, 1788, 'in Scotland', John Barber and Joseph Cownley. It will be remembered that the latter had previously been 'solemnly' received as a lay-helper.[3] According to the Diary, Barber was ordained in Scotland, and for Scotland on the 18th. and 19th. of May. But Telford is wrong in respect of Cownley. Comparing the Journal with the Diary, he would be ordained in Newcastle, admittedly for

1. Harrison: 'Separation of Methodism from the Church of England' p. 18 says Atmore's unpublished journal is the source of this information. He also says Pawson assisted at these ordinations. This fact shows Wesley's belief in the validity of his own ordination as Pawson was one of his own ordinands.
2. p.383.
3. See p. 189 of this present work.

work in Scotland, not in May, as Telford says, but on the 3rd. and 4th. of June, as stated in the Diary.

In the Methodist Magazine of 1786, Wesley [1] gives his reasons for these steps:

> "After Coke's return from America, many of our friends begged I would consider the case for Scotland, where we had been labouring for many years, and had seen so little fruit of our labours. Multitudes, indeed have set out well, but they were soon turned out of the way; chiefly by their ministers, either disputing against the truth, or refusing to admit them to the Lord's Supper, yea, or to baptize their children, unless they would promise to have no fellowship with the Methodists. Many, who did so, soon lost all they had gained, and became more the children of hell than before. To prevent this, I, at length, consented to take the same step with regard to Scotland, which I had done with regard to America. But this is not a separation from the Church at all. Not from the Church of Scotland, for we were never connected therewith any further than we are now; nor from the Church of England; for this is not in the steps which are taken in Scotland. Whatever then, is done in America, or Scotland, is no separation from the Church of England.[2] I have no thought of this; I have many objections against it. It is a totally different case. 'But for all this, is it not possible there may be such a separation after you are dead ?' Undoubtedly it is. But what I said at our first conference above forty years ago, I say still: 'I dare not omit doing what good I can while I live, for fear of evil that may follow when I am dead.!'"

One point of importance to be noted is that these ordinations, like that of Coke, were for work in a specified land, - in this case, for Scotland only.

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1. p.678.
2. Wesley appears to justify his acts on the assumption that the Church of England had no jurisdiction in either Scotland or America. Admitted, in neither land, was the Church of England the State Church, but it certainly had its representation there.

Thus, when these men returned to England, they were no longer allowed to exercise their ministerial office.

One of the ordinands, Joseph Taylor, was transferred to Newark after his term in Scotland, but he received a letter from Wesley prohibiting him from assuming any longer, the office of minister:

> "I desire you would not wear the surplice nor administer the Lord's supper any more" [1]

The members of the Neward society were to blame for encouraging this irregularity.

John Pawson, another Scottish ordinand was similarly treated and very much resented Wesley's attitude. He had, however been guilty of irregularities of his own by ordaining 'elders' himself and forming a 'session' for the supervision of the work in Glasgow. In a letter to Charles Atmore, Pawson complains bitterly of his deposition by 'one single man' and lays much of the blame at the door of Charles Wesley, who had urged the people never to receive the sacraments from the hands of his brother's ordinands. [2]

Hanby also had to relinquish his ministerial authority when he returned to England, but he refused to be as quiescent as Pawson and resisted Wesley's direction. In a letter to James Oddie on the 21st.

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1. Letters. Vol.8.p.105. See also Letters. Vol.8.p.23., where Wesley had obviously insisted on gown and bands being worn in Scotland but admitted that it had been foolish to send cassocks there, "where the ministers do not wear them." He explains that they can easily be made into gowns by adding a yard or so of stuff.
2. Tyerman 'Life & Times &c.' Vol.3.pp.496ff. Wesley addressed Pawson as 'Rev' in Scotland but as 'Mr.' on his return to England.

May, 1789,[1] he asserts that it is his conviction that he should continue to administer the sacraments. A further epistle to Richard Rodda on the 4th. June,[2] of the same year, speaks of the possibility of his expulsion for non-compliance with Wesley's order. It seems that, to make matters worse, he has been put under the supervision of the Methodist clergy and the senior preachers ! But he still maintains that he is right:

> "I grant that these who are called to preach have the equal right to administer; but do not talk of "depreciating ordination". Mr. Wesley did that, seven years ago, when he published in the newspapers those who had presumed to be ordained by the Greek Bishop. I expect he will depreciate me, though he himself ordained me, and commanded me to administer the ordinances in the church of God."

He reveals in this letter that it was the people to whom he ministered who had persuaded him to continue administering the sacraments.

On fact is very clear - these ordinations for Scotland gave rise to more difficulties than they were intended to solve. Abuses of privilege are evident. Pawson's irregularities in Glasgow, coupled with the ordinands' reluctance to relinquish their ministerial authority when south of the border, brought to Wesley a burden of perplexity which was almost intolerable.

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1. Tyerman: 'Life & Times &c.', Vol.3. p.574.
2. Tyerman (op.cit). Vol.3.p.575.

Know all Men by these Presents, that I John Wesley, Master of Arts, late of Lincoln-College in the University of Oxford, did, on the fifth Day of August in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty eight, by the Imposition of my hands and Prayer, and in the Fear of God, (being assisted by other ordained Ministers) set apart Robert Gamble for the Office of an Elder in the Church of God: Whom I recommend to all to Whom these Presents shall come as a proper Person to administer the holy Sacraments and feed the Church of God. Given under my Hand and Seal, the tenth Day of August, in the Year above written.

John Wesley

A CERTIFICATE OF AN ORDINATION BY JOHN WESLEY, OF A METHODIST PREACHER - ROBERT GAMBLE.

From the Original in the possession of the Methodist Publishing House. London.

(g) Ordinations for Overseas Missions

The year 1786 saw the first ordinations for work overseas other than for America. In the Diary only, for Friday, 28th. July, along with Joshua Keighley, (who was commissioned for Scotland), there were ordained William Warrener for Antigua and William Hammet for Newfoundland.[1] A footnote in the Standard Journal mentions that, though it was Conference time, these men were not ordained in Conference hours. Further ordinations took place on Saturday the 29th., which would be those to the higher order of elder, following the ordinations of the previous day.

The following year, two more men received ordination (at the same time as Duncan Mc.Allum and Alexander Suterm who, as stated, were appointed for Scotland). They were James Wray for Nova Scotia and John Harper for the West Indies.[2]

On Sunday, 3rd. of August, 1788, according to Wesley's Diary (only), six preachers were ordained. No names are given. In a footnote, the Editor of the Journal says that two of the preachers were Robert Gamble and Thomas Owens, whose certificates have survived.[3] On Tuesday, the 5th., Wesley enters a note

1. Harrison: 'Separation of Methodism from the Church of England',p.18, says Atmore's Diary records another ordinand. Harrison thinks that this is John Clark, who went to Nova Scotia the same year.
2. The Editor of the Journal says the fourth ordinand is unknown. Telford's list says it is John Harper. Wesley Swift in W.H.S.Proc.XXX.Pt.1.72. gives details of the certificate.
3. Telford agrees that Gamble and Owens were ordained deacons on the 3rd., but gives only the name of Gamble as being ordained elder on the 5th.

of having ordained 'six presbyters).' Presumably, these were the same six men, being ordained to the higher order of 'elder'. A footnote in the Jounral says that the two names known were those of men intended for abroad and it is suggested that the other four were similarly appointed, but of this there is no proof.[1] Eayrs [2] gives details of another ordination to the office of elder on the 6th. of August, viz. that of Matthew Lumb, though the certificate is dated for the 7th. It is possible that this man was also ordained for work overseas as there is later evidence that he laboured in St. Vincent and, on one occasion was imprisoned for having preached to the negroes.[3]

Now that Wesley had ordained for America, Scotland and the mission field abroad, the next step which led to general ordinations for England, was but a small one.

(h) Ordinations for England

Ordinations for England were inevitable. Many circumstances leading to this can be traced without difficulty. Wesley and his clerical colleagues could not meet the sacramental requirements of the Methodist people in the country. Secondly, although they had been directed to attend faithfully at the parish church

1. Journal. Vol.7. p.422.
2. 'Wesley, Christian Philosopher and Church Founder', pp.279/80.
3. 'New History of Methodism' (Townsend, Workman and Eayrs), Vol.2.p.291.

for the sacraments, many incumbents had repelled the Methodist people from the Lord's Table. Wesley's requests to Anglican bishops for the ordination of his preachers had been turned down. Preachers and people alike clamoured for the right of administration in their own societies. It will be remembered that when Taylor and Hanby returned from Scotland and continued to assume the ministerial office, the excuse offered to Wesley for their conduct was that the people insisted.[1] As early as 1755, controversy was being stirred up by the preachers and the subject received consideration at the Conferences of 1755 and 1756. A letter from a Rev. Mr. Baddiley of Hayfield to Wesley, of 7th. June, 1755, appeals to him to prevent separation from the Church by refusing to allow the preachers to administer. They were, he alleges, taking too much upon themselves, as did the sons of Levi. The next year, Edward Perronet, one of the preachers, issued his protest against this refusal in a satire on the Church of England, which he published under the title of 'The Mitre'. In this 279 page, 12mo. work, which Wesley, urged by his brother Charles, was able to suppress, only with moderate success, Perronet, with characteristic wit and poetic skill, depicts thus, the faithful Anglican's disgust at the possibility of receiving the sacraments from a lay preacher: [2]

1. See pp250-252 of this present study.
2. Tyerman: 'Life & Times&c.' Vol.2.pp.241-244.

"What, take the ordinance from them !
O, what a frenzy of a dream !
No deacon nor a priest !
Sooner renounce our grace or friends,
Than take it from their fingers' ends !
A lay, unhallowed beast! "

In a note, he denounces the notion of the Lord's Supper being 'a sacrifice'. So long as this delusion is maintained, the sacrament must be administered by priests, and by priests alone. "Only reduce this simple institution to its primitive and scriptural standard, and then,a handful of private individuals, or a single family, may communicate, as the Christians did of old, and the sacrament (so called) become, once more, literally, a daily sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving." [1] (page 128).

Dr. Adam Clarke in a letter of 16th. June, 1832 asserts that this agitation was due to Wesley's attitude:

"I have been a preacher in the Methodist Connexion for more than half a century; and have been a travelling preacher 47 years, and I ever found many people in most places of the Connexion very weary of not having the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper administered in our own chapels by our own preachers. Mr. J. Wesley mildly recommended the people to go to the Church and Sacrament. Mr. C. Wesley threatened them with damnation if they did not...."

He also says it was not the preachers only, who agitated for the Sacraments:

"It was only when the cry became almost universal and the people were in every way

1. J. E. Rattenbury: 'Eucharistic Hymns &c.' pp 97/9., says that in suppressing this publication, Wesley was insisting on the priesthood of the ministry.

> in danger of being everywhere scattered and divided, and a party of rich men, principally trustees in the connexion, rose up to prevent any concessions to be made to the people, and it was too evident, that those very men aimed, not only, as they professed, to keep the people to the Church, but to rule them and the preachers too, that the preachers in general declared on behalf of the societies; and then, and not till then, did I argue on their behalf." [1]

Matters were made worse when some of the preachers took it upon themselves to administer without Wesley's consent, and without ordination, though it has been maintained by some that both had been obtained, though obviously, in secret.[2] Apart from the Scottish ordinands who had continued in the priestly office after their term had expired, there were a number of others. In 1760, Paul Greenwood, Thomas Mitchell and John Murlin assumed the ministerial office at Norwich. Greater offence was taken by Charles than by John. In a strongly worded letter of protest to John,[3] he blames the preachers' desire for separation to be the cause of the trouble. In a similar letter to Nicholas Gilbert on the 6th. of March,[4] his greatest fear is that the preachers will become Dissenters. They had acted, he declares, "upon the sole authority of a sixpenny licence." John Murlin gives his own account of the

1. W.H.S.Proc. XVIII.p.23.
2. See p 262 of this present work.
3. March (early), 1760. T. Jackson: 'Life of Charles Wesley' Vol.2.p.180. Gregory: 'Scriptural Principles &c.' p.120 is wrong when he says Wesley authorized his preachers to administer at Norwich.
4. Jackson: 'Life of C.Wesley' Vol.2.p.183.

incident in a letter dated 23rd. December, 1794:

> "In the infant state of Methodism, the preachers only preached and did not administer the sacrament, but near thirty-six years ago, Mr. Wesley sent me to Norwich where I preached, baptized their children and administered the Lord's Supper for a great part of three years, till Mr. Charles made a great outcry and put a stop to it for a time." [1]

In Charles' letter to John mentioned above, the former claims that he has a list of the defaulting preachers. Apparently these are the same as contained in his Diary for October 17th. and 18th., 1754 which reads as follows:

> "October 17. Sister Macdonald, first, and then Sister Clay, informed me that Charles Perronet gave the sacrament to the preachers, Walsh and Deaves, and then to twelve at Sister Garder's in the Minoties.
>
> October 18. Sister Meredith told me that her husband had sent her word that Walsh had administered the sacrament at Reading. "

Twelve years later, in 1766, John expresses surprise and concern to Christopher Hopper by letter about a note he has received from someone in Sunderland where Hopper has been preaching for a fortnight. It has stated that the hope has been expressed locally that Hopper would be settling down there to become their 'minister' and thus they would not need the travelling preachers so often. "And, I hope" concludes the writer " that he will give us the sacrament." Quite naturally, Wesley demands an

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1. London Quarterly, 1884.

explanation.[1]

More serious still, according to Hockin [2] and Whitehead,[2] one preacher - one of Wesley's 'bishops', as the former describes him, was not content with administering the sacraments, but had actually ordained others, apparently without Wesley's consent. The name of the preacher is not given, though obviously one of Wesley's own ordinands is indicated. Defending the man before Charles, John says the man had asked his leave. "You are exactly right" replies Charles, "he did nothing before he asked, - True, he asked your leave to ordain two more preachers before he ordained them; but while your answer was coming to prohibit him, he took care to ordain them both. Therefore his asking you was a mere compliment." Hockin is careful to point out that Moore, T. Jackson and Tyerman all suppress this passage.

Feeling was now running high on all sides. Preachers had been ordained for other countries, but the request for English ordinations had been refused. As a result, a number of Wesley's helpers had left the Connexion.[4] His resistance was waning. One most important point which no doubt influenced him in his

1. Dated 20th. November, 1766 (Letters Vol.5.p.31). This must have been settled satisfactorily, for, in a later letter (9th. January, 1768), Wesley says that he 'constitutes' Hopper 'Lord President of the North' and bids him enter upon his province without delay.
2. 'John Wesley and Modern Methodism' pp.74ff.
3. 'Life of John Wesley' Vol.1.p.368.
4. e.g. Edward Perronet, Wm. Moore of Plymouth etc.

decision was his brother's death in 1788 - the year of

the Preachers in the Methodist Connexion, by a layman of the Methodist Society' in which ordination is objected to because it would mean separation and make discord among the preachers and also destroy itinerancy.

2. Diary only records this. Telford gives August 6th. as the date of both ordinations.
3. Telford's list gives only the ordination of the 27th.
4. 'Chronological History' p.175.

bishop or Superintendent, though it is generally supposed that he was intended to superintendent the whole work in England after Wesley's death, as Coke was appointed to do in America during Wesley's lifetime. The Diary simply states the fact of two ordinations of Mather, and as he had not received any ordination previous to this, they must be those of deacon and elder respectively, as laid down in the 'Sunday Service'. Raymond George[1] emphasises that it was not Wesley's practice to omit a step in ordinations, though he feels that at the second ordination there may well have been some indication made that Mather was also appointed 'superintendent'. Surely, Wesley would have added the third ordination of 'superintendent' in accordance with his 'Sunday Service' ? There is, however, no proof that Mather was ever intended by Wesley to be a bishop or a Superintendent, for there seems to be no record of his having performed any of the functions of these two offices. He was appointed to Wakefield in 1788 and to Hull in 1791. The only other mention that is made of Mather being appointed a 'bishop' is in a manuscript letter of Pawson, quoted by Tyerman in which he says :

> "He(Wesley) foresaw that the Methodists would soon become a distinct body. He was deeply prejudiced against presbyterian, and as much in favour of episcopal government. In order,

1. L.Q.H.R. April, 1951.p.163. It is difficult, however, to understand why Wesley should trouble to ordain Elders as Superintendents in any case, if they are, as he believes, equal in order and the latter no more than a presiding Elder.

> therefore, to preserve all that is valuable in the Church of England among the Methodists, he ordained Mr. Mather and Dr. Coke bishops. These he undoubtedly designed should ordain others. Mr. Mather told us so at the Manchester Conference, in 1791." [1]

A final question to be asked in this chapter is whether or not there were any ordinations by Wesley previous to these recorded in the Diary and Journal? When the trouble arose over the administration of the sacraments by Walsh and Perronet in 1753, Charles Wesley consulted Lady Huntingdon on the matter. She expressed her firm conviction that John must have laid his hands on these preachers, otherwise they would not have officiated. However, this seems to be no more than Her Ladyship's own private judgment,[2] though Charles attached much importance to it.

Two curious incidents are recorded. The first is by a daughter of Thomas Taylor who was born during her father's ministry in Manchester in 1771, in a letter to James Everett about the building of Oldham Street Chapel:

> "It is well known that high church principles were so prevalent as to exclude our own preachers from officiating in Church hours; and it was therefore deemed necessary to appoint a priest who should be duly authorized to read prayers."

She then describes the appointment of a Mr. Edward

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1. Tyerman: 'Life & Times&c.' Vol.3.p.443.
2. See Simon: 'John Wesley and the Advance of Methodism' p.293. Also Tyerman(op.cit.) Vol.2.p.202 - Letters to Walter Sellon from Charles Wesley.

Bayley who, "by the imposition of Wesley's hands, was constituted a proper person for this office." [1] There is however, no evidence available to support this statement.

The second incident is given by Smith in his 'History of Wesleyan Methodism':[2]

> "He ordained Mr. Woodhouse of Owston, near Epworth, and appointed him to preach in his gown and bands in church hours, and also to administer the sacraments, although he was only a local preacher."

Bowmer [3], quoting F. H. Baker, says the authority for this is Alexander Kilham's 'Earnest Address to the Preachers Assembled in Conference, by their Affectionate Brethren in the Gospel, Paul and Silas.' Kilham, says Baker, being a native of Epworth would have some knowledge of local affairs there.

Gregory,[4] enlarges upon this incident, saying that Wesley's step was his reply to the 'insolence of his father's successor as Rector of Epworth', and in redress of the deprivation of the sacraments to the Methodist people of that parish. Wesley mentions the unfriendliness of the incumbent of that parish, but if this incident is true, why has he omitted it in view of its importance ? Perhaps Woodhouse's commission was no more than that of Cownley when he was admitted as a Methodist preacher, with no reference to the administration of the sacraments.

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1. W. H. S. Proc.1.46.
2. Vol.II.p.11.
3. 'The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism' p.155.

Although there may have been some ordinations by Wesley other than those recorded in the Diary and elsewhere, it may safely be assumed that none of these took place prior to 1784.

Lastly, it may asked if any ordinations were carried out in this country by anyone else during Wesley's lifetime ?

Apart from the incident reported by Hockin and Whitehead concerning the ordination of some preachers by one of Wesley's 'bishops'[1], there is one interesting ceremony described by Sutcliffe in his account of Wesley's last Conference. At the close of this Conference he says an impressive ceremony was held. Eleven or twelve young men gave briefly their experience, their call to preach and confessed their faith. After this Dr. Coke delivered a copy of the 'Large Minutes' to each of them, putting his right hand on their heads. Sutcliffe continues:

> "This was ordination in every view; what else could it designate, having sworn thus to the faith, and devotion to the work of the Lord ? I do not recollect that this was continued in future Conferences, but I am told it followed the Scottish ordinations, and though it was not called ordination, what else could it be ? Mr. Wesley took no part in those proceedings; he kept his seat, but saw the Doctor deliver the Minutes to the twelve, laying his right hand in silence on the head of each. His presence sanctioned the whole, for though bound to him by countless (ties), he saw and felt that half a million people could not be kept together without the bread hallowed by

1. See p.259 of this present work.

the Lord." [1]

Sutcliffe, who alone describes this ceremony, says this is ordination. If it was ordination, surely Wesley himself, along with other presbyters, would officiated. According to Wesley's revised Prayer-Book services of ordination for the three orders of Deacon, Elder and Superintendent, it is a Bible, not the 'Large Minutes', which is given to the candidate. There is no evidence that any Prayer-Book was used at all, - rather it was a silent ceremony. Wesley would not regard this occasion as being other than a formal acknowledgement and authorization, of a lay preacher by the Methodist Conference.

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1. W. H. S. Proc.XV.60.

CHAPTER FOUR

WESLEY'S FINAL POSITION

It is now necessary to see how far Wesley has deviated from his early orthodox views and to what extent he has implemented his revised ideas.

To the end he maintains his conviction that he will live and die a faithful member of the Church of England. Some of his biographers are at pains to emphasize his orthodoxy, whilst others see virtue in his nonconformity.

(a) His Inconsistencies as an Anglican Clergyman

Wesley could never be convinced of any inconsistency on his part. He admits he has 'varied' from the Established Church on some points of doctrine and discipline, such as praying and preaching extempore and by forming societies.[1] He should also add, of course, the fact of preaching in other man's parishes without permission. Gregory confirms Wesley's own view by saying that none of his movements "even the boldest of them, had been a new departure; every step had been a fresh advance on old lines."[2] Perhaps he is right up to a point. These factors may be regarded as breaches of discipline and irregular, but not serious enough to constitute separation. The

1. Letter to Charles Wesley, August 19th.1785.(Letters, Vol.7.pp.284/5.
2. 'Scriptural Principles &c.' p.98.

employment of lay-preachers in itself was, technically possible within the Church of England, though the custom had lapsed into disuse, but it was irregular for the obvious reasons that no bishop had licensed them, and that they did not confine their activities to any specified parish.

Lord Mansfield's judgment to Charles Wesley that "ordination is separation" cannot be denied. Herein lies Wesley's greatest schism. Most writers either agree with his ordinations and praise them, or condemn them. Is there possibly, a via media which would allow for the pressing circumstances in which they took place, whilst excluding any intention of separation from the Church ? If so, the following points must be taken into account, though they offer but a meagre defence of Wesley's acts.

(i) As an Anglican priest, Wesley had no right to ordain any person to any order in the Anglican Church.

(ii) Even though he is sincerely convinced that originally, 'Presbyter' and 'Bishop' were synonymous terms in the New Testament, - in the historic tradition, these two orders soon became separated. The Church of England, to which Wesley belonged has always maintained this latter position and has based its ministerial orders upon it. Therefore, whilst scripturally, he thought himself to be an 'episkopos', he was definitely not a bishop in the Anglican sense. [1]

1. Sparrow-Simpson: 'John Wesley and the Church of England', pp64/5, describes this difference of opinion as "Wesley's individualism versus the Ordinal"

William Jones of Nayland,[1] says"this could not be done by Mr. Wesley in virtue of what he <u>was</u>, - it must have been done in virtue of what he <u>thought</u> himself to be.....If he acted of himself, as John Wesley, a presbyter of the church of England, he acted against all sense and order; and by taking upon himself what no man can take, he would introduce in the issue more confusion than he would prevent.." Thompson[2], Tyerman,[3] Whitehead,[4] and many others are in complete agreement here. A. J. Mason mentions that even if Wesley had been an Anglican bishop, his ordinations would have been no less schismatic, and caused inevitable separation, though they would have had a greater claim to be considered valid.[5] Curteis in his 'Bampton Lectures' wishes John Wesley had been made a bishop in the mid-eighteenth century, because the fortunes of the English Church and he American and Colonial daughters would then have been different.[6]

(iii)Wesley, however, did not claim to ordain men as Anglican deacons and priests or 'bishops' for service in the Anglican Church. Nor did he ever expect the Established Church to recognize or accept his ordinands. They were ordained by Wesley, the head of the Methodist movement, for Methodist work.[7] When it seemed obvious that no Anglican bishop would ordain them, he accepted the fact and felt perhaps, that it was as well, otherwise they might expect to exercise jurisdiction over them. No bishop was likely to ordain a man for purely Methodist work. His revised edition of the Prayer-book, - admittedly a schismatic step in itself, - allowed for three orders, similar to those of the Anglican Church, but were to be regarded primarily as scriptural orders. By doing this he felt

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1. 'Life of Dr. Horne'.p.158.
2. 'Wesley: Apostolic Man' p.48.
3. 'Life & times &c.'Vol.pp448/9. 4. 'Life &c' Vol.2.pp. 438 ff. 5. 'The Church of England and Episcopacy' pp.409ff.
6. 'Dissent in its relations to the Church of England'. p. 344.
7. In his letter to the Bishop of Oxford, Dr. Pusey is correct when he says that Wesley was reluctant to ordain. He is wrong when he states that his ordinands were never allowed to administer. That, of course, is the very reason why they were ordained.

he was retaining the best of Anglican tradition for his characteristically scriptural movement.[1]

(iv) His ordinations were not, as some have supposed - Presbyterian.[2] Charles Wesley thus described both the ordinations and the Methodist people after he had heard of the former. Wesley did not agree with Presbyterian orders.[3] He preferred episcopal orders. To be called a Dissenter was the last description of himself that Wesley would desire. Moreover, the form used by Wesley was definitely not that used in Presbyterian churches.

(v) There is every evidence that to the end, Wesley cherished the hope of reconciliation with his Mother Church and that she would recognise and adopt the movement and work. It would be with this in mind that he made his earlier ordinations temporary and localised. Coke was Superintendent in America but not in England. Pawson and Hanby were ministers in Scotland but laymen south of the border. Ordination was a temporary expedient. It was, as Sykes says, of 'ineluctable necessity'[5] In short, Wesley wanted to be both Anglican priest and scriptural, spiritual 'episkopos'.

Nevertheless, the first ordination was a decisive act of schism, intentional or otherwise. It laid the first real foundation for a new church, because Wesley's preachers, in their ambition, regarded ordination by him to be equivalent to that conferred by an Anglican bishop.

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1. See Myles: 'Chronological History'.p.175.
2. Sparrow-Simpson: 'John Wesley and the Church of England'.p.96.
3. A.W.Harrison: 'Separation of Methodism from the Church of England'.p.11. He denies that Wesley was a Presbyterian in the full sense, though he accepted the principle that Presbyter = Bishop. In W.H.S.Proc. XV.9. he says Wesley had to accept some of the fundamental principles of Presbyterianism as Apostolic. Even Hockin (Uohn Wesley and Modern Methodism')(p.65) denies that Wesley's ordinations are presbyterian. 4. See Hastings E.R.E.Vol.9.p. 545: Presbyterians did not use any particular form and the ordinand was ordained in and to the church he was to serve. 5. 'Friends of Reunion Bulletin' - Not as Sidney (Life of Walker) says - "wretched

Wesley's refusal to believe that ordination was separation still remains to be adequately explained:

> "These are the steps, which, not of choice," he writes, " but necessity, I have slowly and deliberately taken. If any one is pleased to call this separation from the Church, he may. But the law of England does not call it so; nor can any one properly be said so to do, unless, out of conscience, he refuses to join in the service, and partake of the sacraments administered therein." [1]

Not all his preachers agreed with his views or practice. Charles Wesley had his supporters among them. This is the verdict of one of them:

> "Ordination among Methodists ! Amazing indeed ! Surely it never began in the midst of a multitude of counsellors; and I greatly fear, the Son of Man was not secretary of State, or not present, when the business was brought on and carried. Who is the father of this monster, so long dreaded by the father of his people, and by most of his sons ? Whoever he be, time will prove him to be a felon to Methodism, and discovers his assassinating knife sticking fast in the vitals of its body. Years to come will speak in groans the approbrious anniversary of our religious madness for gowns and bands." [2]

Another[3] wrote:

> "I wish they had been asleep when they began this business of ordination; it is neither episcopal or presbyterian; but a mere hodge-podge of inconsistencies."

How true is the middle sentiment ! These ordinations certainly were not episcopal in the Anglican sense, nor Presbyterian, though they

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1. Methodist Magazine.1785.p.602.
2. Tyerman:'Life and Times &c.' Vol.3.p.439.
3. ibid. p.439.

possessed some elements of both. They can only be described as 'Wesleyan' - truly Wesleyan, for they appertained only to Wesley's lifetime.

His ordinations not only alienated him from his Mother Church [1], but gave rise to a division within the ranks of Methodism. The major battles, however, were not fought until Wesley's earthly pilgrimage was ended.

(b) His Ruling Motive

> "The true explanation of Wesley's conduct in this matter is the intensely practical character of his mind" submits Overton.[2] Everything must be sacrificed for the sake of his work. Some may think that this was doing evil that good might come, but no such notion entered Wesley's head; his rectitude of purpose, if not the clearness of his judgment, is as conspicuous in this as in the other acts of his life."

No fairer judgement than this could be asked for, especially from an authority of the church from Wesley had deviated.

Wakeman,[3] who has less sympathy with him, says:

> "He looked upon the Church mainly as a legal establishment of religion....as a political arrangement for the advancement of religion....he treated such irregularity as merely irregularity in the eyes of the law, and not as in any way contrary to the purposes of God."

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1. Cf. Curteis 'Bampton Lectures' pp378/9."In assuming Episcopal functions, John Wesley did what it was quite beyond his province to do and that he thereby largely contributed to bring about the unhappy event which (in words) he forbade, to his dying day,viz: the secession of his societies from the Church of England."
2. 'The English Church in the 18th.Century' Vol.2.p.83.
3. 'History of the Church of England'.pp.484ff.

It is not to be thought that Wesley did not believe that church order was of God. He did believe it could be, but he also knew that there was much of man's making in it. Therefore, if the choice between ecclesiastical order and the direct revelation of the Divine Will, had to be made, the latter must take precedence. He believed he had a special Divine commission and that necessitated special methods, which often had to cut across tradition. Thompson makes a plea for the right of 'private judgement',[1] but Wesley is never keen on private opinions. To him, both the conception of, and work of, the Christian ministry, is one of Divine leading.

There will be few acquainted with this subject who will not wish that Wesley had left a reasoned statement and defence, of, his views on the ministry and of his ordinations.[2] His teaching on Salvation by Faith, Justification, the Right use of Money and so many other important subjects, is clearly defined. But his teaching on the ministry seems to have changed with changing circumstances as is shown by his actions. What was expedient for yesterday, he casts aside to-day. The final word on this subject may never be written.

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1. 'Wesley: Apostolic Man'.p.66.
2. See Journal Vol.8. pp.108/9(Also Methodist Magazine for 1823). After Wesley had preached at Diss in Norfolk, by permission of the Bishop, a certain Mr. Freer, who had obtained this consent, interviewed Wesley in the vestry at the close of the service. He question Wesley about his ordinations. The latter was about to reply but was hastened away by his friends, not, as some supposed, because they feared mischief was brewing but because they were concerned about his punctual arrival for an appointment at Bury.

Lastly, had Wesley any regrets ? He does regret, not so much the ordinations, but the circumstances necessitating them and the results of them. He grieves for the slowness and the unspirituality of the National Church. He sorrows over the ambitious nature of so many of his preachers whom he has ordained.

> "I am quite undetermined whether I shall ever ordain again." he writes to Joshua Keighley on 20th. May, 1787. "At the Conference this must be thoroughly discussed. I know not but I have already gone too far." [1]

Of course, he did ordain again, but he is obviously far from happy about it.

Tyerman, in a footnote, adds:

> "The Rev. J. Creighton, in his reply to Bradburn's pamphlet in 1793, affirms that Wesley repented, with tears, that he had ordained any of his preachers. He states that he expressed his sorrow for this at the Conference of 1789, and occasionally afterwards till his death. Creighton adds: 'About six weeks before he died, he said "The preachers are now too powerful for me "!" [2]

Tyerman is cautious to suggest that this must pass for what it is worth as James Creighton was a clergyman !

Wesley, old man though he had become, must have included in his regrets, that of having to lay the foundations for the separation of his movement from the Church it was intended to serve. He knew well enough the inevitable results of the steps he had

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1. Letters. Vol.7.p.384.
2. 'Life and Times &c.' Vol.3.p.441.

taken, - he must have done. They were results which were even more far - reaching than he had anticipated. [1] He had indeed gone too far and there was no turning back. What had been done was irrevocable and must remain - for better or for worse.

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1. See the postscript of this present work, beginning on the next page.

POSTSCRIPT.

The main purpose of this postscript is, not to extend this study beyond its legitimate scope, but rather, to show very briefly, how little of Wesley's opinions and practice were valued and accepted by his successors. In fact, the history of the belief and practice with regard to the ministry in the post-Wesley period is an immense subject, to study which, would require a separate work.

The most unfortunate result of Wesley's ordinations, had been the creation of two opposing parties within the Methodist movement. One party comprised those who desired to continue in the Established Church and were against Methodist ordinations. The other section wanted to separate from the Church and have the sacraments administered in their own chapels, and ordination conferred by imposition of hands, though some of their number saw little importance in this rite. After the death of Wesley, some unauthorised ordinations took place, but the Conference of 1792 forbad any ordination to take place without the consent of that body,[1] nor were the sacraments to be administered in the chapels, not even by the clergymen or Wesley's ordinands. Administration was still refused at the next conference. It was also decreed that the title 'Rev.' should not be used between preachers, nor gowns, cassocks, bands or surplices worn. Furthermore, the distinction between ordained and unordained men was to be dropped.[2] Gregory

1. Minutes of the Conference. Vol.1.p.259.
2. 'Scriptural Principles &c.'p.126.

ingeniously describes this as a "levelling up rather than a levelling down." He maintains that this decision was not deleting Wesley's orders but simply raising up the other preachers to 'Full Connexion' with the Conference. So it is obvious that his successors did not share Wesley's emphasis on the necessity and value of ordination or found any use for his prescribed services for the ordination to the three orders of Superintendent, Elder and Deacon. The 'lifting up of the hands' in assent when a man was admitted to the full status as a preacher, by the Conference,[1] was now substituted for ordination by the imposition of hands.[2]

The whole conception of the ministry is found to have little in common with that of Wesley. Smith outlines the change:[3]

> "The reason why the first Methodist preachers were not ordained was, that they were not accounted ministers, but helpers to others who held that character; while it was now an undoubted fact, that, by the providence of God, they had long ceased to occupy a subordinate position. They were no longer helpers to any class or body of men, but themselves constituted the ministry of a large and growing Christian denomination; and, as such, were not only entitled to all the privileges of the Christian ministry, but bound to avail themselves of every

1. A. Raymond George (L.H.Q.R.April,1951) refers to this as the 'virtual ordination theory'
2. Gregory :'Scriptural Principles' argues in favour of this on the grounds that, originally,'laying on of hands' meant also ' lifting up of hands'. Smith. 'History of Wesleyan Methodism' Vol.3.p.359 regards the imposition of hands as only a 'circumstance' of ordination.
3. Smith (op.cit.)Vol.3.p.362.

> scriptural circumstances, and thus place themselves before their people and the world as fully accredited ministers of the Gospel."

Few ordinations took place before 1836 and these were mainly in respect of men appointed overseas. Coke does not seem to have exercised his episcopal functions very much, whilst Mather, apparently, not at all. Henry Moore, the sole surviving ordinand of Wesley's was not asked to share in the first ordination ceremony after the Conference of 1836 authorised the rite of imposition of hands. On this occasion, according to Smith,[1] thirty young men were set apart by the President, Jabez Bunting, the ex-President, the Secretary and three senior preachers, none of whom had ever received the type of ordination they were now conferring on others. To each of the candidates, Bunting said:

> "Mayest thou receive the Holy Ghost, for the office and work of a Christian minister, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands; and be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God, and of His holy sacraments, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost."

It is sometimes stated that the ministers of Methodism are not in the 'Apostolic Succession', but, according to the facts related above, they can hardly be regarded as being in the 'Wesleyan' succession. Wesley knew nothing of ordination, simply to 'the Christian ministry' without reference to particular orders.

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1. 'History of Wesleyan Methodism' Vol.3.p.362.

A new church and ministry had been brought into being. Wesley's revised beliefs had been responsible for this, even though, to his dying day, he had refused to separate from the church of his birth. Yet, how a reconciliation could have been effected between his movement and that church, it is difficult to determine. Wesley had employed among his preachers, men of latent talent and unquestionable ability, but, unfortunately, too many of them were also potential Dissenters, whom only a genius like Wesley could control. They would never have found a niche in the Established Church, whereas Methodism gave them a status which they were denied elsewhere. It is understandable, then, that, as soon as Wesley's leadership ceased, separation from the Anglican Church was made official and complete, though, one hopes, not final. In any scheme for reunion with the Church of England, the difficult subject of the ministry will have to be discussed and agreed upon. More important still, however, is the wider context in which Wesley himself set the ministry and in which it will still have to be seen, i.e. the work of spreading the Gospel. The ministry, like the Church and Sacraments, was and is, a means to an end, not an end in itself. Possibly this is the reason why Wesley never troubled to work out a reasoned statement of his views on the ministry, His greater concern was with reformation within the church and the reclamation of the multitudes without. A reunion which has, as its chief aim the sole glory of Him who is the Redeemer of mankind, will be one for which every reasonable man will work and pray.

APPENDIX ONE

WESLEY AND THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN

That there was a ministry to be exercised by women, Wesley did not doubt. The question he had to face, was that of the type of ministry. He acknowledges that in the early Church, deaconesses [1] were appointed:

> "..in every church. It was their office, not to teach publicly, but to visit the sick, the women in particular, and to minister to them both in their temporal and spiritual necessities." [2]

Consistent with this, he found service for women in every circuit and society as band leaders, class leaders, sick visitors and as teachers of the young. To allow them to preach, he at first refused. Writing to Thomas Whitehead on 10th. February, 1748,[3] explaining the differences between Quakerism as portrayed by Robert Barclay, and Methodism, he denied the right of women to preach or to 'teach publicly'. He will not allow Barclay's interpretation of St. Paul's injunction that women should keep silence in the churches, as referring only to the talkative ones. It speaks of women in general, says Wesley. He admits that Joel foretold that 'the daughters should prophesy', but he distinguishes

1. He seems to have regarded 'widows' as being the same as 'deaconesses'. 2. See note on Romans 16.v.1.in

between prophesying and preaching.

It is unlikely that Wesley would have contemplated the employment of female preachers, had not the question arisen of its own accord. Perhaps the same could have been said of male lay-preaching. In 1761 a Mrs. Sarah Crosby [1] left London for Derby and began to meet classes with great success.

> "I found," she says, " an awful loving sense of the Lord's presence. I was not sure whether it was right for me to exhort in so public a manner; and, yet, I saw it impracticable to meet all these people by way of speaking particularly to each individual. I therefore gave out a hymn, and prayed, and told them part of what the Lord had done for myself, persuading them to flee from sin." [2]

The following Friday she preached again to a large congregation. This is how she describes the occasion:

> "My soul was much comforted in speaking to the people, as my Lord has removed all my scruples respecting the propriety of my acting thus publicly." [3]

She consulted Wesley on the matter and he replied on the 14th. of February:

> "Hitherto, I think you have not gone too far. You could not well do less. I apprehend all you can do more is, when you meet again, to tell them simply, 'You lay me under a great difficulty. The Methodists do not allow of women preachers; neither do I take upon me any

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1. J. S. Simon (Studies.Vol.4.'John Wesley : The Master Builder', p.292), reminds his readers that some regard Susannah Wesley as the first Methodist woman preacher, but he warns that this statement should be received with caution. Her ministry could not actually be called preaching.
2. Tyerman: 'Life and Times &c.' Vol.2.p.398.
3. ibid.

such character. But I will just nakedly tell you what is in my heart.' This will, in a great measure, obviate the grand objection, and prepare for J. Hampson's [1] coming. I do not see that you have broken any law. Go on calmly and steadily. If you have time, you may read to them the Notes on the chapter before you speak a few words; or one of the most awakening sermons,[2] as other women have done long ago." [3]

Further advice was offered in 1769:

"(1) Pray in private or public as much as you can (2) Even in public you may properly enough intermix short exhortations with prayer; but keep as far from what is called preaching as you can: therefore never take a text; never speak in a continued discourse without some break, about four or five minutes. Tell the people, 'We shall have another prayer-meeting at such a time and place.' If Hannah Harrison [4] had followed these few directions, she might have been as useful now as ever" [5]

At the Conference of 1765 the question was asked:

"How can we encourage the women in the bands to speak since 'It is a shame for women to speak in the church'? "(I.Cor.xiv.35.)

The reply is given by Wesley himself:

"I deny (1) that speaking here means any other than speaking as a public teacher. This St. Paul suffered not, because it implied 'usurping authority over the man'.(I.Tim. ii.12). Whereas no authority either over man or woman is usurped by the speaking now in question. I deny (2) that the church in that text means any other than the great congregation." [6]

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1. The preacher appointed to that circuit.
2. This was Susannah Wesley's custom with her society at Epworth. She read the 'most awakening' sermons from the books in her husband's library.
3. Letters. Vol.4.pp.132/3. 4. Another aspiring woman preacher.
5. Letters. Vol.5.p.131.
6. Minutes. Vol.1.p.52.

Grace Walton was another female preacher to whom Wesley wrote. His advice to her follows the usual pattern:

> "If a few more persons come in when you are meeting, either enlarge four or five minutes on the question you had, with a short exhortation (perhaps for five or six minutes, sing and pray). I think, and always, its meaning is this: (I suffer not a woman to teach in a congregation, nor thereby to assert authority over the man. God has invested with this prerogative; whereas teaching.....'" [1]

Wesley's main approach seems to be a practical and reasonable explanation of St. Paul's Corinthian directive. This is indicated again in his instructions to Miss Bosanquet on 13th. June, 1771:

> "I think the strength of the cause rests there - on your having an <u>extraordinary call</u>. So I am persuaded has every one of our lay preachers; otherwise I could not countenance his preaching at all. It is plain to me that the whole work of God termed Methodism is an extraordinary dispensation of His providence. Therefore I do not wonder if several things occur therein which do not fall under the ordinary rules of discipline. St. Paul's ordinary rule was: 'I permit not a woman to speak in the congregation.' Yet in extraordinary cases he made a few exceptions; at Corinth, in particular." [2]

Further evidence of her activities is revealed in a letter to Mrs. Crosby, another fellow-preacher with whom she lived. Miss Bosanquet apparently has

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1. September 8th. 1761. Letters. Vol.4.p.164. The ending, for some reason, is rather abrupt. Miss. Bosanquet became the wife of Rev. John Fletcher of Madeley.
2. Letters. Vol.5. p.257. This letter, according to Nightingale: 'Portraiture of Methodism' p.454; Myle's 'Chronological History' p.99 and Tyerman:'Life & Times &c.' Vol.3.p.112, is to Miss Bosanquet. Simon:'John Wesley, the Master Builder' p.292 and Taft:'Holy Women' say it is to Mrs. Crosby. This cannot be as

enjoyed no small measure of success in her calling:

> "For the sake of retrenching her expenses, I thought it quite needful for Miss Bosanquet to go from home. And I was likewise persuaded (as she was herself) that God had something for her to do in Bath and Kingswood; perhaps in Bristol too, although I do not think she will be called to speak <u>there</u> in public.
>
> The difference between us and the Quakers in this respect is manifest. They flatly deny the rule itself, although it stands clear in the Bible. We allow the rule; only we believe it admits of some exceptions. At present I know of those, and no more, in the whole Methodist Connexion." [1]

Other female preachers of whom mention has been made at various times include Mary Sewell of Thurlton,[2] Hannah Harrison,[3] Penelope Newman,[4] Mary Barrett, Miss Horne,[5] and a Miss Franklin. Miss Franklin, according to the Journal,[6] was a pioneer in preaching, in the Wells and Fakenham district of Norfolk, and was instrumental in Miss Sewell taking up the work. Wesley is amazed to learn that before the Methodists came to the area, there were only female preachers. There were six of these within ten or twelve miles, all members of the Church of England. There is little doubt that this would sweep away any remaining prejudice on the part of Wesley. Smith,[7] mentions a certain Mrs. Fletcher, who, in spite of objections

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1. Letters. Vol.6.p.290. See also Smith: 'History of Wesleyan Methodism' Vol.1.p.242, where he says that Miss Bosanquet would not go into a pulpit to preach, but stood on the stairs, or 'on some other elevation' so that she could 'command' the congregation.
2. Journal.Vol.6.p.338. 3. Letters. Vol.5.p.131.
4. Letters. Vol.5.pp.310-311. 5. Tyerman(op.cit.)Vol.2. p.399. 6. Vol.6.p.338.
7. 'History of Wesleyan Methodism'.Vol.1.pp.423/5.

raised against her, preached with great success in Huddersfield and district. Whether or not Wesley knew of her, is not stated. Penelope Newman, who has been referred to, was instrumental in the conversion of both her mother and her future husband, Jonathan Coussins, who became a preacher.

Also worthy of special mention are two others. The first is Sarah Mallet.[1] She came to live with her Uncle William at Long Stratton in January 1780 when only sixteen. She was converted a week after her arrival. She returned for reasons of health, to her father in London, in March, 1781. She suffered from fits, during which it is said she preached, although unconscious. She returned to her uncle in 1785 and Wesley had a conversation with her the following year. He brought her name before Conference on 1787 and obtained permission for her to preach,[2] the permit being given to her by the Assistant, Joseph Harper. This was necessary because of the apparent opposition she met with from the preachers.[3] She was financially independent by the labour of her own hands, serving as a preacher and evangelist wherever she was invited, though Wesley assured her that she would never

1. Letters. Vol.8. pp.15 and 160. See also Journal Vol.7.pp.226/227.
2. According to Letters Vol.8. p.77. there must have been a suggestion that she should be licensed as a preacher, but Wesley forbids it.
3. Letters. Vol.8.p.118. and p.250.

be without means if he could prevent it,[1] and promised her all the books she required.[2] According to her own words, her method of preaching was to take a text, divide it and speak from the different headings. As there were few chapels in the neighbourhood, she preached in the open air and in barns and wagons. Wesley's advice to her was threefold,[3] viz: Never to continue a service above an hour, not to judge by her own feelings but by the word of God; never to scream nor speak above the natural pitch of her voice. She subsequently married a Mr. Boyce who was a local preacher for thirty-two years.

The second preacher is a Miss Alice Cambridge, who appears to be the first woman preacher in Ireland. By the time she was twenty-nine years of age, she had established meetings in various parts of the town of Bandon, speaking regularly in each of them. Her work than spread to Kinsale, Youghal and elsewhere. Naturally her practices were condemned as irregular, but having written to Wesley she received a characteristic reply which settled her mind:

> "Mr. Barber has the glory of God at heart; and so have his fellow labourers. Give them all honour, and obey them in all things as far as conscience permits. But it will not permit you to be silent when God commands you to speak: yet I would have you give as little offence as possible; and therefore I

1. Letters. Vol.8.p.43.
2. Letters. Vol.8.p. 228.
3. Letters. Vol.8.p.190.

> would advise you not to speak at any place where a preacher is speaking at the same time, lest you should draw away his hearers. Also avoid the first appearance of pride or magnifying yourself. If you want books or anything, let me know." [1]

One most important fact is that Wesley never permitted female preaching to become a general practice. Each case was judged on its own merits. A letter of his to George Robinson, written on 25th. March, 1780 is proof sufficient:

> "I desire Mr. Peacock to put a final stop to the preaching of women in his circuit. If it were suffered, it would grow, and we know not where it would end." [2]

Female preaching was a practice which, had it been possible, Wesley would never have countenanced. He shared the deep rooted prejudice of his age. As with lay-preaching in general, it is to be regarded as a necessary expedient, as was indeed, Methodist work as a whole. It was never officially recognised in Wesley's lifetime.[3] One fact may be clearly assumed, - that Wesley would never have contemplated the admission of women to the sacerdotal office, or for that matter, to have the full pastoral charge of societies or circuits as did his male helpers.[4]

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1. Letters. Vol.8.pp.258/9.
2. Letters. Vol.7.p.9. John Peacock was the Assistant at Grimsby.
3. Conference of 1802, whilst discouraging the preaching of women, allowed those with an 'extraordinary call' to be allowed to preach to their own sex. See Minutes. Vol.ii.p.187.
4. Female ministers were recognised in the early Primitive Methodist Church, e.g. Elizabeth Bultitude. Her name appears in 'Hill's Arrangement'.

APPENDIX TWO

WESLEY'S 'SUNDAY SERVICE' and THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER: A COMPARISON OF THE ORDINATION SERVICES

Book of Common Prayer	The Sunday Service
(i) The Form and Manner of Making of Deacons	
(Preface to the three offices)	(No Preface)
Rubric "First, the Archdeacon or his deputy, shall present unto the bishop (sitting in his chair near to the Holy Table) such as desire to be ordained Deacons, (each of them being decently habited) saying these words"	When the day appointed by the Superintendent is come, after Morning prayer is ended, there shall be a Sermon or Exhortation, declaring the duty and office of such as come to be admitted Deacons.
Introduction "Reverend Father in God, I present unto you these persons present, to be admitted Deacons.	Omit "Reverend Father in God." Substitute "ordained" for "admitted".
Warning by the Bishop "Take heed that the persons whom ye present unto us... &c." and the answer by the Archdeacon.	Omitted.
Then the Bishop shall say unto the people: "Brethren, if there be any of you who knoweth any Impediment, or notable Crime, in any of these persons presented to be ordered Deacons, for which he ought not to be admitted to that Office, let him come	Then their names being read aloud, the Superintendent shall say unto the People,..... (Unaltered except for: "notable" is omitted; "ordered" is read "ordained".

Book of Common Prayer	The Sunday Service
forth in the Name of God, and shew what the Crime or Impediment is."	
"And if any great Crime or impediment be objected.... shall be found clear of that crime."	"great" is omitted. For Bishop read "Superintendent". For "ordering" read "ordaining".
Then the Bishop (commending such as shall be found meet to be Ordered, to the Prayers of the Congregation) shall, with the Clergy and people present, sing or say the Liturgy, with the Prayers as followeth: (Here follow the Litany and Suffrages and the Lord's Prayer).	Then the Superintendent (commending such as shall be found meet to be ordained, to the prayers of the Congregation) shall, with the Ministers and People present, say the Litany, inserting a Petition for the Candidates, when he prays for the Ministers of the Gospel; and omitting the last Prayer and the Blessing (N.B. The Litany is not inserted in the service).
Omitted	Then shall be said the service for the Communion; with the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel as followeth.
further prayers and responses	Omitted.
Let us pray	Let us pray
"Almighty God, who by thy divine Providence hast appointed divers orders of Ministers in Thy Church..&c."	Unaltered.
The Epistle. I.Tim.iii.8.	Unaltered.
"or else this, out of the sixth of the Acts of the Apostles" Acts.vi.2.	Omitted
"And before the Gospel, the Bishop, sitting in his chair, shall examine every one of them that are to	Then shall the Superintendent examine every one of them that are to be ordained, in the

Book of Common Prayer	The Sunday Service
be Ordered, in the presence of the people, after this manner following:	presence of the people, after this manner following:
"Do you trust...edifying of the people" Answer."I trust so"	Unaltered.
"Do you think that you are truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the due order of this Realm, to the Ministry of the Church ?" Answer. "I think so"	"and the due order of the realm" - omitted. Answer - unaltered.
"Will you diligently read the same unto the people assembled in the Church where you shall be appointed to serve ?"	"assembled in the Church" - omitted.
Answer: "I Will"	Answer - unaltered.
"It appertaineth to the Office of a Deacon in the Church where he shall be appointed to serve, to assist the Priest in Divine Service, and specially when he administereth the Holy Communion, and to help him in the distribution thereof, and to read Holy Scriptures and Homilies in the Church and to instruct the youth in the Catechism; in the absence of the Priest to baptize infants, and to preach, if he be admitted thereto by the Bishop. And furthermore, it is his Office, where provision is so made, to search for the sick, poor, and impotent people in the Parish, to intimate their estate, names, and places where they dwell, unto the Curate, that by his exhortation they may be relieved with the alms of the Parishioners, or others.	Omit "in the Church" Omit "where he shall be appointed to serve." For "Priest" read "Elder". For "specially" read "especially". Add "and expound" after "Scriptures". Omit "and Homilies in the Church." Omit "in the catechism". Read "Elder" for "Priest". Omit "infants and to preach if he be admitted thereto, by the Bishop." Omit "where provision is so made." Omit "people of the parish to intimate their estates,. ...they may be relieved." Substitute:"that they may be visited and relieved."

Book of Common Prayer	The Sunday Service
Will you do this gladly and willingly ?"	
Answer: "I will so do, by the help of God.	Answer - unaltered.
"Will you apply all your diligence to frame and fashion your own lives, and the lives of your families, according to the Doctrine of Christ; and to make both yourselves and them, as much as in you lieth, wholesome examples of the flock of Christ ?"	After "families" and "if you have or shall have any"
Answer: I will do so by the help of God"	Answer - unaltered.
"Will you reverently obey your Ordinary, and other chief Ministers of the Church, and to whom the charge and government over you is committed, following with a glad mind and will, their godly admonitions ?"	Substitute: "Will you reverently obey them to whom the charge and government over you is committed, following with a glad mind and will, their godly admonitions ?
Answer:"I will endeavour myself, the Lord being my helper."	Answer: "I will endeavour so to do, the Lord being my helper."
Then the Bishop, laying his Hands severally upon the Head of every one of them, humbly kneeling before him, shall say,	Substitute: After this the Congregation shall be desired, secretly in their Prayers, to make their humble Supplications to God for all these things; for which Prayers there shall be silence kept for a space. Then the Superintendent, laying his hands severally upon the head of every one of them, shall say,
"Take thou Authority to execute the Office of a Deacon in the Church of God committed unto thee; In the Name of the Father, and	Omit "committed unto thee"

Book of Common Prayer	The Sunday Service
of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."	
Then shall the Bishop deliver to every one of them the New Testament, saying:	Substitute "the Holy Bible" for "New Testament"
"Take thou Authority to read the Gospel in the Church of God, and to preach the same, if thou be thereto licensed by the Bishop himself.	Substitute: "Take thou authority to read the holy Scriptures in the Church of God, and to preach the same."
Then one of them, appointed by the Bishop, shall read the Gospel: Luke.xii.35.	Substitute: Then one of them appointed by the Superintendent shall read the Gospel: Luke.xii.35.
Then shall the Bishop proceed in the Communion, and all that are Ordered shall tarry, and receive the Holy Communion the same day with the Bishop.	Then shall the Superintendent proceed in the Communion, and all that are ordained shall receive the Holy Communion.
The Communion ended, after the last Collect, and immediately before the Benediction, shall be said these Collects following:	The Communion ended, immediately before the Benediction, shall be said these Collects following:
"Almighty God, Giver of all good things..&c.."	Unaltered.
"Prevent us O Lord..&c."	Unaltered.
"The peace of God &c.."	Add "May"(the peace &c.) and "May" (the blessing &c.."

The note regarding the Deacon having to remain in his Office for a whole year except in special circumstances, is omitted in the 'Sunday Service'.

(II)

The Form and Manner of Ordering of Priests	The Form and Manner of Ordaining of Elders
When the Day appointed by the Bishop is come, after Morning Prayer is ended, there shall be a Sermon or Exhortation, declaring the Duty and Office of such as come to be admitted Priests; how necessary that Order is in the Church of Christ, and also how the people ought to esteem them in their office.	Substitute "Superintendent" for "Bishop" Substitute "Elders" for "Priests".
First, the Archdeacon, or, in his absence, one appointed in his stead, shall present unto the Bishop (sitting in his chair near to the holy Table) all them that shall receive the Order of Priesthood that day (each of them being decently habited) and say,	First, one of the Elders shall present unto the Superintendent all them that are to be ordained, and say,
"Reverend Father in God, I present unto you these persons present, to be admitted to the Order of Priesthood."	"I present unto you these persons present, to be ordained Elders."
"Take heed that the persons whom ye present unto us, be apt and meet, for their learning and godly conversation, to exercise their ministry duly, to the honour of God, and the edifying of the Church.	Omitted.
The Archdeacon shall answer: "I have inquired of them, and also examined them, and think them so to be."	Omitted.
Then the Bishop shall say unto the people:	
"Good people, these are they whom we purpose, God willing, to receive this day unto the holy Office of Priesthood; For	For "unto the holy office of Priesthood" read "to

Book of Common Prayer	The Sunday Service
after due examination we find not to the contrary, but that they be lawfully called to their Function and Ministry, and that they be persons meet for the same. But yet if there be any of you, who knoweth any Impediment, or notable Crime, in any of them, for the which he ought not to be received into this holy Ministry, let him come forth in the Name of God, and shew what the Crime or Impediment is. "	Omit "notable"
And if any great Crime or Impediment be objected, the Bishop shall surcease from Ordering that person, until such time as the party accused shall be found clear of that Crime.	Omit "great" Substitute "Superintendent" for "Bishop".
Then the Bishop (commending such as shall be found meet to be Ordered to the Prayers of the Congregation), shall, with the Clergy and the people present, sing or say the Litany, with the Prayers, as is before appointed in the Form of Ordering Deacons; save only, that, in the proper Suffrage, there added, the word (Deacons) shall be omitted, and the word (Priests) inserted instead of it.	Then the Superintendent (commending such as shall be found meet to be ordained, to the Prayers of the Congregation) shall, with the Ministers and people present, say the Litany, inserting a Petition for the Candidates, when he prays for the Ministers of the Gospel; and omitting the last Prayer and the Blessing.
Then shall be sung or said, the Service for the Communion, with the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, as followeth:	omit "sung or"
The Collect: "Almighty God, giver of all good things &c...."	Read "thy"(Church) for "the". Read "office of Elders" for "office of Priesthood."

Book of Common Prayer	The Sunday Service
The Epistle : Ephesians.iv.7.	Unaltered.
After this shall be read for the Gospel, part of the ninth Chapter of Saint Matthew, as followeth..... St. Matth.ix.36. or else this that followeth, out of the tenth Chapter of Saint John. St. John.x.1.	The passage from St. John, only, is prescribed.
Then the Bishop, sitting in his chair, shall say unto them, as hereafter followeth:	And that done, the Superintendent shall say unto them as hereafter followeth:
"You have heard, Brethren, as well in your private examination, as in the exhortation which was now made to you...&c. "	Read "through" (the mediation of our only Saviour) instead of "by".
	Read "in yourselves, from time to time" instead of "in your Ministry, and that ye may so endeavour yourselves, from time to time."
"Do you think in your heart, that you be truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the order of this Church of England, to the Order and Ministry of Priesthood ?	Do you think in your heart, that you are truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the order of Elders ?
Answer: "I think it."	Answer: "I think so."
"Are you persuaded that the holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation &c....?"	Unaltered.
Answer: "I am so persuaded, and have so determined, by God's grace.	Unaltered.

The Book of Common Prayer	The Sunday Service
"Will you then give your faithful diligence always so to minister the Doctrine and Sacraments, and the Discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church and Realm hath received the same, according to the Commandments of God; so that you may teach the people committed to your Cure and Charge with all diligence to keep and observe the same ?"	"Will you then give your faithful diligence, always so to minister the Doctrine and Sacraments, and the Discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded ?"
Answer: "I will so do, by the help of the Lord."	Unaltered.
"Will you be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish, and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's word; and to use both publick and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, within your Cure, as need shall require, and occasion shall be given ?"	Read "public" for "publick". Read "admonitions" for "monitions". Read "district" for "Cure".
Answer: "I will, the Lord being my helper."	Unaltered.
"Will you be diligent in Prayers, and in reading of the Holy Scriptures and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh ?"	Unaltered.
Answer: " I will endeavour myself so to do, the Lord being my helper."	Unaltered.
"Will you be diligent to frame and fashion your own selves, and your families, according to the Doctrine of Christ, and to make both yourselves and them, as much as in you lieth, wholesome	After "families", read ("if you have, or shall have any").

Book of Common Prayer	The Sunday Service
examples and patterns to the flock of Christ ?"	
Answer: "I will apply myself thereto, the Lord being my helper."	Read "shall" for "will"
"Will you maintain and set forwards, as much as lieth in you, quietness, peace, and love, among all Christian people, and especially among them that are or shall be committed to your charge ? "	Unaltered.
Answer: "I will so do, the Lord being my helper."	Unaltered.
"Will you reverently obey your Ordinary, and other chief Ministers, unto whom is committed the charge and government over you; following with a glad mind and will, their godly admonitions, and submitting yourselves to their godly judgements ?	Omit "Ordinary and other"
Answer: "I will so do, the Lord being my helper."	Unaltered.
Then shall the Bishop, standing up, say,	Then shall the Superintendent say,
"Almighty God, who hath given you this will to do all these things; Grant also unto you strength and power to perform the same; that he may accomplish his work which he hath begun in you; through Jesus Christ our Lord."	Unaltered.
Request for silent prayer from the Congregation	Unaltered.
The Veni Creator Spiritus, the Bishop and Priests saying or singing alternate lines	The same, only "Superintendent and Elders" instead of "Bishop and Priests" taking alternate lines. It is to be said.

Book of Common Prayer	The Sunday Service
Or this:	
"Come Holy Ghost, eternal God, Proceeding from above, Both from the Father and the Son, The God of peace and love" (16 verses)	This alternative is omitted.
Let us pray.	That done, the Superintendent shall pray in this wise and say,
"Almighty God, and heavenly Father, who, of thine infinite love and goodness, hast given to us...."	Unaltered.
When this prayer is done, the Bishop with the Priests present shall lay their hands severally upon the head of everyone that receiveth the Order of Priesthood; the Receivers humbly kneeling upon their knees, and the Bishop saying,	When this prayer is done, The Superintendent with the Elders present, shall lay their Hands severally upon the Head of every one that receiveth the Order of Elders; the receivers humbly kneeling upon their knees, and the Superintendent saying,
"Receive the Holy Ghost for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful Dispenser of the Word of God, and of his holy Sacraments; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."	"Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of an Elder in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. And be thou a faithful Dispenser of the Word of God, and of his holy Sacraments; In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen."
Then shall the Bishop deliver to every one of them kneeling, the Bible into his hand, saying,	Then the Superintendent shall deliver to every one of them kneeling, the Bible into his hand, saying,
"Take thou Authority to preach the Word of God,	"Take thou authority to preach the Word of God,

Book of Common Prayer	The Sunday Service
and to minister the Holy Sacraments in the Congregation, where thou shalt be lawfully appointed thereunto. "	and to administer the holy Sacraments in the Congregation. "
When this is done, the Nicene Creed shall be sung or said; and the Bishop shall after that go on in the Service of the Communion, which all they that receive Orders shall take together, and remain in the same place where Hands were laid upon them, until such time as they have received the Communion.	When this is done, the Superintendent shall go on in the Service of the Communion, which all they that receive Orders shall take together.
The Communion being done, after the last Collect, and immediately before the Benediction, shall be said these Collects,	The Communion being done, after the last Collect, and immediately before the Benediction, shall be said these Collects.
"Most merciful Father, we beseech Thee to send upon these thy servants thy heavenly blessing &c..."	Unaltered
"Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favour..&c."	Unaltered.
"The peace of God which passeth all understanding &c..."	Read "May the peace of God &c..." and "May the blessing &c.."
The instruction is here printed with regard to the possibility of Deacons being ordered at the same time as Priests.	Unaltered except that the Gospel appointed is St. John.x.1. and not St. Matt. ix. 36-38 or St. Luke.xii.35-38.

Book of Common Prayer	The Sunday Service
(iii)	
The Form of Ordaining or Consecrating of an Archbishop or Bishop	The Form of Ordaining a Superintendent
Which is always to be performed upon some Sunday or Holy-Day.	Omitted.
When all things are duly prepared in the Church, and set in order, after Morning Prayer is ended, the Archbishop (or some other Bishop appointed) shall begin the Communion Service; in which this shall be	After Morning Prayer is ended, the Superintendent shall begin the Communion Service, in which this shall be
The Collect	The Collect,
"Almighty God, who by thy Son Jesus Christ didst give to thy holy Apostles many excellent gifts and didst charge them to feed thy flock; Give grace, we beseech thee, to all Bishops, the Pastors of thy Church, that they may diligently preach Thy Word, and duly administer the godly Discipline thereof; and grant to the people, that they may obediently follow the same; that all may receive the crown of everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.	for "Bishops, the Pastors of thy Church" read "all the Ministers and Pastors of thy Church".
And another Bishop shall read the Epistle 1. Tim.iii.1.	Then shall be read by one of the Elders, The Epistle. Acts.xx.17.
or this, For the Epistles, Acts.xx.17.	Omitted.
Then another Bishop shall read the Gospel, St. John.xxi.15.	Then another Elder shall read The Gospel. John.xxi.15.

Book of Common Prayer	The Sunday Service
Or else this. St. John.xx.19.	Or this: Matthew.xxviii.18.
or this: St. Matt.xxviii. 18.	
After the Gospel, and the Nicene Creed, and the Sermon are ended, the Elected Bishop (vested with his Rochet) shall be presented by two Bishops unto the Archbishop of that Province (or some other Bishop appointed by lawful commission) the Archbishop sitting in his chair near the holy Table, and the Bishops that present him saying,	After the Gospel and Sermon are ended, the elected Person shall be presented by two Elders unto the Superintendent, saying,
"Most Reverend Father in God, we present unto you this godly and well-learned man to be Ordained and Consecrated Bishop."	"We present unto you this godly man to be ordained a Superintendent."
Then shall the Archbishop demand the King's Mandate for the Consecration, and cause it to be read. And then shall be administered unto them the Oath of due Obedience to the Archbishop, as followeth.	Omitted.
"In the Name of God. Amen. I N, chosen Bishop of the Church and See of N. do profess and promise all due reverence and obedience to the Archbishop and to the Metropolitan Church of N and to their Successors; So help me God, through Jesus Christ."	Omitted.
This oath shall not be made at the Consecration of an Archbishop.	Omitted.
Then the Archbishop shall move the Congregation	Then the Superintendent shall move the

Book of Common Prayer	The Sunday Service
present to pray, saying thus to them:	Congregation present to pray, saying thus to them:
"Brethren it is written in the Gospel of Saint Luke....&c...."	Unaltered.
And then shall be said the Litany, as before in the Form of Ordering Deacons, save only, that after this place, That it may please thee to illuminate all Bishops, &c. the proper suffrage there following shall be omitted, and this inserted instead of it:	And then shall be said the Litany, a Petition being inserted for the Candidate, and the last Prayer and the Blessing being omitted.
"That it may please thee to bless this our Brother elected, and to send thy grace upon him, that he may duly execute the Office, whereunto he is called, to the edifying of thy Church, and to the honour, praise and glory of Thy Name;"	Omitted.
Answer: "We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord."	Omitted.
Then shall be said this Prayer following:	Then shall be said this prayer following:
"Almighty God, giver of all good things, who by thy Holy Spirit has appointed divers orders of Ministers in thy church...&c..."	Read "Superintendent" for "Bishop". Otherwise unaltered.
Then the Archbishop, sitting in his chair, shall say to him that is to be Consecrated,	Then the Superintendent shall say to him that is to be ordained,
"BROTHER, forasmuch as the holy Scripture and the ancient Canons command,	"BROTHER, forasmuch as the holy Scripture commands that we should not be

Book of Common Prayer	The Sunday Service
that we should not be hasty in laying on hands, and admitting any person to Government in the Church of Christ, which he hath purchased with no less price than the effusion of his own blood; before I admit you to this Administration, I will examine you in certain Articles, to the end that the Congregation present may have a trial, and bear witness, how you may be minded to behave yourself in the Church of God."	hasty in laying on hands, and admitting any person to government in the church of Christ, which he hath purchased with no less price than the effusion of his own blood; before I admit you to this administration, I will examine you in certain articles, to the end that the congregation present may have a trial, and bear witness, how you are minded to behave yourself in the church of God."
"Are you persuaded that you be truly called to this Ministration, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the order of this Realm ?"	"Are you persuaded that you are truly called to this ministration, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ ?"
Answer: "I am so persuaded."	Answer: "I am so persuaded."
"Are you persuaded that the holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all Doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation ..&c...?"	Unaltered.
Answer: "I am so persuaded, and determined, by God's grace,"	Unaltered.
"Will you then faithfully exercise yourself in the same holy Scriptures and call upon God by prayer &c?."	Unaltered.
Answer: "I will so do, by the help of God.	Answer: "I will so do, by the help of God."
"Are you ready, with faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines &c...?....."	Unaltered.
Answer: "I am ready, the Lord being my helper."	Answer: "I am ready, the Lord being my helper."

Book of Common Prayer	The Sunday Service
"Will you deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts &c...?.."	Unaltered.
Answer: "I will so do, the Lord being my helper."	Unaltered.
"Will you maintain and set forward, as much as shall lie in you, quietness, love, and peace among all men; and such as be unquiet, disobedient, and criminous, within your Diocese, correct and punish, according to such authority as you have by God's Word, and as to you shall be committed by the Ordinance of this Realm?"	Read "criminal" for "criminous". Read "District" for "Diocese". Omit "by the Ordinance of this realm" and read "unto you" instead.
Answer: "I will so do by the help of God."	Answer: "I will so do, by the help of God."
"Will you be faithful in Ordaining, sending, or laying hands upon others ?"	Unaltered.
Answer: "I will so shew myself, by God's help."	Unaltered.
Then the Archbishop, standing up shall say,	Then the Superintendent shall say,
"Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who hath given you a good will to do all these things &c.."	Unaltered.
Then shall the Bishop elect put on the vest of the Episcopal habit; and kneeling down, Veni Creator Spiritus shall be sung or said over him, the Archbishop beginning, and the Bishops, with others that are present, answering by verses, as followeth.	Then shall Veni Creator Spiritus be said.
The Veni Creator Spiritus	The Veni Creator Spiritus
or this:	
"Come Holy Ghost, eternal God, Proceeding from above &c..."	Alternative omitted.

Book of Common Prayer	The Sunday Service
That ended, the Archbishop shall say,	That ended, the Superintendent shall say,
"Lord hear our prayer."	"Lord hear our prayer".
Answer: "And let our cry come unto thee."	Answer: And let our cry come unto thee.
"Let us pray"	The Superintendent:
"Almighty God and most merciful Father, who of Thine infinite goodness hast given..&c.."	Unaltered.
Then the Archbishop and Bishops present shall lay their hands upon the head of the elected Bishop kneeling before them upon his knees, the Archbishop saying,	Then the Superintendent and elders present shall lay their Hands upon the head of the elected Person, kneeling before them upon his knees, the Superintendent saying,
"RECEIVE the Holy Ghost, for the Office and Work of a Bishop in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands; In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. And remember that thou stir up the grace of God which is given thee by this Imposition of our hands: for God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and love, and soberness."	Read "Superintendent" for "Bishop".
Then the Archbishop shall deliver him the Bible saying,	Then the Superintendent shall deliver him the Bible saying,
"Give heed unto reading, exhortation, and doctrine. Think upon the things contained in this Book. Be diligent in them, that the increase coming thereby may be manifest unto all men. Take heed to thyself, and to doctrine, and diligent in doing them; for by so doing thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear	Read "and to the doctrine" after "take heed unto thyself" Omit "and diligent in doing them"

Book of Common Prayer	The Sunday Service
thee. Be to the flock of Christ, a shepherd, not a wolf; feed them, devour them not. Hold up the weak, heal the sick, bind up the broken, bring again the out-casts, seek the lost. Be so merciful, that you be not too remiss; so minister discipline, that you forget not mercy: that when the chief Shepherd shall appear you may receive the never-fading crown of glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. "	
Then the Archbishop shall proceed in the Communion-Service; with whom the new Consecrated Bishop (with others) shall also communicate.	Then the Superintendent shall proceed in the Communion Service; with whom the newly ordained Superintendent, and other Persons present, shall communicate.
And for the last Collect, immediately before the Benediction, shall be said these Prayers.	Unaltered.
"Most merciful Father, we beseech thee to send down upon this thy servant thy heavenly blessings..&c.."	Unaltered.
"Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings &c..."	Unaltered.
"The peace of God, which passeth all understanding &c....."	Read "May" (the peace &c.) and "May" (the blessing &c.).

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