

Henry Moore (1751–1844)
and the Dynamics of Wesleyan-Methodist Expansion

A Contextual Study of Pre-Victorian Methodist Lay Preaching

A thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the
University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy by

Robert D. Clements

31 December 2011

SYNOPSIS

John Wesley once famously remarked that “when the Methodists leave the Church [of England], God will leave them.” However, if numerical growth could be taken as a measure of God’s favour on the movement Wesley founded, history proved the opposite to be true: In the decade following Wesley’s death Methodism membership grew exponentially, resulting in a religious movement that would come to change not only the spiritual, but the also the political landscape, on both sides of the Atlantic.

Drawing on neglected archival resources, unpublished manuscripts, and recent scholarship this creative and engaging critical study of Wesley’s Irish preacher and assistant Henry Moore (1751–1844) explores the ascendancy of British Wesleyan-Methodism in the decades following Wesley’s death and redresses significant gaps in denominational histories of the period. It argues that the influence of Wesley’s “son in the gospel” was not simply forgotten, but intentionally suppressed by later Methodists under the leadership of Jabez Bunting.

Using Moore’s life trajectory as a window through which to view the evolution of Methodist structures and self-identity, this study identifies the key factors that made Methodism such an attractive religious alternative for English-speaking people in the years leading up to the Victorian period.

The resulting thesis will be of interest not only to historians seeking to understand the process by which a relatively small sect evolved into a major international force in less than a century, but also to church leaders and theologians who seek to understand better the ecclesiological roots of the Methodist movement.

The contribution to learning made by this thesis is hence twofold: First it analyzes previous largely neglected sources relating to Moore. Second, it draws conclusions from those sources shedding new light upon Methodist history, particularly in its Irish context.

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Word count: 99,751 including notes and references.



Robert D. Clements

Not many wise, rich, noble, or profound
In science win one inch of heavenly ground.
And is it not a mortifying thought
The poor should gain it, and the rich should not?
—Cowper

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Preface

My first encounter with Henry Moore occurred several years ago in an attempt to trace my family's origins. I am Canadian, but descended from a line of Irish Methodist lay preachers and I had hoped to verify a family legend, passed down from my great grandmother, that one of my direct ancestors rode with John Wesley throughout Ireland. Regrettably, nothing had been preserved for posterity as evidence of that rather remarkable claim so I would have to start from square one. As Google's Library project had recently been launched (then only Beta stage), I decided I would experiment with this new resource, haphazardly entering a simple keyword search for "Methodism" and "Derry" in hopes of hitting upon something that might provide a starting point for the investigation. One of the few documents that turned up was a collection of sermons self-published by Henry Moore in 1830, scanned by the British Museum, to which the author's autobiography had been appended. I downloaded the scan and eagerly began to read through it in hopes that it might provide some leads.

What I discovered in those pages, somewhat unexpectedly, was a vibrant, charismatic movement in a context that was completely unfamiliar to me (even as a Methodist lay pastor), and one which begged far more questions than it answered: Who was this author and what happened to this strand of Methodism? What was the relationship of Methodists to the Church of Ireland (and how did it differ from the English context)? Why did the author of this manuscript, so enthusiastic for the Methodist cause, later take the Methodist conference to court near the end of his life? The more that I researched Henry Moore, the more I was struck by the fact that this man—like some kind of eighteenth-century Forrest Gump—had some connection to nearly every major figure in early Methodism, not least John Wesley, who placed enormous trust in him.

To make a long story short, I soon found that my interest in Moore, which began as a half-hearted genealogical inquiry, had broadened into a number of historical questions about Methodism. Having been encouraged by several church leaders and professors to pursue this further, I submitted a proposal to present a paper on Moore at the

tercentenary conference on Charles Wesley held at Liverpool Hope University in the autumn of 2007.

In retrospect, I am quite embarrassed by how little I knew of Moore when I gave that paper, but one of the happy results of having delivered it was an introduction to many fine scholars of Wesley and early Methodism, notably Gareth Lloyd, archivist at the Methodist Archive Research Centre at the John Rylands University Library in Manchester, who kindly issued me a reader's card at this outstanding collection, and introduced me to an archival box containing most of Henry Moore's literary remains.

Henry Moore has ever since been something of a travelling companion to my various research interests in Wesleyan history and theology, allowing me to view many turning points of Methodist history from an alternative angle and challenging me to rethink the traditional denominational accounts of Methodist origins and expansion.

The resulting study in the pages that follow is probably best described as a "contextual biography." As a biography it has a narrative structure roughly corresponding with the chronology of Moore's life, but I have laid particular emphasis on showing how Moore's story illumines several pivotal debates in the history of Methodism, and how that is both continuous and discontinuous with an explanation of Methodist growth put forward by John Kent, a leading historian of eighteenth-century religion. Put a little less eloquently, I have attempted to hang several local and thematic studies together using Moore's life as the unifying thread, the overarching argument being that the contribution of Moore was crucial in shaping what it meant to be a Methodist leading up to the Victorian period. I consider this to be a substantial new insight worthy of consideration, and I hope that at the very least the following study will put Moore "back on the map" (so to speak) as a significant player in the period and as a useful resource for studies of British Methodism during the closing decades of the eighteenth-century and the opening decades of the nineteenth.

Unlike the subjects of many church history dissertations, Moore cannot be considered exceptional for his theological output, nor for his administrative leadership, though clearly he was gifted in both areas. Moore was instead a self-conscious and intentional "rank and file" preacher, remaining so for the duration of his remarkable life span, delivering a funeral sermon at the age of 81.

Apart from historical insights that might be gleaned from this study, I argue that leaders of the so-called "emergent" church movement might well benefit from pondering this case study of an enthusiastic young religious preacher who found himself in later life enmeshed in a battle with the very movement he had devoted his life to serving. As

Richard P. Heitzenrater (who has probably written in the twentieth century more about Henry Moore than anyone else) exclaimed to me upon hearing of my interest in writing on Moore, "It would be quite fascinating to understand how Moore became such a grumpy old man!"

In the process of answering that question, and numerous corollaries, I have had the privilege of meeting so many fascinating scholars that it would be impossible to name them all here in this short space. I do, however, feel I need to express my sincere gratitude to a few in particular: As previously mentioned, Gareth Lloyd at the John Rylands library has been extraordinarily generous to me with his time and knowledge. I must also thank Mike Brealey at Wesley College, Bristol, and Robin Roddie at the Irish Methodist Archives in Belfast for access to their collections. Professors Randy Maddox, Richard Heitzenrater and Russell Richey at Duke's Centre for Wesley Studies, have provided valuable advice and feedback, as well as access to the papers of the late Frank Baker, which were still in the process of being cataloged at the time of writing. A number of unplanned encounters with Drs. James M. Houston, I. Howard Marshall, Mark A. Noll, and Alan R. Acheson have also been a great encouragement to me on this journey.

Generous support for my research has come from several quarters and I wish to thank Lloyd Eyre of the Lorne Park Foundation, Dr. Brian Stiller at Tyndale University College & Seminary Foundation, Bishop Keith Elford and the Free Methodist Church in Canada, for their continued support of my studies and ministry. Without such support, this project would have never have commenced, let alone been completed.

I am heavily indebted to my father, David Clements, who, in addition to accompanying me on my first trip to Ireland, also proof-read the first draft of this thesis; and to Dr. Alan Acheson, Rev. Dale Harris and the Rev. Dr. Victor Shepherd who read subsequent drafts and offered helpful suggestions. I bear responsibility for any errors that remain.

Most of all I wish to acknowledge the sacrifices of my wife Diana and my four daughters, Rebekah, Jenna, Aubree, and Hannah, who graciously allowed me, in particular, to spend four weeks undisturbed at Center for Wesley Studies at Duke University in June of 2011 in order to complete my research. Raising a young family is not naturally conducive to doctoral research and writing. For their sake, especially, I am looking forward to "just being a Dad again."

Robert D. Clements

December 2011

Abbreviations

AM	<i>Arminian Magazine</i>
BDEB	Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography, ed. Donald M. Lewis
DNB	Dictionary of National Biography
CW	Charles Wesley
CWJ	Manuscript Journal of Charles Wesley, eds. Kimborough and Newport
EMP	<i>Lives of Early Methodist Preachers</i> , ed. Thomas Jackson
MM	<i>Methodist Magazine</i>
JW	John Wesley
JWL	<i>Letters of John Wesley</i> , ed. John Telford, 8 vols
JWW	<i>Works of John Wesley</i> , ed. Thomas Jackson
MARC	Methodist Archives Research Centre, John Rylands University Library of Manchester, England
PWHS	Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society
WCA	Wesley College Special Collections, Bristol, England
<i>Works</i> (BE)	The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley (Begun as the Oxford Edition)

A Note on Style

Chicago style and Oxford spellings have been used throughout the body of this thesis. The punctuation and spelling of cited sources has been retained, however. In some cases, the modern spelling of Irish place names in Moore's memoir has been given in brackets for the sake of clarity.

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3. St. Columb's Cathedral, Derry (in 2009).
4. An engraving based on "Holy Triumph, The Death of John Wesley," by Marshall Claxton (1844). Original painting in the Museum of Methodism, Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London, England.
5. Key to Claxton's painting. Reproduced from John Fletcher Hurst, *The History of Methodism*, Vol. III (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1902).
6. Last page of Wesley's shorthand journal. Archived at Wesley College, Bristol.
7. First page of Moore's shorthand journal. Archived at Wesley College, Bristol.
8. Engraving of the original Hinde Street Chapel. Source: Telford, *Two West End Chapels* (London, 1886)

Chronology of Key Events in the Life of Henry Moore

- 1751 Born in a suburb of Dublin to Anglican parents
- 1760 Placed under private tutor, Mr Williamson, Minister of St Paul's Oxmantown
- 1763 Father dies
- 1768 Visits London, intoxicated by the theatres, but returns to Ireland
- 1773 Moves to London
- 1776 Returns to Ireland to settle estate
- 1777 Reads Romans, accepts justification by faith
Returns to Methodist chapels (in Dublin)
Experiences a "heart-warming" after prolonged fasting
Joins Methodist society
- 1777 Begins Preaching in Dublin,
- 1779 Assigned to Londonderry Circuit
Marries Nancy Young from Coleraine
- 1780 Assigned to Charlemont Circuit
- 1781 Assigned to Lisburn Circuit
- 1782 Assigned to London Circuit
- 1783 Assigned to Cork Circuit
- 1784 Brought to London by Mr. Wesley to serve as Assistant
- 1785 John Fletcher dies
- 1786 Reject's Charles' offer to assist with ordination in Church of England
Assigned to Dublin Circuit
- 1788 Brought back to London to serve as Assistant
Charles Wesley dies
- 1789 Accepts ordination from John Wesley, assisted by Creighton and Dickenson
- 1790 Assigned to Bristol Circuit
- 1791 John Wesley dies. Moore named as one of three literary executors
Moore-Whitehead Controversy
- 1792 Assigned to Bath Circuit
Publishes *Life of John Wesley* with Thomas Coke
- 1794 Writes response to Alexander Knox's pamphlet entitled
"Considerations on a Separation of the Methodists from the Established
Church"
- 1795 Assigned to Liverpool Circuit

- 1801 Assigned to Bristol Circuit
- 1803 Assigned to Birmingham Circuit
- 1804 Elected president of the Wesleyan Conference
- 1805 Assigned to Leeds Circuit
- 1807 Assigned to London West Circuit
- 1810 Assigned to Bath Circuit
- 1812 Assigned to London East Circuit
- 1816 Assigned to Birmingham Circuit
- 1817 Publishes *Thoughts on the Eternal Sonship*
Publishes *The Life of Mrs. Mary Fletcher of Madeley*
- 1817 Returns to Ireland with Richard Reece (President)
- 1818 Assigned to York Circuit
- 1819 Publishes *A Short Account of Mrs. Mary Titherington of Liverpool*
- 1820 Assigned to Bristol Circuit
- 1823 Elected President of Wesleyan Conference
- 1823 Assigned to London North Circuit
- 1824 Publishes first volume of *Life of Wesley*
- 1825 Publishes second volume of *Life of Wesley*
- 1826 Attempts to occupy City Road
- 1827 Assigned to London North/East Spitalfields
- 1828 The Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts
- 1830 Assigned to Deptford (south-east London)
- 1830 Publishes *Occasional Sermons* with autobiography through to 1791
- 1833 Assigned to London City Road (11 years supply)
- 1834 Opposes establishment of Methodist theological school
- 1839 Opposes acquisition of land by Methodist body
- 1844 Moore dies, buried at City Road Chapel
Mary Ann Smith publishes *Moore's Life*
- 1845 American ed. of Smith's *Life of Moore* published with a preface by George Peck, reprinted in 1853.

1.

“The Wonder of this Age”: Henry Moore and the Dynamics of Wesleyan-Methodist Expansion

“The rise and progress of Methodism is the wonder of this age. Against all *human probability* it has spread far and wide, and has been the peculiar care of Providence.” —
Broadsheet Circular from the Trustees, Leaders, and Stewards of Sheffield Society, June 27,
1791

[*The Life of the Rev. Moore*] contains facts in the history of Methodism not to be found in any other work. —George Stevenson¹

[Henry Moore’s] well-deserved reputation as a theologian; the power of his “profound, luminous, and sententious” preaching; the gravity and stateliness of his demeanor; his quiet humor, kindling sometimes into sparkling wit; his general force and weighty of character; and Wesley’s recorded confidence in his integrity and wisdom, all placed him, for many years, in the foremost ranks of the connection. —Thomas Percival Bunting²

It is an unfortunate reality of life that a great many persons of historical significance have been sentenced to obscurity by the sheer coincidence of their having a ubiquitous name. This study is a contextual biography of a Methodist preacher named Henry Moore (1751–1844) whom I shall herewith distinguish from the much more celebrated English sculptor Henry Spencer Moore (1898–1986), and from the Cambridge philosopher Henry More (1614–1687), a writer John Wesley abridged in his anthology of Christian writers entitled the *Christian Library*.

Were his given and surnames not enough to obscure his memory to later generations, the only “biography”³ of this Henry Moore published to date was undertaken by Mary Anne Smith, daughter of the Methodist Bible commentator Adam Clarke, resulting in a now rare and rather curious mishmash of autobiographical memoir and hagiographic

¹ George Stevenson, *Methodist Worthies: Characteristic Sketches of Methodist Preachers* (London: Thomas C. Jack, 1884), 2:211.

² Thomas Percival Bunting, *The Life of Jabez Bunting, D.D.: with notices of contemporary persons and events*, Vol. 1 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1859), p. 222.

³ Although no monographs on Moore have been published since 1844, entries on Henry Moore do appear in George Stevenson’s collection (see note 1, above, pp. 201–210); the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and most recently, Donald M. Lewis, ed. *Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography*.

postlude entitled the *The Life of Rev. Mr. Moore* by Mrs. Richard Smith⁴ (1844), the pedestrian title-author combination of which has done little to distinguish further Moore's reputation from several other itinerant preachers of the period bearing the same surname.⁵

It is my contention that *this* Rev. Mr. Moore has not only been given short shrift in traditional denominational histories of Methodism, but that he has been quite literally omitted from its standard portraits, most notably the well known scene of Wesley on his deathbed surrounded by his preachers. I shall further argue that Henry Moore ought to be considered at least as influential in the Methodism of his day as Wesley's much better known superintendents Francis Asbury (1745–1816) and Thomas Coke (1747–1814), whose invitation to Moore to join them in America as a third bishop says a great deal about Moore's status amongst the Wesleyan preachers in the 1780s.

A Contribution to the Study of World Methodism

As John Wesley expressly forbade him to leave his post in London, Moore did not accept the invitation to America. Nevertheless, he remains a character worthy of scholarly attention for his influence on British Methodism until his death in 1844 at the age of 93, and for his role in crystallizing the memory of both John and Charles Wesley as one of their earliest biographers. (Moore's two-volume *Life of Wesley*, in spite of its problems, is still considered "the most useful of the firsthand accounts" by leading biographers of Wesley.)⁶

Social historians are also indebted to Moore for preserving and publishing the *Life of Mary Fletcher*, for which a number of recent studies of women in early Methodism are heavily indebted.⁷

Yet the greatest paradox of Moore's life and ministry (hereto unstudied) is how and why Moore came to be the centre of so much conflict related to the ecclesiastical polity of British Methodism. At the relatively young age of 42, he would confront the trustees in

⁴ Mr. Richard Smith (d. 1855) was a trustee of City Road Chapel. Mary Ann was his second wife.

⁵ A number of Wesley's preachers shared the surname: Joseph Moore (d. 1779) and William Moore (d. 1785), as well as a John More (d. 1802) who joined the connection in 1798. A more likely candidate for misidentification is H(ugh) Moore, mentioned in Wesley's journals, also assigned to the Coleraine circuit who, after remaining on probation circuit for several years, was eventually sent to Aberdeen, apparently after a dispute with Thomas Coke. See, F. Baker, "Hugh Moore and John Wesley: Some Unpublished Correspondence" *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 29 (1954) pp. 112-116. Despite their sharing the same circuit, Henry Moore and Hugh Moore are not known to have been related.

⁶ Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Elusive Mr. Wesley*, 2d. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), p. 361.

⁷ See for e.g., Phyllis Mack, *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism* (Cambridge, 2008); Peter S. Forsaith and Geordan Hammond, eds. *Religion, Gender and Industry: Exploring Church and Methodism in a Local Setting* (Eugene, Ore: Pickwick, 2011).

Bristol for the autonomy of the emerging brotherhood of Wesleyan preachers (resulting in the eventual demise of the New Room as a Wesleyan-Methodist chapel). Shortly after we find him waging a tract war against Anglican critics (including his own friend and Irish countryman Alexander Knox), who wished to see the Conference stay a society within the established church (a view Knox believed was consistent with Wesley's own intentions). A little later, we find him leading the charge against Alexander Kilham (1762–1798), who wished to see Methodism democratized (resulting in the first major schism following Wesley's death and the creation of the Methodist New Connexion⁸ in 1797). By the end of his life, Moore had turned his cannons against Jabez Bunting and the conference itself, over its refusal to respect special rights bequeathed to him in Wesley's will.

Perhaps as a result of the latter event in particular, the memory passed down of Moore via Percival Bunting (who can hardly be considered an objective source given that his father was president of the Methodist conference at the time of the legal proceedings) is that of a grumpy old man insisting on an "irregular plan of action" impossible to reconcile "with the general system of itinerancy."⁹ "His crotchets," Bunting comments rather curiously, "did not become prominent until they had lost power to hurt."

Where might one turn for a fair, refreshed portrait of the man? No scholarly monograph has been published on Moore this century, or last. Worse, in the opinion of Henry Rack, "There is no really satisfactory history of Methodism in the eighteenth century (or beyond)."¹⁰ Regrettably, many American-centric accounts of Methodist origins tend to follow the rails of British Methodism up to about 1776, then switch tracks around 1784, forgetting that events in British Methodism continued to have a significant impact on world Christianity throughout the British empire. This was certainly the case on the north shores of the Great Lakes, where many Methodists, loyal to the crown and following Wesley's own stance on the rebellion, fled in the 1790s.¹¹

⁸ An event significant to the history of Christian missions in China since the New Connexion was particularly active there.

⁹ Bunting, *The Life of Jabez Bunting*, p. 222.

¹⁰ See Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 3rd ed. p. 560, who describes *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* as uneven. Frank Baker's entry, "Polity," covers this period in some detail but does not make reference to Moore's contributions. John C. Bowmer's monograph, *Pastor and People: A Study of Church and ministry in Wesleyan Methodism from the death of John Wesley (1791) and the death of Jabez Bunting (1858)* (London: Epworth, 1975), is perhaps the best resource on this subject that has been published to date.

¹¹ By the late nineteenth century, the provincial capital Toronto would bear the affectionate nickname "Methodist Rome," an indication of both of their numerical strength of Methodism and its political influence it exerted on the colony. The historian George Rawlyk estimated that there were at least 20,000 adherents to Methodism in Upper Canada by 1810, equivalent to 37 per cent of population (George Rawlyk, *The Canada Fire: Radical Evangelicalism in British North America, 1775-1812* [Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994]).

The key to distinguishing the mixture of American, British and home-grown Methodist groups that would come to co-exist in such localities as Upper Canada (and as far away as Australia¹² and Jamaica), is the decade following Wesley's death, when crucial decisions regarding the polity of Methodism and its relationship to the established church were hammered out, not altogether successfully, resulting in the fragmentation of Methodism into a number of splinter groups, on one hand, and further centralization of the main body, henceforth known as the "Wesleyan-Methodists," on the other.

A Critical Assessment of John Kent's *Wesley and the Wesleyans*

Moore's life trajectory sheds some fascinating light into this period, which has recently been the subject of a rather bold argument put forward by John Kent in *Wesley and the Wesleyans: Religion in Eighteenth-Century Britain*¹³ without question one of the more creative books about Wesley and Methodism to appear in recent decades.

Although there is nothing particularly new about writers on Methodism painting a less-than flattering picture of its founding father,¹⁴ Kent has distinguished himself from his predecessors in claiming that the *evangelical revival itself* is a persistent "myth of British history," and that neither John Wesley nor his theology was nearly as important to eighteenth-century Christianity as he has been made out to be by Wesley's theological progeny. Further, Kent suggests, such a view of Wesley "is part of a conscious, quasi-political desire to provide evangelicalism of the twenty-first century with a history which may supersede the Catholic and Roman Catholic and Anglo-Catholic versions of the growth and consolidation of the modern Church."¹⁵ For Kent, it seems, the question of Methodist origins is not merely one of historical interest, but also has implications for our understanding of evangelical religion and global politics in the twenty-first century: "It was not an accident that by the time the Republican George W. Bush secured the presidency in 2001 the Religious Right was demanding the restoration of the Churches' social hegemony," comments Kent. "The same aim, quite as much as any revival of the gospel, lay at the heart of the myth of the eighteenth-century evangelical revival."¹⁶

Kent's language seems deliberately provocative, and his assertions are so sweeping and forcibly stated, that it might be tempting to those working within Wesleyan theological tradition in North America to dismiss Kent prematurely as a kind of radical positivist on

¹² For an interesting example of how these complexities played out in the Australian colonial context see Glen O'Brien, "Not Radically a Dissenter': The Rev. Samuel Leigh in the Colony of New South Wales," *Wesley and Methodist Studies*, Vol. 4 (Toronto: Clements Academic, 2012).

¹³ John Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).

¹⁴ Charles Wesley, as co-founder, seems to be less criticized.

¹⁵ Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, pp. 23–24

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

the level of Richard Dawkins.

Such a dismissal, however, would be imprudent for at least two reasons. The first is that Professor Kent is no stranger to the field of Methodist studies: one of his earliest publications was an insightful study of Jabez Bunting, published more than half a century ago.¹⁷ His work and knowledge in the field is so highly respected by Henry Rack, whom many consider to be Wesley's best biographer, that Rack himself has suggested that Kent would have been more qualified to write a biography of Wesley than himself.¹⁸ And were Rack's comments not enough of a commendation, the best evidence of Kent's intimate knowledge of early Methodism and its broader social and economic context is the way in which he cleverly marshals early Methodist sources to support his overarching argument, helpfully expositing the subtle biblical nuances that are often overlooked by modern readers along the way.

The second reason one should not be too quick to dismiss Kent's argument is because he is far too well acquainted with historical and contemporary theological concerns (equally a blind spot for some scholars working in this period) to be written off as "out of his depth," in such matters.¹⁹ A perusal of recent dissertations²⁰ on John Wesley reveals that the vast majority of North American writing on John Wesley has been motivated by theological inquiry rather than by purely historical interest. Such work, quite naturally, tends to focus on comparative studies of Wesley's *writings* rather than attempting to understand Wesley and the early Methodist movement in its historical, and in particular its socio-economic, context. Even amongst the minority of interdisciplinary studies that have delved into this area, many have failed seriously to wrestle with the complex legal, economic and political context within which Methodism sprouted *after* Wesley's death.²¹

¹⁷ John Kent, *Jabez Bunting: The Last Wesleyan* (London: Epworth, 1955). See also J. Kent, *The Age of Disunity* (London, 1966).

¹⁸ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 3rd ed., p. xi.

¹⁹ For an account of Kent's own intellectual development, see "A Rebel's Pilgrimage" in Stuart Mews, ed. *Modern Religious Rebels: Presented to John Kent* (London: Epworth Press, 1993).

²⁰ Randy L. Maddox, "Recent Dissertations in Wesley Studies: 2001–2011," Accessed Sept 20, 2011 at <<http://divinity.duke.edu/initiatives-centers/cswt/research-resources/wesley-studies-resources>>.

²¹ See, for instance, Richard Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1980), who writes (emphasis mine): "In England the Methodist awakening had been *contained by its ejection* from the Church of England, and evangelical churchmen *were rare*, surrounded by bishops, prelates and lay people involved in a pattern of formal, moralistic, worldly 'churchianity' that was steadily accommodating itself to the process of secularization." The precise opposite seems to be true: churchmen were quite common and Methodism, well past 1800, seems to have been attractive because it was not yet considered a dissenting denomination in its own right. A more recent critique of contemporary church growth literature drawing on the history of early Methodism can be found in Andrew Goodhead's recent study, *A Crown and a Cross: The Rise, Development, and Decline of the Methodist Class Meeting in Eighteenth-Century England* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2010) which critiques Howard A.

Thus, before engaging with Kent's thesis, it should be stated that (alongside the groundbreaking social histories of transatlantic Methodism offered by W.R. Ward²² and David Hempton²³) many theologically-motivated writers could greatly benefit, as the present writer most certainly has, from reading and pondering Kent's macro-analysis of Wesley and his movement within the broader scope of eighteenth-century religion (regardless of how one may feel about his conclusions).

A Test for Kent's Thesis

John Kent's thesis has opened up so many interesting lines of inquiry, in fact, that it has been selected as a the primary dialogue partner throughout the remainder of this study.

What is especially curious about Kent's treatment of the second wave of Methodism, which he defines as the period from 1770–1800, is that it makes no reference to the life and ministry of Henry Moore. This omission might be excused on the grounds of his book's short length. It could be argued that Moore is just one of more than eight hundred²⁴ preachers who ministered under Wesley's authority at some time or another, and it would be unrealistic to expect Kent to have mentioned all of them. Yet it must be noted that Kent does cite a number of lesser known specimens to make his case (e.g., Thomas Rankin, William Bramwell), and for that reason Moore's exclusion seems like a rather serious oversight, or at best a poor sampling. For were there ever a man who might be called the "transitional form" between Wesley and later Wesleyans it most certainly was Henry Moore, Wesley's friend, executor, biographer and one of the first Wesleyan preachers ordained by Wesley for ministry within England. Moore, I intend to demonstrate in the following pages, saw himself as walking in the footsteps of Wesley, a vision briefly realized when he was elected as president of Methodist conference in 1804 and again in 1823. In

Snyder's *The Radical Wesley and Patterns for Church Renewal* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1980; reprint by Wipf & Stock, 1996).

²² Ward's three magisterial books, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (1992); *Christianity under the Ancien Régime, 1648-1789* (1999); and *Early Evangelicalism: A Global Intellectual History, 1670-1789* (2006) have decisively changed the way historians understand the origins of evangelicalism, largely by showing that distinctly evangelical beliefs and practices emerged in response to political pressure from powerful states in central Europe. When set against this wider political backdrop it seems increasingly untenable to tell the story of Methodism as a uniquely Anglo-American movement beginning, for example, with Wesley's heart-warming experience at Aldersgate.

²³ See Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit and Religion of the People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

²⁴ John H. Lenton, *John Wesley's Preachers: A Social and Statistical Analysis of the British and Irish Preachers Who Entered the Methodist Itinerancy before 1791* (Paternoster, 2009). Lenton's study identifies at least 802 lay and ordained men who served under or with the Wesleys as preachers from the 1740s until John's death in 1791.

the long run, however, his own self-understanding was not shared by the emerging brotherhood of younger preachers who looked up to Jabez Bunting for leadership, resulting in the aforementioned conflict regarding Moore's right to live at Wesley's former house at City Road.

On one level, the dispute at City Road further reinforces Kent's thesis that some very significant changes occurred in Methodism in the last decades of the eighteenth-century. On the other hand, there are some aspects of Moore's experience that seem to stand in direct contradiction to Kent's "reappraisal" of Wesley as "strong-willed and ambitious," "patriarchal towards women," "unimaginative and intellectually incurious," and critical of his own supporters.²⁵ More importantly, however, I believe Moore's life story helps us better define the precise manner in which Wesley functioned as a central catalyst for the evangelical revival.

This is significant because Kent has not contented himself merely to describe the differences between two waves of Methodism, but has gone further to offer his readers a phenomenological explanation of its growth largely *based on those differences*.

From the higher ground of modern objectivity, and the benefit of hindsight, Kent wants to lift up the hood of the evangelical revival, as it were, and show his readers the causal engine that lies beneath. The implicit (though some might say arrogant) assumption behind such an approach is that Wesley and his followers did *not* understand what was truly going on when thousands flocked to hear him preach and subsequently joined the Methodist societies. Hence we come to what may be the most audacious lines in his book:

John Wesley thought that Wesleyanism grew because he was preaching the true gospel, but he succeeded because he responded to the actual religious demands and hopes of his hearers, many of whom thought that religion ought to function as a way of influencing and changing the present, quite apart from what might happen at the future moment when the Second Coming revealed the wrath of God. They wanted a reduction in their personal anxieties, a resolution of their practical problems and a greater degree of self-approval.²⁶

Kent should not be misunderstood here as denying of the basic historical record regarding Wesley and Methodism in the eighteenth century, for which there is an overwhelming amount of empirical and statistical evidence. Rather, he is asserting that Wesley's theological emphases (e.g., on the free grace of God offered to all through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ) were not as important to Methodist growth as the "fundamentalist pressures" of self-realization:

²⁵ Although "strong-willed" was certainly an apt description of Wesley's personality, when viewed against the eye-witness testimony of Moore, some of Kent's other assertions seem to be overstated, if not misleading.

²⁶ Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, p. 2.

What was happening in the early eighteenth century was the partial replacement of an official form of Anglicanism, which had itself developed as a protest against the excesses of a seventeenth-century mixture of religion and politics, by a new expression of primary religion, which eschewed political power and was indifferent to the decline of Dissent, but which also found moderate Anglicanism non-responsive and sought religious forms which took seriously the demand for supernatural empowerment.²⁷

Is Kent right? I believe Kent has overstated his case. Yet I also think he has made some good observations and raised some important questions that require further analysis by both historians and theologians in the Wesleyan tradition. From this point forward, I will use the phrase *dynamics of Wesleyan expansion* to address the basic question that I think Kent is attempting to answer: Namely, how can one explain, in very broad strokes,²⁸ the rise of evangelicalism in the wake of John (and Charles) Wesley? Was this phenomenon caused by “a confluence of many tributaries, quite independent of the Wesleys”²⁹ or was there something unique about Wesley that made him a central figure?³⁰

Primary vs. Secondary Religion as an Explanation for Methodist Expansion

The crux of Kent’s explanation is a phenomenological distinction between what he terms “primary” and “secondary” religious impulses. *Primary religion*, we’re told, includes “excitement and power.” It is about “harnessing supernatural power” for one’s personal benefit (pp. 23–24). The primary religious impulse “is to seek some kind of extra-human power either for personal protection, including the cure of diseases, for the sake of ecstatic experience, and possibly prophetic guidance.

Kent is wary of the term *popular religion* to describe this impulse because “popular religion is a term sometimes used to describe a system of witches, wise-women and cunning-men, and the charms, curses, and fortune-telling they provided—in which case it seems to denote no more than a particular example of the focus which primary religion has often taken. The term is also sometimes used to indicate a set of religious institutions organized by poorer people...”³¹ “[These] definitions,” he concludes, “can lead to drawing a thick boundary-line between popular religion and what is regarded as official religion.” In reality primary religious impulse and secondary religious structures often overlap and co-

²⁷ Ibid., p. 22.

²⁸ Proceeding, of course, on the understanding that human religious behaviour is remarkably complex.

²⁹ For a comparable treatment of the Evangelical revival, see John Munsey Turner, *John Wesley and the Evangelical Revival* (Peterborough: Epworth, 2004), who repeats the argument that the evangelical revival “was a result of a confluence of many tributaries, quite independent of the Wesleys.”

³⁰ The scope of this biographical study does not permit an exhaustive analysis of all writers who have tackled the subject of Methodist origins.

³¹ Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, p. 6.

exist with each other. That should not, however, lead us to think that no distinction can be made between the two impulses:

This fundamental level of religious behaviour should be distinguished from the secondary theologies which develop around it, and which, in the world's religious systems, produce fresh expectations of what being religious means and what effects being religious may have on the individual. Institutional theologies are imposed on the primary level of religion and breed sects, denominations, churches, what you will—sources of power in themselves, social and political. But the primary level, with its basic belief in intrusive supernatural power survives at all times (and this is frequently forgotten) at all social levels.

According to Kent, the test of a successful religious system is how far it can supply this 'supernatural force.' Prior to the Reformation, Kent sees this religious impulse being fulfilled in Mary cults, etc., but

by the eighteenth century there could be a wide gap between what ordinary people wanted from religion and what different religious bodies offered, or thought they were offering. There had never been a perfect fit between the intellectual structures of what claimed to be orthodox Christianity and the alternative interests of proliferating local cults..."

Many people, he concludes, "were more concerned to obtain supernatural power for a variety of ends than with religious orthodoxy." It was not merely the ability of Methodism to meet such needs, but the established church's inability to meet such needs, which drove people into the arms of Wesley and the Methodists.

Kent against the wider backdrop of Methodist historiography

In one sense Kent stands in a long tradition of historians³² who have tended to see Methodism as a combination of irreconcilable influences, a perspective that can be traced back to the work of the French historian Élie Halévy (1870–1937), who described Methodism as "High Church Non-conformity." For Halévy, the Puritan emphasis on justification by faith and the anti-Puritan emphasis on works and free will combined to form an "eclecticism, which logic may call inadmissible" and yet gave "novelty and force" to Wesley's movement. This, said Halévy, was especially evident in the ecclesiology of the movement: "In Wesleyan organization, the hierarchical and the egalitarian principles were combined in equal portions" resulting in the same "conciliation of contrary principles" whereby Wesley, for example, could encourage a layman to preach, but forbid him from administering the sacraments. This dual nature enabled it to become an "intermediate between the Establishment and the older Nonconformist bodies. It . . . constituted a transition between the former and the latter." "Thus the old establishment and the existing

³² Élie Halévy, *A History of the English People in 1815* (1924), p. 342.

Free churches constituted the double environment in which the new spirit was developed. And it is only when we are acquainted with this environment that we can understand the character and estimate the importance of the Methodist revival.” Halévy’s concern, it must be remembered, was not so much to explain how Methodism evolved, but rather to describe its wider impact on society, namely how eighteenth-century England was spared the bloody revolution that France endured.

In the 1960s, the British historian and socialist E. P. Thompson (1924–1993) picked up similar themes in his *Making of the English Working Class*,³³ when he suggested that “From the outset Wesleyans fell ambiguously between Dissent and Establishment, and did their best to make the worst of both worlds.” In his theology, claimed Thompson “Wesley appears to have dispensed with the best and selected unhesitatingly the worst elements of Puritanism; if in class terms Methodism was hermaphroditic,³⁴ in doctrinal terms it was a mule.”³⁵ In other words, Methodism was not just confused, but also exploitative: Whereas Halévy saw Methodist theology as benevolently eclectic, Thompson saw it as a form of “promiscuous opportunism, better suited than any other to serve as the religion of the proletariat whose members had not the least reason, in social experience, to feel themselves elected.”³⁶

Like Halévy, Thompson was more concerned with the external impact of Methodism on British society rather than the inner dynamics that caused that growth. This did not escape the attention of Bernard Semmel (1928–2008), an American historian specialising in British imperial history, who questioned in *The Methodist Revolution* (1973) whether such historians had paid adequate attention to Methodist *theology*, noting that “most liberal, secular-minded historians have judged Methodism to be a reactionary movement, a protest against the Enlightenment and reason, and have seen its discipline, polity and doctrine in this spirit.” Semmel went on to suggest that such negative appraisals of Wesley and his followers ultimately originate in a failure to “see the Revival as both a spiritual Revolution of a progressive and liberal character and as a counter to revolutionary violence.” He concluded that Methodism preached reason, tolerance and both civil and religious liberty, all essential to liberalism. Methodism is thus seen as a precondition of the

³³ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Victor Gollancz (1963); 2nd edition with new postscript, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968, third edition with new preface 1980.

³⁴ A *hermaphrodite* is an organism that has reproductive organs normally associated with both male and female sexes. Thompson was fond of sexual metaphors, once describing ecstatic experiences of Methodists as “psychic masturbation.” For a helpful assessment of Thompson’s interpretation see David Hempton and John Walsh’s essay, “E. P. Thompson and Methodism” in Mark Noll, ed. *Protestants, Money, and the Markets, 1790-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

³⁵ Thompson, p. 362.

³⁶ Thompson, p. 362.

modern liberal democracy.

While agreeing with Semmel's observation, the Canadian historian Frederick Dreyer (1932–) suggested that the two-nature definition advanced by writers such as Thompson is ultimately inadequate because it requires us to “imagine a revival whose logic is unintelligible to its members—perhaps even to Wesley, its leader. Either they [Wesleyans] do not know, or do not care, what it is they are doing. . . . The eclectic Wesley comes across as someone who, in turn is muddleheaded, impulsive, and, perhaps, disingenuous No plan is consulted; Wesley improvises on the spot, receiving his inspiration from a variety of sources.”³⁷

Dreyer, along with an increasing number of historians in more recent years, pointed to Wesley's exposure to the Moravians³⁸ as a more reliable guide to grasping the contours and unity of Wesley's thought and practice.³⁹

Drawing upon Dreyer's work, David Hempton has more recently portrayed the rapidity of Methodist growth in the period from 1790–1840 as just one facet of a larger cultural movement towards *voluntary* societies and associations.⁴⁰ In Methodism, so the argument goes, we see a kind of church governance emerging that is not based “upon apostolic authority, confessional orthodoxy or state co-ercion but rather on the free consent of equals to form a voluntary association.”⁴¹ Hempton draws on several sources, including the work of W. Reginald Ward (1925–2010),⁴² who saw the transfer of leadership from priest to laypeople as the connecting link between Methodism and continental

³⁷ See Frederick Dreyer, “A ‘Religious Society under Heaven’: John Wesley and the Identity of Methodism,” *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Jan., 1986), pp. 62-83, and his more recent monograph *The Genesis of Methodism* (Bethlehem, Penn.: Lehigh University Press, 1999), p. 22.

³⁸ Wesley makes no mention of the Moravians in his *Short History of Methodism* (1765) or *Thoughts on Methodism* (1786), but it is clear that their influence on Wesley and his movement was immense. Dreyer sees Wesley's suppression of the Moravian influence as originating in his experience at the Fetter Lane society. “Clearly,” he writes, “the association with the Moravians is something in Wesley's past, something he preferred not to talk about.”

³⁹ It should be stated that Wesley, if no one else, insisted on the unity of his own thought: “That I may say many things which have been said before, and perhaps by Calvin or Arminius, by Montanus or Barclay, or the Archbishop of Cambray, is highly probable. But it cannot thence be inferred that I hold “a medley of all their principles; —Calvinism, Arminianism, Montanism, Quakerism, all thrown together” (Wesley, *Works* (BE), Vol. 7, p. 65).

⁴⁰ Hempton, *Religion of the People*. See also his chapter “The Methodist revolution?” in Hempton, *Religion and political culture in Britain and Ireland: From the Glorious Revolution to the decline of empire* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 25-48, which specifically addresses this topic.

⁴¹ Henry Rack has offered two caveats of Hempton's view: the first is that when Wesley created a formal church for America he adopted a threefold ministry. The second is that Wesley: “Although Wesley liked to portray his organization as originating in people voluntarily asking him to lead them, he ruled it autocratically. . . You were free to differ from him, but if so you had to leave!” (Rack, “A Man of Reason and Religion? Wesley and the Enlightenment,” in Geordan Hammond and David Rainey, *Wesley and Methodist Studies*, Vol. 1 (Manchester: Didsbury Press, 2009), pp. 2-17.

⁴² See W.R. Ward, “The Religion of People and the Problem of Control, 1790-1830,” in *Faith and Faction* (London: Epworth, 1993).

pietism. Ward further suggested that the slowing growth and eventual decline of Methodism in the Victorian period was largely the result of Wesleyan leadership trying to retain control by centralizing power and clamping down on religious revivalism and political radicalism in the tense and troubled years between the death of Wesley in 1791 and Napoleon's defeat in 1815.

Historical versus Phenomenological approaches

This brings us back to the argument put forward by John Kent in *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, which may be distinguished from all of the above interpretations of Methodism on the grounds that it is essentially ahistorical: "The centre of this study is the nature and value of religion as such," writes Kent,

Primary religious behaviour does not revive in this technical theological sense, because, as far as one can see, it does not decline in the first place. At the present time various kinds of fundamentalism, Catholic and Protestant, flourish precisely because they keep close to the primary energies of religion.⁴³

In other words, the factors at play in the "Revival" are better understood as universal constants rather than historical particularities. If John Wesley hadn't risen to the occasion, another religious leader, another movement, would have inevitably risen to release the pent-up primary religious impulses. The decline of Methodism, conversely, can be understood as the development of secondary religious structures under later leadership ("the Wesleyans") and the eventual suppression of primary religious expression.

It is a stimulating argument, not so much because it presents new factual details about eighteenth-century Methodism, but rather because it implies, on secular grounds, that the same perennial energies that drove Wesleyan expansion in the eighteenth century are still at work in the twenty-first century in the remarkable expansion of evangelical Christianity throughout the global south.⁴⁴

Just as it would be a mistake, using this line of argument, to see the eighteenth-century "revival" as the supernatural return of Christian orthodoxy to the British peoples, it would also be a mistake, by extension, to see the remarkable growth of Christianity in the global

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. vi.

⁴⁴ Cf., for example, Phillip Jenkins, assertion that worldwide, "Christianity is actually moving toward supernaturalism and neo-orthodoxy, and in many ways toward the ancient world view expressed in the New Testament: a vision of Jesus as the embodiment of divine power, who overcomes the evil forces that inflict calamity and sickness upon the human race. In the global South (the areas that we often think of primarily as the Third World) huge and growing Christian populations—currently 480 million in Latin America, 360 million in Africa, and 313 million in Asia, compared with 260 million in North America—now make up what the Catholic scholar Walbert Buhlmann has called the Third Church, a form of Christianity as distinct as Protestantism or Orthodoxy, and one that is likely to become dominant in the faith" (Phillip Jenkins, *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 290, 2002).

south, this century, as a revival of neo-orthodoxy.

Kent's reconstruction, of course, might easily be dismissed as a kind of backhanded revisionism whereby previously accepted historical "facts" have been selected and rearranged in such a way as to strengthen a pre-existing stance on a contemporary issue. The issue of same-sex blessings, to use but one obvious contemporary example, has threatened to divide the worldwide Anglican communion along North-South lines in recent years, with both sides claiming to represent the "orthodox" position. It is not difficult to see how Kent's identification of eighteenth-century evangelicalism with "fundamentalist pressures" might be marshaled in such debates to advance the legitimacy of liberal Anglicanism over and against African claims to what they feel is biblical fidelity. (African Christians, it might be noted, might just as easily identify with Wesley's rejection of Deism and ambivalence towards the ecclesiastical power structures of Christendom.)

Either way, such disputes highlight the need for refreshed histories of evangelical origins to help understand contemporary concerns. As Mark Noll comments,

The problem is not that earlier historical accounts are necessarily erroneous or misleading. It is rather that they presume a core Christian narrative dominated by events, personalities, organizations, money and cultural expectations in Europe and North America... But today—when Christian adherence has become stronger in Africa than in Europe, when the number of practicing Christians in China may be approaching the number in the United States, when live bodies in church are far more numerous in Kenya than in Canada, when more believers worship together in church Sunday by Sunday in Nagaland than in Norway, when India is now home to the world's largest chapter of the Roman Catholic Jesuit order, and when Catholic mass is being said in more languages each Sunday in the United States than ever before in American history—with such realities redefining the present situation, there is a pressing need for new historical perspectives that explore the world situation.⁴⁵

The positive contribution Kent has made to the field is providing historians with alternative, secular language to describe what has often gone under the heading of "spirituality"—a term that is notoriously slippery.

In so doing, however, his argument becomes difficult to engage critically because it crosses outside the disciplines of history and into the realm of phenomenology and religious psychology. Whereas the historian usually confines him or herself to what has actually happened in history, Kent has granted himself the liberty to speculate about what might come, and arranges his facts to that end. To counter fully such an argument an

⁴⁵ Mark A. Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2009). Noll himself suggests that one needs to look back to evangelical origins in the eighteenth century to understand how American evangelicalism has influenced the rest of the world. "The key is how American Christianity was itself transformed when Europeans carried their faith across the Atlantic. The American model rather than American manipulation is the key" (p. 10).

interdisciplinary response would similarly be required.

To engage in that task is beyond the scope of this study of Henry Moore, but it should not preclude us heeding Kent's warning and considering some of challenges facing the historian of eighteenth-century Methodism.

Popular Religion versus Denominational Histories

Although I am hesitant to accept Kent's categories of primary and secondary religion without qualification, I agree that it is important not to draw a "thick boundary-line between popular religion and what is regarded as official religion." However, one need not resort to the language of phenomenology to observe that, for the simple reason that institutional records are much easier to access and synthesize, denominational histories generally tend to be written from an institutional perspective and tend to overlook the personal motives and methods of everyday members, while at the same time glorifying the efforts of denominational officials and their labors.

Those who are primarily interested in institutional expansion or the spread of certain theological doctrines tend to gloss over the "circulation of the saints"⁴⁶ across ecclesiastical boundaries. As a result, the broader trends outside the scope of regular church record-keeping (e.g., underlying socio-economic factors) tend to go either unnoticed or unexplained. Of particular relevance to this study we may observe that the viewpoints of those who are marginalized by religious institutions are often ignored or suppressed by their contemporaries, and later forgotten by subsequent generations.

Thus, although the most obvious documents available to the Methodist historian may be sermons and conference records, the discerning historian of religion must look beyond these documents to gain an accurate understanding of Methodist experience "on the ground."

This is particularly true of Methodism because it was, with a few notable exceptions, a voluntaristic movement of the laity which transcended institutional boundaries. While lay members generally were quantified numerically in conference minutes and circuit records, these statistics do not do justice to the significant role the Methodist laity played in shaping the social fabric of early modern England and colonial America.

In the American setting, historians such as John Wigger have found it helpful to distinguish between Methodist "adherents" from "members" since it is clear that many

⁴⁶ A phrase coined by the Canadian sociologist Reginald Bibby in the 1970s to account for the growth of evangelical churches, which he postulated was largely disaffected conservatives leaving the mainline denominations. See, however, his revised reflections in Reginald W Bibby and Merlin B. Brinkerhoff, "Circulation of the Saints 1966-1990: New Data, New Reflections," in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Sep., 1994, vol. 33, no. 3, pp. 273-28.

who attended Methodist services had not entered into “full connection” with the church⁴⁷ He cites Francis Asbury’s observation in 1811 that membership stood at 100,000, but that up to 1 million “attend our ministry,” a difference that is more understandable when one considers that membership required weekly small group gatherings and subjecting oneself to the discipline of the church. Wigger suggests that the density of adherents to members in Jacksonian America be calculated conservatively at a ratio of 6 adherents to 1 member, though some local studies would suggest that in certain areas that density could be as high as 15:1.⁴⁸

In the British context, Robert Wearmouth’s study of *Methodism and the Working-Class Movement of England, 1800–1850*, first published in 1937, explored this subject area in some detail, and successfully redirected social historians away from the Conference of traveling preachers and onto the significance of lay involvement in the wider world of politics, education and social welfare to explain Methodism’s wide-ranging influences on wider society. However, as David Hempton has more recently noted in his analysis of Methodist historiography, “It is a pity that some fifty years [since the publication Wearmouth’s thesis] we still do not have an authoritative treatment of the lay leadership of Methodism in the period of the Industrial Revolution”⁴⁹

Hempton’s own studies *Religion of the People* (1996) and *Empire of the Spirit* (2005) have gone a long way in explaining the legal and political undercurrents that drove the exponential growth of Methodism in Moore’s lifetime, but there is still considerable work to be done⁵⁰ to explain why men such as Moore chose to spend their lives preaching the Methodist gospel, quite literarily embodying Adam Clarke’s famous epitaph: *Alteri serviens consumor*.⁵¹

Spiritual Autobiography as a Corrective to the Received Tradition

The methodological resources available for the study of Methodism have also been greatly enriched by D. Bruce Hindmarsh’s insightful work *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England*, and this study is indebted to his helpful genre classifications and comparisons to other forms of eighteenth-century literature such as the nautical travel journal to help make sense of popular religion in this period. Those familiar with Hindmarsh’s categories will immediately recognize that Moore

⁴⁷ John H. Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America* (Oxford University Press, 1994), Introduction.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴⁹ David Hempton, *Religion of the People*, 1996, p. 167.

⁵⁰ It is only with the publication of John Lenton’s study *John Wesley’s Preachers* that scholars have the sort of statistical foundation necessary for the kind of study Hempton has suggested.

⁵¹ Latin: “In serving others, I myself destroy.”

provides us not only with an extended evangelical conversion narrative, but also with two samples of early evangelical hagiography (Moore's *Life of Wesley* and *Life of Mary Fletcher*). In this study, we will also encounter two examples of "The Good Methodist Death Narrative" (Smith's *Life of Moore, the Second Part* and *Life of Ann Moore*). In all of these expressions, we are granted glimpses into early Methodist spirituality in a way that cannot be extracted from conference and other institutional records.

According to Hindmarsh, however, the use of such documents to recreate an historical narrative is fraught with two opposing dangers, the first of which is *naivety*. "Because autobiography is first-hand testimony, it often appears as innocent fact reporting; the history of a life by the one who lived it. . . . It is only when such commonsensical readings are contested that the naivety is challenged, and we realize again how creative and significant is the act of interpretation in selecting, arranging, and presenting events—even the events of one's own life." Kent makes a similar point when he dissects John Cennick's account of the horrific death of a parson and his bailiff in the village of Stranton, Wiltshire in 1741,⁵² noting that the "divine punishment and terrifying death of the atheist, the blasphemer or the tepidly religious became a staple of eighteenth-century religious literature." "Whether these events happened exactly as described," suggests Kent, "does not matter, only that Cennick expected them to be believed. They follow a recognisable pattern, and one of the biblical roots of this kind of story may be found in account in Acts for the death of Herod."⁵³ (Henry Moore's account contains a similarly gruesome episode, which we shall examine in Chapter 3.)

The opposite danger, Hindmarsh argues, is a theoretical preoccupation whereby the literary or social-scientific theory of the investigator crowds out the foreground and obscures rather than enlightens, the historical subject. Here we might wonder whether Kent is guilty of imposing a naturalistic paradigm upon his subjects rather than allowing them to speak for themselves. That is, unless such claims to "special providences" and other forms of supernaturalism are first proven as factually untrue,⁵⁴ one should not therefore conclude from the existence of such literary patterns that such events did not in fact happen. The literary pattern may well exist precisely because it does, in some sense,

⁵² Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, pp. 17-18.

⁵³ Kent sees the prototype of such stories in Acts 12:21-24: "And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost. But the word of God grew and multiplied."

⁵⁴ Comparing Cennick's account with local histories, Kent notes at least one of Cennick's accounts of divine judgment does not seem to have had quite *the effect* Cennick claims it did. This hardly seems to justify his ambivalence regarding the historicity of the events Cennick describes.

reflect eighteenth-century historical realities—however we may choose to explain them.⁵⁵

In any event, it seems clear enough that Henry Moore's writings were, ultimately, created to fulfill a specific function within a religious context; that is, they were not written for the benefit of sociological or historical investigation but rather that they might—as Moore writes himself in the preface—“by the blessing of the Lord, be helpful to those ‘who are coming up out of the wilderness leaning upon their Beloved.’”⁵⁶ In other words, since Moore intended his memoir to inspire others it should not overly surprise us if his happens to exclude details he does not feel will further his purposes, nor should we expect his biographer, Mrs. Smith, to be unbiased.

Bearing these considerations in mind, we now turn to a summary and analysis of Moore's own account of his early life and conversion.

Publication History of Moore's *Life*

The earliest part of the memoir was self-published in 1830 as an appendix to a collection of his sermons.⁵⁷ The print run of this edition is unknown, but copies made it as far north as Ireland, prompting Alexander Knox⁵⁸ to write Moore to correct some of the minor historical details regarding the origins of Methodism in Londonderry.⁵⁹ The second, and more common edition of Moore's *Life* was published in 1844 by Mary Ann [nee Clarke] Smith (Adam Clarke's youngest daughter) and titled *The Life of the Rev. Mr. Henry Moore, the Biographer and Executor of the Rev. John Wesley; including the Autobiography; and the Continuation, Written from his own papers.*⁶⁰ The text of the original memoir (subdivided as Part 1) in the 1844 edition has been completely re-typeset, though the text itself (with a few notable exceptions which we shall examine in chapter 3) has not been altered substantially. Part 2, or “The Continuation of the Life” is authored by Mrs. Smith and quotes generously from Moore's written correspondence and other

⁵⁵ Cf. My own views on this subject have been influenced heavily by David W. Bebbington, *Patterns in History: A Christian Perspective on Historical Thought* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), who maintains that a Christian vista of history remains a vigorous alternative to deconstructionist approaches espoused by Jacques Derrida et al.

⁵⁶ Preface to Smith's *Life of Moore*, Book I.

⁵⁷ Henry Moore, *Sermons on Several Occasions, by the Rev. Henry Moore for some years assistant to the Rev. John Wesley and now a member of the Methodist Conference with a Brief Memoir of His Life and Christian Experience from his birth to the first conference held after the death of Mr. Wesley* (London: Printed for the Author by and sold by John Mason, 1830).

⁵⁸ Alexander Knox was private Secretary to Lord Castlereagh, and also friend and correspondent with John Wesley.

⁵⁹ Alexander Knox, “Letter to Henry Moore” in *Remains of Alexander Knox, Esq.* A facsimile of the original letter is housed in the Frank Baker collection at Duke University.

⁶⁰ Mrs. Richard Smith, *The Life of the Rev. Mr. Henry Moore, the Biographer and Executor of the Rev. John Wesley; including the Autobiography; and the Continuation, Written from his own papers* (London: Simkin, Marshall, and Co., 1844), hereafter abbreviated Smith, *Life*.

documents.⁶¹ Though a treasure house of transcribed letters, it hardly can be considered objective in its presentation. It might also be said that Mrs. Smith's verbosity may partly account for volume's rarity. An American edition was issued with a brief preface by George Peck, general editor of the Methodist Episcopal church, in 1845;⁶² followed by a second printing in 1853.⁶³

As if to reassure the reader of her work, Mrs. Smith states in her preface that it was Moore's intention to complete his memoir and he had authorized her to do so on his behalf following the paralysis of his right hand. The manuscript, she explains, "was gradually brought down through its different periods . . . and the different portions of the manuscript were left with Mr. Moore for his perusal, and judgment; and very carefully did he examine every sheet, adding occasionally a few lines of his own to the manuscript, and at any important fact, signing his name; till eventually, about a year before his death, he returned the manuscript to his friend [Mrs. Smith], signifying his approval of it, and expressing his satisfaction that the long promised task was accomplished, familiarly observing, 'it only makes me look too handsome.'"

That Methodism had evolved considerably over Moore's life was not lost on Moore's biographer, who even in 1844 seems to have anticipated that some of her readers would not recognize the Methodism of an earlier generation and thus comments in her introduction that if "this picture of Wesleyan Methodism appear new to any reader; he is requested to consult the early printed documents of the body of Christian with which Mr. Moore was united;—and at the same time to remember, that he was, owing to his greatly protracted life, a moving spring of that system, of whose early detail the reader may have heard little. . ."⁶⁴

If the Methodism Moore describes in the closing decades of the eighteenth century seemed unfamiliar to those in the mid-nineteenth century, how much more unrecognizable is this Methodism to those of us in the twenty-first century?

Moore's early memoir describes Methodism as a fledgling movement of loosely connected voluntary societies with few buildings and limited organizational structures. As

⁶¹ Moore's autobiographical memoir covers events up to 1791 (Smith, *Life*, p. 102). Smith's biographical narrative begins on page 105.

⁶² The rarity of the first American edition (Mrs. Richard Smith, *The Life of the Rev. Mr. Henry Moore* [New York: Lane & Tippet, 1845]) may be connected with the fact that it was published on the brink of the split between the North and South over the slavery issue, in which the assets of the Methodist Publishing House were contested all the way to the US Supreme Court.

⁶³ Its reissue (Mrs. Richard Smith, *The Life of the Rev. Mr. Henry Moore* [New York: Carlton & Phillips, 1853]) was probably under the auspices of the Methodist Episcopal Church, North. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, moved its publishing offices to Nashville, Tennessee in 1854.

⁶⁴ Smith, *Life*, vii.

such it gives the modern historian a rare glimpse into early Irish Methodism: The symbiotic relationships among preachers, class meeting, society and Church of Ireland parish are seen in their natural setting, and the social consequences of becoming a Methodist are seen within the context of family and village life.

An *Apologia* for Church Methodism

In the following two chapters I intend to demonstrate that Moore's original 1830 narrative, describing the period 1751–1793 is an apologetic for "Church Methodism" specifically written to address the objections of early nineteenth-century Anglicans to the movement. As such, I shall argue that it offers the historian of Methodism an alternative window into the period and offers several insights that help to illuminate the development of Methodist ecclesiology (chapter 4). In chapter 5, I will resume Moore's narrative based on Mrs. Smith's *Life of Moore*, drawing on archival documents, in an attempt to provide a more concise and intelligible account of the remainder of Moore's life. Chapter 6 will discuss Moore's contribution to the formation of Methodist identity as a biographer of Wesley. In chapter 7, we will return to answer Kent's thesis in light of Moore's life story. I will argue that that Moore's testimony was not available to the earliest historians of Methodism on account of its late publication date, and was generally neglected by later historians because he had run afoul of Methodist leadership in the final decade of his life.

2.

A Methodist Conversion in Dublin: Henry Moore's Early Life and Call to Preach (1751–1779)

"Most of [Wesley's itinerant preachers] wanted to make some progress in the world and had started with little scope to do so. Wesleyanism offered them an opportunity. As a whole, they were quite unlike the tiny group of Anglican clergymen who worked with John Wesley, who regarded the itinerants as for the most part their social and educational inferiors, and who found a vocal leader in Charles Wesley." —John Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*¹

A reading of John Kent's *Wesley and the Wesleyans* leaves one with the impression that the majority of John Wesley's preachers were unlearned opportunists whose saw in Methodism a convenient means through which to transcend their lower stations in life. Such assertions are by no means original to Kent, who correctly notes that Charles Wesley from the 1760s "constantly complained about the low quality of the majority of itinerants."² Similar charges were also advanced in the eighteenth-century by Augustus Toplady, who charged John Wesley with "prostituting the ministerial function to the lowest and most illiterate mechanics, persons of almost any class, but especially common soldiers, who pretended to be pregnant with a 'message from the Lord.'"³ Toplady's advice to Wesley: "Let the cobblers keep to their stalls. Let his tinkers mend their vessels. Let his barbers confine themselves to their blocks and basons. Let his bakers stand to their kneading-troughs. Let his blacksmiths blow more suitable coals than those of controversy. Every man in his own order."

There is a sense in which John Kent's observation that Wesley offered his lay preachers "opportunities" is true: and another sense in which it—if not more carefully nuanced—

¹ Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, p. 92.

² *Ibid.*, 65.

³ Augustus M. Toplady, *The Works of Augustus M. Toplady*, 6 vols. (London: Printed for William Baynes and Son, 1825), vol. 2, p. 360. Toplady (perhaps best remembered as the author of the hymn "Rock of Ages") was also disturbed by Wesley's baptism by immersion of a woman in a "common bathing-tub" located in the cellar of a cheesemonger's house in Spafields, London.

unfairly casts a shadow on the intrinsic motivation of several hundred men who preached under Wesley's authority. Henry Moore, as I shall demonstrate in this chapter, was indeed offered opportunities through Wesleyanism, but he was far from the kind of illiterate opportunist caricatured by Toplady. In Moore's case, it would be more accurate to say that Methodism provided opportunities for education and vocational fulfillment that were in many respects denied to him unfairly.

Definitions

"The institution of lay preaching," wrote George Smith in his massive 3-volume history of the movement, "lay at the foundation of Methodism. Without it the Connexion could not have come into existence."⁴

Although more recent historians of Wesley's movement have more or less concurred with Smith's assessment, the growing legal and cultural gap between church life in the eighteenth century and the twenty-first century threatens to obscure the meaning and significance of the practice to most contemporary readers. Before proceeding with an examination of Moore's early life, therefore, it seems necessary to define more carefully what was meant by *Methodist lay preacher* since any discussion of its significance in pre-Victorian Methodism is fraught with the danger of misunderstanding on purely semantic grounds. Having defined the practice more carefully, we shall then attempt to place it against the wider backdrop of eighteenth-century religion, noting how it radically differed from the Church of England's complex system of patronage-based appointments.

a) Lay

Whereas the presence of financial remuneration for services rendered is the most obvious way in which one might distinguish "professional" clergy from "amateur" lay ministers in the twenty-first century,⁵ the distinction between a Methodist lay preacher and Anglican clergyman in the eighteenth-century was less a matter of pay or function than it was a matter of legal status and political privilege.

Following the collapse of the Puritan commonwealth and restoration of the monarchy with Charles II in 1660, the Church of England had, by Wesley's day, essentially become a department of the state obsessed with promoting a "middle way" between Puritanism on the left, and Roman Catholicism on right—both of which were seen by the ruling party as

⁴ George Smith, *A History of Wesleyan Methodism, Vol 1., Wesley and his Times* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862), p. 305.

⁵ Historically, the Church of England has distinguished between stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministry.

politically subversive extremes. In an attempt to root out these influences, Charles II initially passed laws that made it illegal for anyone to receive communion outside of an Anglican church. He also revised the *Book of Common Prayer* in 1662 so that loyalty to the monarch became an article of faith.

Further to this, *The Act of Uniformity* (1662) made it unlawful to seek any reform of the constitution of the church or state, and required all the clergy to take an oath of allegiance to these terms. Approximately one fifth of them (more than 2,000) refused to do so, and were consequently ejected from their positions. Although there had already been ministers outside the established church, this event—known as “the Great Ejection”—created the concept of “non-conformity” and resulted in the exclusion of a substantial section of people (Roman Catholics, Puritans, Quakers, Baptists, Congregationalists et al.) from English society until the mid-nineteenth century.

Denied access to their former church buildings, many non-conformists began meeting in the privacy of their homes to worship, a phenomenon which prompted the *Conventicle Act* (1664), a piece of legislation that threatened to punish “with fine, imprisonment or transportation all persons who met in greater numbers than five.” When determined pastors began to organize unauthorized meetings in groups of five, the government passed the *Five Mile Act* (1665) which allowed a penalty of more than a year’s salary and six months in jail for any of ejected clergy who so much as approached within five miles of any town, borough, or parish in which they formerly taught or preached.⁶ Further legislation enacted under Charles II forbade non-conformists from teaching in schools and holding civil or military office. Non-conformists were also prevented from being awarded degrees from the universities of Oxford or Cambridge.

b) Methodist

Coinciding with above measures aimed at suppressing the political influence of Puritan “enthusiasm” was a proliferation of *voluntary* religious associations within the Church of England. Voluntary religious associations were hardly the direct result of the above measures, but arose rather (apparently) to foster private devotion and counter Roman Catholicism.

It is against this wider backdrop that the Methodist movement emerged and spread throughout Britain. In its earliest stage, Methodism was essentially a grassroots network of such societies serviced by men who were personally authorized by John Wesley, who, on account of his being a fellow of Oxford was legally permitted to preach in any diocese

⁶ J. Wesley Bready, *England: Before and After Wesley* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938), p. 4.

throughout England.⁷

The practice of outsourcing ministerial duties to the non-ordained helpers (“curates”), it should be noted, was not in itself unique and it is sometimes forgotten that Wesley’s “connexion” was just one of several networks of religious societies, including those founded and serviced by the Wesleys’ contemporaries John Cennick (1718–1755)⁸ and Benjamin Ingham (1712–1772), the latter of whom founded more societies than he could personally manage, eventually relinquishing control of them to the Moravian Brethren in 1742.

John Wesley has sometimes been portrayed as the architect of such groups, as if he had purposefully intended to instigate an evangelical revival through them, but in fact the proliferation of voluntary religious societies preceded Wesley throughout England by at least one generation,⁹ providing what one recent historian has deemed a “foundation for revival” prior to the Wesley brothers arriving at Oxford University and forming their “holy club.”¹⁰ It is, however, fair to say that Wesley made more strategic use of societies than many of his contemporaries. (It is said that George Whitefield, toward the end of his life commented, “My Brother Wesley acted wisely. . . and thus preserved the fruits of his labor. This I neglected, and my people are a rope of sand.”)

Perhaps more significantly, however, the Wesleyan movement, over time, cannibalized many of the religious societies that were started by people other than Wesley and own his preachers. Years before John Wesley stepped foot in northern Ireland, for example, John Cennick had already established Moravian societies throughout Ulster, in some sense paving the way for later Methodist preachers.

⁷ Wesley himself was ordained as a deacon (1725) and priest (1728) by Dr. John Potter, bishop of Oxford, later to be the archbishop of Canterbury. When asked to explain his activities by Bishop Joseph Butler (1692-1752), Wesley responded, “Your Lordship knows, being ordained a priest, by the commission I then received I am a priest of the church universal: and being ordained as Fellow of a College I was not limited to any particular cure, but have an indeterminate commission to preach the word of God in any part of England. I do not therefore conceive that in preaching here by this commission I break any human law” (Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England*, p. 71).

⁸ John Cennick is a figure deserving of further study. Before dying at the age of 36, he established, between the years 1747 and 1752, some 220 Moravian communities throughout England, Wales, and Ireland. The literature on him is surprisingly sparse, but see Joseph Edmund Hutton, *John Cennick: A Sketch*, and more recently Peter Gentry and Paul Taylor, *Bold as a Lion: The Life of John Cennick (1718-1755): Moravian Evangelist* (Leicester: Life Publications, 2007).

⁹ Wesley’s father Samuel was an enthusiastic supporter of voluntary religious societies.

¹⁰ Scott Thomas Kisker, *Foundation for Revival* (Langham, MD: Scarecrow, 2007) traces the Pietistic origins of the English voluntary religious society through the ministry of Anthony Horneck. The original rules of Horneck’s societies stipulated that each society must have a clergyman as its leader, though this requirement was later dropped, perhaps because there were not enough willing clergy to lead. The presence of an ordained cleric for Methodist meetings was not required according to Wesley’s rules for the United Societies, presumably because it was assumed that such meetings were happening under Wesley’s authority.

In this early period the term “Methodist”¹¹ did not describe a formal organization, let alone a denomination, but rather a common experience of conversion and conception of the Christian life. Perhaps more significantly, the Methodist societies provided a venue within which one could express such experience and views without being labeled a non-conformist.¹²

c) Preacher

Despite the fact that John and Charles Wesley traveled and preached extensively among the early “United Societies,” the rapid growth of the societies eventually necessitated help with more traditional ministerial responsibilities. Unfortunately, most of the ordained clergymen who had assisted Wesley with the religious societies up until 1739 were not able or else unwilling to assist (in light of doctrinal controversies and pressure from ecclesiastical authorities.) Therefore, beginning in 1739, John Wesley began to make use of lay “assistants” to lead people in prayer, Bible study and exhortation (as distinct from preaching or expounding biblical text). By 1740 he was using “assistants” to help with writing or copying correspondence and perhaps preaching as well.¹³

None of Wesley’s assistants were ordained at this time, and were therefore forbidden by English law to perform sacraments such as the Lord’s Supper or baptism. They were also directly accountable to Wesley as an ordained cleric of the Church of England, and in this regard it is important to note that Wesley’s outsourcing of pastoral responsibilities—even preaching—to men without formal theological training¹⁴ was not, in and of itself, a radical innovation: parish priests regularly hired “curates”¹⁵ from local parish funds to

¹¹ From the outside, the term *Methodist* was generally used in derision to designate a person as a “fanatic” or “enthusiast” and it is worth noting that on at least one occasion Charles Wesley himself rejected the label of “Methodist.”

¹² The Methodist society and the Church of England co-existed in much the same way that an Alpha Group or other parachurch ministry might function within a large evangelical church today.

¹³ The titles “helpers” and “assistants,” were used interchangeably until about 1749 onwards, when it “assistant” came to denote the senior preacher among the helpers in each circuit (*Works* (BE) 10:75.

¹⁴ The basic ordination requirements for English clergy were set down in the canons of 1604, and later adjusted by parliamentary decisions, see C.H. Davis, ed. *The English church canons of 1604: with historical introduction and notes, showing the modifications of each canon by subsequent Acts of Parliament, etc.* (London: H. Sweet, 1869). Although candidates with university degrees were preferable, bishops might also license a man who could, at the least, “yield an account of his faith in Latin,” and present to the Bishop letters “of his good life and conversation, under the seal of some College in Cambridge or Oxford, where before he remained, or of three or four grave Ministers, together with the subscription and testimony of other credible persons, who have known his life and behaviour by the space of three years next before” (p. 38).

¹⁵ The word “curate” in Wesley’s day was a broad term that could describe four different roles: (1) apprentices (and the sense in which I am using it here); (2) clergymen serving as assistants in town parishes, often holding posts entitled “lecturer” or “reader” for which endowments existed; (3) clergy serving as “resident curate” with primary responsibility for a parish where a resident

assist them with their duties. The novelty was, rather, that Wesley began to authorize numerous men in many places to preach under *his* authority, rather than first requiring them to first obtain a license from the local bishop.¹⁶ As John Kent has insightfully noted,

An individual wandering preacher made no serious inroads into the authority of parson or bishop, and might be ignored, unless he seemed a nuisance. But a disciplined band of men with no ecclesiastical sanction beyond what Wesley gave them, and no loyalty other than their personal loyalty to him and to the Societies which they served, was another matter altogether.¹⁷

It was in response to his irregular transgression of ecclesiastical boundaries, that Wesley's oft-quoted proclamation, "the world is my parish," was originally uttered. From the very outset of the revival Wesley seems to have realized that his mission could not be fulfilled under the typical conventions of the English parish system.

In the early phase of the Methodism, the raising up of the preachers—"extraordinary prophets" as John was fond of calling them—was perceived by Charles Wesley to be a special dispensation of God sent to revive the Church of England from its spiritual laxity. By "extraordinary" Wesley was not referring to their "exceptional" quality as much as their "out of the ordinary" nature¹⁸—indeed, the preachers were perceived as a special work of God even by the Countess of Huntington, who eventually founded a "college of prophets" expressly for the purpose of having these preachers properly educated so that they might be properly ordained in the Church of England.

incumbent was inactive, through sickness or advanced age, or non-resident; and, (4) perpetual curates' of perpetual curacies or chaplains of chapelries (See W. M. Jacob, "Recruitment, Background, and Education of the Clergy" in *The Clerical Profession in the Long Eighteenth Century, 1680-1840* (Oxford University Press, 2007). Oxford Scholarship online DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199213009.001.0001

¹⁶ Statute 48 of the Canons of 1604 reads that "No Curate or Minister shall be permitted to serve in any place without examination and admission of the Bishop of the diocese, or Ordinary of the place, having episcopal jurisdiction, in writing under his hand and seal. . . . And the said Curates and Ministers, if they remove from one diocese to another shall not be by any means admitted to serve without testimony of the Bishop of the diocese. . . ." (Davis, *The English church canons of 1604*, p. 49).

¹⁷ Kent, *Jabez Bunting*, p. 10.

¹⁸ Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England*, p. 64, noted that Wesley's distinction between extraordinary vs. ordinary may be traced back to his reading of Richard Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, particularly Book VII where Hooker concludes that although episcopal ordination is supported by church tradition and reason and could not be contradicted by Scripture, it is not "uniquely valid" and in some cases God himself validated extraordinary exceptions to the ordinary rule. "Where the Church must needs have some ordained, and neither hath, nor can have possibly, a bishop to ordain; in case of such necessity, the ordinary institution of God hath given oftentimes, and may give, place. And therefore *we are not, simply without exception*, to urge a lineal descent of power from the Apostles by continued succession of bishops in every effectual ordination" (emphasis mine, quoted from Keble, ed. *Hooker's Works* [Oxford, 1888], vol. 3, Book VII, Ch. xiv, p. 309). The idea of "extraordinary exceptions" seems central to Wesley's thinking on the subject.

In the earliest stages of the Methodist movement, both brothers were comfortable with lay preaching. Charles Wesley, as late as 1746, approvingly records that he

adored the miracle of grace, which has kept these sheep in the midst of wolves. Well may the despisers behold and wonder. "Here is a bush in the fire, burning and yet not consumed!" [Exod. 3:2] What have they not done to crush this rising sect? but, lo! They prevail nothing! . . . For one preacher they cut off, twenty spring up. Neither persuasions nor threatenings, flattery nor violence, dungeons or sufferings of various kinds can conquer them.¹⁹

But the brothers would soon part ways on the practice. Charles' initial approval of lay preaching waning after he had investigated charges of adultery against James Wheatley, a cobbler turned preacher, who confessed to his guilt yet continued to justify himself and proved "stubborn and hard."²⁰ Shortly after this, Charles and John resolved upon "examining into the life and moral behavior of every preacher in connexion with us." Charles was appointed to the task by John and set out in June 1751 on his first trip into the north of England to purge any other such preachers. Charles' journal from that period gives us a glimpse into the sorts of behaviours he intended to root out:

Such a preacher I have never heard, and hope I never shall again. It was beyond description. I cannot say he preached false doctrine, or true, or any doctrine at all, but pure unmixed nonsense. Now and then a text of Scripture or a verse quotation was dragged in by head and shoulders. I could scarce refrain from stopping him. . . . I talked closely with him, utterly averse to working, and told him plainly he should either labour with his hands, or preach no more. He hardly complied, though he confessed it was his ruin, his having been taken off his business. He complained of my brother. I answered I would repair the supposed injury, by setting him up again in his barber's shop.²¹

Charles observed that there was a socio-economic dimension to the problem, which he expressed to the Countess of Huntingdon²² that same year:

Unless a sudden remedy be found, the preachers will destroy the work of God. What has

¹⁹ CWJ 2:468-469.

²⁰ Ibid. See also Moore, *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, Vol. 1 (1824) pp. 160-161 for his account of this episode. Wheatley had claimed other preachers were guilty of the same behavior, but there is not in CW's journal, as John Whitehead observed, "the least accusation of a nature to that of Wheatley, against any other preacher in the Connexion."

²¹ CWJ 2:617.

²² Lady Huntingdon, for her part, sought to address the economic aspect of this problem, but discovered in the end that this was more than simply a problem of funding. Even when the Countess of Huntingdon attempted to have a number of Methodists nominated to the universities for theological education, she found her path blocked by the limited number of places available to "nominations" by sympathetic nobles, and by a prejudice in the universities against Methodism. She therefore founded Trevecca College as a "college of prophets." During her lifetime more than two hundred students passed through the school bound for Christian ministry. However, only twenty of them were able to secure Anglican ordination, the majority served in Lady Huntingdon's own chapels or in Dissenting churches (Tyson, *In the Midst of Early Methodism: Lady Huntingdon and Her Correspondence*, Introduction).

wellnigh ruined many of them is their being taken from their trades . . . the tinner, barber, thatcher, forgot himself and set up for a gentleman, and looked out for a fortune, having lost the only way of maintaining himself . . . Some have fallen into grievous crimes and must therefore be put away. What will then become of them? . . . Will not each set up for himself, and make a party, sect, or religion? Or supposed we have authority enough to quash them while we live, or while my brother and I live, who can stop them after our death? It does not satisfy my conscience to say, God look to that. We must look to that now ourselves, or we tempt God.²³

Beneath what may have appeared, on the surface, to be a moral purging of the movement, lay Charles' deeper concern that Methodism would leave the Church of England. Charles therefore suggested to John that no preacher should undertake a wider itinerant work unless he had the independent financial means to do so. In what was intended to be a private letter²⁴ to the Countess of Huntingdon, he explained that he hoped such proposals would weaken John's authority:

It will break his power, their not depending on him for bread, and reduce his authority within due bounds, as well as guard against that rashness and credulity of his, which has kept me in continual awe and bondage for many years. Therefore I shall insist on their working . . . because without this I can neither trust them nor him. If he refuses, I will give both preachers and society to his sole management, for his ruin shall not be under my hands. If he complies, I hope to take up my cross, and bear it more cheerfully than I have ever done heretofore.²⁵

In at least one case Charles put up funds to send a preacher back to his trade, writing to his friend John Bennett (with apparent satisfaction) "A friend of ours [John Wesley] (without God's counsel) made a preacher of a tailor. I, with God's help, shall make a tailor of him again."²⁶

Ironically, while Charles was sending preachers back to their trades, John began pressuring the preachers in the conference of 1767 to be "men of one business"—urging those who were "half-itinerants" to leave their trades completely: "every traveling preacher solemnly professes to have nothing else to do, and receives this little allowance for this very end, that he may not need to do anything else."²⁷ John was especially critical of preachers who were selling medicinal drops, saying that to "hawk them about . . . does not suit the dignity of his calling."²⁸

When, in the conference of 1768 Wesley asked, "Should Itinerant Preachers follow

²³ Quoted in Dallimore, 191.

²⁴ John somehow learned of the contents and was not impressed. For a helpful chronology and discussion of emotional tensions between the two brothers see Gareth Lloyd, *Charles Wesley and the Struggle for Methodist Identity* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

²⁵ Quoted in Frank Baker, *Charles Wesley as Revealed by His Letters*, p. 84.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 79–90

²⁷ Wesley, Question 22 in "Annual Minutes, 1768" in *Works* (BE) 10:359.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, *Works* (BE) 10:360.

trades?" his answer was "No!" He then gave the following explanation:

The question is not, whether they may occasionally work with their hands, as St. Paul did, but whether it be proper for them to keep shop, and follow merchandise. . . . But this has already offended, not only many of the world, but many of our own brethren If one Preacher follows trade; so may every one. And if any of them trade a little, why not ever so much? Who can fix how far he should go? Therefore we advise our brethren who have been concerned herein, to give up all, and attend to one business. And we doubt not but God will recompense them a hundred fold, even in this world, as well as in the world to come.²⁹

Wesley gave the preachers one more year to leave their work or be questioned the following year. True to his word, the conference of 1770 demanded the resignation of any preacher who "traded in cloth, hardware, pills, drops, balsams or medicines of any kind."³⁰ Those who would not leave their trades could remain in their ministry as local preachers, but they would not be considered in "full connection" and would be exempt from the preacher's fund.

Despite Wesley's ultimatum, it seems that many chose to remain independent: Between 1741 and 1765 only 81 of the 200 preachers who had been accepted as helpers remained in full connection until death;³¹ Twenty were ordained as clergy. Six were dismissed. Nearly half remained or became "local" preachers (i.e., no longer full-time itinerants with Wesley).

The significance of this episode in Methodist history should not be overlooked, since it indicates that a high percentage of the earliest Methodist preachers were, as one might say in contemporary church parlance, "bi-vocational"—that is, they responded to what they perceived to be a God-given calling and exercised a pastoral function within their respective communities without leaving their "worldly" employment. Perhaps even more significant is the fact that a good number of them elected to remain that way despite Wesley's ultimatum "to give up all and attend to the one business."³²

The term *Methodist lay-preacher*, therefore, can mean several things in the eighteenth-century context and the descriptors "full-time" and "traveling" (as opposed to "local," "located," or "supernumerary") become particularly crucial. Not only were there *traveling* preachers (full-time itinerants), but there were also *local* preachers who were based in one

²⁹ Ibid. *Works* (BE) 10:358.

³⁰ Wesley, Q. 7 in "Annual Minutes, 1770" in *Works* (BE) 10:381. There was, however, no objection to the preachers Thomas Hanby, John Oliver, and James Oddie, who "had a share in ships" (Tyerman, *Life*, p. 71). Wesley's concern, at least initially, was not over the preachers earning supplementary income as much as their being distracted and tied down to one place to "keep shop and follow merchandise." Another objection seems to have been that such trading creating competition with other Methodist tradespeople (See *Works* [BE] 10:381 n. 289).

³¹ Wesley, "Minutes," *Works* (BE) 1:236.

³² Wesley, Q. 22 in "Annual Minutes, 1768" in *Works* (BE) 10:360.

area, as well as “half-itinerants” who exercised a sort of bi-vocational ministry supplemented by other activities. Preachers classified as *supernumeraries* were often, as the term might suggest, often retired, but the descriptor could also be used for those who had other means of support (e.g., clergyman) or otherwise performed irregular roles within the movement.³³

Comparisons to the Established Church

The radical nature of Methodist lay leadership in the first half of the eighteenth century is quite striking when set against the ecclesiastical structure of the Church of England, where prospective clergy were drawn from the universities, a degree being the prerequisite for ordination by a bishop in most dioceses.³⁴

The Church of England, following the western Catholic tradition, understood itself as the historical continuation of St. Peter’s apostolic authority. That is, it claimed (as it continues to claim) that its bishops were in direct historical succession from Christ’s commissioning of St. Peter in Matthew 16:13–20. For this reason, Anglican churches are bound together globally by a college of bishops, with each bishop functioning in his own diocese and only crossing its borders to minister in another by invitation and permission. Historically, this commitment to stay in one’s own diocese has had some exceptions—yet under normal circumstances a cleric would only be able to speak outside of his bishop’s territory with by permission of the respective bishop in that territory.

How did one become a priest in the Church of England in Wesley’s day? The basic guidelines for ordination in the Anglican church are laid out clearly in the preface to the ordinal of the *Book of Common Prayer* in a section entitled “The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.” It reads as follows:

No man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, in the Church of England, or suffered to execute any of the said Functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the Form hereafter following, or hath had Episcopal Consecration, or Ordination. And none shall be admitted a Deacon, except he be twenty-three years of age, unless he have a Faculty. And every man which is to be admitted a Priest shall be full twenty-four years of age, unless being over twenty-three years of age he have a Faculty. And every man which is to be ordained or consecrated Bishop shall be full thirty years of age. And the Bishop, knowing either by himself, or by sufficient testimony, any person to be a person of virtuous conversation, and without crime; and, after examination and trial, finding him to possess the qualifications required

³³ See Chapter, note 1, regarding John Fletcher’s request. Adam Clarke was listed as a “supernumerary” in connection with Hinde St. Chapel.

³⁴ W. M. Jacob, *Lay People and Religion in the Early Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).

by law and sufficiently instructed in holy Scripture may on the Sundays immediately following the Ember Weeks or on the Feast of Saint Michael and All Angels or of Saint Thomas the Apostle, or on other such days as shall be provided by Canon, in the face of the Church, admit him a Deacon in such manner and form as hereafter followeth.³⁵

It is interesting to note that the formal and deliberate assertion of Episcopal ordination (italicized above) was not added to the Prayer Book until the 1662 edition instigated by Charles II.

As Methodism was most successful among the lower classes, many of its converts were not well educated. As a result, it was easy for Anglican bishops to refuse them ordination. This was more than simply a problem of funding. Even when the Countess of Huntingdon attempted to have a number of Methodists nominated to the universities for theological education, she found her path blocked suspicions of “Methodism” and “Calvinism” as in the case of expulsions from St. Edmund Hall, Oxford in 1768.

A recent study has shown that out of every hundred men ordained by the Church of England during this period, only one fifth found a benefice within five years of their ordination.³⁶ A quarter died young, emigrated to other countries, or went into teaching. A third took more than six years to find a living. Ministers were appointed through a relatively complex system of patronage, and it was expected that a parish minister be involved in the life of a town or village since the parish vestry was the centre of village life in England. Because the church and state were inextricably intertwined, ecclesiastical appointments were usually made on the need to combine talent and with good governance rather than with a mind to further the church’s mission.

Remuneration

Once appointed, the parish minister derived most of his living from collecting tithes and the use of “glebe”³⁷ land, which he could lease or farm himself. Many also supplemented their income by teaching in local grammar schools.

Rather than voluntary contributions, the “tithe” in eighteenth-century England was a

³⁵ Emphasis mine. Quoted from Church of England, *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662 edition). Cf. *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1549. “It will be clear that the most notable feature of this revision [1662] of the Ordinal is the requirement of Episcopal ordination as an absolute necessity for admission to the ministry of the Church of England. Previously the preface had required that anyone who was not already a bishop, priest, or deacon should be ordained by the rites of the Ordinal, but it had left it indeterminate as to what constituted a true bishop, priest or deacon (Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Anglican Ordinal: Its History and Development from the Reformation to the Present Day* [London: SPCK, 1971, p. 95).

³⁶ P. Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence: Ecclesiastical Structure and the Problems of Church Reform, 1700–1840* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1989), pp. 191–6.

³⁷ “Glebe” land was an area of property belonging to a benefice assigned to support the priest (in addition to the parsonage and its grounds). In addition to farmland, Glebe properties sometimes included houses, shops, even factories.

property right enshrined in common law and obligatory for all landowners. Because the tithe was part of common law and not ecclesiastical property as such, the right to collect tithe could be sold, leased or purchased at will. This gave rise to an important class of non-clerical tithe owners known as “lay impropiators” who were sometimes ruthless in their collections. Lay people generally paid their tithes, but the system made clergy and bishops especially unpopular, and the 1730s saw a number of unsuccessful anti-clerical bills brought to parliament between 1715–1735.

Another challenge to effective ministry in this period was the practice of pluralism, in which a single minister held more than one living. This practice became increasingly widespread during Wesley’s lifetime to the extent that in 1780 only 38 percent of Anglican parishes had resident incumbents, inevitably resulting in the neglect of pastoral needs of some parishioners.³⁸

Reflecting on these above challenges, David Hempton notes that the majority of parish priests in this period

lived a life of peripatetic poverty with few incentives, little supervision, an absence of like-minded company and an undisguised element of rural boredom. The vast majority of clerics dutifully performed the tasks required of them, which were mainly the conduct of services and other Anglican formularies, but only an enthusiastic minority devoted themselves to a more wide-ranging pastoral ministry. . . .³⁹

Notwithstanding evidence presented in a more recent study by W. M. Jacob,⁴⁰ who counters that clergy in this period were the most carefully recruited and educated of the “learned professions,” it is difficult to argue with Hempton’s conclusion that “such deficiencies as there were among stipendiary curates were not so much caused by excessive moral and theological inadequacy as by deep-seated structural and economic deficiencies at the heart of the Established Church.”⁴¹

Genre Considerations

With this broader picture of eighteenth-century religion in mind, we now turn to a more detailed examination of Henry Moore’s memoir, seeking first to categorize it amongst the rapid proliferation of “conversion narratives” that occurred during the evangelical revival.

D. Bruce Hindmarsh, in what is probably the definitive analysis of spiritual

³⁸ Hempton, *Religion and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland*, p. 7.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ W. M. Jacob, *The Clerical Profession in the Long Eighteenth Century, 1680–1840* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁴¹ Hempton, *Religion and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland*, p. 7.

autobiography in early modern England to date,⁴² helpfully distinguishes between the autobiographical narratives of Methodist laypeople in the 1740s, which were often written in the “white-hot” period following a conversion experience and the later “Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers” which were often published decades after the conversion experience. Many of the former were written down as letters, often at the request by John or Charles Wesley,⁴³ and only a fraction of them were ever published.⁴⁴ The latter, on the other hand, were often published as monographs or rewritten in abbreviated form and popularized in such collections as Thomas Jackson’s multi-volume series *Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers* (1837–1838),⁴⁵ which received wide circulation and went through several editions,⁴⁶ Moore’s memoir clearly falls into the second category, but his profile is suspiciously absent from Jackson’s *Lives*.

In his introduction to the *Preachers* Jackson observes that John Wesley requested from each of his junior preachers “a written account of his early life, including the time and circumstances of his conversion, and the manner in which he was led to preach the Gospel.”⁴⁷ Thus, it is likely that these accounts provided at least some source material for many of the final published narratives. That most of the lives of the preachers were not published until after Wesley’s death should not surprise us since Wesley considered the press his personal property and expressly prohibited his preachers to publish materials under their own name while he was alive.⁴⁸ It was only after his death that his executors transferred control of Wesley’s press to the conference.

Hindmarsh also observes that “the most distinctive feature of these narratives, and the invariable narrative convention that links them to the other accounts of evangelical experience in the eighteenth-century, was the detailed rehearsal of the subject’s conversion.” He cites the autobiography of Henry Moore’s contemporary John Pawson (1737–1806), *An Account of the Lord’s Gracious Dealings with J. Pawson, Minister of the*

⁴² D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁴³ Charles Wesley appears to have kept a scrapbook throughout the course of his ministry of such testimonies. See Hindmarsh, *Conversion Narrative*, p. 131.

⁴⁴ There are several hundred such letters archived at the John Rylands Library, Manchester.

⁴⁵ Thomas Jackson, ed. *The Lives of Early Methodist Preachers chiefly written by themselves*, 3 vols. (London: John Mason, 1837–1838).

⁴⁶ Moore’s absence in the original three-volume edition of Jackson’s *Lives* is probably best explained by the fact that Moore was still alive at the time of its publication. However, when additional lives were added to series in 1865, expanding the series to six volumes, no account of Moore was included.

⁴⁷ Thomas Jackson, ed. “Introductory Essay” in *The Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*, 4th ed. (London: Wesleyan Conference Office), vol. 1, p. xii.

⁴⁸ Several were published in the *Arminian Magazine* by Wesley.

Gospel (1801) as an example of this particular genre.⁴⁹ Pawson's autobiography, Hindmarsh notes, clearly exhibits the "syntax of a retrospective consciousness"⁵⁰ by signposting significant events with phrases such as "The time of my deliverance now drew near,"⁵¹ or adding reflective commentary such as, "The change in my mind was so extraordinary, that I never could doubt of my acceptance with God through Christ to this day."⁵²

Surveying the lives of early Methodist preachers, Hindmarsh suggests that in general outline, the autobiography of an early Methodist lay preacher is a conversion narrative followed by the curriculum vitae or itinerary of an evangelist: "The plot of each preacher's narrative drove first towards the crisis of a guilty conscience and its relief under faith in the promises of God, then drove towards the second crisis of spiritual vocation and the decision to forsake all to preach the gospel."⁵³

Henry Moore's autobiographical narrative certainly follows this basic outline in its progression from *crisis* to *relief* to *calling*, but is of particular interest to the historian of Methodism for two reasons. First, because it was not published until 1830, considerably later than most other accounts we have of the period;⁵⁴ and second, because most of the events it describes took place in Ireland. Unlike the "white hot" conversion narratives documented by Hindmarsh, Moore's memoir is a retrospective account of eighteenth-century Methodism written with the apologetic concerns of nineteenth-century Methodists in mind.

English versus Irish Conversion Narratives?

In his analysis of religious conversion narratives in eighteenth-century Ireland, (curiously devoid of any Methodist accounts) Michael Brown comments that, "the few who chose to abandon one faith and find sustenance in another often remained marginalized; disowned by the faith of their birth and distrusted by the faith of their adoption. . . the convert ran the risk of family disdain and social opprobrium."⁵⁵ While this was undoubtedly true of Catholic to Protestant conversions and vice-versa, one might

⁴⁹ Pawson became a Methodist preacher in 1762 and was ordained by John Wesley in 1785 for ministry in Scotland, returning to England in 1787. After John Wesley's death, Pawson served as president of the British Methodist Conference in 1793 and again in 1801 (BDEB).

⁵⁰ Hindmarsh, *Conversion Narrative*, p. 228.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

⁵⁴ There is, however, an unpublished account written of Methodism written by Joseph Sutcliffe.

⁵⁵ Michael Brown, "Conversion Narratives in Eighteenth-Century Ireland," in Michael Brown, Charles Ivar McGrath & Thomas Power, eds. *Converts and Conversion in Ireland, 1650-1850*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), p. 237.

safely assume Protestant “conversions” to Methodism in Ireland were considerably less dangerous, since Methodism still existed as a religious society within the Church of Ireland and benefited from its legal protection. That said, the social stigma attached to becoming a Methodist was no less political in Ireland than it was in England, and Methodist preachers faced considerably more violence in Ireland from unrestrained mobs, resulting in two of the movement’s earliest martyrs.⁵⁶

Although there is a considerable amount of helpful writing on Irish Methodism in form of denominational histories,⁵⁷ it is only recently that scholars such as David Hempton and Myrtle Hill have attempted to synthesize a deeper analysis of the complex factors at play in Irish Methodist expansion.⁵⁸ Working out of a paradigm pioneered by W. R. Ward, the contemporary researcher has a number of resources to supplement the Crookshank’s standard 3-volume history of Methodism in Ireland.⁵⁹ Dudley Cooney’s more recent *The Methodists in Ireland*,⁶⁰ while providing a helpful overview and chronology of the Methodist Church in Ireland in this period, falls short of being either a detailed scholarly analysis or a social history of the eighteenth-century movement.

Wesley and his Irish Preachers

The late Nigel Yates, in his *Religious Condition of Ireland*, has insightfully noted that whereas evangelicalism had begun to have an important impact in parts of England and Wales starting the 1730s, it did not have a major impact in Ireland until a good deal later, “but its impact when it came was decisive, both for the theological development of Protestant churches and for Protestant-Roman Catholic relations.”⁶¹ Although the Moravians had been active in Ireland with several settlements, the primary catalyst for Methodist growth appears to have been John Wesley’s personal visits between 1747 and

⁵⁶ John Smith, who was brutally attacked with a pitchfork in 1774, was the first Irish Methodist martyr. He was followed by John McBurney, who succumbed to injuries in 1779. See Dudley Levistone Cooney, *The Methodists in Ireland: A Short History* (Dublin: Columba, 2004), pp. 35–36.

⁵⁷ See for example chapter 6 of Alan Acheson’s *A History of the Church of Ireland*, while a particularly helpful resource for understanding the evangelical tradition within the Church of Ireland, does not include an in-depth treatment of Methodist tradition.

⁵⁸ David Hempton and Myrtle Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society, 1740–1890* (London: Routledge, 1992).

⁵⁹ Ward’s assessment of the importance of Continental pietist influences excludes the Irish situation, a gap which has been filled by David Hempton’s in his essay “Evangelical Revival and Religious Minorities in Eighteen-Century Ireland,” in George Rawlyk and Mark A. Noll, *Amazing Grace: Evangelicalism in Australia, Britain, Canada, and the United States* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994).

⁶⁰ Dudley Levistone Cooney, *The Methodists in Ireland: A Short History* (Dublin: Columba, 2004), pp. 35–36.

⁶¹ Nigel Yates, *The Religious Condition of Ireland 1770–1850* (Oxford University Press, 1986).

1789, which have been documented by several writers.⁶² John Wesley, it has been calculated, spent the equivalent of six full years in Ireland in aggregate, crossing the Irish sea at least forty-two times after the first Irish conference was held in Limerick on 14 Aug. 1752.⁶³

Although John Wesley was the first of the brothers to set foot in the third kingdom, it was Charles who bore the brunt of Methodism's arrival in Ireland. Arriving two weeks after John in 1747, Charles found that a mob had broken into the chapel being used and destroyed everything, including the benches, which had been burned openly in the street.⁶⁴ Charles also discovered that the nickname "Swaddlers" had been given to the Irish Methodists on account of one of the leaders of society having preached on "the Babe that lay in swaddling clothes"—apparently something of a novel idea to the rioters. Left without a meeting place, Charles, at some peril, preached at Oxmantown Green,⁶⁵ then a large open place, situated near the royal barracks, for about a month. He then bought an abandoned weaver's shop and converted it into a chapel, with rooms above to house preachers. In doing so, he was replicating a pattern established at the New Room, Bristol—which is reflected in his name for the first Methodist chapel in Dublin—"New House." It opened on October 25, 1747.

The Expansion and Migration of Irish Methodism

The numerical growth of Methodism from 1747 onward is remarkable. From a mere 280 Methodists in Dublin in 1747, membership in the societies would grow to 19,292 by 1800, 36,529 by 1820, and 44,314 by 1830. In the year of Henry Moore's death, 1844, Methodism would peak at 44,314 and then decline sharply to 26,790—largely because of the great potato famine of 1845–1848 and the consequent mass emigration of Methodist members out of Ireland.⁶⁶ Although the Methodist movement in Ireland would not

⁶² In addition to Wesley's own journal, see Samuel J. Rogal's three-volume *John Wesley in Ireland, 1747-1789* (Lewiston, N.Y.: E. Mellen Press, 1993) and Robert Haire's *Wesley's One-and-Twenty Visits to Ireland: A Short Survey* (London: Epworth Press, 1947).

⁶³ Alexander Gordon, "John Wesley" in *DNB*. In addition to Wesley's own journal, see Samuel J. Rogal's three-volume *John Wesley in Ireland, 1747-1789* (Lewiston, N.Y.: E. Mellen Press, 1993) and Robert Haire's *Wesley's One-and-Twenty Visits to Ireland: A Short Survey* (London: Epworth Press, 1947).

⁶⁴ Franklin Wilder, *The Methodist Riots: The Testing of Charles Wesley* (Great Neck, N.Y.: Todd & Honeywell, 1981), p. 77.

⁶⁵ Ten years later, in 1757, George Whitefield would experience the wrath of violent "popish mob" at Oxmantown Green after he urged prayer for the King and prayed for victory over the Prussians (see Luke Tyerman, *The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield* [New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1877], pp. 395–396).

⁶⁶ "During the Famine the charge was laid that some Protestant groups offered food and soup to those who convert. Those who did convert were often ostracized by their community and branded as "souters," "perverts," and "turncoats," and it would appear that many of these converts felt that

recover these losses until well into the twentieth century,⁶⁷ Methodism worldwide would be the benefactor of the outward migration. Thus it has been said that what John Wesley sowed in Ireland, he reaped in America.⁶⁸ This is true not only of the first wave of Irish emigrants, which included early American Methodist leaders such as Phillip Embury and Barbara Heck,⁶⁹ but also of the second wave of Irish emigration in the nineteenth century, many of whom arrived in New York City by way of Liverpool (the closest major port to Dublin). British North America, in particular, was the destination of the most destitute Irish because fares to Canada were much lower than those to the United States or Australia largely on account of the high numbers of returning timber ships (which were also used to transport the lower classes). In the years between 1830 and 1850 alone some 624,000 Irish arrived in British North America, making the Irish, by 1867, the second largest ethnic group in Canada after the French.⁷⁰

Although the role that the Scots-Irish, in particular, played in the religious development of the American “Bible Belt” has been the subject of some recent scholarly attention,⁷¹ less attention has been paid to how Irish migration influenced the growth of Methodism in British North America. Although this is a question beyond the scope of this study, the question is worth noting, if only to reassure the reader that the relatively small numbers of Methodist in Ireland today are not necessarily indicative of the character or the significant global impact of the eighteenth-century movement. As one writer has exclaimed, “How little even those who have studied the subject know of the germinant power and far-reaching influence of Irish Methodism!”⁷²

With the above considerations in mind, we are now better prepared to consider the

the best option for them to emigrate. Many ended up in New York city where they obtained work in the late 1840s with the American Protestant Society and in the 1850s with its successor, the American and Foreign Christian Union” (Ofelia García, Joshua A. Fishman, eds. *The Multilingual Apple: Languages in New York City* [Walter de Gruyter, 2002]).

⁶⁷ The Methodist Church in Ireland today claims 212 churches and approximately 53,000 members. <http://www.irishmethodist.org/about/welcome.php> Accessed 8 November 2011.

⁶⁸ Norman W. Taggart, *The Irish in World Methodism* (London: Epworth, 1986).

⁶⁹ Embury and Heck are credited with the formation of the first permanent Methodist society in North America.

⁷⁰ David A. Wilson, ed. *Irish Nationalism in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009).

⁷¹ See for e.g., Barry Aron Vann. *In Search of Ulster-Scots Land: The Birth and Geotheological Imagings of a Transatlantic People, 1603-1703* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008); also *Immigrants in the land of Canaan: letters and memoirs from colonial and revolutionary America, 1675–1815* (Oxford University Press, 2003) and Peter E. Gilmore, “Rebels and revivals: Ulster immigrants, western Pennsylvania Presbyterianism and the formation of Scotch-Irish identity, 1780-1830,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Carnegie Mellon University, 2009.

⁷² William Crook, *Ireland and the centenary of American Methodism: Chapters on the Palatines; Philip Embury and Mrs. Heck; and other Irish emigrants, who instrumentally laid the foundation of the Methodist Church in the United States of America, Canada, and eastern British America* (London: Hamilton, 1866), p. 190.

following outline of Moore's childhood, conversion, and call to preach.

Summary of Moore's Early Life and Conversion

Henry Moore was born in Drumcondra, a suburb on the north side of Dublin in 1751, at a time when all of Ireland was under English rule. Moore doesn't give a detailed account of his family's origins, but simply states that his father, Richard Moore (Esq.), was a Protestant farmer, on land that had been in the Moore family for nearly a century, and that his father supplemented his income by several rental houses on the property.

Henry was the only surviving son, second born, in a family with five children.⁷³ Like many residents of the Pale, the Moore family was strongly attached to the Church of Ireland, the state church, which came into existence as a reformed church independent of the Roman Catholic Church in 1536, following the Irish Parliament's declaration of Henry VIII to be the Supreme Head of the Church on earth.⁷⁴

Moore says little about his spiritual formation, except that his mother was a woman of good understanding and "possessed much of the fear of God" and his father was a "good churchman." He describes himself as being religiously inclined from his infancy and experiencing anxiety regarding his spiritual state from an early age:

When very young, I used to think often on the day of judgement, and frequently dreamed that it was come: and this brought such a habitual dread of God upon my mind . . . that I used to look for a place to where I might hide myself from his face, whom I seemed always to behold as sitting upon the throne, and calling the quick and dead before him.⁷⁵

After several years at "commercial" school, Moore's father placed him at the age of nine in a private school run by Rev. Mr. Williamson, a minister at St. Paul's, Oxmantown, and a chaplain at the military barracks. Under Williamson's care, Moore made good progress in Latin and Greek before his 11th birthday, and seemed destined towards a profession. Sadly, however, his education was interrupted when his father passed away

⁷³ All four of Moore's sisters converted to Methodism, though Moore's youngest sister Sarah held out for some time, finally joining the Dublin society on May 10, 1784, after hearing John Fletcher (of Madeley) preach. Sarah Moore later married Henry Moore's colleague William Myles, author of *A Chronological History of the people called Methodist* (1813). (George Coles, *Heroines of Methodism: or, Pen and ink sketches of the mothers and daughters of the church* [New York: Carlton & Porter, 1857], p. 46).

⁷⁴ Whereas it is often assumed that the Church of Ireland was just an extension of the Church of England, the situation was in fact not the case until 1801 when Ireland was incorporated into Great Britain and the Church of England and Ireland merged to form the United Church of England and Ireland. As the state church, however, it was partially funded by tithes imposed on all Irish subjects of the Crown and the population at large was expected to pay for its upkeep through forced tithes regardless of their own religious affiliation, a situation that eventually boiled over into the violent "tithe wars" of 1830-1836. Despite attempts to translate the Bible into Irish, most of the native Irish continued to view the Church of Ireland as an instrument of English occupation.

⁷⁵ Smith, *Life*, p. 20

from rheumatic fever in the summer of 1763, leaving Moore's mother a widow with limited income to support five children. Concerned for her family's finances, she decided to withdraw Moore from Williamson's private school.

Upon noticing his absence on the first day of class, however, Mr. Williamson, a good friend of Moore's father, offered to tutor Moore at no cost and see him through Trinity College Dublin,⁷⁶ where Williamson had many connections. This was a generous offer, as the cost of attending Ireland's oldest university deterred those of humble origins from entry unless they were heavily subsidized.⁷⁷ (It is perhaps also worth noting that until 1793 the doors of Trinity College were closed to Dissenters and Catholics.)⁷⁸

Unfortunately, Williamson did not live long enough to be of much help to young Henry—he died of a violent fever not long after making this commitment. Prospects for a higher education having dissolved twice, Moore's mother placed Henry under the apprenticeship of a local wood carver, a vocation clearly not suited to Moore's mental abilities or aptitude: "I do not remember that I was ever unfaithful to any trust," recalls Moore, "yet I was very careless of the business, minding only my books, except in the hours when I was obliged to labour. My heart was set upon learning. It was my idol. I used frequently to dream that I was at school again, and awaked only to weep."⁷⁹

Completing his apprenticeship around the age of 19, Moore set out for London, of which he had heard much of from his co-workers and quickly found work in the metropolis, making new friends. "Our leisure, and even our Sabbaths, and sometimes the hours which ought to be spent in necessary employment, were consumed in what is usually called pleasure. The Parks, Vauxhall, Ranelagh, and especially the theatres, of which I was a passionate admirer, quite intoxicated me; so that the name of Garrick,⁸⁰ in a play-bill, would make my heart vibrate with delightful anticipation. I lost, in a great measure, my relish for my former studies, and seemed to be sinking into depravity."⁸¹

Emerging from this "vortex of dissipation," around the age of majority, Moore returned home to his mother and sisters in Dublin, where his former master kindly rehired him. Around this time, Moore records that he heard John Wesley preach in Dublin, though he

⁷³ Smith, *Life*, p. 7.

⁷⁷ It was estimated in 1730 that the total cost training a minister at Trinity College could be as high as £400.

⁷⁸ Jos. M. M. Hermans, Marc Nelissen, *Charters of foundation and early documents of the universities of the Coimbra Group* (Leuven University Press, 2005), p. 44.

⁷⁹ Smith, *Life*, p. 8.

⁸⁰ The reference is to David Garrick (1717–1779) an influential English actor and theatre manager. He was pupil and friend Dr. Samuel Johnson, who famously remarked that Garrick and his profession were indebted to each other: "His profession made him rich, and he made his profession respectable" (Boswell, *Life Johnson*, p. 422).

⁸¹ Smith, *Life*, p. 9.

was “much disappointed” in his preaching style:

I imagined that a public speaker, especially a reformer, ought to be an orator; and I had formed my ideal portrait from heathen models. I thought it strange that a man who spoke with such simplicity should make such a noise in the world; and the luminous exposition, and powerful enforcement, which used to have such an effect on me in following years.⁸²

Having sampled the cultural pleasures of urban life in London, he found himself feeling even more dejected in Dublin than he had before. “The sight of the university had a painful effect on upon me,” he comments. “I sometimes attended the college chapel and often took a melancholy walk in its park.”⁸³

Having stayed less than a year, he returned to London in 1776 in hopes of better prospects. Reunited with his old circle of friends, Moore returned to his previous habits, but found himself still thinking thoughts of despair and death.

Around this time Moore befriended a young Methodist named William Gibson, and began to attend, occasionally, some of the Methodist chapels in London, where he first heard Charles Wesley preach. Charles’ “vehement” and his “headlong elocution” however, were not to Moore’s liking.⁸⁴

Moore’s basic Christian upbringing is evident when he writes that during this period he “sometimes had gracious drawings from the Spirit of God,”⁸⁵ in which he used to pray, but as he felt that prayer was hypocrisy unless a person was fully devoted to God. “Any interruption, to my religious course, was followed by prayerless weeks, or even months.”⁸⁶

I knew not the Friend of sinners, nor had I any clear conception of the power of his atonement and mediation. I thought, if I could be good, (which I considered as being in my own power, and that is was previously required,) I might pray to be enabled to persevere; but I had no conception of that which I afterward found was the doctrine of the Church of England,—that it was necessary “the grace of God by Christ should prevent us, that we may have a good will,” as well as “work with us when have that good will.”⁸⁷

Tormented by his “wretched state of mind” Moore was forced once more to return to Ireland, this time in order to deal with property matters related to settling his father’s

⁸² Ibid., p. 10.

⁸³ Smith, *Life*, p. 9.

⁸⁴ Smith, *Life*, p. 11. Sometime not long after his evangelical conversion Charles adopted the practice of preaching *ex tempore* (with the result that fewer of his sermons have been preserved), on some occasions quoting the Greek text from memory. Moore’s description of Charles’ preaching seems consistent with that of Joseph Sutcliffe, who once described one of Charles’ sermons as a “torrent of doctrine, of exhortation, and eloquence bearing down all before him” (Kenneth G.C. Newport, *The Sermons of Charles Wesley: a critical edition, with introduction and notes* [Oxford University Press, 2001], p. 32).

⁸⁵ Smith, *Life of Moore*, p. 11

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 21.

estate.⁸⁸ Soon after his arrival in Dublin Moore found himself alone with a copy of the New Testament in the home of his eldest sister.⁸⁹ Some time before he had left London, he had met with a zealous Calvinist, who had challenged him to read the book of Romans so that he could better understand the doctrine of predestination. Reminded of this encounter, Moore picked up the Bible and began to read through the epistle:

But how shall I describe the change wrought in my mind while rapidly, and with almost breathless attention, going through that epistle...? The doctrine I wished to explore vanished from my remembrance. I discovered that which I needed much more, "salvation by grace, through faith!" I saw with delight, I suppose almost equal to Luther's when he made the discovery, that sinners must be, and may be, "saved by grace;" and that God had appointed the way of faith, as that alone in which we could be saved." My mind was enlightened . . . I walked as in a new world and all the gloom which had nearly fastened on my mind seemed to be totally dispersed.⁹⁰

This "cheering light" lasted a considerable time, but Moore eventually found that these feelings had subsided.

I began to know something of the total fall of man, as set forth in the ninth article⁹¹ of the Church of England; but I almost despaired of deliverance, as I knew nothing of the doctrine of regeneration, which I was taught to identify with baptism.⁹²

At this time, an acquaintance who was not particularly religious presented Moore with one of John Wesley's journals in order to show that "this eminent man, although a Protestant divine, believed in the reality of ghosts and apparitions."⁹³ Though he found Wesley's account of Elizabeth Hobson⁹⁴ interesting, Moore began to read Wesley's other letters on

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁸⁹ Afterward "Mrs. Timms"—possibly Mrs. Jane Timms (nee Moore) who married on 19 October 1780 Richard Tim or Timms (1784-1802), a wood carver of some reputation at 5 Mary Street, Dublin. See Knight of Glin and James Peill, *Irish Furniture: Woodwork and Carving in Ireland from the Earliest Times to the Act of Union* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 295.

⁹⁰ Smith, *Life*, p. 14.

⁹¹ Possibly a veiled reference to struggles of a sexual nature: Article IX reads: "Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk;) but it is the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek, *phronema sarkos*, (which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh), is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized; yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin."

⁹² Smith, *Life*, p. 15.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Elizabeth Hobson (1744-?) of Sunderland had recounted to Wesley (see Wesley's journal entry of May 25, 1768) her experiences of seeing apparitions of the dead. The fact that Moore mentions his initial attraction to the supernatural, but downplays its influence upon him, is significant. Wesley's "credulity" in publishing such accounts would become a favourite theme of his critics.

religious experience in the same Journal.⁹⁵ “These seemed to give me some idea of the thing I wanted, but how to attain it I had no conception. I attended our parish church constantly, but could hear nothing that was suited to my case.”

I went to the Methodist chapel, though greatly afraid of being seen there by any who might know me; the reproach of Christ being heavy upon the people at that time. As usual with a mere hearer, the sermon was sometimes profitable, and at other times the contrary. I was proud, and fastidious in my taste; and though I longed to hear something that would clearly point out deliverance, yet I could not bear, as I ought, “the earthen vessel” through which it was conveyed. The lay appearance also of the preachers I exceedingly disliked.⁹⁶

Around this time a preacher about the same age as Moore named Samuel Bradburn (1751–1816), a shoemaker by training, arrived in Dublin and removed Moore’s prejudice against preachers in “plain coats.”⁹⁷ Moore had come to hear Rev. Edward Smyth, who had recently been dismissed from his curacy by the bishop of the diocese, ostensibly for preaching and holding meetings of prayer without permission—though Moore states that Smyth’s dismissal from established church was a direct result of his having reprimanded a nobleman for adultery.⁹⁸ For whatever reason, however, Smyth did not appear as advertised and Bradburn ascended the pulpit in his place, preaching on Matthew 11:5-6, “The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.”

“The sermon,” writes Moore, “was highly impressive, and some parts of it came home to my case. . . . He strongly inculcated the poverty of Spirit which is essential to a right reception of the gospel, and showed largely that it was the poor, and especially *such* poor, who in every age had preached it, and received it.”⁹⁹

A Watch-night Conversion

Moore began attending the Methodist chapel once again, finding “some good” in the

⁹⁵ It would appear that Moore was reading vol. 3 of the original publication of Wesley’s journal.

⁹⁶ Smith, *Life of Moore*, p. 24.

⁹⁷ Bradburn was considered the greatest orator among the Wesleyan preachers. Jabez Bunting declared that “he trod the pulpit with the air of a conqueror,” and Adam Clarke commenting on his command of language said, “I have never known his equal . . . We have not a man among us that will support anything like a comparison with him” (Joseph Beaumont Wakeley, *The Heroes of Methodism: Containing sketches of eminent Methodist ministers, and characteristic anecdotes of their personal history* [New York: Carlton & Porter, 1856], p. 270).

⁹⁸ For a detailed account of the circumstances (which Moore correctly relates), see Robin Roddie, “The ‘Alarming’ Edward Smyth,” in Turner, Brian S., (ed) *Down Survey 2000, Yearbook of Down County Museum, Spreading the Word* (Down County Museum, 2000).

⁹⁹ Smith, *Life of Moore*, p. 26.

preaching “even when delivered in the most homely garb.”¹⁰⁰ Then, he says, “One Sunday evening in February, 1777, I think the 16th, I heard it published from the pulpit, that there would be a watch-night on the following evening, being the full of the moon; and I determined to attend. What a watch-night meant I knew not; but it was enough for me that it was to be a religious service.”¹⁰¹

The watch-night service Moore proceeds to describe differs in many respects from the traditional New Year’s eve service still present in contemporary Methodist liturgies.¹⁰² The tradition itself can be traced back to the Moravians, who as early as 1733 held watch-night services at Herrnhutt on the last day of the year, using Mark 13:35–37 (“Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh . . .”) as a scriptural basis for the service. Unlike the Moravian services, however, the earliest Methodist watch-nights were not New Year’s Eve events, as Moore’s narrative makes clear. Instead, the service was intended to afford individuals an opportunity to reflect on their relationship with God and ponder whether they were in good enough standing to meet their Creator. In Moore’s case, the commitment to attend the Watch-night service also seems to have implied extended fasting in the days leading up to the event, such that he felt “a full determination to perish at the Lord’s feet rather than turn back.”¹⁰³ It was in this weakened physical state that Moore had his first “conversion” experience.

Returning to his sister’s house the day before the watch-night service, Moore found himself praying that nothing would divert his attention from the fast when, he writes, “in a moment, I felt as if I was gently struck with Lightning.” “Tears of love and gratitude overflowed my eyes (I had not wept before in all my conflict) and I was ‘lost in wonder, love and praise.’”¹⁰⁴

His account of returning from the watch-night service, which began at 8:30 p.m. and ended with a blessing at 12:15 a.m. is of interest on several levels and is worth quoting in

¹⁰⁰ Smith’s 1830 edition has dropped the following lines: “I was thankful for every degree of information. I felt I had wasted my life hitherto in striving to lay up useless knowledge; and every word that helped my faith in Christ, seemed precious, even when delivered in the most homely garb” (Moore, *Sermons*, p. 311). Cf. Smith, *Life*, p. 23.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 23.

¹⁰² Methodist watch-night services were held on full moons so that the faithful could find their way home in the dark. However, they were often suspect by outsiders, who often suspected them of fostering sexual immorality, a charge repeated by Robert Southey in his biography of Wesley: “The Watch-night was another of Wesley’s objectionable institutions. . . . Mr Wesley disregarded the offence which he gave, by renewing a practice that had notoriously been abolished, because of the objections to which it led (Southey, *Life of Wesley*, p. 257). For a helpful overview of early British Methodist liturgy see William Parkes, “Watchnight, Covenant Service, and the Love-Feast in Early British Methodism,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 80–104.

¹⁰³ Smith, *Life*, p. 24.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

full:

The family at my sister's were all in bed and I found they had been uneasy about me; but my brother-in-law rose and let me in, observing, that he supposed I was at Mr. —'s, a relation whom I used to visit in former days, and where I spent my evenings with cards and supper. I well remember that I felt astonished at the question and felt surprised that she should think I had been so employed; for I seemed to have forgotten, as well as to abhor, my former ways: I then retired to my apartment.

There was no light in the house, but the moon shone bright in my apartment. I went over to the window and reflected on my brother's statement . . . I instantly cried out, apparently without a previous thought, "My sins are forgiven!" and I knew it was so. I had a delightful impression that the Son presented to me to the Father, and that 'through him I had access into the grace of justification, wherein I stood. The love of God was shed in my heart by the Holy Ghost given unto me, and I rejoiced in hope of the glory of God, with joy unspeakable. . . seeing my title clear, through Christ, to mansions in the skies. I then cried out, "How shall I praise thee, O Lord!" And immediately the doxology then common among religious people, and which I had learned at the chapel, burst from my lips: I knew no other hymn of praise. . .

I sung this aloud, and, as I afterward learned, awoke the remainder of the family, and greatly alarmed my sister, who thought that the crisis was come, and that insanity had taken place.¹⁰⁵

There are obvious parallels in the preceding account with the conversation narratives of other Methodist leaders, and Moore himself compares his own experience and that of John Wesley's heart-warming experience at Aldersgate Lane.¹⁰⁶

As with the so-called "conversions" of John and Charles Wesley, in 1738, Moore's 1777 evangelical conversion at the age of 26 was less about embracing a new religious tradition as it was receiving a sudden and overwhelming emotional awareness and personal reassurance of a previously held cognitive belief—"justification by faith"—which prior to this experience was for him "a faint and obscure idea" but afterwards the core of his theological outlook and deeply personal. "My prayer," writes Moore, "seemed to rise up to the throne of God; and an impression was made on *my* mind, that there Christ reigned, and that he was *mine*,—*my* Saviour and *my* God!"¹⁰⁷

The discerning reader, however, will also note in Moore's account that he is careful to mention his being steeped in the established Church, the *Book of Common Prayer* ("one of

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 35.

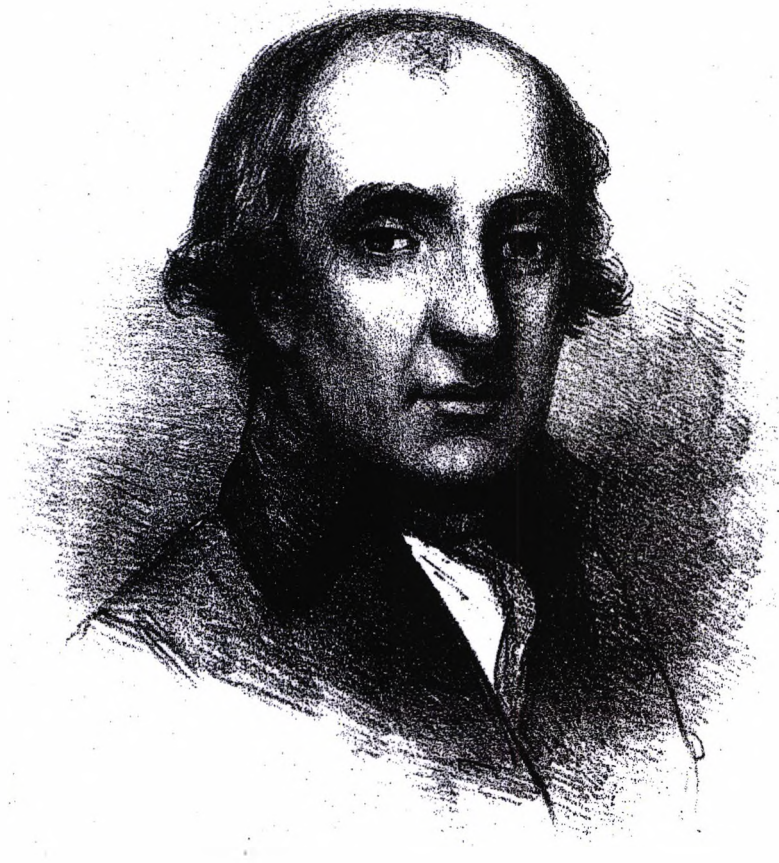
¹⁰⁶ John Wesley's "heart-warming" experience was preceded by hearing Martin Luther's commentary on Romans being read aloud. It is interesting to consider Moore's account in light of Albert Outler's observations that "Aldersgate" drops out of sight in Wesley's writings after 1738: "Wesley's first biographers took it as his actual conversion to authentic Christianity, and succeeding generations have made of it a pious legend" (Outler, *John Wesley* [Oxford University Press, 1964] p. 51).

¹⁰⁷ Cf. the similarly repeated pronouns in Wesley's account: "I felt *my* heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death. (Curnock, ed. *Journal*, 1738, Vol. I. No. 3.), pp. 97–98.

the books I constantly studied”) and that he burst out into singing the doxology by heart—facts that seem to be included in the narrative to disarm the objections of high church readers to Methodism.

“I can . . . remember the time,” Moore would write at the end of his life, “when I could cry out ‘Enthusiast!’ ‘Fanatic!’ and could set the bubble *virtue*, and the pride of Churchmanship, against the Scriptures, and the real doctrines of our venerable Establishment; thus ‘speaking evil of the things’ (the things of God!) which I knew not.”¹⁰⁸

Fig. 1. Henry Moore (from Smith's *Life*)



Social Alienation and the Function of the Class Meeting

The result of his Moore's watch-night conversion was, as the final paragraph of the passage above indicates, considerable tension within his own family. Not only did his sister think that he had gone mad, his brother-in-law (with whom he was living) and some other

¹⁰⁸ Moore's preface to *Life of the Rev. John Wesley* (1824), p. xxi.

relatives became “enemies.”¹⁰⁹ His mother became deeply grieved, telling him “she would go down with sorrow to the grave.”¹¹⁰ His friends lamented his new-found faith, mostly for the effect it had upon his card-playing.¹¹¹

Curiously this does not seem to have prevented him from leading what he terms “family prayer” despite threats from his brother-in-law. Lamenting over such social pressures, Moore describes how he briefly considered a monastic life, but could not see how this was justifiable on scriptural grounds. At the same time, he found himself increasingly concerned over the eternal destiny of his friends and neighbors—a concern that eventually led him to consider outdoor preaching—an idea he eventually dismissed because he feared exposing himself to further mockery and the negative effect it might have upon his other relatives “lest they should be utterly hardened.”¹¹²

It is significant to note that up until this point Moore was still a “hearer” at the Methodist chapel, not a “member.” His evangelical conversion and new religious outlook occurred prior to his joining the Methodist society, even though he regularly attended their services. His reluctance to join the Wesleyan societies formally, he explains, was the fear of “committing himself to men.”¹¹³ Eventually, however, his desire to find fellowship with other believers of like mind led him to approach a Methodist preacher and express his desire to enter into “full connexion” with the society. The preacher gave him a note of admission¹¹⁴ to a local class meeting, though surprised that a complete stranger to him would speak of such lofty spiritual aspirations.

The Methodist class meeting has sometimes been portrayed as a kind of evangelistic tool devised by John Wesley for the specific purposes of proselytization, but it is clear that in Moore’s experience at least its function was probably as much a spiritual discipline as it was a tool for evangelism, as the following passage from Moore’s memoir makes clear:

The meeting began with singing and prayer, which I thought was very good. But as it proceeded, it is impossible to describe my disappointment! There was but one person in the class, (which consisted of upwards of twenty persons,) a servant-maid, who spoke of enjoying any happiness in religion, or having even “peace with God.” Yet all appeared to be

¹⁰⁹ Smith, *Life*, p. 27-28.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* An allusion to Genesis 42:38.

¹¹¹ Smith, *Life*, p. 26.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹¹³ An interesting comment given Kent’s suspicion “that pietism was itself one of the early signs of the police-state, to the extent that it encouraged informing on one’s neighbours” (Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*), p. 216., n. 27.

¹¹⁴ Members of Methodist societies in this period were issued “class tickets” for the purposes of admission to non-public events. The practice of issuing tickets lasted well into the nineteenth century and gave Wesley (in his own words) “a quiet and inoffensive method of removing any disorderly member” from the societies. The tickets were reissued quarterly to members in good standing (JW, *Works* [BE] 9:265, 11).

very serious, and some seemed to be under very deep concern. The Leader spoke a few words to me; but as I entered into no detail, having no encouragement to do so, he only gave me a few plain words of advice, and did not seem to receive very well my speaking so confidently of “having peace with God.”

I sat musing upon what I heard—and felt, as Mr. Wesley once said, as if I had touched the torpedo, the benumbing fish. I hastily thought, “I will come here no more. This is no place for me. I shall get no good here; rather, I shall be robbed of my happiness. I will continue in the way in which I have been called,—in which the Lord himself has led me. He is able to keep me, and I will trust in Him.” While I was thus forming my resolution, and waiting, I fear with some impatience, for the conclusion of the meeting, that Scripture came with uncommon power to my mind, “Except you receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, you shall in nowise enter therein.” My Babel was demolished in a moment! I felt that I was “despising his little ones;” that I was lightly esteeming “the smoking flax,”¹¹⁵ and turning away from “the bruised reed.”¹¹⁶

The meeting broke up with prayer, and Moore departed “praising and blessing God” for having taught him a deep lesson. From this point forward, Moore claims to have been the “most constant member of the class.”¹¹⁷

The Band

Moore soon befriended several other young men in his class, and a preacher (unnamed by Moore) organized several of them¹¹⁸ into a “band”—a smaller subdivision of the class meeting, in which members were usually grouped by their gender and age. Moore seems to have found in this group the spiritual companionship that he so desperately desired, and sometime in 1774, at the encouragement of friends, he began a ministry of prayer and “exhortation.”¹¹⁹ Soon after several members of the society urged him to try preaching, an opportunity he did not refuse, though it seemed a “great trial” to him. The results, however, were more than encouraging: “My beginning was soon noised abroad, and so many came from all parts to hear, that I was almost discouraged by reason of the

¹¹⁵ The reference to Isaiah 42:3 quoted by Jesus in Matthew 6, upon which Wesley comments: “The wicks of lamps were anciently made of flax, which, if not supplied with oil, soon expired in smoke. It denotes feebleness, or a low state of religion. But the blessed Saviour encourages the first beginnings of holy desires in the young converts, and revives the expiring spark in the poor backslider” (Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*, p. 45).

¹¹⁶ Ibid. Wesley comments: “A bruised reed—The Eastern shepherds, while watching their flocks, often play on pipes made of reeds; they often get bruised, when the owner breaks them in two, throws them aside, as they are little worth, and can easily be replaced. It points to a weak believer, or a convinced sinner; one that is bruised with the weight of sin.

¹¹⁷ Smith, *Life*, p. 34.

¹¹⁸ Members of Moore’s small band included Mathias Joice (Joyce), who, like Moore, went on to be one of Wesley’s itinerant preachers; and Bennett Dugdale (c. 1756–1826), who later became a prominent publisher and bookseller in Dublin (see D. A. Levistone Cooney, “A Pious Dublin Printer,” in *Dublin Historical Record*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Autumn, 1993), pp. 74-100. Their activities—apparently distinct from that of the “general bands”—included visiting the sick and the imprisoned in Newgate Prison, Dublin.

¹¹⁹ The act of “exhortation” was understood to differ from “preaching.” A preacher chose a text from Scripture to expound, but an exhorter appealed to his or her experience.

multitude . . . When the preacher visited the place,¹²⁰ he found twenty-six persons in the society, all of whom were either convinced of sin or happy in ‘the knowledge of God,’ as ‘being merciful to their unrighteousness, and remembering their sins no more.’”¹²¹

Moore’s initial exercises in preaching, together with his continued reading of Wesley’s writings, led him to seek out a deeper work of grace in his own life. “Shallow and superficial convictions; conversions not truly evangelical . . . backsliding in the heart—all this surrounded me, and distressed me exceedingly . . . I remembered also the sorrowful confession of those who are called to public work in the church, ‘My own vineyard have I not kept’¹²² . . . I began to feel what my heart was capable of, if it should cease one moment to live by faith.”¹²³

Though he was not aware of any “worldly principle” remaining in his heart, his reading of John Wesley’s writings on Christian perfection led him to seek “full sanctification.”¹²⁴ However, in pressing towards this goal, Moore interestingly comments that he “certainly raised the standard too high” and his views were “not entirely Scriptural.”¹²⁵

I afterward found that I hoped in several respects, to extinguish nature, as well as the rebellious principle of it.... By a course of fasting, and by every species of self denial, I aimed at victory over the body, which nearly effected its destruction. For sixty years I felt the effect of those austerities, to which also I had recourse after I had become an itinerant preacher. My constitution, naturally very strong, became much enfeebled, and I seldom enjoyed an hour’s comfortable health.¹²⁶

¹²⁰ It is sometimes forgotten that Wesley’s itinerants were exactly that: *travelling preachers*. Many of the local pastoral duties of the local society were left in the hands of lay leadership.

¹²¹ Smith, *Life*, p. 42. Cf. Hebrews 8:12.

¹²² The intertextuality of early Methodism, as well as Moore’s dependence upon Wesley’s *Explanatory Notes* is evident in this reference to Song of Songs 1:1–6, in which Wesley sees “False brethren, who pretend that the church is their mother, when their actions demonstrate, that God, the husband of the church, is not their father; hypocritical professors, who are, and ever were, the keenest enemies; false teachers, and their followers, who by their corrupt doctrines, and divisions, and contentions, bring great mischief to the church.” Moore had access to the 1757 edition of Wesley’s *Notes*. In his 1824 biography of Wesley, Moore notes that Wesley, constantly marked the words in the Commentary where the leading thoughts occur with capitals . . . and thus gave the reader a clue to profitable meditation When I compare [later] editions . . . I can hardly look up on them as the same work! Nor can I derive any thing like the same profit from them.”

¹²³ Smith, *Life*, p. 42.

¹²⁴ Moore comments, retrospectively, that he believes he already possessed what the Swedish Moravian Arvid Gradin gave Wesley as he his definition of “the full assurance of faith” (on Wesley’s trip to Germany in August 1738): “Repose in the blood, a firm confidence in God and persuasion of his favor; serene peace, and steadfast tranquility of mind, with a deliverance from fleshly (unholy) desire, and from every inward and outward sin.” Wesley quotes this definition in *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* and elsewhere comments that this was “the first account I ever heard from any living man of what I had learned myself from the oracles of God . . .” (*Journal*, II, 49). It is not insignificant, in light of his high church despisers, that Moore footnotes Gradin’s definition in Latin.

¹²⁵ Smith, *Life*, p. 43.

¹²⁶ Moore, as we shall see, would play a significant role in setting up a fund to take care of retired preachers and their widows. His comments are a stark contrast to those of Wesley, who, when the Irish conference asked “What reasons can be assigned why so many of our preachers contract

But the Lord, however, looked on my efforts with the eyes of mercy and I received many blessings from him. One day in particular, in secret prayer, he so graciously visited me, that from that hour to the present (and it is now more than fifty years,) notwithstanding unfaithfulness that will ever humble me before him, I never came under the power of unbelief.¹²⁷

The above comments are fascinating given the emphasis that had often been laid on Wesley's doctrine of "entire sanctification" by later Methodists—particularly those in the nineteenth-century Wesleyan-Holiness movement, for they suggest that Moore, in latter years, saw the long-term dangers of radical asceticism espoused by Wesley. One of Wesley's more recent biographers has observed, "Wesley habitually judged that the disciplines that he found useful for himself would be useful for others, regardless of circumstances or temperament. Everybody should rise early; everybody should travel incessantly; everybody would find good for their health what he found good for his."¹²⁸ Moore, in this passage, connects his understanding of Christian perfection with the "full assurance of faith" (i.e., the absence of doubt), but seems reluctant to emphasize any kind of secondary work of moral perfection in his life—evidence that some of the more extreme claims of perfection presented in Wesley's *Plain Account of Christian Perfection* were not necessarily shared by his own preachers.¹²⁹

Such claims, it must be remembered, had erupted in the years between 1758 and 1763, more than a decade earlier than the time of which Moore writes. While Wesley had attempted to present a "reasonable" account of what the Holy Spirit might possibly do in a believer's life, he eventually expelled Thomas Maxfield and George Bell in 1762 from the London Society over fanatical claims.¹³⁰ By the time Wesley acted on these extreme views, however, the damage had already been done, and even Wesley himself admitted that the Maxfield-Bell controversy had caused "the very name of Perfection to stink in the nostrils even of those who loved and honoured it before."¹³¹

nervous disorders?" responded that it was "either indolence or intemperance. . . . If then our preachers would escape nervous disorders, let me, (1) Take as little meat, drink, and sleep as nature will bear" (Q25 in "Irish Minutes" for 1778 in *Works* (BE), 10:965.

¹²⁷ Smith, *Life of Moore*, p. 55.

¹²⁸ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p. 535.

¹²⁹ It has been argued that Wesley himself later revised his views, but did not alter his published texts accordingly. Wesley published *Thoughts on Christian Perfection* in 1759, and then reprinted it with some earlier writings in 1767 as *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. For a helpful discussion of how Wesley's own thought on Christian Perfection evolved over time, see Victor A. Shepherd, "'Can You Find Anything More Amiable Than This? Anything More Desirable?' A Note On Wesley's Challenge Concerning Christian Perfection" in *Mercy Immense and Free: Essays on Wesley and Wesleyan Theology* (Toronto: Clements, 2010).

¹³⁰ Letter JW to CW, July 9, 1766 cited from Telford, ed. *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley*, Vol. 5 (London: The Epworth Press, 1931).

¹³¹ JW to Thomas Rankin, Jan. 22, 1767 (JWL 5:38).

Although Maxfield and Bell appealed to the language of some of Charles Wesley's hymns to justify their radical claims, the precise role that Charles Wesley's role in the controversy is difficult to ascertain because his journal from the period is not extant. Charles early hymnody clearly emphasizes Christian perfection as the restoration of the image of God in the believer, but correspondence four years later indicates that the two brothers held somewhat differing views of how that process unfolded in the life of the believer: "That perfection *which I believe*," wrote John to Charles, "I can boldly preach, because I think I see five hundred witnesses of it. Of that perfection *which you preach*, you do not even think you see any witnesses at all. Therefore I still think to set perfection *so high* is effectually to renounce it."¹³² Charles, it seems, was more skeptical of such claims: "When I left London last year," he explained to Joseph Cownley in a letter dated July 1 1764, "the number of witnesses [to instantaneous perfection] was 500. Half of them have since recanted. Those who live another year may expect to see them all convinced of their own great imperfection."¹³³

John Tyson has suggested that whereas "John Wesley was more apt to stress the instantaneous reception of Christian perfection in this life, Charles had come to emphasize the gradual work of Christian perfection in this life that went on till a person laid down his or her life in death."¹³⁴

Moore's view, therefore, seems to lie somewhere in between the differing views of the Wesley brothers: On one hand, Moore testifies to a specific instantaneous ("in the hour") experience of God's assurance consistent with John's emphases; yet in the same sentence he readily alludes to his own "unfaithfulness that will ever humble"—which suggests that his own spiritual journey for the past fifty years had not been a simple upward progression towards Christlikeness.¹³⁵

The Call to Preach

Moore is representative of Methodism's great success in developing future leadership from within its own ranks and Moore's memoir bears witness to his own struggles to make sense of his vocation and calling.

For a time Moore, like countless other Methodist lay preachers of the period, exercised a preaching ministry whilst at the same time practicing a trade. Such "exercises of mind,"

¹³² JWL 5:19–20.

¹³³ Letter to Joseph Cownley quoted in John Tyson, ed. *Charles Wesley: A Reader* (Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 372.

¹³⁴ Tyson, *Assist Me to Proclaim: The Life and Hymns of Charles Wesley*, p. 247.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, *Life*, p. 43.

however, made his usual employment even more burdensome to him. As a woodcarver, he was required to associate with “very ungodly men,”¹³⁶ and he found he could not be silent when he heard their “perverse disputings against religion.”¹³⁷ As a result, he found himself “continually involved in contention.”¹³⁸ Seeking some kind of alternative employment that might be more conducive to his faith, he mentioned to some of his friends that he would take on pupils, and instruct them in the elements of classical learning. Much to his surprise, he soon had more students at his independent school than he could attend to. By Moore’s account, the school was a great success and his friends “rejoiced at his having their sons under his care.”¹³⁹

The ever introspective Moore, however, continued to struggle with his vocation and calling, fearing that he had “cast off the cross of the Lord, and taken an earthly path.”¹⁴⁰ Previously several members of the Methodist society (“and of the most pious”) had encouraged him “to lay aside every weight” and devote himself entirely to the Lord’s work; and Moore, encouraged by the numbers of people attending his preaching, wondered if he might have a “real call to ministry.” Such thoughts were no doubt further reinforced by meeting John Wesley, who was introduced to Moore on his trip to the Dublin Society in 1779.¹⁴¹ At that time Wesley had suggested that he and Moore “might be more closely united.”¹⁴²

Moore, however, feared the reaction he would get from the parents of his new students, as well as his mother’s reaction, were he to become a full-time preacher. He also seems to have feared the loss of control he would have over his own finances:

I had many and very serious doubts if I were called to *live* by the Gospel; and I felt that I would much rather eat my own bread. I dreaded the thought of dependence on the creature, in any shape; and greatly feared that it might be a snare to me. I feared also, that the great dislike which I felt to all worldly employments was a snare of the enemy, in order to make me a “servant of men,” instead of being “the Free servant of Christ.”¹⁴³

Unable to “determine concerning it with any clearness,”¹⁴⁴ but miserable in his current state, Moore decided to give up his pupils and embark for England, leaving such temptations behind him. Arriving in Liverpool in early 1779 at the age of 28, Moore went

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 45.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Moore records, with apparent satisfaction, that much later in life he found one of his former students to be a doctor of civil law at the university (Smith, *Life*, p. 46).

¹⁴⁰ Smith, *Life*, p. 45.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 46.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 47.

¹⁴³ Ibid., pp. 55–56.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 46.

to the house of a relative, only to receive there a letter from Wesley's general assistant back in Ireland containing an order from Wesley himself that Moore should proceed immediately to Londonderry. Wesley's assistant also informed Moore, much to his surprise, that his mother had fully consented to Wesley's order.

"Perhaps nothing but an extraordinary providence of this kind could have fully satisfied my mind," recalls Moore. "I so greatly revered Mr. Wesley, that I concluded he must be directed by the Lord, and I submitted to the direction . . . Upon the whole, my mind acquiesced in what appeared to be the will of the Lord; and I resolved to devote myself, body, soul, and spirit, to the work, and live and die in his service."¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 47.

3.

Special Providences: Adventures of Methodist Itinerant in Ulster

“In the eighteenth century the Wesleys and their itinerants to some extent restored the freedom of primary religion to be itself in a Protestant context. Examples of healing, prophesy, personal protection, special providences and ecstasy occurred in the Wesleyan societies for a long time and were only very slowly squeezed out in the course of the nineteenth century.” (Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, p. 24)

The walled city of Londonderry (now more commonly referred to as “Derry”¹) in north-west Ulster has not often been associated with the rise of transatlantic Methodism in the eighteenth century. Yet it should be considered of significance by historians of the evangelical revival for at least the following three reasons: First, it was here that the slavetrader John Newton, his ship having limped into nearby Lough Swilly for repairs, was first awakened to God’s special providence in his life and began attending church regularly, leading to his eventual conversion, ordination, and subsequent support of William Wilberforce;² Second, it was Dr. William Barnard, bishop of the diocese of Derry who first agreed to ordain Wesley’s preacher Thomas Maxfield;³ Third, Londonderry was the northernmost terminus of John Wesley’s numerous trips to Ireland, a place where he observed that Methodism was “rendered strangely popular” and a circuit he described as “of great importance.”⁴

¹ Despite the city’s official name of Londonderry (reaffirmed by a high court decision as late as 2007) the city is more usually known as “Derry.” The prefix London was added in 1613 when large tracts of land in the plantation were granted to London merchant companies. The surrounding county, previously known as Co. Coleraine was also renamed to Londonderry.

² Newton nearly shot himself while hunting with the Mayor of Londonderry in 1748. See John Newton, *An Authentic Narrative . . .*, (London: S. Drapier, T. Hitch, and P. Hill, 1765), pp. 110–112.

³ (Journal, 5:11). Wesley had met Barnard “a man advanced in years, and one who professed a friendship for those who were stigmatized with the name of Methodist,” in Bath.

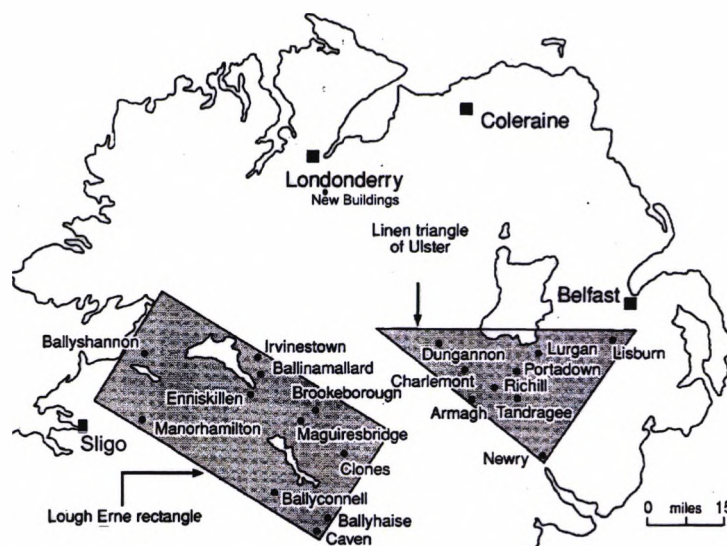
⁴ John Wesley to John Bredin, July 24, 1779. “My Dear Brother,—as you desire it, I will place you and Billy [William] Myles (whose letter I have received) in the Londonderry circuit. It is a circuit of great importance . . . It is a dangerous time, and you have need to yourselves unto prayer” cited in Gallagher, p. 47-48. Neither seems to have ended up in the intended circuit—Myles (Moore’s brother-in-law) went to Lisburn and Bredin went to Cork.

It was also here that Henry Moore would meet two men⁵ who would come to play very significant roles in shaping the trajectory of Methodism following Wesley's death, and in preserving his legacy to future generations.

The first of these men was Adam Clarke,⁶ who came to faith in 1777 in nearby Coleraine. Clarke would become the leading intellectual of the Methodist movement, authoring an eight-volume Bible commentary that would become a standard critical apparatus for Methodist preachers for decades, and later serve as President of Methodist Conference in 1806, 1814 and 1822.

The second figure was Alexander Knox, an insightful and sympathetic critic of Methodism, who later moved to Dublin and would distinguish himself as the leading lay theologian of the Church of Ireland.

Figure 2: Map of Ulster (adapted from Hempton's *Religion of the People*).⁷



⁵ Another leader to emerge from Londonderry was James Lynch, who somewhat reluctantly took over the first Methodist missionary expedition to India, following Thomas Coke's untimely death at sea while en route to Madras.

⁶ Clarke (1762–1832) was born in 1762 at Moybeg in the parish of Kilcronaghan, Co. Londonderry. Moore later in life recounted the details of their first encounter: "He was mentioned to me as a remarkable young man, the son of a schoolmaster who lived in a village about four miles from the town. . . . But how I was surprised when he was introduced to me! He was then seventeen years of age, as thin as was possible for any one to be who had any portion of health . . . His soul was in bondage; and fear prevailed over hope, notwithstanding all the encouragements held out to him in the gospel. In a little time a degree of intimacy took place between us . . . and he followed me about to all my appointments, hungering after the word of life" (Moore, *The Judgment of the Human Race*, p. 10). Clarke was later introduced to John Bredin (one of John Smith's converts), who became a significant mentor to him. Clarke preached his first sermon at New Buildings, near Londonderry, in 1779.

⁷ David Hempton (see Fig. 2) has identified "Linen triangle" and Lough Erne triangle as the hotbeds of Methodism in Ulster. His study does not cover the northern centres of Londonderry and Coleraine in which circuits had already been established prior to Moore's arrival.

The Knoxes of Londonderry

Unfortunately, the history of Methodism in the northern Irish counties is sketchy to say the least, and it is highly probable that some documents that might have been helpful in reconstructing the history more fully were lost in 1922 when the Public Record Office of Ireland in Four Courts, Dublin was destroyed by fire as the result of civil disturbance.⁸

What does seem clear from both Wesley's journal and Moore's memoir is that the origins of Methodism in Co. Londonderry and the relative favour Wesley and the Methodists seemed to enjoy there⁹ as a minority amongst Presbyterians and Catholics, began with the hospitality on behalf a certain Knox family, an influential clan of Scottish origin that moved to Ireland in the seventeenth century to colonize County Down and the surrounding areas. The Knoxes upon arrival at the plantation of Londonderry multiplied rapidly¹⁰ and various members of the family established themselves at Prehen, Rathmullan, Dungannon, Waringsford and Moneymore. "The original grants of land supported only the elder sons; younger sons went into professions and trades, with the result that in a hundred and fifty years the Knoxes, like other families of the Plantation constituted a formidable tribe, implacably hostile to the remaining native Irish, conscious of kinship, but varying in economic status from spacious landed gentry to small farmers and shopkeepers."¹¹

This description is entirely consistent with John Wesley's Journal entry of June 26, 1760, in which he describes his meeting with Rev. James Knox (d. 1770), a clergyman in the Church of Ireland. Wesley and James Knox established a warm relationship at first, but when Wesley came back to Sligo two years later he records in his journal that Rev. Knox seemed to be avoiding him.¹²

Wesley's first visit to Londonderry was in May of 1765 and is described in his journal:

In the afternoon, after riding through a fruitful country, (one mountain only excepted,) we came to Omagh, the shire-town of the county of Tyrone. We found a good inn; but were not glad when we heard there was to be dancing that night in the room under us. But in a while the dancers removed to the Shire-Hall; so we slept in peace. Sat. 11. —Having no direction to any one in Derry, I was musing what to do, and wishing some one would meet

⁸ It is estimated 1,006 Church of Ireland parish records were lost in the fire.

⁹ JW to Alexander Knox, Feb 28, 1778: "the latter end of March I hope to be in Dublin, and about the twenty-eighth of May in Londonderry. It is a place I always loved; but I shall love it more than ever, if I have the pleasure of lodging with you..." (Knox, *Remains*, Vol. 4, p. 7).

¹⁰ George Knox, the Elder (of Prehen) sired twenty-six children (Edmund Arbuthnott Knox, *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian, 1847–1934* [London: Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., 1935]).

¹¹ Evelyn Waugh, *The Life of Ronald Knox* (London: Collins, 1959), p. 27.

¹² Not a few of the hearers at Sligo on May 28 showed "a total want of good sense, of good manners, yea of common decency" (Wesley, *Journal and Diaries IV*, in *Works* (BE), pp. 115, 127–8. Wesley missed his old friend, and wrote a letter of remonstrance on the night before he left Sligo.

me, and challenge me, though I knew not how it could be, as I never had been there before, nor knew any one in the town. When we drew near it, a gentleman on horseback stopped, asked me my name, and showed me where the Preacher lodged. In the afternoon he accommodated me with a convenient lodging at his own house. So one Mr. Knox [i.e., Rev. James Knox] is taken away, and another given me in his stead.¹³

The second Knox Wesley refers to in his entry was Alexander Knox the Elder,¹⁴ a resident of Londonderry and a member of Corporation Council of the town, and the father of Alexander Knox, Esq. (1757–1831), the aforementioned theologian, then still a boy. While he would spend the last three decades of his life in Dublin, the younger Knox continued to correspond not only with Wesley, but with several bishops and early evangelicals, including Adam Clarke, Hannah More and William Wilberforce.¹⁵

Wesley continues in his journal:

About eleven Mr. Knox [the Elder] went with me to church, and led me to a pew where I was placed next the Mayor. What is this? What have I to do with honor? Lord, let me always *fear*, not *desire* it.

The Afternoon Service was not over till about half an hour past six. At seven I preached to near all the inhabitants of the city. I think there was scarce one who did not feel that God was there. So general an impression upon a congregation I have hardly seen in any place. Monday, 13, and the following days, I had leisure to go on with the Notes on the Old Testament. But I wondered at the situation I was in, in the midst of rich and honorable men! Whilst this lasts it is well. And it will be well too when any or all of them change their countenance, And wonder at the strange man's face, As one they never had known.¹⁶

The church in which Wesley was seated would have been St. Columb's, Derry, the first cathedral built following the reformation by the Church of Ireland in 1633, and a place politically significant for its role in sheltering Protestants against King James' army in the Siege of Derry in 1689.¹⁷

¹³ Wesley, *Journal and Diaries IV*, Sunday May 12, 1765 in *Works* (BE) 21:394.

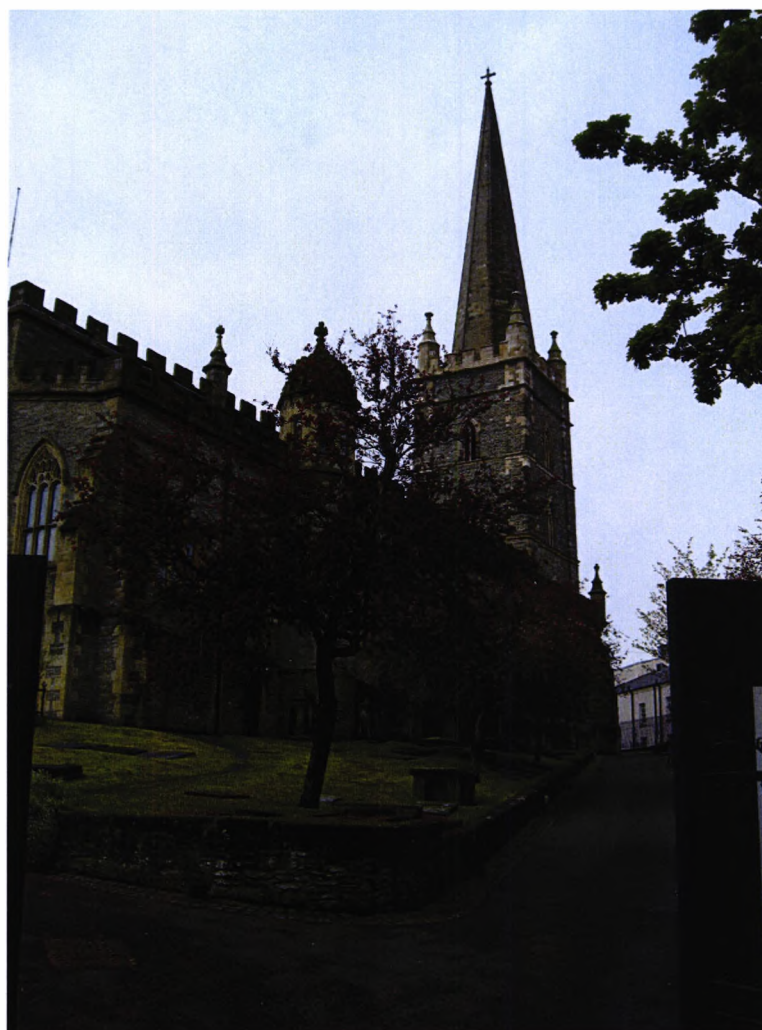
¹⁴ Some local historians [see for e.g., interview with George "Newbuildings then and now" *Londonderry Sentinel* (21 January 2009)] claim that John Wesley stayed at Prehen House, an estate about a mile outside of Londonderry built in 1740, infamous for its connection to the murder of 16-year-old Miss Mary Anne Knox by "half-hung" John Macnaghten (b. 1722-) of Benvarden, Co. Antrim in 1761. While it is possible that Wesley may have visited Prehen with Alexander Knox I have not been able to find documentary evidence to suggest that he did so. During Wesley's visits to Ireland the house was occupied by the father of Mary Anne, Andrew Knox (d. 1774) who was an MP for Donegal. The estate was handed down to his son, George Knox (d. 1840) upon his death.

¹⁵ A contemporary of Moore, Knox corresponded with Wesley as a youth, and Moore as an adult. Though he distanced himself from the Methodists following Wesley's death, he published a defense of Wesley against Robert Southey's early biography (which Southey's son had appended to later editions). Historians of the Oxford Movement see Knox as an antecedent to John Henry Newman and the Oxford Movement, see G. T. Stokes, "Alexander Knox and the Oxford Movement," *Contemporary Review* 3 (1887) pp. 184-205; and J. T. Gunstone. "Alexander Knox and the Oxford movement," *Church Quarterly Review* 157 (1956) pp. 466-72.

¹⁶ Wesley, *Journal and Diaries IV*, Sunday May 12, 1765 in *Works* (BE) 21:395.

¹⁷ St. Columb's Cathedral,

Fig. 3. St. Columb's Cathedral, Derry



Just over a year later, in the summer of 1766, Wesley called on a local Irish preacher from Newry by the name of John Smith (1713–1774)¹⁸ to itinerate in the nearby counties of Fermanagh and Tyrone. The result was a significant revival in the border regions of Ulster.¹⁹ By the end of 1767 Smith had laid the foundations for 36 societies and is said to have converted no fewer than 500 under his preaching. At least fourteen of his converts would later become travelling Methodist preachers. In the Spring of 1776 Wesley dispatched two more preachers to Ulster, bringing the total number of itinerants to six.

¹⁸ Smith's remarkable ministry is chronicled in Crookshank, *A Methodist pioneer: the life and labours of John Smith*. Including brief notices of the origin and early history of Methodism in the north of Ireland (Wesleyan Conference Office, 1881).

¹⁹Crookshank, who wrote the standard 3-volume history of Irish Methodism, laments that "No connected history of the glorious work which took place was written by the only person who was familiar with all its details, and no one else ever attempted it. Incidental allusions are all that are available now, but even from these it is evident that, notwithstanding the almost insuperable difficulties John Smith had to contend with, the success which crowned his labours has been rarely surpassed" (Crookshank, *History of Methodism in Ireland: Wesley and his Times*, Vol. 1), pp. 205.

In 1776, the Conference met in Dublin²⁰ and determined there were now 2,801 members in Ireland, prompting the creation of two massive circuits, one in the north-west and one in the south-east. In addition, a seventh itinerant was dispatched to the work in Ulster.

Smith, known prior to conversion as a fighter, faced fierce persecution in his work, unfortunately succumbing to injuries from a physical attack in 1774 at the age of 59.²¹ The task of leading these fledging societies would be left to the preachers who followed him.

Moore's First Assignment

When Henry Moore arrived in Londonderry in May 1779, four years after Smith's untimely death, a rudimentary preaching circuit had been established with the preachers moving about the circuit every three months. Moore was informed that he would be taking the second place on the Londonderry circuit, Coleraine, about 30 miles east of Derry, as another preacher had already taken the Londonderry position. At this time there were only two dedicated "preaching-houses" on the circuit: one in Derry, which had been established in 1768, and one in Newton-Lemivady, established in 1773. All other preaching points along the circuit were improvised.²²

Despite his being reassigned on short notice, Moore lodged in Derry long enough to become acquainted with the young Alexander Knox and his mother (Knox's father had died in 1770). "I have always remembered this event of my life with great pleasure," Moore recalls. "Our acquaintance, in my subsequent visits, seemed to ripen into Christian friendship, which no distance of time or place, or any circumstance, could impair. I had always a most Christian and hearty welcome at their mansion."²³

A Preacher on the Plantation

On account of land confiscations, population migrations and the colonizing policies of Tutor and Stuart monarchs, pre-famine Ireland, and especially Ulster was a violent society

²⁰ From 1765 onward the Irish Methodists held an annual conference in Ireland just prior to the English Conferences, where the Irish appoints were confirmed. The earliest Minutes of the Methodist Conferences in Ireland (1752-1790) have only recently been published in Henry D. Rack ed. *Works* (BE) 10:957-1007.

²¹ Smith was waylaid on his way to a quarterly meeting in Charlemont by a bailiff, who struck him on the head with a pitchfork and left him for dead.

²² Myles, *A Chronological History of Methodism*, p. 444.

²³ The exact location of this mansion is contested. Samuel Rogal identifies this as Prehen House, a mansion built c. 1740 by Andrew Knox about 2.5 miles southwest of Derry. This appears to be dependent upon the 1837 *Ordnance survey of the county of Londonderry*, which identifies a letter in the Feb 1835 issue of *Methodist Magazine* as being written by "Alexander Knox, Esq. of Prehen." The original of this letter is archived in the Frank Baker collection at Duke University, and does not contain any reference to Prehen. This appears to an erroneous identification of Andrew Knox with Alexander Knox by the surveyors as Alexander (Jr.) had relocated to Dublin long before 1821.

in which public order was often precarious and sometimes non-existent.²⁴ In the year 1600, more than 80 per cent of Irish land was owned by Roman Catholics, but by 1700 this had fallen to around 14 percent and was steadily declining.²⁵ Violent agitations began in 1760s and erupted on a regular basis until the 1840s.

When Henry Moore arrived in Londonderry in 1779 it was very much a British plantation modeled on what one might have found in the West Indies, with most of the fertile land having been expropriated from the native (mostly Roman Catholic) population.²⁶ Under the Hanoverian regime, the plantation at Derry was controlled by investors in London (mostly absent). Elsewhere in the Ulster plantation, grants of land from the six “escheated” counties were redistributed to “undertakers” from Great Britain, Servitors (mostly Scots), and a minority of native Irish proprietors. The first were not permitted to have any native Irish on their land, the Servitors a limited number. But these conditions were not honoured due to the initial scarcity of incoming English settlers.

Within a decade, however, several thousand immigrants from nearby Scotland arrived, bringing their Presbyterian beliefs with them, and settling not only in Co. Londonderry but also the surrounding counties of Tyrone, Donegal, Antrim.²⁷ Here the “Scots-Irish” mixed with the English “planters” (many of whom had come from Yorkshire²⁸) resulting in the co-mingling of planted and native people in south and west Ulster.²⁹ Elsewhere communities segregated into Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterians areas, each consisting of Irish, English and Scottish residents.

The disenfranchised native population (many of whom were forced retreat to mountains, woods, and bogs) was kept in check through a combination of harsh penal laws designed to entrench the Protestant ascendancy, and a network of British military outposts ready to squash any violent opposition that might arise. The journal of Adam Averell, in the year 1795 gives an interesting glimpse into complexities of the situation through the

²⁴ S. J. Connolly, *Priests and People in Pre-Famine Ireland 1780-1845* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001).

²⁵ Hempton, “Ulster Protestantism: the religious foundations of rebellious Loyalism,” in *Religion and political culture in Britain and Ireland*, p. 93.

²⁶ Commencing in 1608, vast tracts of fertile land in the Donegal, Derry, Tyrone, Armagh, Fermanagh, and Cavan were confiscated by the crown and given to companies of merchants or tradesmen, and to certain high officials for resettlement. The vast majority of the native Irish were ordered “to depart with their goods and chattels . . . into what other part of the realm they pleased,” though many chose to eck out a living in nearby hills, glens, and bogs. (Patrick Weston Joyce, *A Concise History of Ireland* [Longmans, Green, and Co., 1905], pp. 187-189).

²⁷ James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), pp. 108-119.

²⁸ Acheson, *The Church of Ireland*, p. 28, notes that many of these fanned out along the “English road” which ran from Carrickfergus through South Antrim and west Down to mid-Armagh.

²⁹ Scotland is a mere twenty miles from Ireland’s north coast and can be seen with the naked eye on a clear day.

eyes of a Methodist preacher:

The country all around this place is greatly disturbed. The ever turbulent papists, leagued under the denomination of 'Defenders,' are intent on the destruction of the lives and properties of the Protestant inhabitants; but they are not likely to carry their wicked machinations into effect. The Protestants oppose a bold front, and in open conflict are always successful. The conflicting parties came into direction collision with each other, yesterday, at a place called the Diamond, and several of the Defenders were killed. In the midst of distractions, the Lord gives me peace. I am at my Master's Work, and under his care.³⁰

While perhaps a one-sided account of the troubles,³¹ it is clear that the seeds of contention that would erupt into bloody violence three years later in the 1798 uprising of the United Irishmen, in which some 30,000 persons lost their lives,³² had already been sown long before Methodism arrived in Ulster.

Methodists in north-west Ulster, in particular, were a very small minority. As a society within the established Church of Ireland, they found themselves perched precariously between Calvinist Presbyterians and Roman Catholics, and generally suspect by both sides. For this reason, it is not surprising that many of the first Methodists in Ireland were soldiers. This no doubt because many of them were imported converts from England, but it may also be related to the fact that Wesley spent a good deal of his time in Ireland preaching in the court houses and barracks, where he would have their protection.

Moore shares an interesting anecdote about how these factors played out in the small village of Clones, which would eventually become a significant centre of Methodist activity in Ulster.³³

A preacher from a neighbouring circuit visited that town, and preached in the market-place. Many attended and much good seemed to be doing among the people; but some ungodly men, chiefly Romanists, assembled, and greatly distributed and annoyed the congregation, so that it was feared the place must be given up, as no magistrate would interfere. Just when this fear was at its height, a very unexpected strange occurrence took place. An old military pensioner, a Presbyterian, surprised the preacher³⁴ and the congregation, by taking his stand by a tree in the centre of the market-place, with his musket in his hand; and using the name of God, alas! In a dreadful way of appeal, he declared that he would shoot the first man that would pass that tree to disturb the preacher! His word was certainly attended with power of some kind; for not one of the

³⁰ Alexander Stewart and George Revington, *Memoir of the life and labours of the Rev. Adam Averell* (Dublin: Methodist Book-Room, 1848), pp. 115-116.

³¹ Cf. S. J. Connolly who observes that "Catholic clergy preached regularly to their congregations on the subject of public order, condemning every form of disturbance or agitation and emphasizing the duty of all men to show obedience to their temporal rulers (*Priests and People in Pre-Famine Ireland, 1780-1845*), p. 209ff.

³² Connolly, p. 208.

³³ The Irish minutes of 1785 indicate that there were 710 members in Clones, second only to the Charlemont society, which reported 943 members.

³⁴ Moore later identifies this preacher as James McBurney.

rioters, although they shouted at a distance, attempted to pass the prescribed limit. The rough old soldier mounted guard every Sabbath afternoon, for some weeks, and until all opposition ceased.³⁵

This humorous account not only illustrates how itinerant Methodists were received in new areas, but also how Methodist and Presbyterians, who might have seen themselves as competitors in more peaceable times, would soon find that they shared a similar plight.

Many writers seeking to understand better the roots of more recent conflicts in Northern Ireland have seen in this partnership the explosive ingredients of militant unionism. However, the affinity between Methodists and Presbyterians was more complex than simple anti-Catholicism. After the *Test Act* was passed in 1704, Protestant Dissenters—in common with Catholics—were denied active citizenship in the parish, guild, corporation and county magistracy.³⁶ Due to such legal and social pressures, Dissent had almost disappeared from the countryside by the mid-seventeenth century. Estimates put the number of Quakers around 6,500 and Baptists around 2,000 members.³⁷ But Scottish Presbyterians—much to the embarrassment of the established Church—continued to thrive economically and socially, with many leaders rising to the fore of the emerging textile industries. Shut out from corporate affairs in towns such as Belfast, Coleraine, and Derry, the Presbyterians of Ulster created their own alternative social structures, leading to what one Irish historian has termed an “embryonic free state.”³⁸ It was in this “state within a state”³⁹ that Methodism in Northern Ireland initially seems to have taken root.

Coleraine

Moore records that the inhabitants of both Londonderry and Coleraine were almost exclusively Protestant, “an understanding people ... remarkable both for mild temper and conduct.”⁴⁰ The first preachers to Coleraine had come from the Londonderry circuit and met with no violent opposition. Similar sentiments are expressed by Moore’s contemporary, Adam Averell, who records in his journal that Coleraine was “the most warm-hearted, loving, deeply devoted society I have met in the kingdom. Everything here bears the semblance of primitive Christianity. It was no toil to preach to this people. I received a hearty welcome from the Queen’s county militia, which is quartered here, and

³⁵ Smith, *Life*, p. 48-49.

³⁶ Irish Presbyterians had some advantage over other non-conformists in that the 1719 Toleration Act gave them official recognition, whereas Catholics were denied the right to vote.

³⁷ Toby Barnard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland: The Irish Protestants, 1649-1770* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 17.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Hempton’s description of the Ulster Presbyterians in “Ulster Protestantism,” p. 93.

⁴⁰ Smith, *Life*, p. 52.

with many of whom, both officers and men, I am acquainted; several of them are my brethren in the Lord." Perhaps through such connections, a large room at a deserted barrack was acquired by the society and converted into a preaching house. As a result, the Methodists in Coleraine were often referred to as "the poor folk at the barrack."⁴¹

It was here that Moore would meet his first wife, Anne (Nancy) Young. Anne, described by Wesley as a "gentlewoman," in his *Journal* the previous year,⁴² had been encouraged to hear the Methodists by a relative from Dublin. Her subsequent joining the Methodist society, along with her sister, Isabella,⁴³ is said by Moore to have had a remarkable effect on the upper class of Coleraine: "The Presbyterians were moved, and several of the first families among them, renouncing their semi-pelagian notions, gladly listened to the plain gospel."⁴⁴ Moreover, he notes that many of the church people constantly attended; and the ministers who were pious men, became very friendly."⁴⁵

"Never have I known a society more dead to the world, more alive to God, or more attached to the whole of Methodism," writes Moore,

The meetings were very lively; the congregations increased; and every one seem to say with the apostle "This one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind and reaching forth to the things that are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high-calling of God in Christ Jesus." I put the most pious into bands, and appointed a general meeting to be held one evening in the week. I preached every morning at five o'clock, (which was indeed the stated duty of every preacher,) and very seldom preached less than fifteen times a week. I also preached abroad; and as I had, in truth, but one thing to mind and do, I felt but little need of what is called study.⁴⁶

Beyond the above passage, Moore does not give us a detailed account of his daily routine as a preacher. However, his friend and co-worker Adam Clarke, who shared the same circuit, much later in life described the kind of day-to-day work that might be undertaken by a young Methodist itinerant during in this period. "My method," wrote Clarke,

was to ascend a hill; and surveying the neighbouring hamlets and villages, to arrange a plan of visitation: then, proceeding to the first, to enter a house, commonly saying, 'Peace be to

⁴¹ Smith, *Life*, p. 52.

⁴² Nancy Young is mentioned in Wesley's journal in the entry for Sunday, June 1, 1778: "In the evening I saw a pleasing sight; a young gentlewoman had joined the society without the knowledge of her relations. She was informed this evening that her sister was speaking to me on the same account. As soon as we came into the room, she ran to her sister, fell upon her neck, wept over her, and could just say, 'O sister, sister!' before she fell down upon her knees to praise God. Her sister could hardly bear it. She was in tears too; and so were all in the room. Such are the first-fruits in Colerain[e]."

⁴³ Isabella Young (d. 1817) married Wesley's preacher Samuel Rutherford, who was survived by his wife. They had eight children, including a son named Henry.

⁴⁴ Smith, *Life*, p. 53.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 54.

this house.' I used next to address myself to the inmates in such language as this, 'Have you any objection to unite with a stranger in praying to Almighty God?' The answer generally—I may say invariably, was favourable. Having secured their consent, I added, 'Perhaps you have some neighbour whom you would like to join with you?' The answer was in the affirmative, and with almost the same breath, some one of the family received the commission of—'Away, fetch Pat such a one, and Betty such a one, and don't forget neighbour such a one.' They came dropping in one after another, and the house was often filled. When all were assembled, I gave out a hymn,—and in those days, I had a clear, strong, well-toned voice; nor was there a hymn in the large blessed hymn book, to which I could not pitch a tune. Sometimes I stopped and spoke about the hymn that had been sung, asking whether they understood the meaning of the different lines—gave the sense of them,—and spoke about the good God to whom the hymn referred, and how grieved he was with persons getting drunk, swearing, telling lies, etc. After addressing them I knelt down and prayed and then, while they were yet staring at me, and at each other, I was off like a dart to another place. In this way I proceeded, going to Port-Rush and other places—six, eight, and then miles around the country, collecting and addressing eight or nine congregations in a day, and walking occasionally a distance of twenty miles. The people were pleased with me, for I was young, and little of my age."⁴⁷

Marriage

The kind of voluntary celibacy advocated by Wesley⁴⁸ was a trial for many young Methodist preachers, and after some time Moore found that he could no longer regard Miss Young, then 22 years of age, with indifference.⁴⁹ "I had prayed much that the Lord would choose for me; and having found that I was not indifferent to her, I concluded that the Lord had answered my prayers." Despite the fact that her family was of the "better sort," Anne had no independent wealth apart from her family, a matter which caused him

⁴⁷ Clarke quoted in James Everett, *Adam Clarke Portrayed*, pp. 116-117.

⁴⁸ Wesley's views on marriage and sexuality, like so many other subjects, were complex and evolved over his lifetime. He initially viewed marriage as an obstacle to faith, but by 1748 was persuaded that "a Believer might marry, without suffering Loss in his Soul." Nevertheless, Wesley continued to emphasize the "glorious liberty" of singleness and advised his preachers to "take no step toward Marriage, without first consulting your brethren." In his own unhappy marriage, Wesley insisted that marriage should not interfere with his preaching, writing in his journal "I cannot understand how a Methodist preacher can answer it to God to preach one sermon or travel one day less in a married than in a single state. In this respect surely 'it remaineth that they who have wives be as thought they had none.'" Later in his life Moore suggested "if Mrs. Wesley had been a better wife, he might have been unfaithful to the great work to which God had called him, and might have too much sought to please her according to her own views." The perceived tension between preaching and marriage was also observed by the preacher John Berridge, who commented that there is "no trap so mischievous to the field preacher as wedlock . . . Matrimony has quite maimed poor Charles [Wesley], and might have spoiled John and George [Whitefield], if a wise Master had not graciously sent them a pair of ferrets" (Berridge quoted in Bufford W. Coe, *John Wesley and Marriage* (Lehigh University Press, 1996), pp. 70-71.

⁴⁹ John Wigger (*American Saint: Francis Asbury and the Methodists*, pp. 132-137) notes that many Methodist itinerants found themselves in a continual struggle with the flesh. His study includes an especially insightful discussion of the journal of American itinerant William Ormond (1779-1803), who left us with a rather detailed record of his struggles with ipsation, and Jeremiah Minster, who had himself surgically castrated in 1791—an act for which he was also reprimanded. Wesley's *Thoughts of the sins of Onan, chiefly extracted from a late writer* (London, 1767) suggests that he believed masturbation would lead to illness or death.

no uneasiness, as he “feared riches much more than poverty.” Still, Moore wrote to Wesley to inquire whether he “should retire to a local situation and eat [his] own bread.”⁵⁰ Wesley’s response to Moore is noteworthy both for its affirmation of marriage and Wesley’s willingness to personally support Moore and his young bride:

Mr. Wesley, who expressed great surprise that I should entertain any such fears, charging me not to think of deserting my post: “It is,” said he, “at the peril of your soul.” He added: “I consider you and Nancy as belonging to my family, and I will take care you shall not want; and if I were under the earth, that word is yours, ‘Dwell in the land, and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed.’” This letter was encouraging, but it did not remove my scruples. I could no more apply to him for support, nor ever did, notwithstanding his kindness, than to any other person or persons; and I should have thought the doing so, little better than robbing the poor-box. I therefore renewed my resolutions, which I have kept to this day. I have avoided debt, and have lived on the fruit of my labour. . . .⁵¹

Despite her family background, Anne appears to have been constitutionally well suited to be the wife of an itinerant preacher.

To spend the whole night in prayer was not an uncommon thing. She hardly ever ate a regular meal, especially when she could escape observation. When hunger made her weak, she would take a piece of bread, and immediately turn again to any employment in which she had been engaged. But she was in truth a ‘happy ascetic,’ and, therefore, even an extreme of self-denial was not grievous. She rose in the morning at four o’clock, and constantly attended the preaching or prayer-meetings, wherever they were held in the neighborhood, even in the depth of winter.⁵²

Charlemont

Wesley’s thoughts on the marriage aside, Moore was concerned that his new wife would be overwhelmed by the challenges of itinerant life, and such fears were not unfounded. The preaching points on the Charlemont circuit, unlike the Londonderry circuit, were spread out thinly across a vast area. Worse, the circuit had no lodging provisions for a preacher, let alone a preacher’s wife. “My dear partner suffered much more than I did; for we could get no lodgings but at Tanderagee, where the people were very poor,” writes Moore, “but this way of life, to which she cheerfully submitted, her constant self-denial, with pain at my absence (which she could not wholly subdue,) laid the foundation of that weakness which ever after accompanied her.”⁵³

After several months, however, one of Anne’s cousins, an Anglican clergyman and chaplain to the British garrison at Charlemont, offered to lodge her in his manse (with his wife) while Henry continued about on his circuit duties, mostly in county Amargh.

⁵⁰ Moore, *Sermons*, p. 363 This paragraph has been omitted from the *Smith’s Life*.

⁵¹ Smith, *Life*, p. 55.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

The constant travel and exposure to all kinds of weather, however, soon took a toll on Henry's health to the point where he thought he might die from consumption. He credits his recovery with the eating of many apples, which the kind people of the circuit, observing his illness, "laid by a store of the very best, against the time of my visiting them; and when I departed . . . load my saddle-bags with them."⁵⁴

A Roman Conversion

Moore's narrative then describes several extraordinary events that took place in the course of his preaching, the first of which is an account of Bartholomew (Bartle) Campbell, apparently a native Irish Catholic, who is described by Moore as having had an evangelical experience on his own prior to joining the Methodists.⁵⁵

Prior to his joining the society, Bartle had found no relief for an overwhelming sense of guilt, even after having performed a pilgrimage and a prescribed penance at Lough Darigg [Derg].⁵⁶ Reprimanded by a priest for doubting the absolution given to him at the holy site, Bartle is said to have cast himself on the ground and vented his anguish to God in "loud cries and tears."⁵⁷ "He called upon Christ and pleaded his precious blood. In a moment all his distress was gone and confidence was given him that God had taken away his sins."⁵⁸

By Moore's account, some time later a local priest had announced that he would be holding open-air mass conducted in an old burial ground "where there was only ruins of a church—no uncommon thing in Ireland:"

Campbell attended, and when the priest had concluded, he stepped up to him, and said "Father, you are to christen a bairn (a child) in the village; go, and leave the people to me. The dead souls you see are standing over dead bodies; and I will awaken the uppermost...

Bartle soon after began to lay before the staring multitude his own former miserable condition, and the efforts he had vainly made for deliverance. But when he came to speak from the fullness of his heart of the cure and the jewel; how Christ had blotted out his sins, and given him to enjoy his love, so that, said he, "I am happy all the day long, and I no more fear to die than to go to sleep," —the effect was astonishing. A general and piercing cry arose. Almost almost the whole assembly fell upon their knees, while some lay prostrate, groaning with deep anguish.

. . . The cry was heard at the village, and the priest soon advanced . . . He demanded of Campbell how he dares thus disturb the flock, but was only answered by vehement entreaties not to hinder the work of God. "You rascal!" says the priest, "do you oppose the

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 60.

⁵⁵ Smith, *Life*, pp. 62ff., Moore, *Sermons*, pp. 371ff.

⁵⁶ The reference is to Lough Derg, a small lake in Co. Donegal and a site of pilgrimage associated with St. Patrick, who is said to have stayed on one of its islands and there received a vision of hell.

⁵⁷ Smith, *Life*, pp. 62.

⁵⁸ Smith, p. 63. Moore further states that Campbell later related his experience to a godly [Catholic] priest, who "acknowledge that he had experienced a similar work, when he was a very young man; but confessed he had lost the blessing, and had long walked in darkness" (p. 63).

church?" "No, father, he replied, "I have found the church." You villain!" said the priest, "begone!" and struck him over the head with his horsewhip.⁵⁹

Bartle, "hardly knowing what he did," pushed the priest back, "falling over a grave, his heels flew up higher than his head."⁶⁰ The resulting riot sent "poor Campbell" fleeing for his life, whereupon he joined the Methodists.

As the story is clearly second-hand testimony given by Moore, it is difficult to know for certain just how much of this story can be taken as history, and how much might be dependent upon Bartle's imaginative retelling of his conversion (Certainly one can see considerable amount of symbolic paradox at play in the story, as well as possible echoes of the Apostle Paul's inadvertent insult of a priest in Acts 23:1-4).

Yet there can be little question that Moore was personally convinced of its historicity, since he further states that Bartle had strong understanding and a great ardency of spirit, and as he perfectly understood the Irish language, he became an instrument of great good to the "poor people of the communion he had left."⁶¹ As if to reinforce the historicity of the story, Moore recounts that when he was stationed in Dublin six years later Bartle Campbell walked several hundred miles from his home to visit with him.⁶²

However implausible the account of Bartle Campbell might seem to a skeptical reader today, it clearly foreshadows the aspirations of Methodists to convert the native Irish to evangelical faith. Such aspirations were realized to some extent two decades later, when Irish-speaking missionaries commissioned by the Conference found themselves in the midst of an evangelical revival:

O! Sir, to see the fields covered with the spiritually slain, what a blessed sight it was. Husbands and wives, parents and children all in a kind of regular confusion, weeping, exhorting, praying, and rejoicing alternately with and for each other. So graciously has God engaged the hearts of the people in quest of salvation, that at I times I have had much to do to prevailing on them to disperse and go home.⁶³

⁵⁹ Smith, *Life*, pp. 65.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² An account of Bartholomew Campbell may also be found in William Graham's Campbell's biography of Charles Graham, who describes him as "a little eccentric, as he was formerly a Roman Catholic, and was converted in Lough Derg, in the County Donegal, and went by the name of 'The Lough Derg' preacher.'" Campbell's account supplies the additional details that "Bartley" laboured alongside Charles Graham out of Sligo for nearly a year in 1790, attracting "multitudes from all quarters, and especially Romanists" before returning to his home in Co. Tyrone. (William Graham Campbell, *The Apostle of Kerry, or the Wonders of the Irish General Mission, being the Life and Labours of the Rev. Charles Graham; together with those of the celebrated Gideon Ouseley* (Toronto: The Wesleyan Methodist Conference Book-Room, 1869), pp. 30-33.

⁶³ Thomas Coke, *Copies of Letters from the Missionaries who are Employed in Ireland, for the Instruction in their own Language, and for the Conversion of the Native Irish* (London, 1801).

Between 1799 and 1802 Irish Methodism more than doubled its membership, attracting huge crowds through the efforts of evangelists such as Gideon Ouseley (1791-1839), who is said to have travelled more than 4,000 miles in one year.⁶⁴

Although later Methodists interpreted these remarkable gains in the province of Ulster as God's blessing of the newly appointed Irish-speaking evangelists, David Hempton has insightfully noted that the explanation does not explain why Irish-speaking preachers had so little impact on other parts of Catholic Ireland.

Although the energetic activity of Methodist preachers cannot be swept aside completely, Hempton's own explanation is that the cumulative psychological impact of rebellion, sectarian equilibrium, and food shortages caused Methodist preachers to become both the "conscious and unconscious catalysts of other profound emotions." In such circumstances, Hempton concludes, "the old Methodist command to flee from the wrath to come had obvious temporal applications."⁶⁵

The Haunting at Drummaron

A second account from the Charlemont circuit, however, is perhaps more relevant to our present quest to assess John Kent's thesis regarding the role of "primary religion" in early Methodism. It involves the purported haunting of a family of three sisters, who lived together in a cottage at a place called Drummaron, about three miles from Tandragee. According to Moore, a manifestation caused the spinning wheels of these sisters to be

broken to pieces before their eyes, and all that they possessed either demolished or rendered useless, except their bed in which they all slept together; and even their bed-clothes were tossed about, and at one time raised up and thrust between the rafters, and the thatch, for there was no ceiling. Their provisions were destroyed, or removed for a time, and then as strangely restored. Their winter heap of potatoes, the great support of life for the poor, was used by invisible hands in pelting them and their visitors. Stones and hard pieces of dirt were also used, and many were thus wounded and bruised in a severe manner. My colleague who had preceded me in the regular way, had been wounded thus, and obliged to fly from the cottage after having ventured to examine the premises in which he had braved these assaults for some time.⁶⁶

Moore introduces the haunting by making it clear to the reader that all the accounts to him were from "members of our Societies, of whose veracity I could have no reasonable doubt," and expressing his initial skepticism regarding the matter:

⁶⁴ The Irish conference reported an increase of 3,000 members in the year 1800 alone. W. Arthur, *The Life of Gideon Ouseley* (Toronto: Samuel Rose, 1876), p. 104.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁶⁶ Moore, *Sermons*, p. 380.

I had read Churchill's poetical satire on the Cock-lane Ghost,⁶⁷ and was in London when the late Mr. Colman ridiculed, at his theatre, the very similar disturbances which, at that time, occurred at Stockwell, in the vicinity of the metropolis. I beheld the theatrical scene, which helped to banish all idea of preternatural agency, with pleasure, and gave my plaudits on that occasion as thinking it well calculated to correct fraud or superstition.⁶⁸

Predisposed to disbelieve the account, Moore recounts that he went to the cottage himself, to examine the premises and the people.

I now seriously considered the case, and thought what should be done. I knew there was one remedy, and but one. One of the poor women, however, addressed me. She said, "Sir, the Romish Priest has been with us; and he says, he will deliver us if we will attend to him." "While I thought of an answer," she continued, "I thought, Sir, of that Scripture, when he made the proposal, 'Master, we saw one casting out Devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said, Forbid him not'" I replied, "I will not forbid him; but I charge you not to suffer him to use any means but that which is allowed in the Scripture. If you do, you cannot be any longer united with us. The means the Scripture prescribes, are fasting and prayer; if he will join us herein, he shall be welcome. If not, we can have nothing to do with him. They were satisfied with this; and the Priest, refusing to act, except in his own way, was dismissed. I then immediately appointed a day of fasting and prayer, allowing sufficient time to warn all the Societies in their neighbourhood, who united with much fervency in imploring help and deliverance from the Lord. We did not seek his face in vain."⁶⁹

Here, as in the account of Bartle Campbell—where the assurance of forgiveness trumps the absolution of a Roman priest—the Methodist disciplines of fasting and prayer are presented as superseding Roman priest's methods in dealing with demonic forces. As such, the episode might be taken to support John Kent's assertion that Methodism succeeded because it restored the freedom of 'primary religion' in Britain to express itself in a Protestant context. Such an interpretation, however, would require one to virtually ignore the fact that—in this case at least—the Methodist option of dealing with the manifestation was *voluntarily* chosen over the methods of a Catholic priest,⁷⁰ who by Moore's account was even invited to join in on the exorcism. Moreover, the means of dealing with the manifestation were not magical, but ascetic—"a day of fasting and prayer"—understood by

⁶⁷ The "Cock-Lane ghost" to which Moore refers attracted mass public attention in 1762. A commission involving Dr. Samuel Johnson concluded that the ghost was in a hoax. The satirical artist William Hogarth makes obvious references to the fiasco in his *Credulity, Superstition and Fanaticism* (1762) in which a Methodist minister slipping a phallic "ghost" into a young woman's bodice.

⁶⁸ Moore, *Sermons*, p. 380.

⁶⁹ Moore, *Sermons*, pp. 383–384. Moore goes on to recount a further incident involving Sir Richard Johnson, "the great man of the place, (John Stuart's landlord)."

⁷⁰ A standardized Roman ritual for exorcism was first documented in Dublin in 1698, but often practiced in a haphazard way, with clergy often adapting their methods to suit local customs. Some used the host, or part of their own body which had touched the host, others used relics. None of these options would have been acceptable to a Methodist on soteriological grounds. For further discussion of the Catholic rite see Raymond Gillespie, *Devoted People: Belief and Religion in Early Modern Ireland* (Manchester University Press, 1997), pp. 7-8.

the Moore to be the only biblical means of dealing with such matters.⁷¹

All that reliably can be concluded from the account is that Roman Catholics and Methodists, over and against certain quarters of the Anglican establishment influenced by philosophical Deism, found common ground in accepting supernatural explanations for such manifestations—though they might disagree on what to do about them. This was a point John Wesley himself willingly conceded when he famously wrote that the denial of “witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible. With my latest breath I will bear testimony against giving up to infidels one great proof of the invisible world, I mean that of witchcraft and apparitions, confirmed by the testimony of all ages.”⁷²

One curious thing about Moore’s account of the haunting—which takes up no less than ten pages in his self-published memoir of 1830—is the fact that it is suspiciously absent without explanation or notice from Mrs. Smith’s *Life* published in 1844. Whether this was at Moore’s request, or an editorial decision undertaken by Mrs. Smith is not clear. It will, however, suffice for us to note that Moore self-published this account in 1830, well aware that Methodism had become “almost synonymous with credulity concerning the supernatural.”⁷³

Judgment upon a Landlord

In 1782 at the age of 31, Moore was assigned to the Cork circuit, where he records yet another extraordinary occurrence in his preaching ministry. At the village of Dunmanway the Methodist society had procured a former workshop and “a considerable number had been united in society.” The whole town was subject to one landlord, Sir R[ichard] C[ox], “a young man of the most profligate habits,”⁷⁴ who was

much displeased with the change that had taken place in the town, and with the preacher who had instrumentally caused it; and had frequently threatened that he would stop such proceedings. A good man observed, “He may do so, if God permit, for no man here can resist him; he is greater in Dunmanway than King George himself.” He at length resolved that he would throw the next preacher that came into the lake which fronted his mansion. When the time of my going thither came, I found the Lord had most awfully prevented the execution of his purpose. He had himself been thrown into it the evening before, where he perished miserably. His body was recovered after several hours search; and when I rode into the town, the corpse lay at a public-house, waiting for the coroner’s inquest. I went thither to look at the body—it was a dreadful spectacle. He was a tall, athletic young man,

⁷¹ Moore, *Sermons*, p. 383.

⁷² Wesley, *Journal and Diaries V*, in *Works* (BE) 22:135.

⁷³ Owen Davies, *Witchcraft, Magic and Culture, 1736–1951* (Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 14.

⁷⁴ The young man appears to be to Sir Richard Cox, grandson of the better known Sir Richard Cox, Lord Chancellor of Ireland from 1703 to 1707, an important early patron of the town (Burke, *Burke’s genealogical and heraldic history of the landed gentry*, Vol. 1, p. 385).

about twenty-two years of age. The body was much swollen by the water, and his countenance dreadfully disfigured [by large eels which were abundant in the lake.]⁷⁵

As we saw in the case of the haunting at Drummaron, a redaction has taken place between editions and the reference to “large eels” has curiously dropped out of Mrs. Smith’s *Life of Moore*, perhaps to make it less offensive for her Victorian audience. Nevertheless, the story remains retains its tragic force, and Moore continues on at some length to give the historical particulars of how the young man died: Living by himself at his mansion (he had been left by his wife and daughter on account of his profligate habits), it seems Sir Richard was at loss for some amusement on the Lord’s day and went rowing on the lake.

One of the oars of his boat, however had been broken! but this could not stop him: timber was procured, and piece sawed from it in the church-yard (where the only saw-pit was situated,) and the oar was thus made during divine service . . . He dipped the oars in too deep, and making a violent pull, the new-made oar snapped like a twig and Sir R— was precipitated backward into the lake. There were above three hundred people soon collected on the shore, and every effort was made to save him —but in vain! . . .

Thus ended the short but awfully-eventful, life of Sir R— C—. The work of the Lord received strength by a serious consideration of the end of this unhappy young man, who might, if he had sought wisdom from above, have been a blessing to many. All opposition was at an end, and “the word of the Lord had free course, and was glorified” in the conversion of many souls.⁷⁶

While at first glance Moore’s account appears to be yet another case of divine retribution, this visited upon a member of the Protestant Ascendancy, there is a secondary theme in the story evident in Moore’s emphasis on the particulars of how and when the instrument of God’s wrath was crafted. This emphasis is even more fascinating when one considers that Methodist meetings in this period were held outside of church hours, and members of the Methodist societies were expected to attend parish worship within the established church.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Cf. Smith, *Life*, p. 77ff. with Moore’s *Sermons*, p. 403ff.

⁷⁶ Smith, *Life*, p. 78.

⁷⁷ Although Wesley initially refused to allow Methodist societies to meet during chapel hours, by 1786 he was allowing it in the event that “the minister is a notoriously wicked man” or when “he preaches Arian, or any equally pernicious doctrine.” The issue had come to a crisis much earlier in the movement when Charles Perronet distributed the elements of the Lord’s supper to the Methodist society in London. Charles demanded that John discipline him, which he did, but the issue resurfaced again at conference of 1786, at which according John Pawson, “Dr. Coke thought, that our public services in the large towns ought to be held in church hours, and was freely speaking in the conference upon that subject, and urging its necessity from the fact that nearly all the converted clergymen in the kingdom were Calvinists. Upon hearing this, Mr. Charles Wesley, with a very loud voice, and in great anger, cried out, “No,” which was the only word he uttered during the whole of the conference sittings. Mr. Mather, however, got up and confirmed what Dr. Coke had said, which we all knew to be a truth” (Pawson quoted in Luke Tyerman, *Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley*, Vol. 3 [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1872] p. 478).

Bearing this context in mind, it is not insignificant that God would choose to inflict his wrath through an oar made in a churchyard during church hours—for the story implies almost as much about God’s blessing of the Church of Ireland as it does about his protection of Methodist preachers. The story therefore functions not merely as a warning to profligate young landlords but also as the divine affirmation of the established church and its services to the Methodist faithful, who might otherwise find themselves tempted to forego parish services—or, worse, to separate themselves from the established church by worshipping on their own during church hours.

It was precisely over such concerns and in this very circuit that Wesley would complete his sermon, “Prophets and Priests,” (completed at Cork, May 9, 1789) reiterating his unwillingness to “ordain” lay preachers to administer the sacraments anywhere where the Anglican establishment had jurisdiction: “Ye were fifty years ago, those of you that were Methodist preachers, ‘extraordinary messengers’ of God, not going in your own will, but *thrust out*, not to supercede, but to provoke jealousy for the ‘ordinary messengers.’ In God’s name, stop there! . . . Ye are a new phenomenon in the earth: a body of people who, being of no sect or party, are friends to all parties . . . though you have and will have a thousand temptations to leave [the Church] and set up for yourselves, regard them not.”⁷⁸

The Last Temptation

Moore continued his work in Cork through 1783, and describes the year as one of the happiest [he] ever experienced.” He records that during that time he “devoured, one by one, and chiefly on horseback” all 32 volumes of *Wesley’s Works*,⁷⁹ commenting that “the year’s study was more to me than many years would be under the ablest masters, who had not so abundantly tasted of the powers of the world to come as this man of God had.”⁸⁰

Learning itself, however, would present Moore with “a trial of a particular kind.” A certain unnamed physician, “who was born and educated a Quaker, but who had renounced that form of religion,” became a constant hearer at the chapels and pressed Moore to go with him to the university and hear the lectures on anatomy, chemistry, and physics.⁸¹ Impressed by Moore’s ability to recite entire lectures by memory, the Doctor proposed that Moore spend two years with him in Dublin and then request “Mr. Wesley to

⁷⁸ John Wesley, Sermon 121, “Prophets and Priests,” §29-35 in *Sermons IV* in *Works* (BE) 4:82.

⁷⁹ The 32-volumes of *Wesley’s Works* to which Moore refers was published by William Pine in Bristol between 1771–74. It was the only “collected edition” of Wesley’s own writings available until Joseph Benson’s more complete edition (in 17 volumes) appeared 1809–13.

⁸⁰ Smith, *Life*, pp. 91–93.

⁸¹ It is curious that Moore does not share with us the identity of this doctor, “a former Quaker,” in light of his later controversy with Dr. John Whitehead, which we shall explore in later chapters.

appoint him to Edinburgh, where he would most certainly get a diploma . . . and be a better Physician than nine out of ten of those who have the reputation of it”.⁸²

I listened to the doctor, then observed, that he had forgotten one thing: and said, “I have no more doubt, doctor, that I am called of God to preach the Gospel, than I have of my own existence; but how will your plan agree with this? “Very well,” he replied: “ you may preach as you do now, and you will be more attended to, and do more good. You will avoid the fatigues of the circuits, and the pain of continual change. Neither your health, nor Mrs. Moore’s is equal to these things”

I at length consented to think of the proposal; and for several days the speculation seemed both pleasing and reasonable; especially when I considered what the doctor had said about the health of my dear partner and myself. He followed up the proposal by bringing a number of books with which I was to begin my course of study. But soon after I commenced reading, I found that I understood better what our Lord meant by that declaration, the desire of other things entering in, “choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful, than ever I did in my life before. I no longer breathed out my soul to the Lord, for I was embarrassed in my duties, and began to be in heaviness: I observed also that I must painfully study my sermons, or I could not preach; and even then I entered the pulpit with such a weight on my mind, that I had no clearness in treating my subject, nor any comfort in the duty. I resolved to renounce at once the whole business, and never to think of it more.⁸³

The above “trial” is best understood against the general tendency of itinerant Wesleyan preachers to “locate” later in life. Against those who portray Wesley’s preachers as ambitious upstarts, Moore would have us know that more lucrative vocational options were available to him and rejected.

Off to England

Though he desired to stay in Cork, sometime prior to the Irish conference in Dublin, Moore was informed by Wesley that he should make preparations to come to the England. He attended the conference in Dublin and “from thence, to the grief of his mother (who nevertheless bore the separation like a Christian)”⁸⁴ embarked to Leeds, where the English conference was held. There he met with Wesley, and was informed that he would be appointed to London, a location he feared and his “modest and tender partner dreaded”:

I entreated Mr. Wesley to appoint me to some other place, but he would not hear of it. When I at length desired to have his advice and direction how to proceed, he only replied, “Take care of the select band.”⁸⁵

The somewhat cryptic reference to “select band” deserves further comment for what it suggests about Wesley’s intentions for Moore. In the ecosystem of Methodist organization, the select band, or “select society” was used by Wesley to develop future leadership.

⁸² Smith, *Life*, p. 84.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

Wesley created such bands not only to spur on those who “outran the greater part of their brethren” to “exercise their every grace, and improve every talent they had received,” but also to create a forum where he could share his own spiritual life. It was, as Wesley explained, “a select company to whom I might unbosom myself on all occasions, without reserve.”⁸⁶ The first rule of such bands was that “nothing spoken in this society be spoken again,” and in such confidence, each member had an “equal liberty of speaking, there being none greater or less than another.”⁸⁷

A Vision in London

Ann Taves in her fascinating study *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (1999) has helpfully documented the significant role that dreams and visions played in late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Methodism, noting that they were never far from the surface of Methodist discussions of the “witness of the Spirit.”⁸⁸ Wesley, for his part, warned that dreams (and other involuntary movements such as “falling into fits”) were no sure sign or evidence of salvation, insisting that they must be verified by “the fruits of the Spirit” (i.e., a transformation that encompassed the whole tenor of a person’s life).⁸⁹ Such discussions were commonly associated with conversion dreams,⁹⁰ but dreams could also serve an important function in reinforcing a preacher’s sense of call and vocation.

Henry Moore offers us an interesting specimen of this in his original memoir (but not included in Smith’s redaction):

In the month of June, 1785, being my first year in London, I had (or I think I may say I was favoured with) a remarkable dream. I thought I was dying, and became in the issue

⁸⁶ Wesley, “Plain Account of the People Called Methodists” in *Works* (BE), 9:270.

⁸⁷ Wesley’s “select band” seems later to be those claiming to have achieved perfection; its function for Wesley unburdening himself is not mentioned after the early years. Wesley also refers to his “cabinet,” a term Wesley first uses in his diary in 1785, and also mentioned in the correspondence of several preachers. For further discussion see Henry Rack’s introduction to *Works* (BE) 10:39-42. The cabinet seems to be for business purposes before Conference.

⁸⁸ Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions: and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 52.

⁸⁹ Wesley emphasizes both points in a letter to his brother Samuel (April 1739): “What I have to say touching visions or dreams is this: I know several persons in whom this great change [the new birth] was wrought, in a dream, or during a strong representation to the eye of the mind, of Christ either on the cross or in glory. This is the fact; let any judge of it as they please. And that such a change was then wrought appears (not from their shedding tears only, or falling into fits, or crying out: these are not the fruits, as you seem to suppose, whereby I judge, but) from the whole tenor of their life, till then many ways wicked; from that time holy, just and good” (*Works* (BE) 19:59-60).

⁹⁰ Many early Methodists recorded dreams of seeing Jesus Christ crucified on the cross leading up to, or immediately following their conversion crisis. For a fascinating discussion of these and other early Methodist dreams see Henry D. Rack, “Early Methodist Visions of the Trinity,” *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* (1985), 38–44 and (1987), 57–69. We will discuss the role of dreams in Moore’s life in Chapter 6.

conscious of my departure. In a moment I was in heaven, when my mother advanced, and with an exclamation of delight clasped me in her arms. When the joy of this meeting had a little subsided, an angel advanced, and, with the benignity of his Maker beaming from his countenance, informed me, that he was commissioned to conduct me to my appointed place. There appeared to be several departments in this glorious state, and in each part a throne was visible. As we proceeded along the golden pavement, (for so it appeared literally to be,) a department exceedingly glorious became visible. Although surrounded with glory, I was astonished at the view of this place, and turning to my celestial conductor, enquired, with strongly excited feelings, "O! for whom is that place prepared?"⁹¹

The immediate significance of this dream appears to have been to affirm Moore in his submission to Wesley's will in accepting his appointment to London, but the same dream evidently functioned to assure Moore much later in life that he had not squandered what, looking back from 1830, must have otherwise seemed like a missed opportunity to become a leader in America:

Some time previous to the year 1785, Dr. Coke had been sent by Mr. Wesley to America; and on his return he requested me with much earnestness to consent to go thither and undertake that vast missionary work, as the third superintendent; assuring me that Mr. Asbury also very much wished it, and he was not willing, for many weighty reasons, that any of his American fellow-labourers should be chosen to that office at that time; and the work was too great for himself alone, Dr. Coke being necessarily absent so frequently, and for so long a time. As I had always preferred the missionary work, I dared not refuse; and on consulting my wife she also consented, although she dreaded the new and distant scene, and the great increase of labor which would devolve upon me. The doctor then informed Mr. Wesley of the proposal, and stated that I had consented; but the reply was a most prompt and absolute refusal.⁹²

"I felt a good deal on the subject, as even Brainerd's lot⁹³ was more desirable to me than the sphere which I filled," comments Moore, "but Mr. Wesley confirmed in private what he had before declared, and I once more settled down as his assistant."⁹⁴

An Analysis of Moore's Conversion Narrative

Consistent with John Kent's observations that "healing, prophesy, personal protection, special providences and ecstasy occurred in the Wesleyan societies for a long time"⁹⁵ we have seen in the above summary of Moore's memoir a considerable emphasis on the supernatural in what Kent refers to as the second wave of Wesleyan preachers in later Wesleyanism (1770–1800). In the disturbance at Drummaron we see evidence of "primary religious impulses" within the movement, just as we see special providence and prophetic

⁹¹ Moore, *Sermons*, pp. 410–411. Cf. Smith's, *Life*, p. 81.

⁹² Smith, *Life*, p. 82.

⁹³ The reference is to the missionary David Brainerd, whose journal describing his work among native Americans was first published by Jonathan Edwards and abridged by Wesley, as *An Extract of the Life of the late Rev. David Brainerd: missionary to the Indians*.

⁹⁴ Smith, *Life*, p. 82.

⁹⁵ Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, p. 24

judgment at work in the account of Sir Richard Cox's tragic demise. Moreover, we have noted that Moore had no qualms in self-publishing such accounts as late as 1830, nearly four decades after Wesley's death, providing further evidence of Kent's assertion that such phenomena were only "very slowly squeezed out in the course of the nineteenth century."

What we do not see in Moore, however, is any evidence of Kent's assertion that many "itinerants wanted to transform themselves into Dissenting or Anglican ministers fixed in a particular parish or local chapel."⁹⁶ Moore instead provides us with considerable evidence that he continued to envision the relationship between the Methodist society and the established parish as mutually beneficial, a view consistent with Wesley's most mature thoughts on the matter, and a subject to which we shall now turn our attention in some detail before returning to Moore's narrative. It is only against such a backdrop that the historical significance of Moore's contribution to the development of Methodism may be assessed and his actions later in life rendered intelligible.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

4.

Strange Fire: John Wesley and the Ecclesiology of Early Methodism

“In the development of the Methodist Ministry nothing is more important than the authority which John Wesley felt himself able to Exercise.” —John Kent, *Jabez Bunting*, p. 11.

Determining the precise contour of John Wesley’s views on the church has proven to be a notoriously difficult task for Methodists since his death in 1791. Not only did John Wesley draw on many eclectic sources for his ecclesiology, he also seems to have modified his views as his life progressed, resulting in what at first sight appears to be a sharp discrepancy between his published thoughts on the matter (“I live and die in the Church of England”) and his actions (ordaining Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury for service in America without episcopal permission).¹ This has led more than one observer to conclude that John Wesley, “like a good oarsman, looked one way and rowed another.”²

As we have noted in prior chapters, the matter was further complicated by Charles Wesley, who was resolutely opposed to the Methodist movement ever leaving the Church of England, and spent the latter half of his life attempting to “break” his brother’s power over the preachers in an attempt to stave off separation from the established Church. For this reason it is difficult to know with any degree of certainty whether John Wesley personally and privately believed what he publicly told his preachers about the prospect of separation, or whether he was simply attempting to appease his brother until a more opportune moment arrived.

What little do we know about Wesley’s final personal views following Charles’ death in March of 1788 regarding the future of his movement is largely dependent upon the written testimony of Henry Moore:

¹ Gwang Seok Oh in his recent study, *John Wesley’s Ecclesiology: A Study in its Sources and Development* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2008) has identified three distinct views held by Wesley during his lifetime. Oh’s work is particularly helpful for its discussion of continental influences upon Wesley through works such as Johann Arndt’s *True Christianity*, a subject that was largely ignored by Frank Baker in his study of Wesley and the Church of England.

² Joseph Beaumont’s memorable quote, from the Conference 1836, cited in Adrian Burdon, *Authority and Order: John Wesley and his Preachers*.

Wesley's opinion was, that there would be 'a great shaking;' and that a considerable part of the preachers would separate. He thought that about one-third would continue to act as they had been called; while the others would either get preferment in the Church, or take some chapels and Societies to themselves, and thus act in the Independent way. He told me, as indeed he intimates also in several parts of his writings, and as I have declared in his Memoirs, that he was resolved to do every thing in his power, during his life, to prevent this;—to prevent that which was a work of God from being secularized. With this view he consented to form and enrol the *Deed of Declaration* in the Court of Chancery; by which, if it should be confirmed by the Court, the principal chapels (all those which were settled according to his mind) would be secured to those Preachers who should continue to act in the same way as they had done while he was at their head.³

John Wesley's Ecclesiology

The respected Methodist historian Frank Baker in his magnum opus *John Wesley and the Church of England* concluded that there were "two conflicting views" in Wesley's ecclesiology. On one hand, Wesley understood it to be an historical institution linked with the apostolic age by organic ties through the apostolically-ordained hierarchy. On the other hand, he understood the church to be a "fellowship of believers using whatever means came to hand to win others."⁴

"He had been reared in the first view," writes Baker; "circumstances and 'providential openings' led him toward the second but something of the earlier view persisted in him and helps to account for his fluctuating course."⁵

Henry Rack, commenting on Baker's conclusions, points out that it was ultimately the latter view that prevailed in Wesley's thought:

Ties with the church were valued not for theoretical but practical reasons: to avoid divisions within Methodism and to avoid creating a local sect. It was not so much an obsession with 'order' that kept him in the church as the failure of the church to thrust him out that preserved Methodism from separation. Despite his ingenious distinctions, Wesley opposed separation as inexpedient rather than unlawful, and clearly allowed that he would separate rather than give up his system. One may well conclude that for all his skillful manoeuvring it was the failure of the authorities to expel him that enabled him proudly to 'live and die in the Church of England.' To do so at all costs was certainly not his aim.⁶

North American Methodists, at least on a popular level, have sometimes been guilty of falsely reading into Wesley and early Methodism their own democratic values. Although there are ways in which Wesley can be understood as being politically progressive, say for his opposition slavery and or concern for the poor, John Wesley had little use for representative government when it came to church structure. "We are no Republicans,"

³ Moore, *Life*, p. 425; Smith, *Life*, p. 90.

⁴ Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England* (London, Epworth, 1970), 137f.

⁵ Baker quoted in pp. 304-305 of Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (London: Epworth Press, 2002).

⁶ *Ibid.*

Wesley told his preachers, “and never intend to be”:

It would be better for those that are so minded to go quietly away. I have been uniform both in doctrine and discipline for above these fifty years; and it is a little too late for me to turn into a new path now I am grey-headed.⁷

Moreover, Wesley saw a strong connection between worldly and church authority, that God is the ultimately the source of all power, both sacred and civil:

Above all, mark that man who talks of loving the Church, and does not love the King. If he does not love the King, he cannot love God. And if he does not love God, he cannot love the Church. He loves the Church and the King just alike. For indeed he loves neither one nor the other. O beware, you who truly love the Church, and therefore cannot but love the King; beware of dividing the King and the Church, any more than the King and country. Let others do as they will, what is that to you? Act you as an honest man, a loyal subject, a true Englishman, a lover of the country, a lover of the Church; in one word, a Christian!⁸

Loyalty both to the crown and to the established church, in Wesley’s view, was not merely a matter of political preference, but a matter of Christian discipleship:

Loyalty is with me an essential branch of religion, and I am sorry any Methodist should forget. There is the closest connection, therefore, between my religious and my political conduct, the selfsame authority enjoining me to ‘fear God’ and ‘honour the king.’⁹

Which Primitive Methodism?

Following the American rebellion of 1776 and Wesley’s ordinations of Coke and Asbury in 1784, Methodists in the United States would construct their polity largely free of Wesley and the influence of the Church of England. Throughout Britain and its empire,¹⁰ however, the bifurcation of Methodism and the established Church was a much more complicated and drawn out affair.

In Britain, many members continued to co-exist within both spheres, attending Anglican services during church hours but actively participating with the Methodist societies and class meetings. This “dual citizenship” arrangement continued well into the 1830s in the English context, though in Ireland it continued considerably later, with more than 8,000 (approximately one-third) of Irish Methodists breaking off from the main Wesleyan body in 1817 on the grounds that they wished to remain a society within the

⁷ JWL 8: 196–97.

⁸ Cited from “A Word to a Freeholder” in Emory, *Works of Wesley*, p. 372

⁹ JWL 6:267.

¹⁰ The drastic differences between American and British Methodist self-identity in this period can be seen in the collision of the two branches in Canada prior to their unification in 1833 under the leadership of Egerton Ryerson. American itinerants were especially suspect during the War of 1812. For a detailed account of Canadian Methodism, see Neil Semple’s *The Lord’s Dominion: A History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996).

established church.¹¹

Remarkably, the Irish “Primitive Wesleyan-Methodist Connexion” led by Adam Averell (and not to be confused with the similarly named English “Society of the Primitive Methodists” founded between 1810–1812 by Hugh Bourne and William Clowes) would remain a society within the state church until the Church of Ireland itself was disestablished by the *Irish Church Act* (1869).

That both groups described themselves as “primitive”¹² speaks to their desire to return to a more pristine form of Methodism. The really curious thing is that the Irish group and English groups, both quoting John Wesley, interpreted “primitive” in quite opposite ways: the Irish Primitives seeking to return to “the original plan” of staying within the Church; the low church English Primitives focusing on open-air meetings and revivalism, which they saw in Wesley’s journal. That fact that both groups could appeal to Wesley as their authority is just further evidence of the inherent tension within Wesley’s own thinking on the subject.

Wesley’s Call to Ministry

If there is a key to making coherent sense of Wesley’s willingness to exercise spiritual authority over other people, it seems to lie in taking seriously he was born to parents who were converts to the Church of England from Puritan non-conformity. From a very early age Wesley seems to have developed an aptitude and ability to exercise spiritual authority over both his peers and his social inferiors, a trait which was no doubt fostered by a combination of his mother’s strict discipline and his growing up amongst the common people of Epworth. Although a great deal of emphasis has been placed on Susanna Wesley’s influence on her children, the role that Samuel’s ministry *praxis* played in shaping John’s personality has often been overlooked. John wrote to his mother on many spiritual matters, including his own calling to ministry,¹³ but later in life John said that it

¹¹ We will discuss the Irish Primitives and Moore further in chapter 6.

¹² At Oxford Wesley earned himself the friendly nickname of “Mr. Primitive Christianity,” see Wesley, *Works* (BE) 25:246, n. 2.

¹³ That Wesley struggled with his own call to orders as late as 1725 is evident from Susanna’s correspondence with her son: “Dear Jacky, I heartily wish you would now enter upon a serious examination of yourself, that you may know whether you have a reasonable hope of salvation by Jesus Christ, that is, whether you are in a state of faith and repentance or not, which you know are the conditions of the gospel covenant on our part. If you are, the satisfaction of knowing it will abundantly reward your pains; if not, you’ll find more reasonable occasion for tears than can be met with in a tragedy. This matter deserves great consideration in all, but especially those designed for the clergy ought above all things make their calling and election sure, lest after they have preached to others, they themselves should be cast away” (Letter from Susanna Wesley to John Wesley, 23 February 1724[/5] cited in Charles Wallace, Jr., ed. *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1997], p. 106).

was the influence of his father that ultimately pressed him into entering orders.¹⁴

Advice to a Young Clergyman

The influence of Samuel upon Wesley's understanding of ministry is further evidenced by Samuel Wesley's tract "Advice to a Young Clergyman"—the first known publishing project undertaken by John Wesley, while he was still at student at Oxford.¹⁵ The 69-page guide to ministry had originated as a "A Letter to a Curate," originally written for the use of the "brother of the Rev. Mr Hoole of Haxey," who was about to be ordained, and to become Samuel Wesley's curate at Epworth.¹⁶ The intended recipient of Samuel's letter had died, but John Wesley seems to have felt it would be useful to others and so had it published two years after Samuel's death.¹⁷

For the purposes of this study, Samuel's tract is notable for its recommendation of George Herbert's *The Country Parson*,¹⁸ and Richard Baxter's *Gildas-Salvianus*,¹⁹ amongst other writers such as William Law and Thomas à Kempis. It also mentions the leading men of his times with whom Samuel was personally acquainted.

a) Herbert's The Country Parson

Although the extent to which John Wesley read Herbert's *Parson* at Oxford is unclear (Herbert's poetical influence on Charles is clear) it seems safe to say that he inherited Herbert's view of the Christian ministry—if not from reading Herbert's work firsthand, by absorbing his conception of parish ministry secondhand via Samuel's strict discipline of his congregants.

First published in 1652, the *Country Parson* has often been described as the "quintessential portrayal of the ideal parish clergyman."²⁰ It portrays the clergyman as devout, learned and self-giving leader who cares for his parishioners. In addition to performing the sacraments and educating his congregation through sermons,

The Country Parson upon the afternoons in the weekdays takes occasions to visit in

¹⁴ Arthur Alan Torpy, *The Prevenient Piety of Samuel Wesley, Sr.* Ph.D. Dissertation. Baylor University, 2006.

¹⁵ The original pamphlet is extremely rare, but a transcription of it can be found in the second volume of Thomas Jackson's *Life of Charles Wesley* (London: John Mason, 1841), pp. 500-534.

¹⁶ Luke Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. Samuel Wesley, M.A.* (n.d: n.p., 1886), p. 382f.

¹⁷ Jackson, *The Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley*, p. 499.

¹⁸ George Herbert, *The Country Parson: His Character and Rule of Holy Life* (Boston: James B. Dow, 1842).

¹⁹ Deryck W. Lovegrove, "Lay leadership, establishment crisis and the disdain of the clergy," in *The Rise of the Laity in Evangelical Protestantism*, p. 117f.

²⁰ Richard Baxter, *Gildas Salvianus, the reformed pastor: shewing the nature of the pastoral work; especially in private instruction and catechizing* (Kidderminster, 1656).

person, now one quarter of his parish, now another. For there he shall find his flock most naturally as they are, wallowing in the midst of their affairs.²¹

Such notions, however, were clearly dependent upon the Country Parson's legal authority within the community. "The Pastor is the Deputy of Christ for the reducing of Man to the Obedience of God," writes Herbert,

The Parson's punishing of sin and vice, is rather by withdrawing his bounty and courtesie from the parties offending, or by private, or publick reproof, as the case requires, then by causing them to be presented, or otherwise complained of. And yet as the malice of the person, or hainousness of the crime may be, he is carefull to see condign punishment inflicted, and with truly godly zeal, without hatred to the person, hungreth and thirsteth after righteous punishment of unrighteousnesse. Thus both in rewarding vertue, and in punishing vice, the Parson endeavoureth to be in God's stead, knowing that Countrey people are drawne, or led by sense, more then by faith, by present rewards, or punishments, more then by future.²²

Such punishments in Samuel Wesley's parish included requiring adulterous congregants to perform penance by wrapping themselves in nothing but white sheets and announcing their sins publicly in the market.²³ There is, writes Samuel Wesley to his young curate,

a sort of discipline, which I think we may properly call lay-discipline, whereby, if I mistake not, all Clergymen are in some measure obliged to correct notorious offenders. This we have in the King's Proclamation against profaneness and immorality, and the Act against swearing, both enjoined to be read in the churches; and in the Acts of King James I., and King Charles II, against drunkenness and profanation of the Lord's day: which, doubtless, we may largely quote there, if we may not read them. This might have some good effect on our parishioners, especially if we always preached, at the same time, a warm and practical sermon on those subjects; for which I heartily wish there were less occasion.²⁴

Understandably, such pastoral rigorism was not much liked by Samuel's parishioners, and it is highly likely that some of them intentionally set the Epworth manse on fire (an event which further contributed to Wesley's sense of self-identity as a "brand plucked from the fire"). More importantly, however, we should note that it was precisely this pattern of "lay-discipline" that set John Wesley up for trouble amongst the colonists of Georgia. When Wesley denied the sacrament to Sophey Hopkey it procured his arrest for allegedly

²¹ Herbert says this in a chapter entitled the "Parson in Circuit".

²² Herbert, *Country Parson*, (1842 ed.) Ch. XIV, p. 35.

²³ For a description of the circumstances surrounding such penance, see Samuel's disciplinary practices, see Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. Samuel Wesley, M.A.* (London, 1866), p. 411. Apparently these were not isolated cases, however, as Samuel states in his *Advice* that he had always brought to public penance anti-nuptial and no-nuptial fornicators. He also encourages the curate to enforce the 90th canon "first to admonish, and then, if they reform not, to present all your parishioners who do not duly resort to church on Sundays, and there continue the whole time of divine service."

²⁴ Samuel Wesley, "Advice to a Young Clergyman" in Tyerman, *The Life of Charles Wesley*, vol. 2, *Appendix*, p. 533.

defaming her reputation.²⁵ "The Chief Magistrate has become his enemy," the Anglican commissary in South Carolina reported back to London.²⁶

b) *Baxter's Reformed Pastor*

Samuel's recommendation of Richard Baxter's writings is even more interesting for the way in which directly links Puritan non-conformity with Samuel Wesley's ministry at Epworth. Samuel was not only familiar with Puritan writers such as John Owen and Richard Baxter (who was barred from his pulpit and later imprisoned for his non-conformity),²⁷ but in fact received financial support to attend Oxford University as a Dissenter by the former. In his *Advice*, Samuel writes,

I wish I had [Baxter's] *Gildas-Salvianus* again: *Directions to the Clergy for the Management of their People*, which I lost when my House was last Burnt, among all the rest. He had a strange fire and pathos in his Practical Writings, but more in his Preaching, and as I remember, spoke well.²⁸

Gildas-Salvianus is the Latin title of what is better known today as Baxter's classic work *The Reformed Pastor*.²⁹ Though Samuel laments the loss of his personal copy of *Gildas-Salvianus* to the Epworth fire, a choice selection³⁰ of Richard Baxter's text would resurface to influence Methodism in a most remarkable place: *The "Large" Minutes of Conference*.³¹ Wesley had recommended his abridgement of Baxter's work to his preachers

²⁵ Wesley attempted to justify some of his action before a Grand Jury. Arrested in second suit connected with the Hopkey case, Wesley fled on foot to Charleston and caught a ship back to England in December 1737.

²⁶ Cited in Dee E. Andrews, *The Methodists and Revolutionary America, 1760-1800: The Shaping of an Evangelical Culture* (Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 18.

²⁷ Baxter (1615–91) was a notable Puritan writer who addressed most of the theological topics under debate in the English church of his day. Describing himself as a "meer catholic" he developed and defended a self-consistent theological system that he believed would bring an end to division and strife among Christians. For a discussion of Baxter's somewhat irregular non-conformity see J. I. Packer's 1954 Oxford University dissertation published as *The Redemption and Restoration of Man in the Thought of Richard Baxter* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2003) and, for a broader view of the period, C.F. Allison, *The Rise of Moralism: The Proclamation of the Gospel from Hooker to Baxter* (London: SPCK, 1966).

²⁸ Samuel Wesley, *Advice to a Young Clergyman* (Oxford: John Wesley), pp. 50-51.

²⁹ Richard Baxter's work was first published under the title *Gildas Salvianus; the first part, i.e. The Reformed Pastor, shewing the nature of the Pastoral Work, especially in Private Instruction and Catechizing* (London: White for Simmons, 1656). The English title was used in Wesley's lifetime: see, *The Reformed Pastor: A discourse on the pastoral office...* (London: Printed for J. Buckland, 1766).

³⁰ Henry Rack in *Works* (BE) 10:339 n.121 observes that this section of the minutes has generally been mistaken for a completely original composition by JW. Wesley seems to have used chapters 6 and 7 of the first edition of Baxter's treatise as the basis of his extract.

³¹ The *Large Minutes* are a distillation of decisions from the annual conferences from 1753 onwards and were periodically revised and enlarged. Well into the twentieth century British Wesleyan

in the annual minutes of 1766, but this section was taken over and reprinted in 1770 edition. By the minutes of 1780, the text appears to be Wesley's own rationale and instructions for house-to-house visitation:

We may, (1) Every preacher take an exact catalogue of those in society, from one end of town to the other. (2) Go to each house, and give, with suitable exhortation *The Instruction of Children*.³² (3) Be sure to deal gently with them, and take off all discouragements as effectually as you can....

Perhaps in doing this, it may be well,

(1) After a few loving words spoken to all in the house, to take each person singly into another room, where you may deal closely with them, about their sin, and misery, and duty. Set these home, or you lose all your labour. At least let none be present but those who are quite familiar with each other.³³

And so Wesley continues with another eleven points lifted from Baxter.

The significance of this subtle insertion to any consideration of Wesley's lay preachers seems hard to overstate: Wesley has essentially given his "helpers" (i.e., his travelling lay-preachers) a pastoral job description originally intended for Anglican priests, and one which *presumes* a kind of spiritual authority over the laity which might strike one as rather intrusive outside of Baxter's seventeenth-century parish context.

c) Heat before Aldersgate

One final clue to John Wesley's self-understanding may be gleaned from *Advice to a Young Clergyman*. It is Wesley's own short preface to the work, written before Wesley's "heart-warming" experience at Aldersgate:

If any Ambassador of Christ mediating herein, shall *feel the Fire* kindle in himself also; if he find his own Heart *burn within him*, to promote the Glory of his ever blessed Redeemer, let him, in that acceptable Time, beseech him that he would send for more such Labourers into his Harvest: And that, in particular, *he would enable the Publisher hereof, to approve himself as the Minister of God*, by spending his Life in gathering the poor Sheep that are scattered abroad, and, if need be, pouring out his Blood for them.³⁴ (Emphasis mine)

Long before Aldersgate, it seems, Wesley's heart had been warmed with a desire to "gather the poor Sheep scattered abroad."

Wesley's own Ministry Experience

Such statements are curious given John Wesley's refusal to take over his father's parish

candidates for the ministry were required to read the 1797 edition of the *Large Minutes* as a kind of doctrinal standard for later Methodists.

³² Rack notes that Wesley has substituted this tract for Baxter's original catechism. *Works* (BE) 10:336, n. 118.

³³ Rack, "Minutes of Conference, 1766" in *Works* (BE) 10: 336, l.13–18; l.

³⁴ John Wesley's preface to Samuel Wesley's "Advice to a Young Clergyman" in *Life of Charles Wesley*, p. 500. Emphasis mine.

at Epworth. The apparent self-contradiction was noted by his older brother Samuel, who told John he was obligated to take up his father's charge on the grounds of his ordination vows:

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 these committed to your charge? Did you equivocate then with so vile a reservation, as to purpose in your heart that you would never have any so committed? It is not a college, it is not an 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.³⁵

Wesley, in true form, responded to his brother in a lengthy and carefully reasoned statement, arguing that he would be much more effective in his station at Oxford than he would be as a parish priest in the rural village of Epworth. "Would this be the way to help either myself or my brethren up to heaven?" he asked his older brother. "Nay, but the mountains I reared would only crush my own soul and so make me utterly useless to others." Later in life, when he was refused access to his father's former pulpit in Epworth and preached outside of the church on his father's tombstone, Wesley quipped, "I did far more good . . . by preaching three days on my Father's tomb than I did by preaching three years in his pulpit."³⁶

It is perhaps worth reflecting that John³⁷ in fact had very little "ministry experience" at the time of his ordination, apart from his having been raised in the Epworth rectory, and having served as his father's curate in Wroote.³⁸ Charles, pressured into his ordination by John,³⁹ had even less, and later expressed doubt about his ordination to his brother Samuel

³⁵ Letter from Samuel Wesley (Jr.) to John Wesley, Dec. 25, 1734, cited from Joseph Priestley, ed. *Original letters, by the Rev. John Wesley, and his friends, illustrative of his early history, with other curious papers, communicated by the late Rev. S. Badcock. To which is prefixed, an address to the Methodists* (London: J. Johnson, 1791), p. 18.

³⁶ Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England*, p. 150. The "three years" Wesley to which Wesley refers is (apparently) his time in Wroote and Epworth.

³⁷ John Wesley was ordained a deacon of the Church of England by Dr. John Potter, Bishop of Oxford on Sept. 19, 1725 and was in his father's curate at Epworth from August 1727 to July 1728. He was ordained a priest on September 22, 1728 and was curate at Wroote and Epworth before being called back to Oxford at the end of 1729.

³⁸ Very little has been recorded of Wesley's ministry at Wroote. He says himself that, though he preached much in those years, he saw little fruit of his preaching, and thinks he made the mistake of "taking it for granted that all to whom I preached were believers and that many of them *needed no repentance*. . . . For I did not preach faith in the blood of the covenant" (Wesley, "Principles of a Methodist Father Explained," in *Works* (BE) 9:222-223).

³⁹ Unlike John who was sent by the SPCK to be the "parson" of the colony in Georgia, Charles's initial assignment was to serve as General Oglethorpe's private secretary. His ordination seems to have had far more to do with the logistical impossibility of his receiving episcopal ordination in America (if he should be called upon to perform ministerial duties later) than any clear sense of personal calling to the priesthood. In fact he claimed that John bullied him into it ("Letter to Dr. Chandler," in Tyson, p. 59).

while in Georgia. Nevertheless, both John and Charles held that there was *a unique call to ministry*, and Charles was particularly upset when John Shaw, a strong supporter of Philip Henry Molther at the Fetter Lane society backed the claims of a barber named “Wolfe” that there was no such thing as a call to Christian priesthood and that communion services could be conducted by laymen.⁴⁰

Wesley’s Conferences as Personal Control

We have noted in chapter 2, the legal suppression of religious “enthusiasm” under the Clarendon codes enacted by Charles II and the proliferation of voluntary religious societies *within* the Church of England. We have also noted that John Wesley, as a fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, claimed the right to transcend the regular ecclesiastical boundaries to service those societies. Further, we have noted that Wesley began to use lay assistants in various locations. The geographical spread of Wesley’s personal network, however, posed some new challenges: How, for example, could Wesley ensure that his assistants were preaching correct doctrine? And how should his preachers relate to other itinerants and leaders circulating among the religious societies?

It was the latter question that led John to organize what might well be deemed the first “conference” of preachers in 1743. It was a *conference* in the literal sense of the word, “a meeting of two or more persons for discussing matters of common concern.” Among the invited were two other early evangelical leaders: James Hutton (a Moravian), George Whitefield (a Calvinist)—people with whom Wesley disagreed theologically. Only three people showed up, however.

In 1744, Wesley tried again, but did not invite the leaders of the other evangelical groups. Instead, he invited a combination of lay preachers and clergy. Not all were invited and not all who were invited came. In addition to John and Charles, four sympathetic clerics and four lay preachers attended. The six clerics decided that that the four lay preachers should be included in this and future discussions “in cases of necessity.” A conference at the invitation of John Wesley the following year (1745) established the precedent of an annual Conference. This time three clergy and six lay preachers attended. The following year (1746), Wesley established seven preaching rounds or “circuits” to coordinate field preaching efforts.

The conference of 1749 introduced quarterly meetings in each of the circuits and examinations of all class leaders. The 1749 Conference of preachers also introduced the collection of membership statistics by “Assistants” and the publication of minutes.

⁴⁰ Best, *Charles Wesley*, p. 128.

(previously Wesley had used the title “Assistant” to refer to any of his itinerant lay preachers, but now the title would be applied to the head of each circuit.) The Assistant would be responsible for co-ordinating the quarterly meetings and overseeing the societies in their circuit. This included visiting the classes and bands, delivering class-tickets to members, supplying books and keeping careful accounts of financial matters.

The 1749 conference also expanded the role of the *stewards* in the London society to manage financial matters throughout the growing network of circuits. Each circuit would now take care of its own debts and send along some contribution towards the common debt. Money that was left over was put into a general fund to assist the poorer societies.

The conferences of 1744 through 1748 also saw the evolution of a process for developing and examining new preachers. The Assistants were drawn from the ranks of the “helpers” (full-time traveling preachers) and helpers were drawn from the “local preachers,” who are first mentioned in 1747 as those who “assist us only in one place.”

The rules and expectations of local preachers within this early phase of Methodism remain somewhat obscure, the only regulations which survive are those which were urged on John Wesley by his brother Charles in 1751:

1. That none shall be permitted to preach in any of our societies, till he be examined, both as to his grace and gifts, at least by the Assistant, who sending word to us, may by our answer admit him a local Preacher.
2. That such Preacher be not immediately taken from his trade, but be exhorted to follow it with all diligence.
3. That no person shall be received as a Travelling Preacher, or be taken from his trade, by either of us alone, but by both of us conjointly, giving him a note under both our hands.

These rules are clearly indicative of the personal authority that both brothers exercised over the early movement.

Divergent Paths

The evolution of Conference from a voluntary gathering around a common interest, to a rule-making body with Wesley at the helm, effectively pushed Methodism into a legally undefined gray area between the established church, on one side, and dissenting congregations (e.g., Baptists, Quakers) on the other. Dissenting groups, for the most part, owned their own buildings and governed themselves at a congregational level (a model not altogether inconsistent with the Lutheran emphasis on the “priesthood of all believers”). Methodists, by contrast, had up until this point existed as kind of socially networked group of voluntary societies—the hub of the social network being John and Charles.

As the Wesley brothers began to use lay preachers, however, a kind of fraternal brotherhood of the preachers gradually emerged. In the wake of Wesley’s death this

fraternity would eventually come to be govern Methodism as a kind of a centralized authority structure. Various spelt “the Connexion” in the British context and “the Conference” in American context, this structure remains to this day the distinctive mark of Methodist ecclesiology worldwide, even though its development in Britain differed from its development in America. In both cases, however, the long shadow of Wesley’s priestly authority over the people was preserved.

In contrast to the established church, the Methodist societies had developed not only a system of travelling preachers, but (almost inadvertently) a lay-based system of pastoral care and guidance in the form of the class meeting, as well as a means of building chapels and supporting workers where no previous existing ministries existed. Such a system, dependent upon the volunteer labour of class leaders, stewards and local preachers, enabled the Methodism to cross socio-economic boundaries and expand geographically in ways the established church could not, despite the Church of England having an ample surplus of ministers awaiting appointment. The best evidence of this dynamic is the rapid expansion of Methodism in early industrial centres such as Liverpool and Manchester, which grew exponentially in the early nineteenth century. Whereas the southern cities of Bristol and London were clearly the hubs of Methodism prior to 1770, the centre of the Movement would eventually move north to Manchester, where the first training college for ministers would be established. The Church of England, with its medieval patronage appointments would be ill-equipped to deal with the new economic situation created by an industrial society, let alone draw leadership from the ranks of the emerging middle class it created.

Yet even in the midst of such economic change, Wesley continued to insist that the Methodists were to remain within the Church of England, writing to Henry Moore in 1788, “I am a Church of England man, and, as I said fifty years ago, so I say still, in the Church I will live and die, unless I am thrust out.”⁴¹ Wesley insisted that members partake of the Lord’s Supper as often as possible at their local parish church. Methodist preaching services were to be held outside of “church hours” so as not to interfere with the regular church services. The lay ministers (full-time, traveling preachers) were forbidden to administer the sacraments and perform baptisms.

The Wesleyan Conference and the Trustees

By the Conference of 1760s, attendance at the annual meeting of preachers was no longer by special invitation of John Wesley but rather open to any of the preachers who

⁴¹ JWL 8:58 quoted in Baker, p. 319.

wished to come. The Assistants, however, were now *required* to come, an indication of the increasing control Wesley exercised over the preachers and societies. The personal control of John Wesley over his preachers, however, did not go unnoticed at the Conference of 1766, in which Wesley was confronted with the following question: “What power is this which you exercise over both preachers and societies?” His answer was

It was merely in obedience to the Providence of God, for the good of the people, that I first accepted this power which I never sought. It is on the same consideration, not for profit, honor, or pleasure, that I use it this day. . . .

If you can tell me any one, or any five men, to whom I may transfer this burden, who can and will do just what I do now, I will heartily thank both them and you.⁴²

“Is not the bridle in his mouth?”

John further entrenched the power of the traveling preachers as a group over other Methodist lay-people when a group of local trustees of the preaching house in Birstall, a small village in Yorkshire, asserted their right (according to the wording of their original property deed) to “place and displace” preachers.

In response, Wesley threatened to build another chapel “as near the present as may be” and in the 1782 Conference insisted that all new preaching houses be based on a model deed which gave the emerging conference of preachers the right to decide who would be appointed to any given circuit and preaching point.⁴³

In defense of his unwillingness to compromise in any way with the trustees at Birstall, Wesley argued that his preachers must be free to exercise their ministry without the fear of financial manipulation or reprisal from the trustees:

If it be asked, Why should not the Birstall preaching-house or any other, be settled according to that deed? I answer: Because whenever the trustees exert their power of placing and displacing preachers, then,

1. Itinerant preaching is no more. When the trustees in any place have found and fixed a preacher they like, the rotation of preachers is at an end—at least till they are tired of their favourite preacher, and so turn him out.
2. While he stays, is not the bridle in his mouth? How dares he speak the full and the whole truth, since whenever he displeases the trustees he is liable to lose his bread? How much less will he dare to put a trustee, though ever so ungodly, out of the society?⁴⁴

Lest we be tempted to project back into early Methodist polity our modern ideals of representative government, it should be noted that Wesley did not consider his conferences of preachers to be congregational or democratic during his lifetime: “You

⁴² Cited from Tyerman, p. 578.

⁴³ Rack, “Introduction: The Conference History and Minutes,” in *Works* (BE) 10:46-47.

⁴⁴ Wesley, “The Case of Birstall House” (1783) in *Works* (BE) 9:505-509.

seem likewise to have quite a wrong idea of Conference," he wrote to a preacher in 1779, "I desired some of our preachers to meet me in order to advise, not control, me."⁴⁵ "Neither did I at any of these times divest myself of any part of the power above described, which the Providence of God had cast upon me, without any design or choice of mine."⁴⁶

Birstall: Wesley vs. the Trustees

One of the recurring challenges to Wesley's control in this early period was the fact that many of the earliest preaching houses were financed by trusts which ultimately left the power of appointing and dismissing preachers in the hands of local trustees. John and Charles' solution to this was the Model Deed, a document upon which all Methodist property was to be settled. It was formalized in 1763 and stipulated that the Wesleys⁴⁷ would have full control over appointments and doctrine during their lifetime, and that this power would be transferred to the conference upon their deaths.⁴⁸ This helped with the newer chapels, but did not help in the case of older deeds, and at the 39th conference held in London, August 6, 1782, the Trustees of the chapel at Birstall, a village in West Yorkshire (not to be confused with the city of Bristol) expressed their desire to choose their own preachers (from among those in connection with Wesley) rather than submit to appointments determined by Wesley and his preachers. Wesley's response was swift and direct:

Q: What can be done with regard to the preaching-house at Birstall? — A. If the Trustees still refuse to settle it on the Methodist plan. 1. Let a plain case state of the case be drawn up. 2. Let a collection be made throughout all England, in order to purchase ground, as near the present as may be.⁴⁹

"This difference," notes Myles in his earliest history of Methodism, was "after a time, amicably settled."⁵⁰ Although perhaps a minor footnote in the history of Methodism, this challenge to Wesley's authority (and rather forceful manner in which it was dealt with) points to a distinctive principle of Methodist polity and governance which has continued down to most jurisdictions within present-day Methodism; namely, that a pastor not be

⁴⁵ Letter from Wesley to unnamed preacher, Jan. 1780, quoted in Tyerman, *John Wesley*, 3:306.

⁴⁶ Wesley, *Works* (BE) 9:20.

⁴⁷ Charles Wesley's proprietary interest in the Methodist chapels has long gone unnoticed. It appears only to have been settled by Thomas Coke following John's death. See for e.g. Charles Wesley's Junior's reply to Thomas Coke [1791?] expressing his good intentions toward his uncle's "people," but at the same time unwillingness to sign away any claim that he might have on John Wesley's estate. See MARC PLP/28/7/32 (Fasc. of original at Emory University).

⁴⁸ Wesley, *Works* (BE) 10:43.

⁴⁹ Annual Minutes of 1782 cited from *Works* (BE) 10:529.

⁵⁰ William Myles, *A Chronological History of the people called Methodists Of the Connexion of the Late Rev. John Wesley; from their rise, in the year 1729, to their last conference, in 1812. 4th ed.* (London: Conference Office, 1813), p. 146.

directly subject to the authority of the people with whom he (or she, in the contemporary context) is charged to shepherd. Control of the pulpit (for his preachers) was in Wesley's eyes crucial to prevent a localized Congregational-style of governance from destroying connexionalism.

This was a point that Henry Moore was especially passionate about, and his refusal to compromise on the matter (following Wesley's lead in Birstall), would result in a nasty standoff between himself and the trustees of Wesley's earliest chapel in the city of Bristol, the New Room.

Wesley's Most Mature Views on Separation

If the Irish church Methodists had a different view of Wesley's intentions from the English Primitives, it may be on account of a controversial sermon he specifically preached to them in 1789. The sermon, later published in the *Arminian Magazine* in 1790 under the title "Prophets and Priests," was re-titled in later collections of Wesley's sermons as "The Ministerial Office," though it has also been referred to as the "Korah Sermon," a reference to Wesley's use of the biblical account of Korah and his followers in Numbers 16.⁵¹

The preaching text for this sermon was Hebrews 5:4, "No man taketh this honour to himself, but he who is called of God, as was Aaron."

"Prophets and Priests" is particularly interesting not only for what it tells us of Wesley's ecclesiology at the end of his life but also because its conspicuous omission from later collections of Wesley's sermons tells us a great deal about the ecclesiology of later Methodists, who did not feel it worthy of inclusion in collections of Wesley's sermons.

The sermon itself is a fascinating, if not confusing, example of eighteenth-century biblical exegesis brought to bear on the pragmatic concerns of some Irish Methodist lay helpers who had taken it upon themselves to administer the Lord's supper. "Where did I appoint you to do this?" asks Wesley. "Nowhere at all. In doing it you renounce the first principle of Methodism, which is wholly and solely to preach the Gospel."

The Korah sermon, and the biblical text on which it is based, is worth reviewing briefly for what it tells of us of Wesley's most mature theological reasoning on the question of separation.

Wesley has sometimes been criticized for allowing his pragmatist concerns to override his respect for church order, but a closer analysis of the Korah sermon will demonstrate that Wesley's "fluctuating course" with respect to church order was not only rooted within the biblical narrative, but within biblical categories of "priest," "Levite" and "the people."

⁵¹ The critical text of this sermon may be found in John Wesley, "Prophets and Priests," Sermon 121 in *Sermons IV, Works* (BE) 4:75–85.

Analysis of the Korah Sermon

The biblical account⁵² of Korah, Wesley's preaching text, describes a clash between the Levites (the landless Israelite tribe assigned to the maintaining the tabernacle) and the Israelite priesthood (a select group of leaders drawn from the Levites). In the Korah story a group of 250 Israelite community leaders (representing the people) led by Korah (a Levite) oppose the leadership of the Moses and Aaron (priests) saying to them, "You have gone too far!"⁵³ The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the LORD's assembly?"

To this (Levite) charge of priestly autocracy (against the "whole community") Moses replies,

Now listen, you Levites! Isn't it enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the rest of the Israelite community and brought you near himself to do the work at the LORD's tabernacle and to stand before the community and minister to them? He has brought you and all your fellow Levites near himself, but now you are trying to get the priesthood too.⁵⁴

With Korah and his followers (Levites) gathered outside the tabernacle in protest, and the 250 community leaders (People) offering incense at the temple, God tells Aaron and Moses to "separate" themselves from the tents of Korah and his followers, whereupon the earth splits apart and swallows the households of Korah (alive and screaming) as well as their possessions. This episode is followed by fire "out from the LORD" which consumes the 250 community leaders offering the incense.⁵⁵

The next day, "the whole Israelite community" grumbles against Moses and Aaron on account of this horrific episode: "You have killed the LORD's people." Their grumbling, however, is answered by a plague that kills 14,700 Israelites (above and beyond those who were swallowed by the earth).

The explicitly stated lesson of this rather disturbing Old Testament narrative is "that no one except a descendant of Aaron should come to burn incense before the LORD, or he would become like Korah and his followers" (Numbers 16:39). In other words, God has set apart a certain tribe of Israelites to perform temple-related work and this function is not be performed by any other group of Israelites.

But another lesson, implicit in the text though not stated, is that insolent, power-

⁵² NIV, I have quoted from a contemporary translation for the sake of clarity. Wesley, of course, read Hebrew.

⁵³ The KJV's wording "*Ye take* too much upon you" could be taken as a pragmatic rationalization to allow non-Levites to perform Levite duties.

⁵⁴ Numbers 16:8–11 (NIV).

⁵⁵ Numbers 16:35.

grasping Levities should not challenge the authority of priests, nor should they attempt to take on the role of a priest.

Having now reviewed the Korah story, it is not very difficult to see how Wesley could see himself in the text. He is Moses in this story, and his Irish lay assistants, by extension, are the rebellious followers of Korah. One might even see parallels between the 250 community leaders in the chapel trustees, representatives (i.e., “the people”).

Wesley had set his preachers apart as helpers, but now, like Korah and his followers, they were challenging his priestly authority. On what grounds? The “whole community is holy” (cf. the priesthood of all believers).⁵⁶

Had not these assistants, like the “well-respected” followers of Korah, taken upon themselves, without divine sanction, the function of a priest in administering the Lord’s supper?

Whether Wesley’s exegesis was sound hardly matters, for in simply making the comparison, Wesley significantly raised the stakes by reframing the debate so that what might have been perceived (from the outside) as a minor irregularity of church order under extenuating circumstances, has now become a rebellion against God-ordained leadership, worthy of God’s wrath.

Priests and Prophets

This leads Wesley to reflect on the nature of priestly ministry and make the distinction from which the sermon’s title comes. Wesley presents two main theses: (1) that Methodists should not separate from the Church of England; and (2) that there should not be a Methodist priesthood. His theological justification for these arguments is that the role of a priest and the role of prophet are distinct and should not be confused. Aaron, he notes, was called to be a priest, to offer up prayers and sacrifices but “he did not preach at all: he was not called to it either by God or man.” Few of the prophets in the Old Testament were priests. Some, like Amos,⁵⁷ were called by *extraordinary* means to preach God’s Word, but probably the majority of them were *ordinary* prophets and trained in the

‘school of prophets’, one of which was at Ramah, over which Samuel presided (1 Sam 19:18). These were trained up to instruct the people, and they were the ordinary preachers in their synagogues. In the New Testament they are usually termed scribes, or νομικοι, expounders of the law. But few, if any of them were priests. These were all along a different

⁵⁶ Cf. Numbers 16:2.

⁵⁷ See Amos 7:14-15: “Amos answered Amaziah, ‘I was neither a prophet nor a prophet’s son, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. But the LORD took me from tending the flock and said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.’”

order.⁵⁸

Wesley then distinguishes between the *office of evangelist* and the *office of pastor*, which he equates with the term “bishop.” Unlike the evangelist, Wesley argues, the bishop/pastor presided

... over the flock, and administered the sacraments: the [evangelist] assisted him, and preached the Word, either in one or more congregations. I cannot prove from any part in the New Testament, or from any author of the three first centuries, that the office of an evangelist gave any man a right to act as a pastor or bishop. I believe these offices were quite distinct until the time of Constantine.⁵⁹

The convergence of priestly and prophetic roles in the church, Wesley attributes to “that evil hour when Constantine called himself ‘a Christian’ and poured in wealth and honour upon the Christians.” It was only then, suggests Wesley, that it became common for one man to take “the whole charge of a congregation” so that he could “engross the whole pay.”⁶⁰

Wesley’s earlier distinction between ordinary and extraordinary prophets is then pressed into service in his interpretation of the first Methodist conference:

In 1744, all the Methodist preachers had their first Conference. But none of them dreamed that the being called to preach gave them any right to administer the sacraments. And when that question was proposed, ‘In what light are we to consider ourselves?’ it was answered, ‘As *extraordinary* messengers, raised up to provoke the *ordinary* ones to jealousy.’ ‘In order hereto one of our first rules was—given to each preacher—‘You are to do *that part* of the work which we appoint.’ But what work was this? Did we ever appoint you to administer sacraments, to exercise the priestly office? Such a design never entered into our mind; it was the furthest from our thoughts.⁶¹

Wesley then urges the Irish Methodists to be content with preaching the gospel:

O contain yourselves with your own bounds. . . ‘Do the work of evangelists’ Proclaim to all the world the loving-kindness of God our Savior; declare to all “The kingdom of heaven is at hand; repent ye and believe the gospel.” I earnestly advise you, abide in your place; keep your own station. Ye were fifty years ago, those of you were then Methodist preachers ‘extraordinary messengers’ of God, not going in your own will, but *thrust out*, not to supersede, but to ‘provoke to jealousy’ the ‘ordinary messengers.’ In God’s name, stop there! . . .⁶²

Having reviewed Wesley’s own understanding of the church, we shall now return to Henry Moore’s narrative in an attempt to better understand the process by which

⁵⁸ Wesley, “Prophets and Priests,” in *Works* (BE) 4:77

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, *Works* (BE) 4:77.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, *Works* (BE) 4:79.

⁶² *Ibid.*, *Works* (BE) 4:82.

Methodism emerged out of the established church as a distinct denomination. I intend to show that it was Wesley's own actions that created a number of tensions for later Methodists, and to a large degree set Moore on a collision course with the trustees of the New Room in Bristol.

5.

“An Aged Elm with Ivy Bound”: John Wesley, Henry Moore and the Question of Methodist Succession

“For all his preaching forays on the margins of Anglicanism and his refusal to submit to ecclesiastical—that is, Episcopal— control, Wesley wished to be an insider, to be a Church of England man. . . . His favourite scheme for the problem of how to extend his movement was to bring the evangelical Anglican into the sphere of the contract he had imposed on his itinerants, who were told regularly that they retained a liberty to withdraw from him, but not a liberty to criticize him.” — John Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, p. 60.

The successful transfer of leadership from one generation to the next has been a challenge for many renewal movements throughout Christian history. John Wesley had evidently given this problem some thought, and he appears to have groomed several men as his potential successors. The better known of these men was John Fletcher,¹ vicar of Madeley, who predeceased Wesley, much to his sorrow, in 1785. In an oft-quoted letter to Fletcher in January of 1773, Wesley had exclaimed, “‘The wise men of the world say, ‘When Mr. Wesley drops, then all this is at an end!’ and so it surely will, unless, before God calls him hence, one is found to stand in his place . . . but who is sufficient for these things? qualified to preside both over the preachers and the people? ... Who is he? Thou art the man! . . . Come while I am alive and capable of labour!’”²

What is lesser known among historians of Methodism is that prior to Wesley’s overtures to Fletcher, Wesley had relied heavily on assistance of another Anglican clergyman, Dr. John Jones (1721–1785), who for more than a decade served as Wesley’s

¹ Moore, in his second biography of Wesley, took issue with comments made by Wesley’s other early biographer John Whitehead that, though Fletcher was highly flattered by Wesley’s invitation, he declined because he was “well acquainted with the mutual jealousies the preachers had of each other . . . and the general determination which prevailed among them, not to be under the control of any one man after the death of Mr. Wesley.” As evidence, Moore quotes Fletcher’s response to Wesley in which he states that he would not come without “fuller persuasion,” noting that at the last conference before his death (1784), Fletcher requested that Wesley have Madeley inserted into the Minutes as a Methodist circuit and himself listed as a Supernumerary there (Moore, *Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, 2:258–260).

² Cited from Moore, *Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, 2:152.

assistant in London.³ Due to the onset of ill health, Jones resigned his post in London and accepted Episcopal ordination in 1767. By that time he had become so proficient at signing Wesley's name that it is now very difficult to distinguish his signature from Wesley's authentic autograph,⁴ an indication that Jones' function was considerably more than secretarial in nature. Jones instead acted as a trusted advisor; and Wesley, for a time at least, seems to have thought of him as his successor. Despite their parting of ways, the two men continued in their friendship long after Jones' departure.⁵

Henry Moore played a very similar role to Jones in his capacity as Wesley's assistant in London between the years 1782 and 1784. In those two years, Wesley made two radical decisions that would forever alter the course of Methodism. The first of these was his consecration of "superintendents" for America; the second was his decision to define legally his "connexion" through a document known as the *Deed of Declaration*. In both events, the emergence of third possible successor to Wesley may be observed: Thomas Coke (1747–1814), who functioned as Wesley's "right-hand man" and was stationed in London from 1778–1783.⁶

Thomas Coke and *The Deed of Declaration*

Coke, like Jones and Fletcher, was an ordained clergyman. In 1775 he had been turned out of his parish in South Petherton largely on account of his "enthusiasm"⁷ and had met Wesley about a year later in August of 1776. A newcomer to the Methodist scene, Coke was virtually unknown to most of the preachers (his name doesn't even appear in the minutes of 1777) and differed from most of them in that he possessed a doctorate from Oxford. He had also briefly worked as a chief magistrate—experience that would make him especially useful to Wesley in a developing a legal framework for the movement.

Partly as a result of the aforementioned legal dispute with the trustees at Birstall over

³ Jones first served as Wesley's assistant from 1746-1748. He was appointed the senior headmaster at Wesley's Kingswood schools. He returned to London to serve as Wesley's assistant from 1758-1767.

⁴ On this period, John Vickers comments that "although we are unable to trace his movements in detail, it is clear from the few letters that have survived from these years that he must have spent much of his time in the capital. Wesley reposed in him a degree of confidence he had not been able to place in some of his earlier assistants. "Wesley himself told the Rev. Henry Moore, that while Mr Maxfield was with him, he could not when himself absent from London, leave [Thomas Maxfield] there, unless [John Jones] was there also. For the first so limited his exhortation to the exercise of faith, that the presence of the other was necessary, whose peculiar talent it was to enforce the fruits of faith and the duties of the Gospel. With Dr. Coke it was otherwise; he was equally 'sound in the faith,' and zealous of good works." The source of Vicker's quote is Smith's *History of Wesleyan Methodism* (London: Longman, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1866), p. 417.

⁵ A. B. Sackett, *John Jones: First After the Wesleys?* (London: Epworth, 1972).

⁶ The Conference minutes from 1778 to 1783 show Coke stationed in London.

⁷ The final conflict had actually centered on Coke's desire to replace a church door.

the right to choose preachers (see previous chapter), the English conference of 1783 was presented with the legal opinion of John Madocks, a Welsh barrister, that, “the law would not recognize the Conference in the state in which it stood at that time, and consequently that there was no central point which might preserve the connexion from splitting into a thousand pieces after the death of Mr. Wesley.”⁸ Consequently, the conference of 1783 asked Wesley to “draw up a deed which should give a legal specification of the phrase ‘The Conference of the People called Methodists.’”⁹

Wesley turned to Coke for assistance in this matter, who, in turn, collaborated with a young Methodist lawyer in London named William Clulow to propose a course of action. This was then submitted to Madocks for his legal opinion. Having reviewed their proposal, Madocks recommended the following course of action:

As to the means of fixing the sense of the word ‘Conference’, and defining what persons are to be members of the Conference, and how the body is to be continued in succession, and to identify it, I think Mr. John Wesley should prepare and subscribe a declaration for that purpose, to be enrolled in the Court of Chancery for safe custody, naming the present members, and prescribing the mode of election to fill vacancies, and make the minutes or memorials of their proceedings, signed by their secretary, evidence of such elections, to which declaration of Mr. Wesley, so enrolled, all the trust deeds should refer.¹⁰

Coke and Clulow then set about drafting the clauses for such a deed. Significantly, the legal document that they created was not a contract between two parties but rather a “deed poll”—the declaration of one person. The preamble stated that the deed was executed in order to avoid “doubt or litigation” about the meaning of the words “Yearly Conference of the people called Methodists” in the trust deeds of the preaching houses. It went on to describe the composition and functions of the conference:

The Conference . . . hath always heretofore consisted of the preachers and expounders of God’s Holy Word, commonly called Methodist Preachers, in connexion with and under the care of the said John Wesley, whom he hath thought expedient year after year to summon to meet him in one or other of the said places of London, Bristol, or Leeds, to advise with them for the promotion of the Gospel of Christ, to appoint the said persons so summoned and the other preachers . . . not summoned . . . to the use and enjoyment of the said Chapels, . . . and for the expulsion of unworthy and admission of new persons under his care.¹¹

A list of one hundred preachers names and addresses followed. Known henceforth as “the legal hundred,” the list was controversial since it included some of the younger

⁸ Samuel Drew, *The Life of the Rev. Thomas Coke, LL.D.* (London: Thomas Cordeux, 1817), p. 38.

⁹ See *Works* (BE) 10:530, n. 949.

¹⁰ William Peirce, *The Ecclesiastical Principles and Polity of the Wesleyan Methodists* (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1873), p. 22.

¹¹ Wesley, “The Deed of Declaration, 1784” in Henry Rack, ed. *The Minutes of Conference in Works* (BE) 10:950.

preachers (Henry Moore was the youngest on the list) but excluded many of the older veterans. This list of preachers would become the official heir of Wesley's own authority within Methodism.

Legally defining the composition of the conference, however, did not mean that any of the preachers were legally permitted to administer the sacraments of baptism or the Lord's supper. This was a particularly vexing problem for Methodists in America, where finding an ordained cleric to administer the sacraments became more difficult, if not impossible, when the revolution ended in 1783 and political ties to Britain were severed.¹²

The American Ordinations

Judging that the Church of England no longer had jurisdiction in America, Wesley had broached the idea of ordaining preachers for America to Coke as early as 1783. However, he did not reveal the idea to his cabinet of senior preachers until the conference of 1784. No minutes of that meeting are known to exist but the surviving testimony of John Pawson is that "the preachers were astonished . . . and to a man opposed it. But I plainly saw that it would be done, as Mr Wesley's mind appeared to be quite made up."¹³ Despite the preachers' unanimous opposition of his proposal, however, Wesley ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey as deacons on September 1, 1784. One day later they were ordained presbyters and Thomas Coke was consecrated as a "superintendent." All three¹⁴ then embarked to America, whereupon Coke subsequently carried out Wesley's orders to consecrate Asbury as a second superintendent.

Moore explains Wesley's rationale for sending Whatcoat and Vasey:

Mr. Wesley firmly adhered to the Scriptures, the Primitive Church, and the Church of England. When the necessity of the case, however, was apparent, he minded only the Scriptures, believing men may err, but the word of God shall abide forever. . . . The moment he saw the necessity of giving an entire Gospel ministry to his people, he revolted from conferring it in any way not sanctioned by Apostolic practice, or the usage of the purest ages that succeeded them. Hence he never would acknowledge any ministry that was not conferred in the Scriptural, Apostolic, and ancient way, by 'laying on of hands.'¹⁵

¹² The Episcopal Church in Virginia, for example, reported that 'a large number of the churches were destroyed or irreparably damaged; 23 of her 95 parishes were extinct or forsaken; and of the remaining 72, 34 were destitute of ministerial services; while of her 98 clergyman, only 28 remained' (cited in Wade Crawford Barclay and J. Tremayne Copplestone, eds. *History of Methodist Missions: Missionary motivation and expansion. v. 2. To reform the nation* (New York: Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church, 1949), p. 124.

¹³ Pawson quoted in Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p. 512.

¹⁴ The significance of sending Whatcoat and Vasey seems to lie in the biblical injunctions of "laying on hands of the company of the elders" (1 Tim. 4: 14) and Jesus' words in Matt 18:20 "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Both passages are echoed in the Anglican ordinal.

¹⁵ Moore, *Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, p. 203.

John's ordinations incensed Charles Wesley, who saw them as a blatant violation of the apostolic succession, and went so far as to mock his brother in verse:

So easily are bishops made
By man's or woman's whim?
W[esley] has laid his on C[oke]
But who laid hands on him?¹⁶

And in regard to Coke's consecration of Asbury,

A Roman emperor 'tis said
His favourite horse a consul made
But C[oke] brings greater things to pass
He makes a bishop of an ass.

Such comments are not only indicative of Charles' views regarding separation, but also his general dislike for Coke, whom he suspected was championing the cause of lay-preachers for this own ends.¹⁷ Ironically, Coke would discover that many American preachers did not attach great importance to his consecration either, though for quite different reasons: At the Baltimore conference of 1784 it is said that Coke interrupted a preacher, saying "You must think you are my equals," to which the preacher retorted, "Yes, sir we do; and we are not only the equals of Dr. Coke but of Dr. Coke's king."¹⁸

Yet even in monarchial England, there is considerable evidence to suggest that many of Wesley's preachers were less than enthusiastic about separating from the established church: "I wish I had been asleep when they began this business of ordination," wrote one itinerant; "it is neither Episcopal nor presbyterian, but a mere hodge-podge of inconsistencies." "Ordination among Methodists! Amazing indeed!" exclaimed another anonymous preacher. "Who is the father of his monster, so long dreaded by the father of his people and most of his sons. . . Years to come it will speak in groans the opprobrious anniversary of our madness for gowns and bands."¹⁹

¹⁶ S. T. Kimbrough and Oliver A. Beckerlegge, eds. *The Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley*, Vol. 3 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992), p. 81.

¹⁷ Coke developed something of a reputation for being impulsive. "Dr. Coke and I," Wesley once said "are like the French and the Dutch. The French have been compared to a flea, and the Dutch to a louse. I creep like a louse, and the ground I get I keep; but the Doctor leaps like a flea, and is sometimes obligated to leap back again" (Jonathan Crowther, *Life of Rev. Thomas Coke*, pp. 233ff). It is also probable that Wesley's senior preachers viewed Coke as a young upstart who had usurped their place. By 1790, Wesley seems to have placed more trust in Moore than Coke, writing to Moore (regarding controversies in Dublin): "Thank you, my dear Harry, for giving me another proof that you are a man to be depended on. You keep your love and you keep your integrity even among weathercocks, But who was it that turned Dr. Coke from east to west and (much more strange!)" (JW to Henry Moore, April 25, 1790 in JWL 8:215).

¹⁸ John Vickers, *Thomas Coke: Apostle of Methodism* (London: Epworth Press, 1969), p. 119.

¹⁹ Lloyd, *Charles Wesley and the Struggle for Methodist Identity*, p. 198.

Such comments are worth reflecting upon for it might otherwise be assumed that the push towards ordination (and its accompanying “gowns and bands”) was instigated by Wesley’s preachers who, jealous of Anglican ministers of the period, wished to be placed on a more equal footing with them. Certainly that is the impression given by John Kent in *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, who would have us believe that the second generation of Wesleyan preachers in the period from 1780–1800 ultimately wanted to transform themselves into Anglican priests or Dissenting ministers. Such a view might also be inferred from Henry Rack’s suggestion, in *Reasonable Enthusiast*, that “all the concessions which to Wesley’s critics seemed to make for separation were made not to *create* but to *stave off* a formal separation” (emphasis mine).²⁰

Gareth Lloyd, to the contrary, has suggested the British preachers’ feelings (as opposed to their flocks) regarding separation during this period were considerably more complex: “there was feeling within Methodism that the preachers, unlike Anglican ministers, simply did not need ‘gowns and bands’ to validate their divine calling.”²¹ “Fervent expressions of loyalty to the Establishment are virtually non-existent,” he claims, “but if separatist views were standard, than [sic] one would expect the ordinations to have been greeted with enthusiasm . . .”²² Lloyd cites as evidence the testimony of Joseph Sutcliffe, preserved in an unpublished and little known manuscript now preserved at the John Rylands Library:

Having known many of the preachers of that day [1778], I think they were sincerely attached to the *Book of Common Prayer*. Mostly of them, anterior to their conversion, had attended the Church and Sacrament and in their principles had long defended themselves against the charge of dissent.²³

It is upon the contested ground of this period that Henry Moore’s memoir sheds some valuable light.

City Road, London, 1782–1784

Moore notes that upon his arrival in London in 1782, Charles Wesley “still laboured a little, generally once on the Lord’s day.”²⁴ In addition to Charles, there were three other clergymen who read prayers and administered the sacrament at the different chapels. The

²⁰ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p. 521, emphasis mine.

²¹ Moore described Sutcliffe as one of his “most intimate friendships.” “In the legal professional advice of Mr. Sutcliffe, I have the utmost confidence: I have for many years alone followed it, and have never had to regret my implicit trust in it” (p. 369).

²² Lloyd, *Charles Wesley*, p. 200.

²³ Sutcliffe, Unpublished Ms. History of Methodism. MARC quoted in Lloyd, *Charles Wesley*, p. 200.

²⁴ Charles moved his family from Bristol to London in 1771. The Wesley’s home was located on Chesterfield-street, St. Maryle-bone, about “three miles from the Foundery, where his brother generally resided when in London; so that they were at an inconvenient distance from each other” (Jackson, *Life of Charles Wesley*, p. 663).

only full-time itinerant on the circuit besides Moore was Thomas Tennant, who lodged in the “preacher’s quarters” at City Road.²⁵ Wesley occupied the first floor of the building and it is highly probable that Moore and his wife lived on upper floors, though it is possible they lived in a second house for preachers (demolished in the nineteenth century) that once stood on the premises.

“The whole of London, with upward of twenty miles about it, then composed the London circuit;” Moore explains, “yet I had no more help than these.”²⁶ Despite the lack of help, he also records that “the local preachers labored faithfully and at the end of two years I found that the Lord was better to us than all our fears.”²⁷ Such a statement is noteworthy for it reveals considerable dependence upon the volunteer and part-time labours of *local* lay preachers, who, as we have seen in a previous chapter, had already been excluded from Wesley’s conference in 1770 and would have gained little by the ordination of Wesley’s full-time itinerants.

Moore’s journal also presents us with a more favourable picture of Charles Wesley’s interactions with itinerant preachers than has been offered by many historians of Methodism.

Mr. Charles Wesley also treated me with a most fatherly spirit, which surprised me the more as there was almost continual disputes between the brothers respecting these things, in which, at Mr. Wesley’s particular desire, I was generally present; and yet Charles Wesley never showed any difference in his behavior toward me. He seemed much to wish that I might be ordained in the church, as he seemed certain that after his brother’s death there would be a great change; but I took no notice of this, except to be grateful for the kindness which prompted such a proposal.²⁸

Moore’s account suggests that as late as 1784 Charles had not abandoned hope that at least some of his brother’s lay-preachers might obtain orders, whilst at the same time confirming Lloyd’s observation (contrary to Kent) that many of Wesley’s preachers were not especially interested in transforming themselves into Anglican ministers. This was not (in Moore’s case at least) for lack of consideration. Quite to the opposite, Moore writes,

I have had many thoughts on this subject since that time, which continued with me occasionally for many years: sometimes it has seemed as if I had lost my way, but I know that I am in the way of the Lord; whether the other would have been in the issue, in case I had obtained orders, the more excellent way, only eternity can now explain.²⁹

²⁵ Wesley had built his house at City Road only a few years earlier in 1779 and he stayed there for the last 12 years of his life (excluding summers, which he spent travelling).

²⁶ Smith, *Life*, p. 81.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

After completing his two-year appointment in London, Moore and his wife departed the London circuit, “blessed with the love and prayers of the people, at that time considered the most intelligent and pious of any in the whole connection.” He had been assigned to Bristol at the conference of 1786, but at the request of Moore’s mother, “who was painfully exercised by some ungodly relatives who were striving to deprive her of a part of her property,” Wesley changed Moore’s assignment to Dublin.

Excursus to Dublin

Methodism in Dublin had grown substantially since Moore’s departure from Cork in 1782. “It is exceedingly strange that the work of God should not yet decay in Dublin,” Wesley observed in a letter to Moore dated April 1788 informing him of Charles’ death on April 6, 1788. “I have not known before a shower of grace continue so long either in Great Britain or Ireland.”³⁰

With the movement’s rapid growth had come new challenges. Perhaps the most significant of these was the founding of Bethesda Chapel in 1786 by William Smyth, a Dublin merchant who had been converted under the ministry of William Romaine during a visit to London.³¹ Moore says virtually nothing about this in his memoir, but the correspondence from Wesley to Moore in this period indicates that the creation of a distinct evangelical body disconnected from the Church concerned the Wesleyan leadership in Dublin:³² “Is Bethesda full on Sunday evenings? Or half full on week days?” Wesley asked Moore in a letter dated Feb. 19, 1788:

If it had been in full union with Methodists, I am inclined to think it would have prospered. But it was not likely to stand alone I do not see how we can go further than to be friends at a distance. I have referred to Dr. Coke himself in what manner he shall proceed in Dublin, and whatever he and you agree upon I shall not condemn.³³

Complicating the Wesleyan response to the chapel was the fact that Smyth’s brother was none other than the Rev. Edward Smyth, the same clergyman turned out of his parish that Moore had wanted to hear (see Chapter 2) prior to his conversion. Ejected from his pulpit Edward Smyth began to exercise an irregular preaching ministry in connection with Wesley for time, and had at first urged Wesley and others to sever all ties with the

³⁰ Wesley to Moore, April 6, 1788 in JWL 8:51–52.

³¹ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p. 234.

³² Wesley for his part wanted to avoid conflict: “Let them say what they will and do what they can. Neddy [Edward] Smyth wrote lately to me, and I to him, but without a word of dispute. Probably I shall see Mr. W. Smyth; but if I do, I will not dispute with him. I am a man of peace” (Wesley to Moore, June 16, 1788 cited in JWL 8:66).

³³ Wesley to Moore, London, Feb. 19, 1788 cited from JWL 8:37-38.

established church.³⁴ Wesley was at first sympathetic with Smyth's plight, but Moore's correspondence shows that relationship between the two men became strained when Smyth was appointed chaplain of his brother's new chapel.³⁵

Contrary to Wesley's predictions to Moore, Bethesda, a private (i.e., proprietary) Anglican chapel, was a hugely successful experiment in church planting, attracting 800 communicants at Easter in 1787,³⁶ many of whom were also members of the Methodist societies. It was, however, denied a license by diocesan authorities, and as such was legally a "dissenting chapel."³⁷ Smyth, however, was ordained and could administer the sacraments,³⁸ which gave Bethesda a competitive edge over the Methodist New Room under the leadership of Moore, who could not.

Its success was also disturbing to Thomas Coke, who had begun to officiate at the New Room in Dublin in 1788 alongside Moore. To prevent the Methodists from taking the sacrament at "dissenting chapels," he directed that on three Sundays out of four there should be service in Whitefriar Street (Methodist) chapel in church hours and that on the fourth the Methodists should be recommended to attend St. Patrick's (the national cathedral of the Church of Ireland in Dublin)³⁹ and receive the sacrament there.

Coke's innovative solution, however, was not received well by Wesley, who responded to an inquiry from Moore on May 6, 1788:

Dear Henry,—

The doctor is too warm.⁴⁰ He ought to have had more regard to so respectable a body of men as applied to him. I am a Church of England man and as I said fifty years ago so I say still in the Church I will live and die unless I am thrust out. We must have no more service at Whitefriars in the church hours. Leave all contention before it be meddled with Follow

³⁴ Wesley to Moore, Whitehaven, May 11, 1788 cited from JWL 8:58.

³⁵ JWL 8:141.

³⁶ Alan R. Acheson, *A True and Lively Faith: Evangelical Revival in the Church of Ireland* (Church of Ireland Evangelical Fellowship, 1992).

³⁷ After nearly 40 years of rejection, Bethesda and a number of other private chapels in Dublin were eventually licensed in 1825 by Bishop Magee (Acheson, *A History of the Church of Ireland*, p. 157).

³⁸ Bethesda was an "essentially Anglican chapel" in the sense that only those in Anglican orders were permitted to preach there. Despite the tensions between the Wesleyan leadership and Smyth, Wesley preached at Bethesda on several occasions. "What a mercy is it, what a marvelous condescension in God to provide such places as Bethesda and Lady Huntingdon's chapels for these delicate hearers who could not bear sound doctrine if it were not set off with these pretty trifles!" (Wesley, *Journal*, April 10, 1789, in *Works* (BE) 24:128.

³⁹ Dublin is rather unusual in that it has two cathedrals, both controlled by the Church of Ireland (Henry VIII's break from Rome). The second, the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity (generally known as "Christchurch") is still viewed by the Roman Catholic Church as the official Dublin cathedral, but until such claims are recognized has designated St. Mary's Church as its "pro-cathedral."

⁴⁰ Elsewhere in his correspondence with Moore, Wesley appears to use the word *warm* to describe Smyth and other members of the evangelical society.

after peace I am, etc., John Wesley.⁴¹

A week later, Wesley wrote to Moore with further thoughts on Moore's predicament,

Dear Henry—Still the more I reflect the more I am convinced that the Methodists ought not to leave the Church. I judge that to lose a thousand, yea ten thousand of our people would be a less evil than this. 'But many had much comfort in this.' So they would in any *new thing* I believe Satan himself would give them comfort herein for he knows what the end would be Our glory has hitherto been not to be a separate body: *Hoc Ithacus velit.*⁴² But whatever Mr Smyth does I am for the old way I advise you to abide in it till you find another *new event* although indeed you may expect it every day namely the removal of
your affectionate friend and brother,
With dear love to Nancy.⁴³

A day later, Wesley wrote from Glasgow conceding Coke's plan and ask Moore and his wife to return to England to lead at Bristol.

Dear Henry,

I allow two points: (1) That while Dr Coke is in Dublin he may have service at eleven o'clock as before; (2) That on condition that our brethren will attend St Patrick's one Sunday in four you may read prayers the other three in the room. When Dr Coke returns from Dublin he should immediately send me word who is proper to succeed you there I shall be glad if I can to have Nancy and you at Bristol next year. It is not unlikely I may finish my course there and if so I should love to have her to close my eyes. My brother said I should follow him within the year. But be that as it may by God's help I will live to day.⁴⁴

Matters grew considerably more strained when Wesley visited Ireland in the Spring of 1789. On March 29 Wesley had 500 communicants in Dublin and asked William Myles (Moore's brother-in-law) to help him. The following week Dublin's *Evening Post* published an article calling on the Archbishop of Dublin to intervene as a laymen had administered the sacraments—claiming the church was in danger from the greatest innovation that had occurred in the last fifty years.⁴⁵ A controversy raged for three months, and Wesley himself was obliged to write a letter to the publisher from Londonderry,⁴⁶ in which he briefly outlined the history of Methodism in England, concluding that:

I have kindled no more fire in Dublin than I did in London. It is the *Observer* and a few other mischiefmakers who fright the people out of their senses; and they must answer to God for the consequence... This is my answer to them that trouble me and will not let my grey hairs go down to the grave in peace. I am not a man of duplicity: I am not an old hypocrite, a double-tongued knave. More than forty years I have frequented Ireland. I have

⁴¹ JWL 8:59.

⁴² Lt. "This the prince of Ithaca wants"—a reference to Virgil's *Aenid*.

⁴³ Wesley to Moore, Whitehaven (May 11, 1788) cited from JWL 8:58.

⁴⁴ Wesley to Moore, May 12, 1788, cited from JWL 8:59.

⁴⁵ AM, 1797, p. 313.

⁴⁶ As Wesley appears to have been staying at home of Alexander Knox when he wrote this letter, the friend mentioned in the postscript may well have been Knox. See Wesley's letter to Knox of April 11, 1789 stating his intention to be with Knox on the 30th of May (JWL 8:130).

wished to do some good there. I now tell a plain tale that “the good which is in me may not be evil spoken. I seek not the honour that cometh of men. It is not for pleasure that at this time of life I travel three or four thousand miles a year. It is not for gain....

PS.—At the desire of a friend I add a few words in answer to one or two other objections.

First. 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.

Secondly. I did desire Mr. Myles to assist me in delivering the cup. 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 preist in the Primitive Church send both bread and wine to the sick by whom he pleased, though not ordained at all?

Thirdly, the *Observer* affirms, ‘To say you will not leave the Church, meaning thereby all the true believers in England is trifling.’ Certainly; but I do not mean so when I say, ‘I will not leave the Church.’ I mean, unless I see more reason for it than I ever yet saw, I will not leave the Church of England as by law established while the breath of God is in my nostrils.⁴⁷

Wesley returned to Dublin from his trip to Londonderry about June 4. Before embarking to England for conference, he dashed off a several lines updating Moore, who had since departed for Bristol as per Wesley’s instructions:

We had very hot work in Dublin for some time, occasioned by Mr. Smyth’s and Mr. Mann’s⁴⁸ [letters] in the newspapers. But I go straight on my way. *Charles is nothing to me.* I serve God; and am, dear Henry, Your affectionate friend and brother.⁴⁹

Upon his safe arrival in Chester (his last crossing from Dublin), Wesley wrote to Moore again, reassuring him that nothing “Coke has said or done, but the vile, wilful misrepresentation of it, had set all Ireland in a flame.”⁵⁰ He further informed Moore that he had no clergymen to spare from London for Bristol, but that he wished to see Moore and Thomas Rankin a day or two before the next Conference: “We shall have some points of deep importance to consider,” he wrote, “Let T. Rankin and you write down what is on your mind.”⁵¹

Wesley’s assistant 1788–1790

Following the conference Moore returned to his post as the London Assistant, whereupon Wesley and Moore appear to have developed a close friendship:

⁴⁷ “To the Printer of the ‘Dublin Chronicle,’” JWL 8:143.

⁴⁸ Walter Mann (a Calvinist) was Smyth’s curate at Bethesda. A quarrel between the two men led to Smyth’s departure from Bethesda and his founding of two proprietary chapels in Manchester (Rack, “Smyth, Edward,” in BDEB 2:1031–1032).

⁴⁹ Emphasis mine. Wesley to Moore cited in JWL 8:151. Telford footnotes this asking, “Can this be his brother, whose views about the Church may have been quoted against him?”

⁵⁰ JW to Henry Moore, July 14, 1789 in JWL 8:152.

⁵¹ JWL 8:153.

Mr. Wesley had never treated me merely as his assistant in the work; his spirit and conduct had a kindness, with such an appearance of friendship, notwithstanding the disparity of years, as sometimes surprised me, and I often thought of the couplet in Parnell's *Hermit*: —
“Thus an aged elm with ivy bound
Thus youthful ivy clasps an elm around.”⁵²

Such comments are of great interest for what they reveal about Wesley's private conduct amongst those he trusted.

As Wesley's wife had left him in 1774, it seems likely that Moore may have spent as much one-on-one time with the elderly Wesley as anyone else in his final years:

From this time, especially, he seemed to wish to do nothing without me: we were seldom asunder. He expected me in his study at five o'clock every morning; (he constantly rose at four:) I read all his letters to him, and answered many of them; he invariably declining to look at my answers. In many respects I was useful to him, for he had forgotten his French, which was still fresh with me, and he received many French letters. I travelled with him in what might be called his home circuit, the counties of Norfolk, Kent, Oxford, and other parts during the winter, and was never absent from him in those excursions night or day. He had always books with him in the carriage, and used sometimes to read his own *excerpta* of the classics to me.⁵³

Looking back on the period, Moore writes that he was certain of his calling as a preacher but uncertain as to what separation might mean:

Mr. Wesley seemed, however to determine the matter by ordaining me himself, in conjunction with two other presbyters of the Church of England, Mssrs. Creighton and Dickenson. This I have always considered as a real and great privilege; and has fully satisfied my mind respecting the ordinances. I certainly never could have acted in that way comfortably without that sacred sanction.⁵⁴

The ordination to which Moore refers occurred on February 27, 1789 and occurred alongside the ordination of Thomas Rankin (1738–1810), whom Wesley had sent to preside over the first conference of American preachers in 1775. (Rankin's loyalism and strained relationships with Francis Asbury had resulted in his return to England in 1778.)

Moore's parchment is preserved at Wesley College, Bristol and reads as follows:

Know all men by these presents, that I John Wesley, late Fellow of Lincoln College, in Oxford, Presbyter of the Church of England, did, on the day of the date hereof, by the imposition of my hands and prayer (being assisted by other ordained Ministers,) set apart Henry Moore, for the office of a Presbyter in the Church of God: a man whom I judge qualified to feed the flock of Christ, and to administer the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, according to the usage of the Church of England; and as such I do hereby recommend him to all whom it may concern. In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this twenty-seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord 1789.

⁵² Smith, *Life*, p. 82.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

Presenting and assisting,
James Creighton
Peard Dickenson⁵⁵

John Wesley (Seal.)

Moore's brother-in-law, William Myles, records (in 1815) that Wesley strongly advised them "at the same time, that, according to his example, they should continue united to the Established Church, so far as the blessed work in which they were engaged would permit."⁵⁶

Alexander Mather and the English Ordinations

Over his lifetime John Wesley ordained twenty-one presbyters and two "superintendents."⁵⁷ The first superintendent was Coke (as we have discussed), the second was Alexander Mather (1733–1800), a leading preacher of Scottish origin. In America, Wesley had argued that the Church of England had no jurisdiction. He later ordained men for Scotland, arguing that Presbyterian system did not require Episcopal blessing. But what can be made of Wesley's ordination of Mather for England?

As a boy, Mather had joined the 1745 rebellion and fought in the Jacobite forces of Charles Edward Stuart at Culloden. In the aftermath of the battle and the subsequent brutal crackdown on Jacobitism, his family would not let him return home. With no place to go, Mather had come to London to find work. He found employment with a Methodist baker, who invited him to hear Wesley preach. He converted in 1754, and entered the itinerancy in 1757—notably as the first married preacher to be accepted by Wesley.

Mather—like Moore—became a close confidant to Wesley in the final decade of his life, and many expected him to exercise leadership of the connexion following Wesley's death, perhaps in conjunction with Coke. By 1790, Mather was issuing official statements on behalf of the conference, leading him to be described by his critics as the "Prime Minister in our Israel"⁵⁸

John Kent, in *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, suggests that Mather "thought of himself as the English equivalent of Asbury, but his fellow itinerants disliked Wesley's personal centralism and refused to have a 'superintendent' in the driving seat, preferring the honorary control of an annually appointed president."⁵⁹ Upon the significance of Wesley's

⁵⁵ "Certificate by John Wesley of his ordination of Henry Moore dated February 28, 1789," WCA D1/6.

⁵⁶ Myles, *Chronological History of Methodism*, p. 175.

⁵⁷ Asbury's ordination as "Bishop" was at the hands of Coke.

⁵⁸ The comment was made by Alexander Kilham perjoratively in his tract *Martin Luther*. The same sentiment, however, is expressed by Joseph Sutcliffe who described him as a "sort of archdeacon" in this period. ("Bristol, 1790. Wesley's Last Conference," *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 15.3 [Sept. 1925]: pp. 57-60).

⁵⁹ Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, p. 88.

final ordinations Rack comments

a reasonable interpretation of these acts might be that he was preparing for some kind of succession through a group of older and younger preachers after his death . . . though it is difficult to see how this could be reconciled with the corporate authority of Conference, legally secured, unless they simply acted as agents on its behalf. It may equally be the case that he simply continued the process of 'varying' here and there as needs arose, though the ordinations for England manifestly shot his earlier sophistries to pieces.⁶⁰

Anticipating his reader's appeal to such sophistries, Moore suggests that Wesley may have rethought what he had preached (in the Korah Sermon) to the Irish Methodists in Cork just months earlier:

I was with Mr. Wesley in London, when he published that sermon. He had encouraged me to be a man of one book, and he had repeatedly invited me to speak fully whatever objection I had to any thing 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 has always sent, by whom he would send, instruction, reproof, and correction in righteousness, to mankind; and that there was a real distinction between the prophetic and pastoral 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 Pastor, 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 the church, from which he never deviated unnecessarily, had, in this instance, led him a little too far.⁶¹

Besides offering some clues to what was going through Wesley's mind when he ordained men for England, the above account is interesting for it suggests (contrary to Kent's assertion) that Wesley not only tolerated criticism among his select band of preachers, but even encouraged it.

One of the interesting anecdotes Mrs. Smith has preserved is Moore's recollection that a younger local preacher had found fault with one of the senior preachers, an act for which he was reprimanded by Thomas Rankin.

Mr Wesley instantly rose and replied—"I will thank the youngest man among you to tell me of any fault you see, or believe you see in me: in doing so, I shall consider him as my best friend." "This observation," continued Mr. Moore, "put an end to all further remarks, for it was felt to be but in accordance with Mr. Wesley's universal conduct: he never felt himself the master,—only as the elder brother,—or when his brethren were in distress,

⁶⁰ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p. 520

⁶¹ Moore, *Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, 2:339–40.

then indeed he felt for them as a father.” “I remember,” continued Mr. Moore, “when myself and wife were sitting with Mr. Wesley at supper, and I found I was called upon respectfully to object to something that Mr. Wesley proposed. Looking at me earnestly, he said, “Henry Moore, you are a witness that what John Otlet said of me is false: in the pamphlet he wrote after he left us said, ‘Mr. Wesley could never bear a man who contradicted him. Now no man in England has contradicted me so much as you have done, Henry, and yet I love you still.’”⁶²

A New Plan for the New Chapel

Moore’s memoir also provides us with some insight into what lay behind special provisions in his will pertaining to City Road chapel.

The New Chapel, (still so called,) in the City Road, which was built by himself, when he was obliged to give up the Foundery, and for which he had personally made collections in every part of the three kingdoms, he had settled in a particular way; not giving to the Conference the power of appointment after his death, as in the Deeds of the other chapels; but to twelve persons,—four of them Clergymen of the Church of England, who had served him as sons in the Gospel for some years, and for whom he thus made provision; and eight Preachers. The Clergymen were to continue, as they had work enough in that, and in the other chapels in London; while the Preachers, so appointed, were, by the most sober interpretation, to succeed each other; so that one of them should be always there, together with a number of the other Preachers: And at the decease (not before) of these twelve men, the Conference should have the power of appointment, as in the other chapels.⁶³

The English Ordination as Counter-response to Episcopal Abuse

In his two-volume biography of Wesley, Moore notes that about three years before Wesley’s death (c. 1789) certain “friends of the church” realized that Methodists were not eligible for protection under the *Toleration Act* unless they declared themselves Dissenters. “If any one dared to have preaching, or a meeting for prayer or Christian fellowship in his house, information was given, and all that were present at the meeting were fined,⁶⁴ according to the penal clauses laid down in the *Coventicles Act*. The great majority of those who thus offended were tradesmen and labourers, who severely felt the fines which were thus levied upon them.”⁶⁵

Angered by such tactics Wesley wrote to “a member of parliament, a real friend to religious liberty” (almost certainly William Wilberforce, an intimate friend of William Pitt) asking what might be done:

⁶² Smith, *Life*.

⁶³ Smith, *Life*, p. 91.

⁶⁴ Robin Furneaux [3rd Earl of Birkenhead], *William Wilberforce* (London: Hamilton, 1974), pp. 12-13. Following Wesley’s death, Hannah More would complain to Wilberforce about dissolute clergy: “Mr. Boak returns many thanks for his book. I think he is going on well for he is dismissed from one of his curacies for being a Methodist by a Rector who keeps a mistress, gets tipsy before dinner, and last week treated 40 of the poorest wretches he could find to a strolling play because Boak had preached against plays the Sunday before. This rector is our chief Magistrate! Don’t we stand in need of a little visit from the French?” (p. 215).

⁶⁵ Moore, *Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, 2:382.

Last month a few poor people met together in Lincolnshire, to pray to and praise God in a friend's house: There was no preaching at all. Two neighbouring justices fined the man of the house twenty pounds. I suppose he was not worth twenty shillings. Upon this his goods were distrained and sold to pay the fine. He appealed to the Quarter-Sessions; but all the Justices averred, 'The Methodists could have no relief from the act of toleration because they went to Church; and that, so long as they did so, the conventicle act should be executed upon them... Now, Sir, what can the Methodists do? They are liable to be ruined by the conventicle act, and they have no relief from the act of toleration! If this is not oppression, what is?

. . . Where, then, is English liberty the liberty of Christians yea, of every rational creature, who as such has a right to worship God according to his own conscience. But, waiving the question of right and wrong, what prudence is there in oppressing such a body of loyal subjects If these good magistrates could drive them not only out of Somersetshire but out of England, who would be gainers thereby. Not His Majesty, whom we honor and love; not his Ministers, whom we love and serve for his sake. Do they wish to throw away so many thousand friends, who are now bound to them by stronger ties than that of interest. If you will speak a word to Mr. Pitt on that head, you will oblige, &c.⁶⁶

This was followed by a pointed letter to Dr. Pretyman Tomline, Bishop of Lincoln, on June 26, 1790. The letter exhibits the frustration of a man who sincerely wished to see Methodism remain within the established Church:

My Lord—It may seem strange, that one who is not acquainted with your Lordship should trouble you with a letter. But I am constrained to do it: I believe it is my duty both to God and your Lordship. And I must speak plain: having nothing to hope or fear in this world, which I am on the brink of leaving . . .

The Methodists, in general, my Lord, are members of the Church of England . . . Do you ask "Who drives them out of the Church?" Your Lordship does; and that in the most cruel manner; yea, and the most disingenuous manner. They desire a license to worship God after their own conscience. Your Lordship refuses it; and then punishes them for not having a license! And is it a Christian, yea a Protestant bishop, that so persecutes his own flock? I say persecutes: for it is persecution to all intents and purposes. You do not burn them indeed, but you starve them: and how small is the difference! . . .

O my Lord, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, for pity's sake, suffer the poor people to enjoy their religious, as well as civil liberty! I am on the brink of eternity! Perhaps so is your Lordship too! How soon may you also be called to give an account of your stewardship to the Great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls!⁶⁷

Moore notes that the English ordinations were performed immediately after Wesley wrote the above letter, which may suggest that he considered these ordinations exceptional cases worthy of intervention.

Moore further states that Wesley's trusted friends recommended that he prepare an application to Parliament for the repeal of the *Conventicle Act*. Unfortunately, explains Moore, Wesley's "increasing infirmities prevented his bestowing the attention upon it which was needful."⁶⁸

⁶⁶ JWL 8:230.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Moore, *Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, 2:385.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

The surviving correspondence of Wesley in his final year confirms that Wesley had broader political plans. A letter dated March 14, 1790, for example, acknowledges receipt of a “parcel” of anti-slavery literature, of which Wesley approves distribution to all assistants, noting “I would do anything that is in my power toward the extirpation of that trade which is a scandal not only to Christianity but humanity. It will require both time and thought and much patience to bring into execution the *other design* which we see at a distance” (emphasis mine). Such designs were famously expressed in Wesley’s final letter to Wilberforce—indeed his final extant letter—dated Feb 24, 1791:

Unless the divine power has raised you up to be as *Athanasius contra mundum*.⁶⁹ I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise in opposing that execrable villainy, which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God be for you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God. O be not weary of well doing. Go on in the name of God and in the power of His might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it. . . .⁷⁰

The fight for the religious liberties of English Methodists would be left to Moore and his fellow preachers.

Wesley’s Deathbed

In the middle of February 1791 John Wesley caught a cold from which he never fully recovered. Moore completed his two-year appointment in London and at the Conference of 1790 was now on the Bristol circuit. Wesley had told Henry and Ann to expect him in Bristol near the end of February, but upon receiving word of Wesley’s illness, Henry made haste to London, arriving on the 1st of March—a day before Wesley’s death.⁷¹ “He could speak little;” writes Moore in his memoir, “but that little was full of that love of God which he had ever shown . . . his kindness to myself was remarkable to the last.”⁷²

Wesley’s housekeeper Elizabeth Ritchie was at Wesley’s side in his final days and recorded a number of people who came to see the venerable old man on his deathbed. Curiously, she does not mention Moore.⁷³ The final scene has been famously memorialized in Marshall Claxton’s painting “Holy Triumph, The Death of John Wesley” (1844), now displayed in the Museum of Methodism at City Road, London. It depicts a radiant Wesley, hands clasped and looking heavenward. He rests in a partially canopied bed in a spacious room surrounded by family and fellow believers.

⁶⁹ Lt. “Athanasius against the world.”

⁷⁰ JWL 8:265.

⁷¹ Smith, *Life*, p. 90.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ E.R. [Elizabeth Ritchie], *An Authentic Narrative of the Last Sickness and Death of the Rev. John Wesley* (Bristol, 1791).

Figure 4:

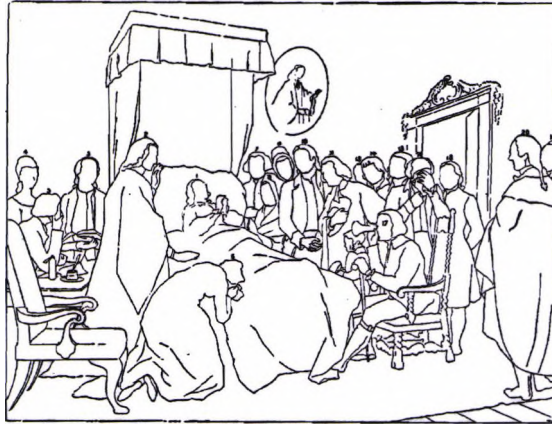
“The Death-Bed of the Rev. John Wesley” (an engraving based on Claxton’s painting)⁷⁴



As modern visitors to the Wesley’s house are encouraged to observe, the scene is physically impossible—Wesley’s small bedroom could never have accommodated so many people. The painting is, rather, Claxton’s imaginative reconstruction of Wesley’s death more than half a century after event it depicts. Claxton, painting in 1844, relied on Ritchie’s account and carefully painted each person into the scene (see Figure 5 below). Theologically, it has often been noted for the way it epitomizes the idea of a “good death”; a faithful Methodist who has completed the race and looks forward to claiming the prize of eternal life.

⁷⁴ By Samuel Belling with a “Key Plate” published (1856?) by Messrs., Thomas Agnew & Sons, Publishers and Printsellers to the Queen, Manchester. (Reproduced courtesy of the United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto).

Figure 5: Key to Marshall Claxton's "Holy Triumph, The Death of John Wesley"



KEY TO THE PAINTING "JOHN WESLEY'S DEATHBED."

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Rev. John Wesley, A.M. | 11. Rev. James Creighton, A.M. |
| 2. Rev. Peard Dickinson, A.M. | 12. Master Rogers. |
| 3. Rev. Joseph Bradford. | 13. Robert Carr Brackenbury, Esq. |
| 4. Miss Sarah Wesley. | 14. Rev. Thomas Broadbent. |
| 5. Medical Assistant to Dr Whitehead. | 15. Rev. John Broadbent. |
| 6. Mrs. Charles Wesley. | 16. John Horton, Esq. |
| 7. Rev. Thomas Rankin. | 17. Rev. Alexander Mather. |
| 8. Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers. | 18. George Whitefield. |
| 9. Miss Ritchie (Mrs. Mortimer). | 19. Rev. Jonathan Edmondson. |
| 10. Rev. James Rogers. | 20. Dr. Whitehead. |

But we may also note that it memorialized the passing of leadership from Wesley to his successors. Of the nineteen people portrayed in the painting, Ritchie's account only mentions eleven. The others have been inserted for their *perceived* historical significance.⁷⁵ Despite having lived with Wesley in his house during his final years, Henry and Ann Moore are subtly absent from the scene—a visual reminder that his influence and memory was quickly fading from the consciousness of Victorian Methodism.

Wesley's Will

John Wesley encouraged everyone to keep a will,⁷⁶ and updated his on at least two occasions. His first will, written in 1739, named his brother Charles and George Whitefield as inheritors of Kingswood. He replaced it with a new will in 1768, and then revised it

⁷⁵ For a discussion of Claxton's interesting choice of subjects see Samuel Romilly Hall, *Illustrative Records of John Wesley and Early Methodism: A Lecture Founded on Marshall Claxton's Painting of the Deathbed of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1856). Hall suggests that Claxton's chose representatives of several classes related to Wesley (i.e., family members, clergyman, preachers, "elect ladies" and so on). The George Whitefield identified in the key is not the better known evangelist but rather Wesley's Book Steward—representative of Wesley's writing and publishing activities.

⁷⁶ See JW's *Journal* for Sept. 1779: "Reader! If you have not done it already, make your will before you sleep!"

again in 1789, consulting Henry Moore for his thoughts on it.⁷⁷ This last revision, executed on Feb 20, 1789, gave all his papers and manuscripts to a committee of three men (Thomas Coke, John Whitehead, and Henry Moore) to “be burned or published as they see good.”⁷⁸ It also named three laymen (John Horton, George Wolff and William Mariott) as executors of the stock of books in trust for the conference.

Besides specifying provisions for his manuscripts and other assets Wesley’s 1789 will laid out usually specific provisions regarding City Road chapel. Moore claims that Wesley

hoped to secure what has been called the Head Quarters of Methodism, to that part of the Preachers whom he supposed would continue to act according to the way he had led them; and, as he believed, according to the will of God. Accordingly, he appointed in his last Will, (as the Deed of the chapel empowered him to do,) those eight Preachers whom he believed would cordially act with the Clergymen; and also with those other Preachers who should continue to act in the way which he, by the grace of God, had set before them, and which the Lord had so greatly owned and prospered.

These Preachers were not remarkable for splendid gifts; but, as he believed, for a true attachment to Methodist doctrine and discipline. Notwithstanding my youth, I was placed the third in this list; and was ordained by him and two of those Clergymen. I then undertook to fulfil the trusts committed to me; with respect to which I hope I have not been unfaithful.⁷⁹

The end of the chapter

The final page of John Wesley’s diary⁸⁰ (see Fig. 6 below) bears witness to Moore’s testimony and self-understanding in the wake of Wesley’s death. Beneath Wesley’s final entry we find a postscript in Moore’s handwriting. “Here ends the this diary of this man of God! He continued it, as above, to Thursday, the 24 of February, 1791, and died on the Wednesday morning following, viz. the 2 of March 1791.” This is followed by a line in Byrom’s shorthand: “Oh, that I might so follow him as he followed Christ!”

On the next page, Moore began his own shorthand journal,⁸¹ a clear indication that he saw himself following in Wesley’s footsteps.

⁷⁷ “A short time after he made his last Will,” writes Moore, he “gave to me to read and to consider; and, to my astonishment, he even desired to have my thoughts upon it” (Smith, *Life*, p. 92).

⁷⁸ Wesley’s will quoted in Moore, *Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, 2:348.

⁷⁹ Smith, *Life*, p. 91.

⁸⁰ Wesley, *Works* (BE), *Journal, and Diaries VII*, Vol. 24, p.

⁸¹ Wesley’s journal ends in 1791, Moore’s shorthand begins in 1799 and continues for about one year. The gap is best explained by the controversy surrounding access to Wesley’s papers (see chapter on Moore as biographer below).

6.

Unfinished Business: The Centralization of Wesleyan-Methodism

“As the itinerants accustomed themselves to living without him, they also turned away from Dissent; they attributed to themselves the kind of power which a parish priest nominally had over his parishioners, and their determination to retain this authority into the middle of the nineteenth century had disastrous results.” —Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, p. 9

It would be easy to understate the influence that the French Revolution had on British Methodists during the closing decade of the eighteenth century. Toward the end of Wesley's life, France was probably the wealthiest and most powerful nation on earth, governed by the First Estate (an elite class of nobility, who were tax exempt); a Second Estate (Roman catholic clergy, who controlled the French press, monopolized religious life, educational institutions and owned choice land), and a Third Estate (representing an estimated 98% of the population). When the Third Estate rose up on July 14, 1789, many in the second and third estate fled for their lives, sailing in open boats across the tumultuous English Channel. Moore and his wife witnessed this firsthand while on a visit to Dover in the autumn of 1792:

One morning, as we were standing on the beach a multitude of priests vomited forth ... [Mrs. Moore] saw and deplored the wickedness of the transaction; and she felt, through her whole frame, the words of Moses “Thouest knowest the heart of a stranger,” &c. She turned to me, bathed in tears, and said “O Henry, could we give them all a dinner at the inn? That could not be: but she went to a fruit stall, and buying as much as she could conveniently carry; she approached the poor strangers, and with the smile of an angel, presented her offering. It is impossible to describe the effect! Tears—profound salutations—their eyes appealing to each other, with gratitude to, and admiration of, the kind offer!¹

Although the American rebellion of 1776 had caused considerable economic consternation to the British Empire, it did not generate anything near the “The Great Fear” that gripped English society in 1790s when the revolutionaries executed the royal family, and the sympathy with which the English first approached the peasant uprising quickly turned to horror. Could this same revolutionary spirit topple the King of England in the

¹ Smith, *Life*, p. 239.

same way it had brought the King of France to his knees? “The mechanism falls like thunder; the head flies off, blood spurts, the man is no more,” Dr. Joseph-Ignace Guillotin had explained to the French Assembly in 1789.² In the year following John Wesley’s death, the industrial killing device bearing his name would claim more than 40,000 human lives.

Back in Henry Moore’s native Ireland, the political tensions that had simmered during his itinerancy in Ulster bubbled into organized resistance in the form of the Society of United Irishmen, a organization that had originally sought Parliamentary reform, but by 1793 had evolved into an illegal revolutionary republican organization, heavily influenced by Thomas Paine’s *Rights of Man*. Following the British suppression of a local rebellion in Leitrim in 1793 the United Irishmen forged links with the revolutionary French government, resulting in a full-scale rebellion in 1798, in which at least 20,000 perished.³

Only three months after Wesley’s death, Moore would receive the following report from his friend and frequent correspondent in Dublin, Mrs. Theodosia Blatchford:

Thousands have been slaughtered, and their families cast houseless upon the world; for the heard of every protestant is steeled against the Roman Catholics, in whom it will be hereafter be impossible to confide. I have stood up for them till I can do so no longer; having believed that their creed had nothing to do with this conflict: but I have been obliged to give up the point . . . I suppose that there is not a family in this now crowded city, which is not in hourly expectation and apprehension for the life of some member belonging to it, as almost every male from between sixteen to sixty years of age is either a yeoman, or a united Irishman. . . Every religious person I see complains of the distracted state of their minds, and their want of a suitable spirit of prayer in our alarming situation, both as individual, and as a nation.⁴

It was in the midst of these political circumstances—“the French disease”⁵—that Henry Moore and other Methodists found themselves in something of an identity crisis following Wesley’s death.⁶ In British political discourse, religious “enthusiasm” had long been linked with political subversion, stemming largely from the Puritan-backed beheading of King Charles I by parliamentarians in 1649. Methodism, despite its being birthed in the

² Guillotin quoted in Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1989), p. 96.

³ For a helpful overview of the Irish rebellion see Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, *Ireland before the famine, 1798–1848*. Gill History of Ireland, Vol. 9. (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1972), pp. 10-28. F. Pakenham (*The Year of Liberty: The Great Irish rebellion of 1798* [Prentice Hall, 1970], p. 13) puts the number of casualties at 30,000.

⁴ Letter from Mary Blatchford to Henry Moore, June 1, 1791, quoted in Smith’s *Life*, p.

⁵ The phrase is attributed to Thomas Hussey, chaplain to the Spanish Ambassador in London, who used it to describing the changing temper of Irish Catholics. Dáire Koegh, *The French Disease: The Catholic Church and Irish Radicalism, 1790–1800* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1993) notes that in spite of efforts by Irish catholic hierarchy to inoculate their flock, it was “impossible to deflect suggestions that the lower clergy were not only involved in the radical conspiracy, but that they were to a great degree responsible for its direction.”

⁶ Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, p. 88

established Church, had never completely shaken off such anti-royalist suspicions. Moreover, most of its activities were still, by the letter of English law, illegal: “Are not all the Methodist preachers, who are not licensed as dissenting ministers, flying in the face of government and liable to prosecuted for every sermon they preach?” exclaimed one Methodist preacher to another, “And if the place is not licensed, each Hearer is liable to fined five shillings?”⁷

Wesley had publicly spoken out against the American rebellion, but had died just as the world-changing events of the 1790s were entering into public consciousness. This above political background helps explain the urgency with which several Methodist societies, only weeks after Wesley’s death, began publishing public statements regarding the need for Methodism to stay within the Church of England.

A False Dichotomy?

The ensuing leadership controversies within Methodism following Wesley’s death have often been portrayed as a clash between liberal-leaning itinerants and the cautious and predominately Tory Methodist leadership led by Alexander Mather and Thomas Coke. John Kent, for example, suggests that “Mather thought of himself as the English equivalent of Asbury, but his fellow itinerants disliked Wesley’s personalized centralism and refused to have a superintendent in the driving seat.”⁸

Upon closer examination of the literature from this period, however, Kent’s presentation turns out to be something of an oversimplification. There were a number of inter-related issues that needed to be decided in the wake of Wesley’s death, and the Methodist response to those questions defies easy categorization. Broadly speaking, however, there were at least three parties within the movement.

The first group we might call *Church Methodists*. Self-described as “Old Planners,” they insisted that Methodism should be a “a kind of middle link between all religious parties, uniting them in the interests of experimental religion and scriptural holiness.” The Itinerants should remain just that, a mobile corps of preachers, and Methodism should remain a network of societies within the Established Church.

A second party, observes John C. Bowmer, in his study of the *Lord’s Supper in Methodism* was “at best indifferent, at worst hostile to the Anglican Church.”⁹ The

⁷ Open letter from John Murlin to Joseph Benson, published as broadsheet circular, Dec. 23, 1794. “Committee of Special Privileges Folder,” Frank Baker Papers at Duke University. Murlin cites the cases of the preacher Andrew English being fined at the Bristol conference, and Samuel Gates being fined as a hearer.

⁸ Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, p. 88

⁹ Bowmer, *The Lord’s Supper*, p. 18.

established church, they noted, had not merely been unsupportive of them—but in some cases actively antagonistic towards them.

Finally there was a third group, but probably the largest group in numerically, who simply wished to worship in peace and receive the sacraments from the same men who preached to them. Samuel Bradburn's comments were probably representative of this moderate group when he declared:

We are not Episcopalians, we cannot be. We are not Independents, we will not be. Therefore we must be Presbyterians . . . The Methodists are, in their judgment and affections, on the side of the established Church; in their constitution they are mild Presbyterians; in their practice some go regularly to Church, others occasionally conform, many are simply hearers of their own preachers.¹⁰

The Plan of Pacification

Only hours after John Wesley died on March 2, 1791, five Preachers of the London Circuit sent a short circular to Assistants throughout the connexion, advising them of the event and reminding them of Wesley's dying request that each of them remain in their stations until the next Conference.

Perhaps not surprisingly, therefore, it was the Methodist lay leaders, not the preachers who made the opening moves only weeks after Wesley's death. They were the ones legally responsible for ensuring that the money and assets entrusted to their care were not violated. A group of "Stewards, Leaders, Trustees and others" in Hull circulated a letter to the "Stewards of every principle society in England" forbidding the Itinerants from administering the sacraments and stating that Methodist services must not be held during church hours. This was followed by similar pronouncements by other societies.

When Wesley's preachers met in Manchester on July 26, 1791 for the first Conference following Wesley's death, there was good reason for the preachers to be concerned. The Hull circular was received and the Conference vaguely decided to "follow strictly the plan which Mr. Wesley left us at his death."

But which plan was it? The church party took it to mean that preachers should adhere to the Church and preachers should not administer the sacraments. But others suggested that the so-called "Old Plan" was not really old—that the oldest plan of all was "to follow the openings of Providence," and therefore follow Wesley in his willingness to improvise as new situations presented themselves.

In the midst of this discussion a tract appeared from Moore's old acquaintance from Londonderry, Alexander Knox, who was now serving as private secretary to Robert

¹⁰ Samuel Bradburn, *The Question, "Are the Methodists Dissenters?" Fairly Examined* (1792), p. 19.

Stewart (1769–1822), better known as Lord Castlereagh, at that time Chief Secretary for Ireland. Castlereagh would not only play an important role in crushing the Irish uprising of 1798, but, as British Foreign Secretary, would go on to play a central role in managing the coalition that defeated Napoléon.

Before his death, John Wesley had published several “considerations” on separating from the Church,¹¹ in which he objected to Methodists separating from the Church of England entirely, though allowing partial separation under extenuating circumstances:

The grand argument (which in some particular cases must be acknowledged to have weight) was this: The minister of the parish wherein we dwell, neither lives nor preaches the gospel. He walks in the way of hell himself, and teaches his flock to do the same. Can you advise them (the Methodists) to attend his preaching? I cannot advise them to do it. What can they do on the Lord’s day, suppose no other church be near? Do you advise them to go to a different meeting? Or to meet in our own preaching house?”

Where this is the case, I cannot blame them if they do. Although therefore I earnestly oppose the general separation of the Methodists from the church, yet I cannot condemn such a partial separation. I believe to separate thus far from these miserable wretches, who are the scandal of our church and nation, would be for the honour of the church as well as to the glory of God.¹²

Seeking to remind the orphaned Methodists of their founder’s views, Knox published a tract entitled “Considerations on a Separation of the Methodists from the Established Church,” urging them to stay with the “the old plan.” Wesley’s ordination of Coke et al. argued Knox, were unfortunate aberrations, “the effect of his own imbecility”—certainly the result of his being “seduced from his better purposes” and his having been “enervated by age.”¹³

Henry Moore wasted no time in responding to Knox’s tract, writing a counter-response entitled *A Reply to Considerations on a Separation of the Methodists from the Established Church*. In it, he reproduced his ordination certificate as irrefutable evidence that Wesley had indeed ordained men for England:

Will the writer of the “Considerations,” [i.e., Knox] or his new friends, reply to this, that such ordination is nothing? Will they dishonour Mr. Wesley in order to condemn his sons in the gospel? Will they deny the strong facts produced by Lord King, to prove that presbyters and bishops are of the same order?

And are they prepared to main the consequence, that almost all of the churches of Europe are no churches of Christ? And that those only are such who derive their authority from the church of Rome? Is this gentlemen quite sure, that the church of England has in

¹¹ The earliest of these was “Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England” (1758) (*Works* [BE] 9:334-349). In 1789, he published “Farther Thoughts on Separation from the Church” (*Works* [BE] 9:538-540).

¹² Wesley, “Farther Thoughts on a Separation from the Church,” (1789) in *Works* (BE) 9:539.

¹³ Moore, *Animadversions*, pp. 18–22.

reality any other ordination except that of presbyters?¹⁴

Against such views Moore upheld a vision of the church articulated by John Locke, which he quoted on the title page of his response to Knox:

A church of Christ, I take to be a voluntary society of men, joining themselves together of their own accord; in order to the publicly worshipping God, in such manner as they judge acceptable to Him, and effectual to the salvation of their souls.¹⁵

A collision between two very different conceptions of Methodism's relation to the Church was inevitable, but the showdown would occur in Bristol rather than Dublin.

Bristol (1790–1792) and Bath (1793–1794)

The story of the “Bristol controversy,” in which Henry Moore became a central player, has often been told from the perspective of later Methodists, who have tended to portray it as an unprovoked aggression of trustees upon the rights of the Conference to appoint preachers. The correspondence of William Pine, one of the trustees at New Room (also one of John Wesley's printers), however, helps us paint a more balanced picture of the events leading up to the 1795 “Plan of Pacification” than what is offered by Mrs. Smith in her biography of Moore.¹⁶

Less than a year before Wesley's death, at the conference of 1790, Moore was assigned superintendent of Bristol circuit. At that time there were two chapels in Bristol. The earliest of these was known as the “New Room.” As we have seen in a previous chapter, Bristol was the birthplace of the Methodist class meeting. It was also the location of the first Methodist building in the world—Wesley himself had laid the foundation stone in 1739, dedicating it “our New Room in the Horsefair”; and Charles Wesley, who lived nearby at 4 Charles St., had laboured there for many years before moving his family to London. A second chapel, known as Guinea Street, was opened by John Wesley in 1779. Both properties had been settled on early trust deeds that gave the Trustees, rather than Wesley, control over who could preach there.¹⁷

A third chapel—Portland Street—was erected and opened in 1792 not long after Moore's arrival. The acknowledged father and founder of this new chapel was Captain Thomas Webb, a fascinating lay preacher of significance to historians on both sides of the

¹⁴ Henry Moore, A Reply to a pamphlet entitled “A Reply to Considerations on a Separation of the Methodists from the Established Church” (Bristol: R. Edwards, 1794), p. 9.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 1. The source for this quoted is Locke's *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689).

¹⁶ Jonathan Barry and Kenneth Morgan, eds. *Reformation and Revival in Eighteenth-century Bristol* (Bristol Record Society, 1994).

¹⁷ The situation concerned Wesley and he had met with the Trustees of the New Room in 1788 in an attempt to amend the deed.

Atlantic.¹⁸ The elderly Webb, having returned to England in 1778 from his notable adventures in America, made his home in the Portland Street area, and with assistance from Samuel Bradburn and Henry Moore, Webb set about raising money to build the new chapel for Methodists who had been “won from the world and to whom the cold and stately formalities of the Church Service” seemed “frozen and lifeless.”¹⁹

Moore was assigned to neighboring Bath circuit in 1792 and Samuel Bradburn (the preacher in plain clothes who had so impressed Moore in Dublin prior to his joining the Methodists) succeeded him as superintendent of the circuit. Tensions between the chapels began to build when Bradburn wore, at the request of its trustees, clerical vestments at the opening service of the Portland chapel on the 26 August 1792. Bradburn’s attire provoked the anger of the trustees of the New Room and Guinea Street chapels, but it also invoked the anger of a local vicar sensitive to the potential rivalry of a chapel near his parish. The trustees brought these concerns to the Conference of 1793, and the conference declared that clerical vestments should not be worn by the preachers. Questions regarding the administration of sacraments, however, were left unresolved. (John Pawson had stood up in Conference and suggested that the issue be decided for the year by the drawing lots. Adam Clarke drew the lot, “You shall *not* give the sacraments this year.”)²⁰

In the midst of these controversies, the Conference met in Bristol, on June 28, 1794. During the early part of the proceedings, Joseph Benson was appointed to the Bristol circuit. The preachers and lay delegates then entered into negotiations. Joseph Benson recommended that the “Conference do affirm and ratify the declaration of last year respecting the sacraments.”

The Conference issued an address, declaring that “as the Lord’s Supper has not been administered except where the society has been unanimous, and would not have been contented without it, it is now agreed that the Lord’s Supper shall not be administered in future where the union and concord of the society can be preserved without it;” that “the preachers will not perform the office of baptism except for the desirable ends of love and concord, though baptism, as well as the burial of the dead, was performed by many of them before Mr. Wesley’s death, and with his consent.”²¹

On the Sunday following the conference of 1794, Thomas Coke asked Moore to help

¹⁸ Prior to his conversion to Methodism, Webb had served in the British army under General Wolfe at Quebec. He had lost an eye to French musket-fire in Nova Scotia, and returned to England 1765 where he was converted under the preaching of the Moravians and subsequently introduced to George Whitefield.

¹⁹ Mark Guy Pearse, “Portland-Street Chapel, Bristol” *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, pp. 518–526 and 647–658.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 649.

²¹ Abel Stevens, *History of Methodism*, p. 54f.

administer the sacraments at the Portland Street chapel. His participation outraged the trustees of the New Room, where Moore was scheduled to preach the following day. The letters of William Pine, Wesley's printer in Bristol, show that on August 9, the trustees of the New Room and Guinea Street resolved that if Henry Moore gave the sacrament in Bristol they would oppose his preaching in their chapels.

Shortly after, Moore received the following letter via an attorney's clerk:

Mr. Henry Moore, Bristol, Aug. 11, 1794.

"We the undersigned, trustees for the Methodist Preaching house, called the New Room, in the Horse-Fair, and also for Guinea-street Chapel, do give you this Notice, that you are not appointed by us to preach or expound God's holy word in either of those places, and that no other person or persons have or hath any legal right to make that appointment, but only we the trustees: we therefore forbid and caution you against attempting trespassing upon the above trust premises, as you will answer it at your peril.

Signed by Henry Durbin, William Green, Daniel Lane, Edward Stock, William Pine, Thomas Roberts, Daniel Wait, Jun. Nath. Gifford. John Curtis
Witness: James Hughes, Attorney.²²

Undeterred by the trustee's letter, Henry Moore met for prayer at 5 p.m. with some of his friends (among them Captain Webb²³) and proceeded to the New Room with them. Upon entering however, Moore found the pulpit guarded by the Trustees.

as he was going towards the Pulpit two of the trustees stepped into it. He said, "Gentlemen I am not come to preach, but only to speak a few Words to the People." The Trustees kept their Places till he sat down. Mr. Jeremiah Brittle, accompanied by Mr. Rodda and Mr. Vasey, came into the Desk to preach (that Business being settled, that the Congregation might not be disappointed). Mr. Moore rose immediately and went towards the Pulpit. Mr. Brittle kept by his Side, when one of Mr. Moore's Friends cried out, "Take care Mr. Moore, or Mr. Brittle will throw you down."

Mr. Moore then addressed the People for about 5 minutes, saying He had been that Day forbid Preaching in that Place by the Trustees; he took the Notice that was sent him out of his Pocket and read it; said he was appointed to another that he stood in that Place; that he was averse to Disputes of every Kind, and particularly so to *legal Disputes*; therefore he should leave the Place to the Direction of the Gentlemen Trustees and go immediately and preach at Portland Chapel. On which some of the lower Class of People began hissing, hollowing, and clapping their Hands, and rushed out of the Chapel as fast as they could, violently [torn page] the Trustees. However their Numbers were not many (supposed to be about 100) for we had left a very [torn page] comfortable Congregation.

Mr. Rodda gave out a Hymn to drown the clamour, and in 4 or 5 minutes all was Peace. Mr. Rodda then prayed very fervently for a considerable Time, after which Mr. Brittle preached a useful Sermon adapted to the Occasion, and the Service ended as quiet as though nothing had happened. There were several Preachers in different parts of the

²² Letter from the Bristol Trustees to Henry Moore dated Aug. 11, 1794 in "Henry Moore, Papers" the Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana and British Methodism. Duke University.

²³ Thomas Webb had been instrumental in securing funds for a second chapel in Bristol on Portland Heights. When he died two years later, his remains were buried there.

Chapel but none of them said a word...²⁴

In a letter to Joseph Benson a few days later, Pine suggests Moore had taken with him about one-third of the congregation. Those who went Portland Street claimed the number was considerably higher. "I was there," said old Mrs. Brice to the Rev. Benjamin Hellier, "and the crush was so great that I lost my shoe, and had to come on without it."

Precise numbers aside, Moore's action signifies an important step in the evolution of Methodist polity. The underlying issue at stake was not the validity of Moore's ordination certificate, but whether the trustees had the right to veto a preacher authorized by the Conference. This tension between people and preachers had existed since the Birstall case, but the Bristol trustees blocking of a preacher by letter of attorney was unprecedented. It sent shockwaves through the movement and polarized the preachers into supporters and opponents of Moore.

On one hand, a group of preachers that included Joseph Benson and Alexander Mather, lent support to the New Room trustees because of their position regarding administration of the sacraments. However, an opposing group (which included Thomas Coke, John Pawson and Samuel Bradburn) sided with Moore because they felt this was an intrusion of the lay power over the spiritual authority of the preachers.

Benson, who had been appointed by conference superintendent of the Bristol circuit, was known to be a supporter of the "old" plan but had left for Manchester before the events of Aug. 11 occurred. He was urged by Thomas Coke to stay there unless he wished to side with Moore in Bristol. "There is not the most distant probability of a reconciliation," he warned Benson, "the people are irritated to that degree, that we are persuaded that they would not now submit to a reconciliation, if Mr. Moore were ever so desirous of it."²⁵

Benson was unconvinced and sided with the trustees, and Coke, despairing of any lasting solution to dispute, building a new chapel settled on the Model Deed.

Meanwhile, matters continued to deteriorate when supporters of Moore prevented Richard Rodda, one of the New Room trustees, from speaking at Kingswood—apparently by physically removing him from the pulpit, and carrying Coke up to take his place.²⁶

In the end, it was the conference supporters that won: some 800 members of 1000 members joined Moore. The New Room and Guinea Street congregations never recovered

²⁴ Transcription of letter from William Pine to Joseph Benson, 12 Aug 1789 quoted in Kenneth Morgan, ed. "Letters from William Pine to Joseph Benson, 1794-1796," MARC PLP 84.7.1-7.

²⁵ Unaddressed letter written to Benson quoted in Vickers, *Thomas Coke*, p. 208.

²⁶ Mary Fletcher to Sarah Crosby, 13 Oct 1794: "How shocking their dragging Mr. Rodda out of the pulpit, & turning him out for the 'old serpent,' while they carried Dr. Coke about to put him in the pulpit for 'their little angel'" (quoted in John Vickers, *Thomas Coke*, p. 209).

their losses and were eventually obliged to hand the deed to their properties over to the trustees of King Street, who sold it in 1808 to the Calvinistic Methodists, thus ending Wesleyan control of the first Methodist chapel in Britain.

Alexander Kilham and “New Connexion”

During the same years that the controversy in Bristol had been raging, Alexander Kilham (1762–1798), then a young preacher on the Whitby circuit in Yorkshire, began to articulate a completely different vision for Wesley’s movement. Kilham had spent six years on the Aberdeen circuit where he had been impressed by the lay participation in Scottish Presbyterianism and believed the time was ripe for “uniting the . . . excellent Presbyterian principle of letting the ministers and people always act together, with those parts of Methodism which related to our doctrines, itinerancy and class meetings.”²⁷ Drawing on the rhetoric of Thomas Paine’s *Rights of Man*, Kilham published a number of tracts and pamphlets leading up to his magnum opus, *Progress of Liberty Amongst the People Called Methodists*, to which he appended a proposal for a new Methodist constitution.

Kilham’s mantra was that “the Preachers rule without consulting the people.” He pointed out that in Methodist polity the Assistants had unrestrained power to receive members into or exclude members from Societies; and that this was done without consent of the people. Furthermore, the Assisants had unrestrained power to place, displace any leaders, stewards or local preachers; also, to recommend new travelling preachers. They were also allowed to make collections without giving any account of how the money was spent.

It was on the latter point that Kilham touched a raw nerve: he accused some of his fellow preachers of wasting the public money, swindling, secrecy in business, and other forms of tyranny. In order to remedy this imbalance of authority, Kilham proposed that the President of Conference must be elected for one year only, and once elected ineligible for re-election for several years afterward. Further, at every level, there must be representation of “the people”—nothing of importance should be decided without their consent.

This equality, argued Kilham, should apply not only to circuit and district meetings, but to the Conference of preachers—even the stationing of the preachers should be determined in consultation with the people.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Kilham’s proposals were not well received by the preachers.

²⁷ *Life of the Rev. Alexander Kilham, formerly a preacher under the Rev. J. Wesley, and one of the founders of the Methodist New Connexion in the year 1797: including a full account of the disputes which occasioned the separation* (London: R. Groombridge, 1838), p. 175.

(One also wonders how many of the people actually desired such reforms).

At the conference of 1796, Kilham was summoned to account for his actions. On the first day, Alexander Mather rose and questioned whether Kilham had agreed with the *Minutes* of conference when he was received into the connexion by Wesley. "Do you retract that agreement or covenant?" Kilham requested time to ponder the question, but the next day stated "I agree to them as far as they are agreeable with Scripture." To this Moore replied, "We all agree with the Koran of Mohammed with the same limitation, namely, as far as it is agreeable to Scripture; but we agree to these rules because we believe them to be agreeable with Scripture." Kilham offered no reply.

Thomas Coke, acting as secretary then cited passages from Kilham's various publications, as charges which he made against the preachers and the Church government, and Kilham was asked to defend them. Following the interrogation a motion was brought forward. "Whereas, Mr. Kilham has brought several charges against Mr. Wesley and the body of the preachers, of a slanderous and criminal nature, which charges he declared he could prove, and which upon examination he could not prove even one of them; and also considering the disunion and strife which he has occasioned in many of the societies, we adjudge him unworthy of being a member of the Methodist Connection."²⁸ The decision was unanimous.²⁹

Liverpool, 1795–1801

At the conference of 1795 Moore was assigned to the Liverpool circuit; and Adam Clarke, who had been stationed in that city since the Manchester conference in the summer of 1793, moved to London. Clarke, along with John Pawson, had seen remarkable growth in Liverpool in the previous years, doubling the number of members in the circuit in just two years. Such gains should probably been understood against the wider backdrop of that city's history. Unlike the ancient harbour of Bristol, eighteenth-century Liverpool was a smaller, but rapidly expanding centre of influence. Its first dock had been built in 1715, and from the 1730s onward the port had been the principal beneficiary of the Atlantic slave trade.³⁰ A writer in 1795 noted "the great influx of Irish and Welsh of whom the majority of the inhabitants at present consists."³¹ In 1750 the population of Liverpool had reached 20,000 and by 1801 the city's population was 77,000.

²⁸ Smith, *Life*, 145.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ James Wallace, *A general and descriptive history of the ancient and present state, of the town of Liverpool: comprising, a review of its government, police, antiquities, and modern improvements; the progressive increase of street, square, public buildings, and inhabitants, together with a circumstantial account of the true causes of its extensive African trade* (R. Phillips, 1795), p. 267.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 267.

Mrs. Smith says virtually nothing of Moore's time here, but Moore's aforementioned shorthand journal indicates that he regularly preached at Edmund Street, Pitt-Street and Mount Pleasant chapels. Of these preaching points, Pitt-street chapel was considered "the largest, and most elegant." The pulpit is supported by fluted pillars; the disposition of the gallery, which is extended on all sides, is oval; and the pews on the ground floor, are disposed in the same form." Correspondence between Anne and Henry further suggests the couple lived at Mount Pleasant, close to what is today University of Liverpool campus.

Despite Kilham's expulsion from the main body of Wesleyans in 1796, Moore continued the battle, publishing counter arguments to Kilham's calls for equal lay representation:

The preachers know all the *circuits*, all the societies, and all the people. They have at various times received them all into the connexion. The people have voluntarily put themselves under their care. They visit and preach to them; and meet —personally—once a quarter. They are appointed by the great Head of the Church to—take the oversight of them, (1 Pet. V. 2) and He declares they shall give account to HIM, Heb. Xiii. 7.17.

But these preachers, it seems, though thus appointed by GOD, and to answer to HIM: though they have been the chosen by the people, and that choice renewed every quarter. Though they visit and know all the societies, and have no interests separate from the prosperity of the people, we are told, are not the representatives of the people, nor should be their DELEGATES! But, on the contrary, men who are not appointed by GOD in his holy word, to superintend them: who are not to give account to God: who do not visit, and who cannot—know—them: who perhaps have never seen, and never may see them: who have interests separate from the people, and must have them, till they are called of GOD to give them up: These men we are told *are* the representatives of the people, and should be their DELEGATES!³²

The reason for continued conflict between Moore and Kilham's followers,³³ which continued well into the nineteenth century, was that Kilham had gathered his followers (numbering about 5,000) into a new, competing network known as the Methodist New Connexion, founded upon the principles that Kilham had hoped the Wesleyan Methodists would adopt.³⁴ While this connection eventually melted back into the main body of British Methodists in 1907, the denomination remains historically significant for its emphasis on mission and as a contributing factor to the creation of the Salvation Army.³⁵

³² "Extract from the Minutes of a District Meeting, Held at Manchester, May 31, 1797," Broadsheet circular, pp. 2-3.

³³ The exchanges went both ways, see Remarks on Mr. Moore's Statement, &c. Lately Circulated through the Methodist Connexion (Liverpool, 1797).

³⁴ The movement doubled to 10,000 by 1822. Timothy Larsen, "Methodist New Connexionism: lay emancipation as a denominational *raison d'être*" in Lovegrove, *The Rise of the Laity in Evangelical Protestantism*, pp. 153–163.

³⁵ The founder of the Salvation Army, William Booth adopted military organization in reaction to problems he observed with lay governance in the New Connexion. For a helpful discussion see Victor A. Shepherd, "From New Connexion Methodist to William Booth," in *Papers of the*

Rather than lamenting the loss of these members, Thomas Coke, appears to have viewed their departure as a kind of purification of the movement. Requesting special exemptions for Methodist soldiers Coke wrote to Henry Dundas, Secretary of State for War, of “the recent expulsion of 5000 democrats from our society”³⁶ as evidence of Wesleyan Methodism’s loyalty to the crown. He also recounted in detail the active role played by the Methodists in helping to put down the Irish rebellion.³⁷ Such overtures to the British government clearly indicate that the Wesleyan Methodist leadership of this period wished to distance themselves from Kilham and his republican ideals.

During his time in Liverpool, there was also an attempted assassination of King George on May 15, 1800 at the Drury Lane Theatre in London. Moore and several other prominent preachers composed a letter reaffirming their loyalty to the crown:

We your Majesty’s dutiful and loyal subjects, the preachers of the gospel, late in connexion with the Reverend John Wesley, deceased, being assembled in our fifty-seventh year. . . humbly desire to express to your Majesty, that we have, in conjunction with the people who are under our care, upon several occasions, united with others of your Majesty’s loyal subjects, in testifying our sincere respect for, and attachment to, your Majesty’s person and government, and our detestation of all sedition upon this occasion.³⁸

As it turned out, the assassination attempt was not politically motivated, but rather the work of a delusional assailant who believed that he could usher in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ if he himself were killed by the British government.

Reunion with Knox

In 1800 Moore travelled to conference in London, and stayed at the home of Dr. James Hamilton, a Scottish physician later resident in London. There, he was surprised to encounter an old acquaintance from Derry: “Mr. Alexander Knox so hangs off me that I know not how to tear myself away from him,” Moore confessed in a letter to his wife,

I spoke strong words to him: I insisted on the absolute necessity of a deep conviction of our lost state by nature, and our actual breaking of the law of God, and that without coming by simple faith to Jesus as our atoning Saviour, and fully believing, and casting our wholes souls on Him for salvation, we must perish eternally. I had much comfort in speaking to him: I hope that he will so far leave his philosophy, as to come simply and truly to Christ.

That Moore’s words had some effect on Knox is evident in later correspondence between

Canadian Methodist Historical Society (Toronto: Canadian Methodist Society Historical Society, 1993) Vol. 9, pp. 91–107.

³⁶ Copy of letter from Thomas Coke at City Road, London, to Henry Dundas, Secretary of State for War, The Papers of the Dr Thomas Coke, PLP/28/4 MARC. [Original at Southern Methodist University.]

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Cited in Smith, *Life*, pp. 183–184.

the two men regarding John Walker, a fellow of Trinity College, Dublin.

Walker's 1803 pamphlet *An Expostulatory Address to the Members of the Methodist Society in Ireland*, in which he railed against "idolatrous attachment" to Wesley and Fletcher and urged them to join with the "growing union of other Christians who have lately been stirred up to co-operate in spreading the glorious Gospel of God through the country; and in the magnitude of that one object (in which their hearts seek a common interest) are forgetting the subordinate differences, which before kept them asunder."³⁹

Are not their writings treated by you as paramount to the Scriptures? Is it the Scriptures you put into the hands of those, whom you have made or want to make converts to Methodism? No, you send them for the most part to Fletcher's *Checks*;⁴⁰ and stuff their poor heads with bad metaphysics and worse divinity, before they have rightly learned the first principles of the gospel of Christ. And if they be directed to the Scriptures at all, they must read them accompanied by Wesley's *Notes*, for fear they would imbibe from the Scriptures any thing contrary to Methodism. This is the way to make Methodists—zealous, bigotted Methodists! but indeed it is not the way to make simple and devoted Christians. It is the way to inflame their minds against the persons, whom Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher opposed, and to make them bitter controversialists . . .⁴¹

Walker's attack was not limited to the Irish Methodists, but extended to Wesley himself:

The root of this evil lies deep; even in the constitution of your Society. According to its original constitution, none could be members of it, but those who paid an *absolute submission* to Mr. Wesley's authority in matters great and small. He claimed and exercised uncontrolled power over his numerous societies; and vindicates himself from the charge of "making himself a Pope," and "shackling freeborn Englishmen," by urging that to *him* "the preachers had engaged themselves, to submit to *serve him* as sons in the Gospel:" that to *him* "the people in general would submit;" and that "every preacher and every member might leave him when he pleased."⁴²

Sometime shortly after its publication Knox forwarded a copy of Walker's tract along with an unsealed letter to Walker to Moore, asking him to read it and then forward to Walker. "I hope you will stand in the gap, and in case of your writing a reply be more than able to meet these principles," wrote Moore to Knox in response:

I confess myself disappointed in Mr. Walker's pamphlet: I had expected something new, or at least a little older in the matter of attack, as well as somewhat different from those of Mssrs. Toplady, Hill, and Berridge; but he has followed them both in arguments and language, and sometimes almost verbatim: How fully has Mr. Fletcher answered all the refinements to which Mr. Walker has had recourse: no wonder then that he almost

³⁹ John Walker, "An Expostulatory Address to the Members of the Methodist Society in Ireland," in William Burton, ed. *Essays and correspondence, chiefly on Scriptural subjects*, vol. 1 (London, 1838), p. 9.

⁴⁰ I.e., John Fletcher's *Checks to Antinomianism*, which expounded the theology of early Methodism and for years was a principal textbook of Methodists on both sides of the Atlantic.

⁴¹ Walker, "An Expostulatory Address," p. 9.

⁴² *Ibid.*

anathematizes that great and good man...

Mr Wesley was much more hated by the world than Mr. Walker is, or is ever likely to be,—and for good reason, Mr. Walker does not bear a full testimony against sin: if the Pharisaic world will hate Mr. Walker—the Antinomian world will not: Mr. Wesley was hated by both.

Blessed are they who keep in the book which tells us that God is loving to every man, and that Christ died for every man: we will leave it to Him who says so, to clear up the difficulties . . . Will you have the goodness to send me anything which you write hereafter.⁴³

Knox's 63-page defense of Wesley and the Methodists against Walker was published a short time later as *Remarks upon an Expository Address*.

It is notable for its defense of Wesley's character, a theme that Knox would repeat in his criticism of Robert Southey's biography.

Walker, in turn, replied with a series of letters to Knox and an anonymous pamphlet that called the established church "carnal" and its "ritual an evil." This did not escape the attention of the Provost at Trinity College, who confronted Walker about its authorship. Walker proposed to resign his preferments in the College; but the Provost expelled him. He was followed by a number of disciples, who met in a chapel in Staffordstreet, Dublin, where "he preached the strongest Calvinistic doctrines." Described by outsiders as "Walkerites" and by themselves as "The Church of God." Crookshank states that Walker and his followers attempted to woo "leading evangelical clergy everywhere; poaching upon their congregations, robbing them of their most devout adherents, and representing themselves as specially and exclusively spiritual, until at length, under the guidance of John Nelson Darby, they took final shape in the sect now called Plymouth Brethren."⁴⁴

President of Conference

In 1804, Moore was elected president of the Conference.

In the summer of 1806 Moore moved to Leeds. An elderly John Pawson was then stationed in nearby Wakefield and Moore records that "Pawson was ever glad to see him, and exceedingly affectionate in his manner."⁴⁵ Despite Pawson's burning of the Wesley's manuscripts, their relationship remained close, perhaps owing to a common concern that Methodism was losing its way. A candid reply from Pawson to Moore, who was disturbed over the *Arminian Magazine's* name being changed to the *Methodist Magazine* sheds considerable light on Pawson's sense of self-identity as a Methodist travelling preacher:

I have long ago publicly declared that I am no Arminian, and can by no means see any propriety in our being called by that name. We might with ten thousand times more

⁴³ Letter from Henry Moore to Alexander Knox, n.d., reproduced in Smith, *Life*, p. 191.

⁴⁴ Crookshank, *History of Methodism in Ireland*, 2:236.

⁴⁵ The comment appears to be Moore's interjection upon Smith's text.

appearance of truth be called Moravians, as we certainly got our light from them and not from Arminius.⁴⁶

As the youngest member of the legal hundred Moore no doubt represented to Pawson connection to the past that was quickly fading. He wrote as much to Moore, telling him that he was the “the last one”—his family and wife having left him for their heavenly reward. Pawson died late that year, but not before making Moore promise to preach his funeral sermon. This Moore did, sharing it “with about thirty other preachers—his most beloved among the brethren, in a legacy of one guinea each.”

Amongst other preachers who died that year was Moore’s brother-in-law Thomas Rutherford. His death seems to have especially affected Moore: “While I feel my own loss, I can truly say, I feel yours in a ten fold degree,” he wrote to his sister-in-law,

In the visions of the night, or in dreams upon my bed, I have been permitted to see my friend since his departure: he seemed in company with Messrs. John, and Charles Wesley. They spoke much, and familiarly with me, as in the body: he spoke not, but looked unutterable love: in departing, and waving his adieu, the indescribable impression made upon my mind was, that he would be one, appointed to receive my departing spirit. Lord grant it if it be Thy blessed will! To His Almighty care I commit you, and yours.⁴⁷

The Moores remained two years in Leeds, and then in 1809, they accepted an appointment to the London West circuit, where they had been solicited.

London West, 1809–1811

It is evident from Moore’s work in these years that the role of a travelling preacher in this period involved, beyond oratory competence, a considerable amount of administrative skill. Two years prior to his arrival, the London societies had divided into two circuits. On the west end of London, a number of smaller societies had outgrown their existing location (Chandler Street)⁴⁸ and at the first Quarterly meeting of the new circuit resolved as early as 1807 “that ground be leased or purchased for a new chapel in the West End of town.” It was further noted at the first quarterly meeting of the new circuit that such ground “might be had at the corner of Thayer Street, near Manchester Square.” Upon

⁴⁶ Letter, Rev. John Pawson to Henry Moore (Methodist Chapel, Bath), London 19 May 1798 (folded sheet). WCA D6/1/418.

⁴⁷ Letter quoted in Smith, *Life of Moore*.

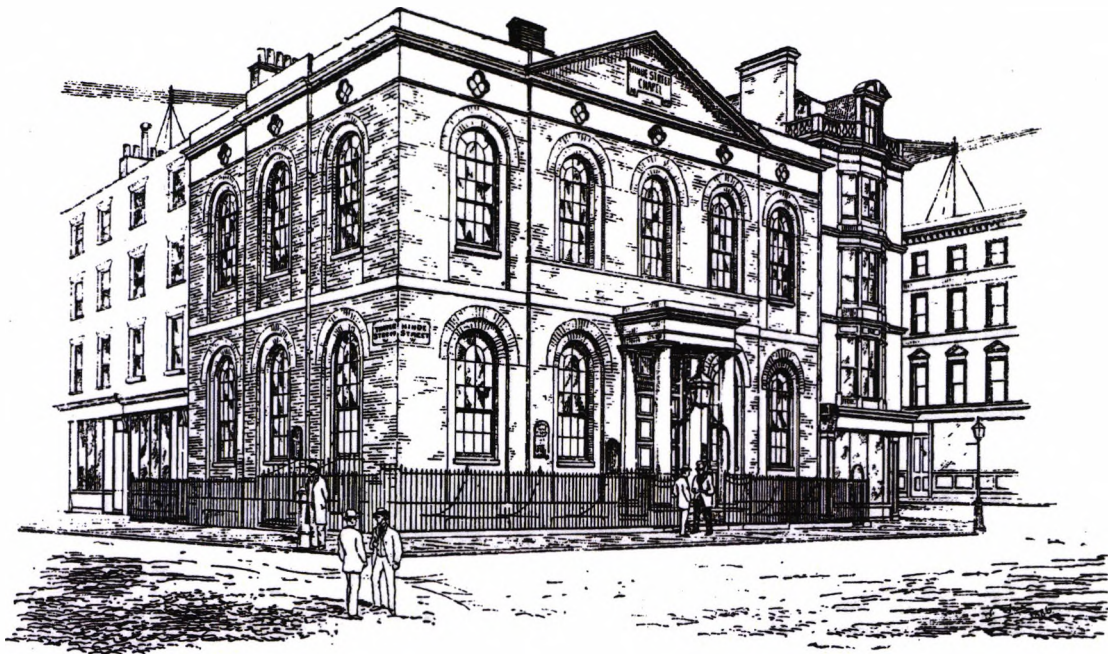
⁴⁸ This location was just south of Oxford Street. On its origins, an article in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* notes: “From 1743 till 1798 West-Street was the advanced post of Methodism in this part of the town. In 1798, when the first Queen-Street Chapel replaced West-Street, the need for some preaching-place beyond Bond-street became even more pressing. Before Mr. Wesley’s death a foothold had been gained near Grosvenor-square, in a room above a slaughter-house in what was then a very low neighbourhood. The travelling Preachers seldom visited it. In 1801, a modest little chapel was built in Chandlerstreet, close to Grosvenor-square.” When the West Circuit was created in 1807, “Chandler-street had one hundred and five members; Saffron Hill, thirty-seven; Battle-Bridge, now King’s Cross, with one service at six, had fifty-seven members” (WMM, p. 511).

Moore's arrival, leases for a plot of land had been bequeathed to the circuit, but considerable legal difficulties had prevented any progress in obtaining it.

"Hinde Street was a new street in 1809," records John Telford in his history of London Methodism, "The ground on which the chapel was built originally formed part of the Hinde Estate," but had been let and sublet till one becomes bewildered in any attempt to follow its changing history. It is evident that it needed all the patience and resolution of Henry Moore to grapple with this involved question of site."⁴⁹

Only five weeks after the last plot of ground had been secured, the building of a chapel with "two galleries and an underground school-room commenced."⁵⁰ Hinde St. chapel was completed in 1810.

Fig. 8: Original Hinde Street Chapel building, West London



HINDE STREET CHAPEL (1810-1885).

"No name is more memorable in connection with Hinde-Street than that of Henry Moore," comments Telford. "He was short of stature, with a fine intellectual forehead; somewhat slow of speech, like a man who weighted well all that he said." The building,

⁴⁹ John Telford, *Two West-End Chapels or Sketches of London Methodism from Wesley's Day* (1740-1886) (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book-Room, 1886), pp. 106-107.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

later described as “one of the ugliest in Methodism,”⁵¹ was demolished in 1885 and replaced with one that was considered the finest of its day.

More significantly, however, Hinde Street Methodist Church would become one of the most significant centres of Methodist influence in Britain down to the present day.⁵² Its “basement” Sunday School attracted an incredible 750 members soon after it began, and the church became known for its ministry to young people as a particular constituency. Through the church, thousands were taught reading and writing skills before universal education was introduced.

A Kindred Soul Set Free

Despite such advances in his ministry, it is evident from Moore’s correspondence that Anne’s health remained a source of anxiety to him. When they had been in Liverpool she had suffered an attack of rheumatic fever. After a second attack in Bristol, Moore sent her to the springs at Bath on several occasions. By March of 1813, however, Henry was lamenting to a friend that Bath’s “waters have failed to produce upon her health their former salutary effect: She is much weaker than when she left town”:

I cannot dissemble that I have much fear, though when I look upon her cheerful countenance, I half flatter myself with the hope, that ‘surely the bitterness of death is passed.’ Oh! How bitter hers would be to me, left alone in the world with only the remembrance of an affectionate faithfulness that never was excelled! The Lord has again and again rebuked death, and I trust that he will still save.

Moore’s hopes for physical healing were not realized, however, and Anne passed away on March 25 at the age of 56. She was buried on the grounds at City Road chapel.⁵³ The Latin inscription on her stone translates:

Anne! Noble-mined, modest, meek, and fair,
Safely thou liest in thy narrow bed!
But not the whole of thee reposes there,
Thy spirit to the joys of heaven is fled.
Insolvent earth could no reward bestow
Worth of thee, for thou hast well sustained
As daughter, wife, and Christian, here below,
Whatever love, faith, piety, ordained.
O let this tearful verse a token be
Of thy lamenting husband’s endless love!

⁵¹ A substantial (404 pp.) history of Hinde Street Methodist Church has been recently been published by Alan Brooks, *West End Methodism: The Story of Hinde Street* (London: Northway Books, 2011). Among other interesting factoids contained in this work we learn that one of the early choir directors was deaf. Telford notes that Adam Clarke was listed as a supernumerary in connection with it in 1831 and observes that his name appears in the Circuit-stewards’ books from September, 1828, to June, 1831.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ These graves have since been relocated.

And soon his kindred soul, from earth set free,
Christ shall unite to thine: we then shall prove,
That peace and love ensure to all eternity⁵⁴

Moore was devastated by her death and experienced several post-mortem apparitions of her, which are of interest to our present study in that they illustrate that Methodists in this period were still very open to the supernatural.

Moore later drew up a short account of his wife, which was subsequently published, and reproduced in Smith's *Life*. The account helpfully fills in further details about Anne's place in early Methodism:

Mr. Wesley certainly loved and esteemed her much; but his venerable brother, Mr. Charles Wesley, a man who kept at the utmost distance from all unreasonable or unscriptural favouritism, manifested, if possible, superior regard. His family (a family ever to be respected by the people of God,) conceived also a love and an esteem for her, which continued from those happy days, till the day of her removal....⁵⁵

It also provides a rare glimpse into the married life of an itinerant preacher:

She was a pattern of industry and attention to all her duties. I believe no creature ever held her for one quarter of an hour unemployed: even in company she used to work, whenever she could do so without giving offence. At home, when she had leisure to read, she often contrived to knit at the same time; and not infrequently she thus worked for the poor, whom she loved to relieve in every possible way. On our circuits for some years, whenever she went with me to any of the places, she used to read to me, sitting behind me on the horse.⁵⁶

Joining the testimonies to her faithfulness was Adam Clarke, who preached her funeral sermon:

I have known Mrs. Moore for more than thirty-five years, and was a resident in the same town, and a member of the society with her. She, and her sister, were not only ornaments of a society, certainly one of the first, in piety and sense, in the nation, but were exceedingly useful, in diffusing the savor and influence of pure religion among many; and causing Methodism to be respected, where no ordinary recommendation of principles so opposite to prevailing religious sentiments of the place, would have been sufficient to stem the torrent of prejudice.⁵⁷

Henry Moore and Adam Clarke

As we last saw Adam Clarke in Liverpool, some explanation of how he came to be in

⁵⁴ The English translation is attributed to Eliza Weaver Bradburn in Smith, *Life*, p. 246. Rather than an original composition, this appears to be a slight modification of an existing Irish epitaph; cf. Francis Grose, *The Antiquities of Ireland* (Hooper, 1791), p. 35.

⁵⁵ Smith, *Life*, p. 237.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 239–240

⁵⁷ Letter from Adam Clarke to Dr. Hamilton reproduced in Smith, *Life*, p. 244–245.

London alongside a bereaved Henry Moore is required. Following his early preaching expeditions on the Londonderry circuit, John Bredin had brought Clarke to Wesley's attention as a preacher of considerable potential. Wesley sent him to Kingswood School (near Bristol) for continued education, but feeling restricted there, Clarke stayed only a month, and asked to be returned to the itinerancy. "I shall send you to a Circuit immediately," said Wesley. "You have learning enough for a Preacher of the Gospel; and you will improve therein while you preach, abundantly more than you can do by mere study. By teaching we learn, and in the best way."⁵⁸

He accepted an appointment to Bradford, Wiltshire in 1782. Wesley, however, seems to have been perplexed by Clarke's abilities. "Where can we put poor Adam Clarke?" he wrote to Moore in 1790, "He must not preach himself to death; and what circuit is he equal to, where he can have rest as well as labor[?]"⁵⁹ Clarke was exceptionally gifted with languages, and because of his proficiency in French, Moore suggested to Wesley that he be assigned to the Channel Islands, where he introduced Methodism to the island of Alderney. From 1793–5, he laboured in Liverpool, where the membership of the societies doubled. In 1795 he was assigned to London, where he remained for most of his life.

In the metropolis, Clarke was able to develop a scholarly interest in ancient languages whilst at the same time leading the entire London circuit as superintendent. In addition to the Greek, Latin and French he had already acquired, Clarke taught himself Hebrew, Syriac, Aramiac, Persian, Sanscrit, Armenian, Coptic, and Ethiopic. He began publishing scholarly articles on various subjects in 1804 and in 1807 he received an MA from King's College, Aberdeen, followed by an LL.D in 1808. Remarkably, none of his scholarly work seems to have distracted him (as it did in Moore's case) from his pastoral duties, and in 1806 he was elected president of the Wesleyan-Methodist conference. (He would be elected again 1814 and 1822).

In 1810 Clarke published the first volume of what would become his greatest legacy, an eight-volume Bible commentary at first entitled "The Holy Bible ... To which are added notes and practical observations, etc." better known to posterity simply as "Clarke's Commentary."

Throughout all of this there is every indication from surviving correspondence that Moore and Clarke had maintained their close friendship since their days in Londonderry. For a time, their ministries overlapped in Bristol and later in Liverpool, where their background no doubt helped their ministry amongst the large Irish population in the city,

⁵⁸ Moore recounted the episode in Clarke's funeral Sermon, *The Judgment of the Human Race*, p. 12.

⁵⁹ JW to Henry Moore, June 1, 1790.

which often experienced similar tensions between Catholics and Protestants.

In light of this close friendship, it is not immediately obvious why Moore would write a pamphlet against Clarke in 1817, stirring up a controversy that would result in later Methodist leaders distancing themselves from Clarke's theology.

We may note in passing that Mrs. Smith in her biography of Moore devotes but a single sentence to the following episode stating only that "Mr. Moore published in 1817, a pamphlet entitled *Thoughts on the Eternal Sonship of the Second Person of the Trinity*, in reply to the note on that subject in Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary on St. Luke, chapter i. verse 35." The lack of further elaboration surrounding the circumstances of this publication is probably best explained as a desire on behalf of Mrs. Smith (Clarke's daughter in law) to smooth over a strained period in the relationship between the two men. Its omission, however, further highlights the need for having undertaken this refreshed portrait of Moore.

The Eternal Sonship Controversy

Whereas many of the internal disputes within Methodism since Wesley's death had been of a pragmatic nature, the so-called "Eternal Sonship Controversy" represents one of the first purely doctrinal debates amongst Wesley's followers after his death, and one of crucial importance in determining the intellectual and organizational trajectory of British (and by extension World) Methodism for the remainder of the nineteenth century. Doubts about the Trinity, of course, were not uncommon in Wesley's day—for more than a century a considerable unravelling of the doctrine under Enlightenment rationalism had been underway.⁶⁰ But in the 1770s several legal attempts to remove subscription to the doctrine, as articulated in *the Book of Common Prayer* and *The Thirty-Nine Articles*, brought the doctrine under increased scrutiny. The "Feathers Tavern" petitions, of 1771, 1773, and 1774, for example, aimed to replace the historic creedal affirmations with a simple belief in the Bible. Such attempts raise the ire of many early evangelicals, and Wesley himself preached on the subject in 1775,⁶¹ in response to a specific request from Dublin.

The turn of the nineteenth century, however, brought with it the popularization of more sophisticated forms of anti-Trinitarianism, many of which can be traced back to Joseph Priestley (1733–1804), a dissenting clergyman who, from the 1760s onward (at the instigation of his close friend, the inventor Benjamin Franklin) made considerable

⁶⁰ For a helpful account of seventeenth-century Trinitarian debates see Jason E. Vickers, *Invocation and Assent: The Making and Remaking of Trinitarian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

⁶¹ Wesley, "On the Trinity" (Sermon 55 in Jackson).

contributions to modern science.

It was Priestley's religious writing that would have the most impact on Methodism. His *History of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ* (1786) attacked not only the doctrine of the Trinity, but also the doctrine of the atonement, inspiration of scripture, and the virgin birth. The making of such assertions, however, was still highly political: a lesson Priestly painfully learned when an angry mob destroyed his home and laboratory in 1791. In 1794, under increased political pressure stemming from the French revolution, he relocated to Pennsylvania. Before leaving for America, however, he published a series of Wesley family letters pertaining to the purported haunting at Epworth in an attempt to discredit Wesley for his belief in ghosts.⁶²

By the opening decade of the nineteenth century, Priestley's form of "reasonable" Christianity (what had by then become known as "Unitarianism") had begun to infiltrate the ranks of Methodist preachers, leading to the expulsion of Joseph Cooke (1775–1811) in 1806 for teaching doctrines incompatible with Methodist beliefs. Such expulsions, however, could not contain the rising tide of skepticism against the historic creeds. "Many a pamphlet, and many a paper in magazines" argued for and against these new ideas.

Adam Clarke, who was president of the conference the year of Cooke's expulsion, would seem to have been the obvious man to lead a counter attack against such unorthodox notions, given his extraordinary competence as a scholar and preacher. Paradoxically, he became the flashpoint for a dispute over doctrinal orthodoxy within the Wesleyan Methodist body.

The catalyst for the controversy was apparently Clarke's assertion that Luke's use of the term "Son of God" did not denote Christ's divine nature. In stating this, Clarke was not denying the divinity of Christ (for which he found ample Scriptural evidence elsewhere); rather he was suggesting that the term, in its biblical usage, did not mean that Jesus was "unoriginated" in the sense of the Athanasian creed: "The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created; but begotten." Such a comment might have been overlooked, except that in so doing, Clarke had further suggested the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ was "anti-scriptural, and highly dangerous":

To say that he was begotten from all eternity, is, in my opinion, absurd; and the phrase *eternal Son* is a positive self-contradiction. Eternity is that which has had no beginning, nor stands in any reference to Time. Son supposes time, generation, and father; and time also

⁶² Joseph Priestley, ed. *Original Letters by the Rev. John Wesley and his Friends, Illustrative of his Early History; with other curious papers, communicated by the late Rev. S. Badcock; to which is prefixed, An Address to the Methodists, by Joseph Priestley* (Birmingham: Printed by Thomas Pearson, 1791).

antecedent to such generation. Therefore the conjunction of these two terms, Son and eternity is absolutely impossible, as they imply essentially different and opposite ideas. The doctrine of the eternal Sonship destroys the deity of Christ; now, if his deity be taken away, the whole Gospel scheme of redemption is ruined. On this ground, the atonement of Christ cannot have been of infinite merit, and consequently could not purchase pardon for the offenses of mankind, nor give any right to, or possession of, an eternal glory. The very use of this phrase is both absurd and dangerous; therefore let all those who value Jesus and their salvation abide by the Scriptures. This doctrine of the eternal Sonship, as it has been lately explained in many a pamphlet, and many a paper in magazines, I must and do consider as an awful heresy, and mere sheer Arianism; which, in many cases, has terminated in Socinianism, and that in Deism. From such heterodoxies, and their abettors, may God save his Church! Amen!⁶³

The passion with which Clarke made such lengthy statements (and his remarks regarding to Socinianism and Deism) may be attributed to the circumstances of his early conversion in Coleraine. As a youth and a new convert, Clarke had been subjected to a theological discussion in which one party claimed Methodists were “guilty of idolatry, for they gave that worship to Jesus Christ that belonged to the Father only.” Clarke reasoned that if this were in fact true, it undercut the idea of the vicarious atonement upon which he trusted God for his own salvation. This, according to one his biographers, left him in a state of spiritual despair for a time.⁶⁴ The precise connection between the doctrine of the eternal sonship and Arianism is not self-evident from Clarke's comments on Luke 1:35, nor is the link with Socinianism, a system of Christian doctrine named for Fausto Sozzini (1539–1604) that emerged in Poland and spread throughout Europe in the sixteenth century.⁶⁵

Elsewhere, however, Clarke explained in considerable detail that the “Arianism” he spoke of was not the same “Arianism” spoken of by the church fathers (who, Clarke complained, were “continually confounding the doctrine imputed to Arius, with that held by multitudes who professed to be his followers”). Arius, Clarke observed, held a view of the universe that presupposed a scale of “spiritual essences” and denied the equality of the Son with the Father based on that metaphysic. For Arius, only God the Father could be pure spirit, and the Son was of a secondary essence. Based on the same scheme, Arius had also denied that the death of Christ was sacrificial, and therein lies the connection with Socinianism, for both Socinus and Arius claimed that Christ saved humanity, not by objectively atoning for their sins on the cross, but rather by his subjective influence on

⁶³ Adam Clarke, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; containing the text taken from the most correct copies of the present Authorised translation including the marginal readings and parallel texts with a commentary and critical notes*, 3 vols. (London: J. Butterworth and Son, 1817), Vol. 1, note on Luke 1:35, p. 37.

⁶⁴ J. B. B. Clarke, *An Account of the Infancy, Religious and Literary Life of Adam Clarke* (New York: B. Waugh and T. Mason, 1833), p. 49.

⁶⁵ Sarah Mortimer, *Reason and Religion in the English Revolution: The Challenge of Socinianism* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 15–22.

mankind as moral and ethical exemplar. This rejection of the substitutionary *work of Christ*, Clarke argued, ultimately stems from an insufficient view of the *person of Christ*:

It does appear to me that it is absolutely necessary to believe the proper and essential Godhead of Christ, in order to be convinced that the sacrifice which has been offered is a *sufficient* sacrifice. Nothing less than a sacrifice of *infinite merit*, can atone for the offences of the whole world; and purchase for mankind an ETERNAL GLORY: and if Jesus be not properly, essentially, and eternally God, He has not offered, He could not offer, such a sacrifice. . . . Jesus was not a martyr, but a sacrifice . . . therefore is He called the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.⁶⁶

Those who knew Clarke and his testimony would hardly accuse him of heresy—he was in fact arguing *for* Trinitarianism apart from the Athanasian creed.⁶⁷ However, the readership of Clarke’s commentary extended far beyond Wesleyan Methodist circles, and his comments viewed from the outside represented to many a further slippage from Trinitarian orthodoxy from a senior preacher and former president of the Methodist Conference.

“It is painful, extremely painful, to be obliged thus to note these awful speculations,” responded Moore in his *Thoughts on Eternal Sonship* (1817), “but the duty is become imperative; especially considering the respectability of their Author, and his intimate connexion with the People, among whom they are chiefly disseminated.”⁶⁸

By this time in his life Moore was a senior preacher already involved in several writing projects. It might be assumed that Moore’s only intent in publishing his *Thoughts* was to bolster his own reputation as a theologian amongst his peers. A closer examination of the texts in dispute, however, reveals that it was specifically Clarke’s comments regarding John Wesley that drew Moore into the controversy. Moreover it was not Clarke’s comments on Luke 1:35, but rather on Hebrews 1:8, that were most troubling to Moore:

On the doctrine of the *eternal Sonship* of the Divine nature of Christ I once had the privilege of conversing with the late reverend John Wesley, about three years before his death; he read from a book in which I had written it, the argument against this doctrine, which now stands in the note on Luke 1:35. He did not attempt to reply to it; but allowed that, on the *ground* on which I had taken it, the argument was conclusive. I observed, that the proper, essential Divinity of Jesus Christ appeared to me to be so absolutely necessary to the whole Christian scheme, and to the faith both of penitent sinners and saints, that it was of the utmost importance to set it in the clearest and strongest point of view; and that, with my present light, I could not credit it, if I must receive the common doctrine of the

⁶⁶ Adam Clarke, “The Love of God to a Lost World: A Discourse on John 3:16” in *Discourses on various subjects relative to the being and attributes of God, and his works in creation, providence, and grace* (New York: M’Elrath & Bangs, 1831), p. 79.

⁶⁷ Clarke questioned the authenticity of the document.

⁶⁸ Henry Moore, *Thoughts on the Eternal Sonship of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, Addressed to the People Called Methodists, Late in Connexion with the Rev. John Wesley, deceased, and Especially to the Preachers in that Connexion* (Birmingham: R. Wrightson, 1817), p. 29.

Sonship of the Divine nature of our Lord. He mentioned two eminent divines who were of the same opinion; and added, that the eternal Sonship of Christ had been a doctrine very generally received in the Christian Church; and he believed no one had ever expressed it better than his brother Samuel had done in the following lines :—

“From whom, in one eternal *now*,
The Son, thy offspring, flow'd;
An *everlasting Father* thou,
An *everlasting God*.”

He added not one word more on the subject, nor ever after mentioned it to me, though after that we *had* many interviews.⁶⁹

Clarke then concluded his comments by observing that in 1781 Wesley had published an article entitled “An Arian Antidote;”⁷⁰ and Wesley himself had written that “Jesus was inferior to the Father as touching his manhood,” and that this was “pointedly against *the eternal Sonship of the Divine nature*.”

It was against such allegations that Moore evidently felt it his duty to publicly correct Clarke's testimony regarding Wesley: “I can assure the Doctor,” wrote Moore, “and all his readers, that he did not; and that he lived and died in the Catholic faith, and approved to the last that mode of expressing it, which the church has always used”:

Indeed so entirely was he on that side, that he died in that sentiment, which he had published to the world,—that the creed of St. Athanasius (which grinds to powder the Doctor's opinion,) was the best he ever saw, respecting the doctrine of the Holy Trinity; excepting only the Philosophical illustrations, and damnatory clauses,⁷¹—and that these might be subscribed with a little explanation.

I can further assure the Doctor, from the intimate knowledge of that great man with which I was favoured, that if he had changed his opinion, he would have declared the change upon the house top. He had too much of the fear of God knowingly to address his maker improperly; nor would he have thought it lawful, when speaking to or of Jehovah, or teaching others to do so, to take refuge in the license commonly allowed to Poets. I may say also, that those who knew Mr. Wesley will not be surprised at hearing that he did not enter into any controversy with his son [Clarke] in the gospel, at that time very young in the work; they would rather have been surprised if he had. He was satisfied, it seems, with declaring his own opinion, in unison with the Catholic Church. That venerable Man, no doubt, considered, and hoped, that his Young Friend had many years before him for thought, reading, and prayer.—Mr. Wesley has said to me more than once, “when I was young, I thought I could convince every one of the truth of any proposition which I

⁶⁹ Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible: containing the Old and New Testaments, the text printed from the most correct copies of the present authorized translation, including the marginal readings and parallel texts, with a commentary and critical notes designed as a help to a better understanding of the sacred writings*, Vol. 2 (B. Waugh and T. Mason, 1833), p. 659.

⁷⁰ *AM*, vol. 4, p. 384

⁷¹ The Athanasian creed differs from many of the earlier creeds in that it includes condemnations of those who disagree with its content: “Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith. Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled; without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.” Wesley, Clarke, and Moore all seem to have agreed that subscription to the creedal affirmation was not a requirement of salvation.

believed myself. I have learned better long before this time."⁷²

It would be easy to overemphasize the importance of the theological dispute between the two men, but the discourse between them indicates a considerable tolerance for divergent viewpoints. Clarke, for his part, appealed to Scripture as the ultimate authority, and felt that the historic creeds should be open to revision if Scripture itself could not back them up. However, he merely offered this as his own opinion and did not expect or demand that others share this view:

Any opinion of mine my readers are at perfect liberty to receive or reject. I never claimed infallibility; I say, with St. Augustine, *Errare possum; hareticus esse nolo*. Refined Arians, with some of whom I am personally acquainted, are quite willing to receive all that can be said of the dignity and glory of Christ's nature, provided we admit the doctrine of the eternal Sonship, and omit the word *unoriginated*, which I have used in my demonstration of the Godhead of the Saviour of men; but, as far as it respects myself, I can neither *admit* the one, nor *omit* the other. The proper essential Godhead of Christ lies deep at the foundation of my Christian creed; and I must sacrifice ten thousand *forms of speech* rather than sacrifice the *thing*. My opinion has not been formed on slight examination.⁷³

Moore, for his part, defended the Clarke's integrity, but respectfully disagreed with him.

We believe that the creed of our Worthy Brother is much better than his many ingenious speculations in divine things may have inclined those to think, who do not know or value him as his Brethren in Christ do, and have done for many years . . . The Doctor has erred, we believe; but we can give him the right hand of fellowship, knowing and feeling too, the truth of that old, saying even respecting the learned, *Humanum est error, et nescire*.⁷⁴

On the question of Wesley's thoughts, however, there could be no compromise.

Clarke, by all accounts, loathed controversy of any kind and did not respond to Moore's *Thoughts*, nor did he remove his comments from subsequent printings.⁷⁵ This, rather than quelling the debate, however, only opened the door for other writers to join the fray. Among these was Clarke's brother-in-law, the English mathematician Thomas Exley (1775–1855), who felt Moore's response fell considerably short of "[Moore's] experience and excellent judgment." This led Exley to ask Clarke why he had not responded to Moore, whereupon he was informed by Clarke that "he had not read Mr. Moore's *Thoughts*, that he had given no cause for the attack upon him, that he did not wish to be interrupted in the progress of his work, and that therefore he must leave these things, saying 'my labour is with the Lord, and my work with my God.'" Unsatisfied with

⁷² Moore, *Thoughts*, pp. 9-10.

⁷³ Clarke, *Commentary*, "Brief Remarks on Hebrews, chap i, verse 8," vol. 2, p. 694.

⁷⁴ Moore, *Thoughts*, p. 8

⁷⁵ Originally published in a series of smaller volumes, Clarke's comments appear unaltered in the standard eight-volume edition (approx. 1000 pp. each) published in New York by J. Emory and B. Waugh for the Episcopal Methodist Church in 1831.

Clarke's response and contrary to Clarke's advice, Exley published his own 40-page defense rebuttal of Moore's *Thoughts as A Vindication of Dr. Adam Clarke, in answer to Mr. [Henry] Moore's Thoughts on the eternal sonship of the second person of the holy Trinity* (1817).

"Mr. Moore handles Reason so roughly that I should be surprised indeed if she favours his cause," wrote Exley, pointing out that Moore had first criticized Clarke for trying to make sense of an unfathomable mystery, but had then appealed to reason to make his case against Clarke:

Surely Mr. Moore will not attempt to persuade us, that we have for our foundation the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship, while he himself has said, he believes the Doctor holds the fundamentals. Let then his fears subside, there is in this opinion nothing contrary to *the form of sound Words*; and, in general, the Fathers of Methodism have adhered to the form of sound words, which we will hold fast; but we do not reckon our Fathers, our venerable and highly respected Fathers, we do not reckon them infallible; they never pretended to it. And it may be, we may meet with a few inaccuracies of different kinds in most of them; and are we to be said to depart from their doctrines, their *form of sound words*, because we leave out those inaccuracies. No, their doctrines, as far as our salvation is concerned, are the doctrines of the Bible. Their doctrines and discipline we believe to be of God, and these we joyfully hold fast. But after all, let me ask, was the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship, or the Eternal Generation of Christ, ever insisted on, enjoined, or even proposed as a Methodist doctrine? Why then all this ado?⁷⁶

The larger significance of the exchange was to elevate the discussion from one of linguistics to one of epistemology. Specifically, what was the role of reason in interpreting Scripture, and could that reason be used to reinterpret historical creeds?

Richard Watson and the Role of Reason

This was precisely the question picked up by a younger preacher, Richard Watson (1781–1833), the following year in his *Remarks on the Eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ* (1818). Watson was considerably younger than Moore, but he attacked Clarke's approach with considerably more vigor than Moore had, focusing not merely on Clarke's conclusions, but the methodology through which Clarke had arrived at his conclusions:

where, then, is the inquirer to begin? To what will he liken God, or to whom compare him... To apply infinite measures to an infinite being; corporeal ideas to a spiritual essence, or mixed notions of corporeity and spirituality to a being pure and unmixed; a knowledge arising from acquaintance with perishable objects to absolute immortality; and the calculations of time to positive eternity.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Exley, *Vindication*, pp. 39–40.

⁷⁷ Richard Watson, *Remarks on the Eternal Sonship of Christ; and the use of reason in matters of revelation: suggested by several passages in A. Clarke's Commentary on the New Testament. In a Letter to a Friend* (London, 1818), p. 56.

Clarke's response, drawing heavily on Lockean philosophy, dealt with the larger encroachment of Enlightenment rationality upon belief in historic Christian teachings. The methodology that he developed in his response to Clarke provided the foundation for his *Theological Institutes*, which eventually supplanted Fletcher's *Checks on Antinomianism* as the primary work of systematic theology amongst nineteenth-century Methodists.⁷⁸

Although Watson never intended his *Remarks* be an attack on Clarke's character, its publication contributed to a growing rift between those preachers who aligned themselves with veteran preachers such as Joseph Benson, Henry Moore and Adam Clarke—and those who looked to Jabez Bunting for leadership. Following Bunting's ascendancy to power, the Wesleyan Methodists tended to treat ministers who sympathized with Clarke's views as heretics and enforced conformity in the face of threatened expulsion, the conference of 1827 declaring that it was the indispensable duty of the president "to examine upon the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship every preacher proposed to be admitted into full connexion."⁷⁹

Clarke's friendship with Moore apparently withstood the controversy, for when he died unexpectedly from cholera on the 26th of August, 1832, it was Moore who preached his funeral sermon.⁸⁰ "All the fame, the worthy fame, the lawful fame, of our deceased brother would be a very little thing to me, if I thought his name was not in the 'book of life,' the only true register of God's children," remarked Moore in his moving funeral sermon. "A man of more blameless life, I believe, even the Methodist Connexion never knew."⁸¹

Moore continued to enjoy a close relationship with Clarke's son-in-law, Richard Smith (a trustee of City Road Chapel) and especially his daughter (Mrs. Smith).

Visiting Moore on his ninety-second birthday with her eldest son Rosevear, she records how Moore blessed her son. "Why this is my friend Rosevear, for though much grown, I trace in him still, the strong resemblance to his grandfather, both in face and form . . . then drawing him to his embrace he said, "Rosevear, you did not know your grandfather, but my blessing on you is, that you may follow him, as he followed Christ, and may you be

⁷⁸ Samuel Tucker provides evidence for this theological crisis in his *A Candid and Impartial Inquiry of the Present State of the Methodist Societies in Ireland*, wherein several important points relative to their doctrines and discipline are discussed (George Berwick, 1814).

⁷⁹ Minutes of 1827 quoted in Peirce, *Ecclesiastical principles and polity of the Wesleyan Methodists*, p. 276. It is perhaps worth noting, in light of the focus of this study on lay preaching, that this treatment of prospective Wesleyan ministers in this manner influenced Clarke's son, Joseph, to enter the ministry of the Church of England rather than the Wesleyan Methodists.

⁸⁰ Moore, *Judgment of the Human Race*, p. 14

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

as useful among men, as he was wise to win souls . . . God bless you my noble boy, may He guard you amidst the snares of life, and make your path-way useful like his, whom you resemble.”⁸²

London, City Road

The widowed Moore returned to the main London circuit in 1812, where he encountered resistance from one of the trustees, Mr. Harvey Walklate Mortimer,⁸³ who according to George Stevenson, was determined,

on his own responsibility, to resist Mr. Moore’s claim, and he used his utmost efforts, backed by threats and legal documents, to intimidate Mr. Moore, and bring him to submit to his wishes. Strong, resolute, and defiant as was Mr. Mortimer, yet Henry Moore was even more so; you might lead him like a child with persuasion, but to drive Henry Moore was beyond the power of any man. The contention was continued for about two years during Mr. Moore’s stay in the first London circuit, and was not, in fact, wholly abandoned for twenty years; but Mr. Moore maintained his integrity and his just rights to the end of his protracted life.⁸⁴

Moore moved to Liverpool in August 1814, but not before getting remarried in Bristol. His second wife, Mary Ann Hind (1754–1834) is described by Smith as a “middle-aged lady, of piety, a good understanding and possessed of an independent fortune . . . the lady was respected and esteemed for her general urbanity, and her especial regard for the poor.” The couple remained in Liverpool until their next circuit appointment.

In 1816 the Moores removed to Birmingham for two years. Interpersonal correspondence between Mary Ann Moore suggests Moore hadn’t slowed in his feverish pace. “Henry is able to continue in all his duties and finds that the work of the Lord still gladdens his soul,” writes Mary Ann in a letter dated 17 Nov 1817, “They have had the collections from the [Sunday] schools and last Sunday morning Henry preached for the Schools at Cherry Street.”⁸⁵ He preached again yesterday at Bradford Street in the morning

⁸² Smith, *Life*, p. 379.

⁸³ Harvey Walklate Mortimer (1753–1819) occupied some of the most responsible lay positions in the London Society, including steward, chapel trustee and treasurer. He became a close friend of John Wesley, who regarded him as a shining example of what a lay official should be like. Mortimer’s second wife was Elizabeth Ritchie, who as we saw in a previous chapter recorded the last hours of Wesley’s life. He was a leading supporter of the link with the Church of England and it was no coincidence that it was shortly after he died that Methodist itinerants were permitted to read the prayers at City Road Chapel for the first time (George J. Stevenson, *City Road Chapel, London, and its Associations* [London: 1872], pp. 153; 554–555).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Cherry Street Wesleyan Chapel in Birmingham was one of the most important chapels in the city. Prior to its opening in 1782 by John Wesley, the society in Birmingham had met in a “dingy old playhouse.” The chapel, enlarged in 1823 under the superintendency of Zechariah Taft was 81ft. long, by 69ft. wide, and could hold more than 1,200 worshippers. Taft, who died in 1824 was buried in a vault in the middle aisle of the chapel, in front of the pulpit. His remains were removed elsewhere when the building was demolished (*Birmingham Daily Post*, June 21, 1886).

and Belmarsh[?] in the evening.”⁸⁶

Moore's *Life of Fletcher*

It was in Birmingham that Moore began work on the publication of an autobiographical memoir by Mary (nee Bosanquet) Fletcher (1739–1815),⁸⁷ a document of considerable importance in the study of women in early Methodism. Mary Fletcher had died of cancer in 1815 and specifically requested him to undertake the task.⁸⁸

“[Henry] is labouring every day in the work which interests you,” wrote Mary Ann on the 17th of November 1817 to Mary Tooth, Mary Fletcher’s companion and executrix, “there are one hundred and eighty pages now printed, the printer has been a little slow some days ago but is now recovering his pace. I think it will be completed about a fortnight after Christmas.”

Evidently the printer’s pace quickened as Henry Moore’s *Life of Mrs. Mary Fletcher consort and relict of the Rev. John Fletcher, vicar of Madeley, Salop* appeared before the end of the year.⁸⁹ Unlike Moore’s first *Life of Wesley*, which he had co-authored with Thomas Coke in 1792 in a matter of weeks, the publication of the *Life of Fletcher* involved editing Fletcher’s own autobiographical manuscript. Moore knew the Fetters from his days as Wesley’s London assistant,⁹⁰ and had already translated one of John Fletcher’s sermons in to English in 1794.⁹¹

In recent years, several writers have criticized Moore’s editing of the source material for this volume. Vicky Tolar Burton, for instance, laments the “condescension” of Moore’s preface, in which she states he has excluded much valuable matter.

Henry Moore intruded at several points to explain and qualify Fletcher’s assertions, assuring readers that her emphasis on good works bore no resemblance to Roman Catholic monasticism and that her claims to hear God in dreams did not make her an enthusiast. Moore’s voice, rather than Fletcher’s, interprets the significance of Fletcher’s experience for those who would follow her example.⁹²

A brief comparison of Fletcher’s manuscript with the published work by the present

⁸⁶ Letter from Mary Ann Moore to Mary Tooth (17 Nov 1817) archived at MAM/FL/5.5/1 MARC

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Mrs. Smith states he was chosen for the task for his general knowledge of the state of religion in her day, and also from his intimate acquaintance with herself. Smith, *Life*, p. 336-337.

⁸⁹ Henry Moore, *The Life of Mary Fletcher* (Birmingham: J. Peart & Son, 1817)].

⁹⁰ See Smith, pp. 318ff. Near the end of his life, Moore recounted to Smith how intimidated he was to follow Fletcher’s preaching at the conference at 1784.

⁹¹ John Fletcher, *The New Birth: A discourse written in French, by the Rev. John Fletcher, late Vicar of Madeley, Salop*. Translated by Henry Moore. Bristol: Printed and sold by Lancaster and Edwards, Redcliff-Street: Sold also by G. Whitfield, in the City-Road, London, and at the Methodist-Chapels, 1794.

⁹² Burton, *Spiritual Literacy*, p. 175.

author confirmed that Moore omitted a section where Mary describes “bleeding” herself in her youth prior to her conversion.⁹³

Though Moore may have been uncomfortable with women preaching (as opposed to their “exhorting”), he should be credited for bringing Fletcher’s memoir into public light. As Burton herself has noted, most other autobiographical accounts by women in this period lay languishing in archives until the flurry of recent interest by social historians.⁹⁴ Moore also defended Fletcher’s emphasis on dreams and visions against the charge of enthusiasm in his preface,

[A] sober mind may object, that she minded impressions, dreams, and those inward feelings to which religious persons are supposed to be particularly exposed. That such things should be condemned, *toto genere*, is hardly consistent with any true religion, seeing the oracles of God so frequently mention them: and not as attached to the prophetic or ministerial character, but as given to those who walk with God in the humblest path of life. The wisest and best men have not only spoken of such things with respect, but have made them a part of the religion which they have held forth to areas and generations.⁹⁵

Further, he argued that such experiences were entirely congruent with the stated beliefs of the established Church:

Concerning religious feelings and impressions, the Liturgy of the Church of England, and her established institutes, bear the fullest and most honourable testimony . . . We know the worship of our Church is so constituted, as, if possible, to impress the whole nation; but there are parts of it that can only be considered as describing and edifying “the children of God.”⁹⁶

The significance of Moore’s *Life of Fletcher* upon the imagination of later Wesleyans has perhaps been more profound than his *Life of Wesley*. The work went through numerous editions in English, and was subsequently translated into French by Alicia D’Arcy.⁹⁷ Smith further claims a copy was presented to the Queen of France, “by whom it was personally received with the most marked expressions of kindly condescension.”

Irish Connections

Despite having lived in England for nearly three decades, Moore’s correspondence from this period indicates that he remained well connected with many of his other Irish relatives and other members of the Irish Methodist societies, often hosting figures on their way to and from London. Amongst these visitors was the evangelist Gideon Ouseley, who

⁹³ This incident is crossed out in Moore’s initial draft of Fletcher’s manuscript.

⁹⁴ See for example, the memoirs of Wesley’s housekeeper Sarah Ryan.

⁹⁵ Moore, *Life of Mary Fletcher*, pp. x-xi.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xii.

⁹⁷ D’Arcy also published a French biography of Wesley based on Moore and Coke’s co-authored biography.

travelled to various parts of England, including Madeley, between 1817 and 1818.⁹⁸ Another significant acquaintance⁹⁹ of Moore's was Adam Averell (1754–1847), who would become a significant player in the history of Irish Methodism. Averell had attended Trinity College Dublin funded by wealthy relatives and been ordained as a deacon. However, his benefactors died before he could complete his studies and he was never ordained as priest. He married into considerable wealth and worked as curate in the parish of until a chance meeting with John Wesley led him to resign and join the Methodists. Self-supported through his wife's inheritance, Averell began to exercise a self-supported itinerant preaching ministry amongst the Irish societies, sometimes administering the sacraments—an action which drew criticism from Alexander Knox, who pointed out to Bishop Jebb that his ordination as deacon did not permit him to do so.¹⁰⁰

Londonderry Revisited

It was perhaps on account of his Irish connections that Moore was sent back to Ireland in 1817 to deal with yet another crisis pertaining to the rights of preachers over and against trustees. The epicenter of the dispute was the Londonderry circuit, where Moore had begun his itinerancy in 1779, but the roots of the conflict may be traced back to the year 1795, when the Irish conference rejected the request of the Lisburn circuit to administer the sacraments. As the Irish Methodist societies always met prior to the English conference, they did not benefit from the Plan of Pacification that had been agreed to at the English conference only a few weeks later that year. However, three preachers (Joseph Sutcliffe and John McFarland in Cork, and John McFarland in Lisburn), administered the sacrament in spite of conference decision and were subsequently put on trial at the Irish conference of 1796.

The Irish conference's discipline of these men¹⁰¹ only aggravated the leadership of the Lisburn circuit, who issued further petitions to conference for administration of the sacraments and lay representation. The conference of 1798, meeting in the midst of the '98 Irish rebellion, viewed these petitions as "founded on the principles of Jacobinism" and expelled 32 leaders in the Lisburn circuit. The result of this heavy-handed response was the withdrawal of some two hundred members and the entry of Alexander Kilham's New

⁹⁸ Arthur, *The Life of Gideon Ouseley*, p. 212.

⁹⁹ The relationship between Moore and Averell does not appear have been especially close. Moore hardly appears in Averell's published memoir, and Smith states that Moore thought his behavior in 1817 was "disappointing." Moore met with Averell at least once while the former was stationed in Liverpool, but gives no details regarding the encounter (Alexander Stewart and George Revington, eds. *Memoir of the Rev. Averell*, p. 269).

¹⁰⁰ Cooney, *The Methodists in Ireland*, p. 61.

¹⁰¹ Sutcliffe returned to England and his name does not appear in the Irish minutes.

Connexion into Ireland. The matter then rested until 1812, when leaders in Belfast issued a letter to other circuit leaders requesting permission to administer the sacraments. They noted that many of their members were Presbyterian, and that both Church of Ireland clergy and Presbyterian ministers were unwilling to give communion to those who attended Methodist meetings.

Adam Clarke returned to Ireland in summer of 1816 to preside over the conference and two speakers were chosen: Adam Averell, who argued for the “old plan” and Matthew Tobias, who argued for administering the sacraments. No consensus could be reached, however, and in the Fall of 1816, those who wished to see Methodism remain a society within the Church of Ireland met in Clones separately. They chose Averell as their leader and appointed eighteen preachers who held to “Wesley’s original principles.”

By the time Moore returned to Ireland in 1817, most of the Londonderry society had sided with the “Church Methodists” led by Averell. However, the trust deed to the Londonderry chapel (on Magazine Street), was settled on the conference plan.

A preacher named John Dinnen had been appointed there by the 1816 conference, but the chapel trustees were offended by his administering the sacraments according to the Wesleyan conference’s decision. In a curious parallel to the Bristol case, the trustees at Londonderry had turned out Dinnen—refusing to allow him to preach or perform any ministerial functions at the chapel—and put one of their own local preachers in his place. The trial of the case coincided with the Conference and Moore was asked by the counsel representing the Conference in the Derry chapel case. “I gave him full information concerned Mr. Wesley, his views, ordinations and liberal plan,—so different from the spirit displayed in all this commotion,” Moore wrote to his wife on July 5, 1817. “I showed him my own authority to administer the sacraments under Mr. Wesley’s own hand; and this document went into court, and I believe settled the whole question, as is attested by the court on the back of the document.”¹⁰²

The decision of the Dublin court was that the trustees would be required to challenge Chancery at their own expense if they wished to challenge the conference’s right to appoint preachers at the Derry chapel. Rather than pursue this costly course of action, the Primitive Methodists formally split from the Wesleyan-Methodists.

Moore returned to Ireland in 1823 to preside at the Irish conference (as was the tradition). “Forgetting all the painful past,—caused by the late schism . . . the brethren are casting off their depression, and are looking for good days,” he wrote to his wife. “I have great comfort in our own people, and the separatists treat me with much respect and

¹⁰² Moore’s letter quoted in Smith, *Life*, pp. 264–265.

kindness."¹⁰³ The Primitive Wesleyan Society would maintain a separate existence until the 1860s.¹⁰⁴

Wesley's Revenge: The Episcopal Ordination of the Irish Primitive Preachers

It is a little known irony of Methodist history that John's desire to see his preachers ordained came to fruition in Ireland more than a century after the ordination of Thomas Coke for America.¹⁰⁵

Rather than disappearing into the Established church, the Irish Primitives continued to grow at a rapid rate: In 1817 it consisted of 6,136 members with 18 preachers. By 1835 it boasted 17,738 members with 66 preachers, 21 scripture readers and a missionary school master. From 1824 onwards, the Irish Primitives maintained their own book room and publication *The Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, printed in Dublin.¹⁰⁶ An evangelical revival that swept through Presbyterian churches of Ulster in 1859, also led to significant gains to the Irish Primitives in Cos. Londonderry, Tyrone, Armagh and Down.

Though numbers had begun to wane several years after the revivals, the end of Irish Primitive Methodism occurred when William Gladstone introduced a parliamentary bill in 1868 to disestablish the Church of Ireland as the state church of Ireland—an act calculated to help quell tensions between Catholics and Protestants. Under this plan, the Church of Ireland would relinquish the bishops' lands and palaces, as well as the clergy's rectories, as well as glebe lands (which the church had the option to buy back at market value). The Church of Ireland would become an independent, self-governing body, responsible for its own finances, property, doctrine and discipline.

One of the concessions of the *Irish Church Act* (1869), however, was that the government would provide lifelong stipends of clergy who were in parishes as of the effective date of January 1, 1871.¹⁰⁷ Anxious to fill as many parishes as possible, the Church of Ireland looked to the Primitive Wesleyans as a source of suitable candidates. By the operative date of 1871, at least ten former Primitive Wesleyan preachers were serving as

¹⁰³ On the impact of the 1859 revival on Anglicans see, A. R. Acheson, "The evangelicals in the Church of Ireland, 1784–1859." Ph.D. Thesis. The Queens' University of Belfast, 1967.

¹⁰⁴ The most detailed account of the Irish Primitive movement to date is Robin Roddie, "Keeping the Faith: Ireland's Primitive Methodism," *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* (Oct. 2010) Vol. 57, Pt. 6, pp. 227–245.

¹⁰⁵ Crookshank concluded his 3-volume history of Irish Methodism with the 1859 revival. Roddie notes that "Crookshank is scrupulously even-handed in his treatment of both traditions, but the effect is to deceive" (Ibid., p. 229).

¹⁰⁶ This should be not confused with the English weekly *The Primitive Methodist* or monthly *Primitive Methodist Large Magazine*, published in London by the English Primitives.

¹⁰⁷ Acheson, *A History of the Church of Ireland*, p. 200.

curates in the Church of Ireland.¹⁰⁸

Meanwhile, another twenty-two Primitive Methodist preachers “ceased to travel” for unstated reasons. By 1877, the remaining Irish Primitives and the Wesleyan Methodists had agreed that the terms “Wesleyan and Primitive Wesleyan would cease to be used” and that henceforth they would be known as “The Methodist Church in Ireland.”¹⁰⁹

Moore’s Last Stand: The City Road Occupation

On November 2, 1826 Adam Clarke chaired a committee as President of Conference, with the specific aim of considering a complaint from the Superintendent of the London North circuit that Moore had “in violation of our discipline ... had continued to occupy the house at City Road.”¹¹⁰ The conference had allocated the house to the conference Superintendent, but Moore claiming the right was bequeathed to him in Wesley’s will refused to give up possession. The District Committee summoned Moore and suspended him from the circuit. Moore, however, continued to preach at City Road and published an open letter to the trustees: “You have no jurisdiction over this particular chapel; I hold it under the will of Mr. Wesley.”¹¹¹ Under Clarke’s guiding hand, however, Moore was eventually persuaded to relinquish his claim to Wesley’s house, and accept the superintendency of the closest circuit in the vicinity of the City Road Chapel.¹¹² Following the dispute, the Moores removed to a private residence at 9 London Place, London Field, Hackney, where they lived for the remainder of their lives.

Despite the fact that Moore relinquished his rights to live at City Road, however, there was still growing internal tension within the movement between lay members and the powers of conference. This came to the fore in the “Leeds Organ Case,” where trustees revolted against the Pastoral Office and growing clericalism of the Conference.¹¹³

The Warrenite Succession and the Rise of “Free Methodism”

Closely related to the Eternal Sonship controversy were discussions regarding the training of Methodist preachers. As we have seen, Methodism had relied largely on self-taught men and women drawn from the working class, and it was thought by some that this lack of formal education left younger preachers prone to theological error. This was the view of Jabez Bunitng, who had long argued for the necessity of theological training.

¹⁰⁸ Cooney, *The Methodists in Ireland*, p. 78.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. For a detailed discussion of how the merger affected Irish Methodism, see Nicola Morris, “Predicting a Bright and Prosperous Future’: Irish Methodist Membership (1855-1914) in *Wesley and Methodist Studies*, vol. 2 (Manchester: Didsbury Press, 2010), pp. 91–114.

¹¹⁰ The minutes of this meeting have been preserved at MARC (Ref. MAW Ms 78/36.1).

¹¹¹ Moore to the Trustees of City Road, MARC MAW Ms 78.36, Special Items box D3-33-5D.

¹¹² Ibid. See also WCB D6/2, Letter from Henry Moore the Stationing Committee, Bristol, July 1831.

¹¹³ Bowmer, *Pastor and People*, p. 135.

Moore strenuously opposed this from the start, but the Conference of 1833 created a committee was formed to create a plan for educating young preachers.

One of the members of that committee was Dr. Samuel Warren (1781–1862), a Wesleyan Methodist itinerant preacher who, after an early career at sea, had received MA and DD degrees at the University of Glasgow, where he had been stationed for a time. When the committee recommended the creation of a theological institution and nominated Jabez Bunting as its president, Warren attacked the scheme in a tract entitled “Remarks on the Theological Institution,” an act for which he was suspended from his position of superintendent of the Manchester circuit. He appealed the suspension in the Court of Chancery and lost, resulting in his expulsion from Conference in 1835.

Warren’s supporters organized themselves into a new organization known as the Wesleyan Methodist Association, which held its first conference in 1836 at Manchester. Later, it joined with other break-off groups to form the “The Methodist Free Churches” (not to be confused with the Free Methodist Church founded by B.T. Roberts in upstate New York), mostly in Lancashire.

David Hempton has noted that in these areas the Free Methodists “attracted those who were fed up with the political and social conservatism of the Wesleyan tradition and used their freedom to espouse a number of liberal and radical causes, from support of the Anti-Corn Law League to campaigns against the financial exactations of the Church of England.”¹¹⁴

Jabez Bunting

Percival, son of Jabez Bunting suggests that his father’s friendship with Moore “was for many years firm, frank, and affectionate, except at times when the latter asserted the authority of the Conference over ones of Wesley’s favorite sons.”¹¹⁵ Their personal intercourse, however, was terminated when certain persons “gathered around Moore in his later days who did much to cheer and comfort him, but whom my father could not meet without danger of unpleasant collision.”¹¹⁶ One of those persons was no doubt Samuel Warren.

A string of references to Moore in letters to Jabez Bunting from his close friend John Beecham¹¹⁷ indicates that the elderly Moore was still viewed as a possible threat by

¹¹⁴ Hempton, *Empire of the Spirit*, p. 104.

¹¹⁵ T. P. Bunting, *The Life of Jabez Bunting: with notices of contemporary persons and events*, vol. 1 (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1859), p. 246.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Beecham (1787–1856) was Bunting’s secretary of missions. He published a well-known *Essay on the Constitution of Wesleyan Methodism* in 1829.

Bunting and his supporters because of his opposition to the theological institution:

From the account of Mr Lessey and Dixon it appears that the violence of the opposing party at City Road [Quarterly meeting] last night was beyond all description or precedent. They both say they never saw anything equal to it in any place. They were cheered on to frenzy by Mr. Moore's furious speeches and example. The whole affair was evidently *concerted*, and the meeting packed for the purpose.¹¹⁸

A few months later, Beecham reported to Bunting that Moore, while sympathetic to the Warren's concerns, had not formally joined the secession.

We had a Book Committee on Thursday at which we talked largely on the present state of Methodistical affairs; and Mr. Moore explicitly stated in order as he said to free himself from suspicion that he had no intercourse whatever with Dr. Warren. That Dr. Warren called on him at the Conference, and he told him then what were his views as to Mr. Wesley's intentions regarding an Institution, [bu]t since then, he had no intercourse whatever with the [Doctor]. He then expressed to the meeting his disapprobation of two or three matters, but the old gentleman was answered with such spirit [that] he gave up, saying, he found he could not obtain a hearing, the tide of feeling so strong on the other side of the question. And that was the case. The preachers manifested a noble and firm spirit in behalf of Methodism.¹¹⁹

A final mention of Moore in Beecham's letters suggests that Moore had all but given up in his resistance to the incoming regime:

... We may now dispense with better with those who refuse. . . , Mr. Moore did not come near us. The President asked him at the Book-Committee, but he said he dared not come. (He was handled with such firmness at the Committee, though respectfully, that he went away weeping.)¹²⁰

The conference minutes of 1838 would report that "Samuel Warren, LLD had been excluded from our body, according to the usual forms of discipline exercised by us on such occasions. . . . Bunting, D.D., is appointed the President of the Wesleyan Theological Institution."

Moore's disillusionment with the direction of Methodism is evident in his response to a fundraising letter sent out from Conference for Bunting's Centenary fund:

I have lived and laboured many years as a Wesleyan-Methodist preacher: when I first became acquainted with Mr. Wesley, I observed that he preached the Gospel with the utmost simplicity, and he seemed to feel all that he preached, and make it all his own. I aimed to follow him, as he followed Christ. All human artificial ways he taught me to despise, believing they could no more help one who was called of God to the ministry, than (to use his own words) "Dean Swift's mill to make verses, could help a real poet." . . .

I hope I am also a Wesleyan giver: I give what I can, and at a time when I think it most needful. Had I acted otherwise, especially for the last twenty-five years, I might now, in the

¹¹⁸ John Beecham to Bunting in Ward, *Early Victorian Methodism*, p. 71.

¹¹⁹ John Beecham to Bunting, Nov. 22, 1834, in Ward, *Early Victorian Methodism*, p. 107.

¹²⁰ John Beecham to Bunting, Nov. 26, 1834, in Ward, *Early Victorian Methodism*, p. 110.

present extraordinary day, rank with the most liberal of my brethren: but I have reserved for myself, and to help those who depend upon me, but a bare sufficiency. Let no man therefore judge me as insensible to the good of Methodism, or ungrateful to the Father of light, who gave it to the world by His favored servant, because I do not give to your Centenary: I cannot, unless I would “rob Peter to pay Paul,” which I do not think it right to do, especially as now Peter seems to be the poorer of the two. Therefore,—admiring the liberality of the brethren, and yet terribly afraid of the consequences of it to the work of God, I remain, Your very affectionate brother, H: MOORE.¹²¹

Final Years

Henry Moore, born in the very middle of the eighteenth century, lingered—“a venerable relic of early Methodism”—till the middle of the nineteenth. Moore’s obituary in the Wesleyan-Methodist magazine states he was the subject of a “great and painful weariness” after suffering a stroke that left, for a time, the entire right side of his body paralyzed in October of 1832. Anecdotal evidence from the memoirs of Moore’s brother-in-law¹²² Joseph Entwistle, suggests that as early as 1834 Moore suffered from what we might now recognize as elderly depression as his ability to function became limited:

On his return home [Joseph Entwistle] found both Mr and Mrs Moore very ill and Mrs M[oore] apparently sinking his first interview with them after his return was very affecting Mrs M[oore] spoke to him about her funeral and the settlement of her temporal affairs saying I do it now the first time you and Mr. Moore are together, that I may have nothing to say about these things when I shall be too weak. Now I have done with them, and shall say no more. May the Lord fully prepare me for his kingdom." Mr. Moore wept much. "Ah!" said he, "I am a poor wretch,—a poor helpless creature. I can preach no more," and then wept again. "But," said he, "I may go first, my complaint is uncertain. I am resigned to the will of God." "I assure you," says my father, in a letter now lying before me, "it was an affecting time. Should he survive his wife, he will indeed be in a pitiable state. But it will not be of long continuance." So all thought who saw his state . . .¹²³

Mary Ann died on the 16th of August 1834. She, like Anne, was buried at City Road Chapel. Henry, however, survived for nearly a decade. While he did not publish anything after this point, he at times conveyed his thoughts to Mrs. Smith, who appears to have made a point of visiting him annually on his birthday with her children. Among Moore’s recorded thoughts are some reflections on the growing Methodist missionary enterprise and its connection to state authority.

I do not approve of any co-ercion in introducing the Gospel to the heathen: our Lord Himself lays down such simple rules to observed in these cases, that we need not err;—“If they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another.” He would have no forced used: in reference to man, He uses no force Himself: if He would force man’s free-will, all might be

¹²¹ Letter from Moore to Bunting in Smith, *Life*, pp. 335-336

¹²² Through his second marriage.

¹²³ William Entwistle, *Memoir of the Rev. Joseph Entwistle: fifty-four years a Wesleyan minister : with copious extracts from his journals and correspondence, and occasional notices of contemporary events in the history of Methodism* (Bristol: John Mason, 1848), p. 479.

saved, for the atonement of Jesus is infinite: but because He will not force man's free-will, souls perish in their sins! Man's free agency, and consequent responsibility, is a subject full of awful grandeur, and worth of the God who made him!¹²⁴

Another conversation with Moore sheds further light on Moore's opposition the formation of the theological institute.

though we have Universities for the educating and training of our own Clergy, it is still at a most serious personal cost to themselves; and that too in very numerous cases is felt to be so great, that young men who would do honour to their clerical calling, are not able to bear the cost of an University education!¹²⁵

Moore also reflected upon the shocking changes that the industrial revolution had upon book publishing and the dissemination of knowledge, which is worth quoting for it highlights the crucial role that Wesley's publishing program had once played in the early years of Methodism was now less important than it had once been:

I know nothing of these modern prices, they are all unlike what they used to be: to me it seems more like giving them, than paying for them: no wonder knowledge, cultivation, and refinement, are spreading on every hand. Formerly, a man had a great thing when he had a few good books; now, a man must have many, in order to deem it any thing: book making has increased in the full proportion to other modern inventions: formerly it was thought a great thing to be an author, and few became such, till after many years of deep thinking; now, after reading many modern productions, I should say, people think less—but write more.¹²⁶

A Final Request Denied

Although it is not strictly true that ordinations in Methodism ceased after Wesley's death (Thomas Coke had ordained several people before the Plan of Pacification), the Wesleyan Conference of 1837 officially reintroduced ordination by the "imposition of Hands" to Wesleyan Methodism. Moore, then 86, wrote a letter to the Jabez Bunting, president of conference suggesting that he had a role to play in this:

The scriptural way of ordination, by the imposition of hands, was allowed by the apostles, and since their time has been allowed by the church in every age. Mr. Wesley allowed this, and ordained—first for America—secondly for Scotland—and thirdly, for England, "when the time should come." The time came long since, but the Conference would not allow it; now that they have allowed it, what provision have they made for it?

The question lies with weight upon my mind, as I am the only person now alive that Mr. Wesley committed that power to, and I know that he committed it for the purpose that it should be become a common thing, whenever it should be judged by Conference best to adopt it. Have we renounced Mr. Wesley? Is he no longer our father in the gospel? I have been much importuned to ordain those who have unhappily been separated from us in the present contentions, but I have refused to do so, as I conceived that I possessed the power

¹²⁴ Smith, *Life*.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 268

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 362.

only for the Methodists.

I saw it is a very serious question for me to be unfaithful to God, to Mr. Wesley, and Methodism, which is their work, by thus suffering this ordination to die with me, and for I know not what reason.¹²⁷

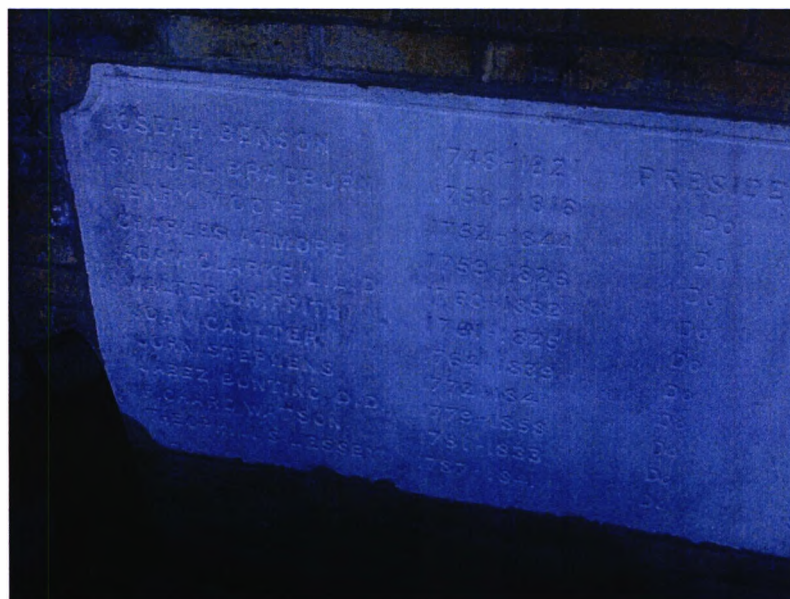
This letter was not answered by Bunting, nor was it answered by the president the following year. John Lenton, in seeking to explain why Conference did not call upon Moore to participate, has noted that there were in fact four other preachers¹²⁸ who received ordinations from Wesley still alive that year, but this is to miss Moore's point: he was the only one to have received ordination from Wesley *for England*. A far more likely explanation is that Bunting and his supporters by now considered him a loose cannon.

Death

Moore died on April 27, 1844, in the presence of Richard and Mary Anne Smith, his niece, Miss Rutherford, and William Gandy (whom Moore appointed executor of his estate).

Moore was buried on the grounds of City Road chapel. His remains, along with others, were relocated to Streatham cemetery in 1980 by an act of parliament. A memorial plaque commemorating Moore (among other presidents of conference) remains at City Road, but erroneously identifies his year of birth as 1752.

Figure 7: Memorial plaque of Conference Presidents at City Road Chapel with incorrect date of birth.



¹²⁷ Moore's letter is reproduced in Smith, *Life of Moore*, pp. 326-327.

¹²⁸ Cf. Lenton, *John Wesley's Preachers*, pp. 362-363. The others were James Bogie (ordained by Wesley for Scotland), Matthew Lumb (a missionary sent to the West Indies), John Ogylvie (ordained by Coke for Scotland) and John de Queteville (ordained by Coke to go to France in 1792).

7.

A Shepherd's Heart: Henry Moore as Preacher and Pastor

“Henry Moore greatly loved his Bible, was pre-eminent as a theologian; as a preacher—profound, luminous, and sententious, sometimes embodying a volume of thought in a sentence; and often, when preaching, appeared to be holding communion with heaven. His intellectual powers were of a high order, his understanding clear and vigorous, his judgment cool and deliberate, his decisions prompt and firm. He had strong faith, and was a man of stern fidelity, and of unbounded affection towards those who gained his confidence.” —George Stevenson¹

Although in recent years an overwhelming amount of literature has been produced on Wesley's sermons,² much less attention has been paid to the content of Wesley's preachers.³ Moore has left us not only with a selection of sermons, but also a clear articulation of his own self-identity as a Methodist preacher in the pre-Victorian Britain. Though his printed sermons may not necessarily represent what was preached from the pulpit, they at do at least give insight into the Methodist experience in this period, and at the same time helpfully dispelling the popular stereotype of Wesley's preachers as “illiterate mechanics, more fitted to make a pulpit than to get into one.”

As noted in previous chapters, there is still considerable scholarly debate amongst historians regarding the feelings of the second wave of Wesleyan preachers toward separation from the church in the period from 1780 through to the reforms of Jabez Bunting. Upon this contested ground, a meditation appended to Henry Moore's 1830 memoir offers a remarkably clear articulation of a Methodist preacher's vocational self-understanding in this period. The meditation, based on Jesus' exhortation to Peter to feed his sheep in John 21:15–17, is said by Moore to have come to him in a most extraordinary way when he was “sawn asunder” and “almost despaired of preserving our union [the

¹ George John Stevenson, *Methodist Worthies: Characteristic Sketches of Methodist Preachers ...*, Vol. 2 (London: T.C. Jack, 1884), p. 211.

² See, for e.g. the *Register of John Wesley's Preaching Texts* (1993) compiled and annotated by Wanda Willard Smith at <http://divinity.duke.edu/initiatives-centers/cswt/research-resources/register>.

³ For a helpful discussion of what Wesley's *thought* a preacher should do and say, see Richard P. Heitzenrater, “John Wesley's Principles and Practice of Preaching” *Methodist History*, 37:2 (January 1999), p. 89ff. It would probably be naive to think that all of Wesley's preachers followed these principles.

Wesleyan Conference] as a *work of God*.”⁴

The discourse, which he felt “immediately impelled to write as fast as his fingers could move,” was never preached or published in those years, but, states Moore,

I have used it only as the seaman uses his chart, while steering through unknown seas. I have sometimes thought of enlarging it, and forming it into a regular discourse, that I might use it in that way. But I never could find freedom to do so; I could not even attempt it. I can, however, now commit it, with this abridged account of my life, and of the Lord’s gracious dealings with me, to the consideration of all those whom it may concern.... It has certainly been helpful to me, in preserving me from departing from the work, or from giving up any part of it; and in enabling me to pass through, and even to praise the Lord in, the fires that nearly consumed me.⁵

Moore then proceeds to outline a theology of ministry based upon Christ’s words to Peter, “feed my sheep.” His first point addresses socio-economic prejudice:

With respect to this calling: It does not appear that there is any need for a man to be a Lord in order to be a shepherd; though some of those have been shepherds also, of whom the Lord will not be ashamed. It does not appear that a man need be rich in this world in order to be a shepherd. This shepherd said, *Silver or gold have I none*. Indeed, if he happen to have this world’s goods, as some of them have had, he need not be hindered thereby, so that he does not *trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God*, or grow delicate through them; *but still endures hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*, and is *merciful after his power*.⁶

A second emphasis is the clearly aimed at dispelling both high church prejudice and low church anti-clericalism. The possession of Latin and biblical languages is also questioned as being essential to the preacher’s task:

It does not appear that he needs a black gown, a white gown, or any gown, in order to be a shepherd: Yet neither are these the marks of a wolf, as some have said. Some that have worn them have been *workmen that needed not to be ashamed*, and *fathers who naturally cared for the flock*. Neither does it appear that a shepherd should be either able or willing to speak in *an unknown tongue to the sheep*. This is child’s play, or worse, as St. Paul declares to the sheep of his day. If, indeed, he happens to have a store of this kind, and finds that it makes him a wiser and a more able Minister, let him be thankful, and glory only in the Lord.⁷

What is far more important to fulfilling Christ’s mandate, according to Moore, is the spiritual state of the shepherd himself.

But there is a great need that he should be *a man of God*,— a man devoted to God,—a man influenced by God,—a man not living to himself, but to Him who lived and died, and rose again for him,—a man that contends with the devil, with *the armour of God upon him*,—a

⁴ Smith, *Life*, p. 95

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁷ *Ibid.*

man that has help from God, and refuge in God,—a man that has happiness in God; that, whether his message is received or rejected, he *may rejoice, and glory in the God of his salvation.*⁸

However, this in no way excuses a preacher from diligent study of Scripture:

He should know the *word of God*, and the *work of God*. He should be a man of one book. He should read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it. He should eat it, as some of the Prophets were ordered to do: And he should use what helps he can get, in order fully to understand it; that he may be *a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*⁹

Finally, Moore stresses the importance of religious experience in the call to pastor:

He should know the work of God. He should be able to say, God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to enlighten us with the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. . . . He should know repentance unto life, the new birth, the witness of God, the strivings of the flesh and the spirit, the establishing grace, the dwelling in love, and so dwelling in God.¹⁰

The Preacher's Content

Unfortunately the parameters of this thesis do not permit an exhaustive analysis of Moore's theological emphases or his preaching texts (which may be observed in Moore's short-hand journal). In light of the arguments presented in the previous chapters, however, it should be mentioned that Moore's preaching was at times politically charged. His sermon "Fear God and Honour the King!" (based upon Matthew 22:21: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's") rails against the *Conventicles Act* in no uncertain terms:

By this Act thousands of men guilty of no crime were stripped of all they had and with their families turned out of house and home and reduced to little less than beggary for no other fault real or pretended but because they did not dare to render to Caesar or to man the things which were God's to worship him according to other men's consciences. . . .

By the Act against Conventicles if any person should assemble to worship God except in the churches of the establishment they were first robbed of all their substance and if they persisted of their liberty also often of their lives. Such was the liberty of conscience that Englishmen enjoyed during the reign of the Stuarts. Can we wonder therefore that the Lord permitted their total overthrow by the Revolution of 1688?¹¹

Preaching in the Methodist Chapel, Bath, on Sunday, January 19th, 1794 while the "Reign of Terror" raged in France, Moore urged his hearers to remain loyal in order to protect their religious freedom:

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., p. 99

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Moore, "Fear God: Honour the King!" in *Sermons*, p. 38.

But does any man in this nation now suffer any thing like this. Does our present King or did any of that family persecute any man for his religion? Has not every man in this nation a legal as well as a natural right to worship God according to his own conscience? Look round you and see how religious communities of every description sit under their own vine and fig tree none making them afraid. . . Let us then be grateful for the blessings we enjoy Let us fear God and honour the King!¹²

Henry Moore's "Tabletalk"

In 1832, George Osborn (1808–1891) was a young preacher on trial, in the circuit under the supervision of his superintendent, Henry Moore, then 80 years old. He would go on to be the President of the Wesleyan Methodist conference. Living for a time under Moore's roof, Osborn repeatedly attempted to get Moore to write out, or to dictate, his personal memories of John Wesley. He did not succeed, but himself made notes of Moore's "tabletalk," which does not appear to have been published until the twentieth century.¹³

Those reminiscences of some older preachers are interesting for what they reveal about Moore's views of other preachers: "Andrew Blair," Moore recalled, "was very zealous, but a rough, noisy preacher. A friend once took a child to hear him, and the boy afterward said, on being asked, that he did not like the preacher at all—he cursed and swore so! I heard Mr. Wesley tell this story once when preaching from the text 'If any man speak, let him speak the oracles of God.' He said: 'No man can be bullied into heaven, or ever was. You would not like to be counted cursers and swearers.'"¹⁴

"Captain Webb was a red-hot preacher. He took some text about the Holy Ghost out of one of the epistles and went on this effect: 'the words of the text were written by the apostles after the act of justification had passed on them. But you see, my friends this was not enough for them. They must receive the Holy Ghost after this. So must you. You must be sanctified. But you are not. You are only Christians in part. You have not received the Holy Ghost. I know it. I can feel your spirits hanging about me like so much dead flesh.'"¹⁵

The Preacher's Remuneration

While moving around the circuits, the full-time traveling preachers were, at first, expected to "live off the land," often lodging in the homes of local Methodists. Local societies were also expected to meet needs relating to horses, laundry, posting letters and mending clothes. The 1744 Conference had laid down a rule that preachers were to "take

¹² Ibid., 39.

¹³ See Hurst, *The History of Methodism*, Vol. 3, pp. 1252ff. (1902) sources Moore's tabletalk as being located in papers of George Osborn at Drew University. Regrettably, archivists at Drew were unable to locate this manuscript prior to submitting this thesis.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

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 pretense to say, we grow rich by the Gospel." As the number of preachers increased, however, this rule soon became impractical, particularly for clothing, so it was dropped from the "Twelve Rules" for preachers around 1752, and several circuits instituted a yearly allowance of £10 or £12 for clothing expenses.

Moore's tabletalk, as recorded by George Osborn, adds some further details to how the £12 allowance was dispersed on the London circuit by the 1780s:

when I first came to London, and had not a second coat, nor could I procure another. We had a tailor among the local preachers, and I wore his coat while he turned mine. And at that time I was living in Mr. Wesley's house as his assistant. He used to say sometimes, "Henry, you don't treat me like a friend; you never tell me of any thing you want." "Indeed, sir," I said, "I'd be loath to rob the poor box." I knew he gave away all he had. My wife, I remember, once had great difficulty in persuading him to have some new stockings, and at last bought them herself, and got the money afterwards from the stewards.¹⁶

Amongst other interesting details we learn that Wesley's preachers would gather at the Wesley's breakfast table on Sunday morning to receive their appointments for the day.

The sacrament was administered every Lord's-day morning by the clergymen who assisted Mr. Wesley, and that collection kept those at the chapel [City Road]. In answer to young Osborn's question: "Then how were the preachers paid, Sir?" "Why, there was a table at the house, sir, where they might eat their fill; and the stewards gave them a stipend of three pounds per quarter."¹⁷

Marriage and children presented additional challenges to the itinerant system and each circuit seems to have addressed the issue differently, some offering allowances for wives and children, others protesting against any stipend whatsoever. On account of his not having any children by either his first or second wife, Moore was perhaps spared from some of the pressures that forced other young itinerants to "locate." Yet he was not unaware of the financial challenges facing many of the preachers and one of his lasting contributions to the Methodist ministry was the proposing and then implementing a fund for retired preachers that eventually became known as "The Itinerant Methodist Preacher's Annuitant Society."¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ This portion of Osborn's text is quoted in William Henry Meredith, *The Real John Wesley* (Cincinnati, OH: Jennings & Graham Jennings and Py, 1903), pp. 144–145.

¹⁸ For a more detailed discussion of Moore's role in this see Lloyd, A. Kingsley, *The Labourer's Hire: the payment and deployment of the early Methodist preachers (1744-1813)* (Wesley Historical Society, 1968).

8. A Collective Memory: Henry Moore Amongst the Early Biographers of Wesley

“Moore’s personal recollections of Wesley form the finest collection of contemporary anecdotes about our Founder extant.” —John Telford¹

“Moore should have been Wesley’s Boswell, but he was scarcely that . . .” —Henry Rack²

When the ex-Methodist preacher turned Anglican curate John Hampson³ (c. 1753–1819) wrote the preface to what would become the first published biography of John Wesley, he did not feel that he had any need to defend himself for publishing some of the less flattering details of Wesley’s life. “The only circumstance which seems to demand an apology,” he wrote,

is the publication of these memoirs during Mr. Wesley’s life. Was he a mere private gentleman, whatever might be his distinction in the republic of letters, such an apology might be necessary. But his case is peculiar. He has been for more than half a century, in the most extensive import of the word, a *public character*. It is impossible to make him more so, than he has rendered himself.⁴

That John Wesley intended himself to be (and even remains to this day) a “public character” is indisputable. The extent to which Wesley projected his own public image in eighteenth-century, and whether that image was an accurate reflection of himself,

¹ John Telford, “Hinde-Street Chapel, London and its Associations: II.—The Pulpit” in *Wesleyan-Methodist magazine: being a continuation of the Arminian or Methodist magazine first publ. by John Wesley* (London: Wesleyan-Methodist Book Room, 1885), p. 751.

² Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p. 537.

³ Hampson (1753–1819) was the son of Wesley’s preacher John Hampson (d. 1795). He was educated at Kingswood School and admitted as a trial preacher in 1777. He preached in Ireland for three years and later returned to Britain, where he served until the *Deed of Declaration* (1784) provoked his withdrawal from Methodism in 1785 (BDEB, p. 512).

⁴ Hampson, *Memoirs*, Vol. 1., p. xvi, emphasis mine.

however, is a somewhat different matter, and one that the present writer wishes to explore in this chapter through a brief survey of the early biographies of Wesley, followed by an assessment of Moore's significance in crystallizing the memory of John Wesley to later generations.

Before delving into the question of Wesley's own public image, however, it is necessary to place Wesley's death within the broader history of writing and publishing at the close of the eighteenth century.

English Biography and Print Culture in the 1790s

The late eighteenth century has often been described as the "golden age" of English biography.⁵ Beginning with Dr. Samuel Johnson's publication of *The Lives of the English Poets* (1779–81) the art of the modern historical biography reached its zenith with the publication of James Boswell's *Life of Johnson* on May 16, 1791⁶—just weeks after Wesley's death on March 2nd of the same year. Acknowledged by many to be the first definitive example of the modern English biography, Boswell's *Johnson* set a new standard for the art of biographical writing, and made Boswell famous in his own right, such that he is still considered one of the greatest biographers in the western canon.⁷ The subject of Boswell's biography was none other than Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709–1784), a contemporary of Wesley at Oxford—and, as fate would have it, a victim of Wesley's questionable practice of paraphrasing other peoples' ideas without (at least by modern standards) properly crediting the source.⁸

To place the early biographies of Wesley in proper context, it should also be noted that the 1790s marked a remarkable convergence of copyright reform, popular literacy and improvements in paper manufacturing so that price of books had dropped, perhaps for the first time in history, within reach of the masses. The number of titles published increased dramatically, and the circulation of those titles grew through the formation of reading

⁵ It is worth noting that it was during this time that the terms "biography" and "autobiography" first entered the English lexicon.

⁶ The Boswellian approach to biography differed from earlier English biographies because it did not follow a chronological narration of the subject's life but instead used anecdotes and incidents selectively, letting the subject "speak for itself" as much as possible.

⁷ So much so that to call someone a "boswell" is to call them "an assiduous and devoted admirer, student, and recorder of another's words and deeds" (OED).

⁸ Wesley had met with Johnson and Boswell on occasion, causing Johnson to famously remark to Boswell that "John Wesley's conversation is good, but he is never at leisure. He is always obliged to go at a certain hour. This is very disagreeable to a man who loves to fold his legs and have out his talk, as I do." Wesley's controversial tract, *Calm Address to our American Colonies* (1775) was more or less an extract and paraphrase of Johnson's work titled *Taxation no Tyranny*. Augustus Toplady (best remembered today as the author of the hymn "Rock of Ages") charged Wesley with plagiarism (among other offenses) in his tract *An Old Fox Tarr'd and Feather'd* (1775).

societies and libraries.⁹

The year 1791, besides being the year of Wesley's death and marking the publication of Boswell's *Johnson*, also saw the arrival of Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man* in England, one of the bestselling and most influential of texts printed in the Romantic period;¹⁰ and the publication of William Fox's tract *An Address to the Peoples of Great Britain*, a publication that would change the course of world history by raising popular opposition against the British slave trade. In short, the year 1791 was a banner year for the English book trade.

Thus, it is not in the least surprising that the first biographies of John Wesley would be of great interest to publishers and booksellers servicing the rapidly expanding numbers of "reading societies" in urban centres such as London and Dublin, not to mention the growing numbers of Methodist faithful across the Atlantic. Since at least the 1760s Wesley had already attained a sort of religious celebrity status throughout the British Isles, and it may well have been on that basis alone that one bookseller suggested to John Whitehead, Wesley's personal physician, that a finished biography of Wesley should be worth at least 1000 guineas to its author (roughly £1050), whilst another bookseller suggested as much as 2000 (£2100)—both remarkable sums¹¹ given that most of Wesley's preachers were living on less than £40 a year. The opportunity was helpfully summarized by a journalist in London's *Morning Chronicle*:

Though John Wesley was a thin man, his bones will afford a good picking to *the Biographers*, a legion of whom are now brandishing their grey goose quills *about his life*. Neither eloquence nor accuracy are at all requisite; the whole depends upon expedition, for the first oars will be sure of a silver badge.¹²

Wesley's *Journal* and the Early Biographies

In placing John Wesley in the broader sweep of charismatic movements throughout church history, Msgr. Ronald Knox, writing in the mid-twentieth century, suggested that it "would be hard to find another man so famous whose works are less generally read. Only the *Journal* retains its popularity, and even this has been described as 'more remarkable for

⁹ For a helpful overview of the book trade in this time period, see William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p 256

¹¹ Henry Moore alleges that these figures were presented by Whitehead after consulting booksellers in London, see Moore, "A Plain Account," mss. reproduced in Heitzenrater, *Faithful unto Death: Last Years and Legacy of John Wesley: Catalog of an Exhibition in The Elizabeth Perkins Prothro Galleries Commemorating the Bicentenary of John Wesley's Death* (Dallas: Texas: Bridwell Library, 1991), p. 100.

¹² *Morning Chronicle* (Mar. 7, 1791) cited in Vivian Green, *John Wesley* (London: Nelson, 1964).

its record of spiritual energy than of intellectual endeavour.”¹³

Knox is surely right on at his first point, for historians today have access to more information about John Wesley’s day-to-day life than nearly any other figure in the eighteenth-century,¹⁴ yet there persists some striking discrepancies—if I may borrow Albert Schweitzer’s famous distinctions¹⁵—between the “John Wesley of faith”¹⁶ and the “historical Wesley.”¹⁷ However we might explain the discrepancies, it is plainly not for lack of resources: Those who wish to study John Wesley today have at their disposal an overwhelming number of publications to choose from, not to mention vast stores of unpublished manuscripts and letters. More than three hundred studies of Wesley have been catalogued, and 26 volumes¹⁸ of Wesley’s sermons, letters, journals and diaries are enough to make one wonder if anything new or helpful can further be said or written about John Wesley in the twenty-first century.¹⁹

Leaving that question aside, my focus in this chapter is not on what we may know about Wesley *now*, but rather to understand how Wesley was interpreted *before* and *immediately after his death* by his friends, followers and subsequent generations of Methodists and Wesleyans. The early biographies played a significant role, not only in forming a distinct Methodist self-identity, but also in crystallizing a collective memory of the “father of Methodism” which remains in some part with his spiritual descendants to this day. It was this *received* Wesley, not the Wesley of later scholarship, which would

¹³ Ronald A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion* (Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 446.

¹⁴ This is partly due to the scholarly efforts of Richard P. Heitzenrater, who deciphered and published Wesley’s private diaries, having discovered the key to Wesley’s own cipher when translating Benjamin Ingham’s diary. John and Charles later switched to a system based on Byrom’s patented “universal” shorthand system, which was officially taught at both Oxford and Cambridge universities for a time.

¹⁵ Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, trans. by W. Montgomery (London: A & C. Black, 1911).

¹⁶ “Wesley of faith” is not soteriological category in the sense that Schweitzer’s “Christ of faith” is, but the Wesley of popular folklore has sometimes been presented as almost single-handedly initiating the eighteenth-century evangelical revivals and the social reforms that followed.

¹⁷ For a helpful inventory of persisting myths about John Wesley see John A. Vickers, “Myths of Methodism,” Wesley Historical Society, 2008. Further discrepancies between Wesley’s views and popular evangelical culture are well, though irreverently, illustrated by Stephen Tomkins viral “10 Things You’d Hate about John Wesley (and 10 Things He’d Hate About You!): http://mondaymorninginsight.com/blog/post/10_things_you_d_hate_about_john_wesley_and_10_things_hed_hate_about_you/ (Accessed March 8, 2011) and to a lesser extent Tomkin’s biography, *John Wesley, A Biography* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), which takes a similar tone.

¹⁸ Of a projected 35 volumes.

¹⁹ This not to suggest that the facts of Wesley life and ministry do not bear repeating to future generations, or that his basic understanding of the Christian life was wrong.

shape popular conceptions of Methodism, for better or worse,²⁰ well into the mid-nineteenth century.

The Public vs. the Private Mr. Wesley

Until the first biographies of Wesley were published in the 1790s, the primary window through which the public had come to know the man called Wesley (apart from personal encounter or second hand knowledge through his followers) was through Wesley's own publications²¹ or those of his detractors,²² neither of which one would expect to be especially objective. What the reading public (be they Methodists or otherwise) could know of Wesley was largely still largely dependent upon Wesley's self-published sermons, tracts (e.g., *A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists*), his *Arminian Magazine*, and his published *Journals*.

The latter deserves some special comment because they are often taken by contemporary readers at face value to be the published version of Wesley's own personal memoirs. In reality, however, Wesley's published *Journals* were carefully vetted prior to publication,²³ and they do not include everything contained in his manuscript journal, nor do they include anything contained in his private diaries, which have only recently been deciphered and published.²⁴ Furthermore, although they tell us a great deal about his daily affairs, his convictions and contacts, as well as other aspects pertaining to early Methodism, they skip over some aspects of his life such as his marriage and sometimes troubled relationships with his own family members, and, perhaps more to the point, how some of those factors have had a bearing on what otherwise looks like self-contradictory

²⁰ John Henry Newman, after reading Southey's life wrote, "I do not like Wesley—putting aside his exceeding self-confidence, he seems to me to have a very black self-will, a bitterness of religious passion, which is very unamiable (*Letters and correspondence of John Henry Newman*, Vol. 2, p. 199).

²¹ John Wesley began publishing tracts while he was still a student at Oxford. He owned and operated the press for nearly fifty years, and when he died in 1791 there were more than 351 titles and 254,512 volumes in inventory. This was appraised as being worth £4000 at his death, and constituted nearly all of his personal wealth (Burton, *Spiritual Literacy*, p. 235). See also Isabel Rivers, "John Wesley as Editor and Publisher," *Cambridge Companion to John Wesley* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

²² By 1846, anti-Methodist literature would go on to become a kind of genre in itself as evidenced by the publication Curtis H. Cavender's *Catalogue of Works in Refutation of Methodism: from its Origin in 1729, to the Present Time* (Philadelphia: John Pennington, 1846), which lists more than one hundred documents, books, pamphlets and articles deemed to be "anti-Methodistical"

²³ For a helpful rhetorical analysis of Wesley's *Journals* see, Vicki Tolar Burton, *Spiritual Literacy in John Wesley's Methodism: Reading, Writing and Speaking to Believe* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2008), pp. 77–99.

²⁴ Ted A. Campbell, in his comparison of Wesley's journal and diaries, concludes, "there was a side of John Wesley that was kept from public view, and his private self was as complex as his public self. His private letters often reveal a character that could be emotionally manipulative or voyeuristic with respect to his most intimate correspondents" ("Wesley as Diarist and Correspondent," in *Cambridge Companion to Wesley*, p. 142).

behavior.

For example, Wesley says hardly anything regarding his relationships with women.²⁵ Nor does he mention the falling out he had with his brother Charles later in life, a theme that has been recently explored in some detail by Gareth Lloyd, who convincingly argues that relations between the brothers were so extremely strained in their later years that their theological quarrels over the ordination of preachers and separation from the Church “were the results of the brothers’ alienation, not the cause.”²⁶

Either way, such gaps in the narrative naturally raise an important question for historians: Can Wesley’s Journals be trusted as accurately reflecting Wesley, or are they be understood as Wesley’s own self-projection to his critics?

To raise this question is not to cast a shadow on Wesley by suggesting he is being “two-faced,” or intentionally projecting an image which he knew to be false, but it is to point out that a number of recent scholarly endeavors have concluded they are best treated as apologetic literature rather than diaries in the popular sense of the word today. When one considers that Wesley kept a private diary (as opposed to his public journal) for his own edification and spiritual discipline, it becomes all the more apparent that much of his published journal was meant from the beginning to be read by others, though of course it includes letters that may not have been originally penned with publication in mind.

Perhaps the best example of this is the first volume of Wesley’s journal, covering 1735–1738, first published in 1740.²⁷ As Wesley himself states in his preface, its publication was a direct response to an attack on Wesley’s character by Robert Williams, a merchant from Bristol, who had returned from Georgia and wished to publicize Wesley’s troublesome episode with Sophey Hopkey.²⁸ Rather than deal with those accusations head on, Wesley instead—in a bold rhetorical move—chose to begin his defense against William’s accusations with an account of his Holy Club activities, by reproducing a letter he wrote in reply to Richard Morgan, the father of William Morgan:²⁹

²⁵ Gareth Lloyd, *Charles Wesley and the Struggle for Methodist Identity* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

²⁶ Lloyd, p. 133. Lloyd argues that Wesley’s ecclesiology was as much shaped by conflict with his brother as it was on theological grounds. For an alternative view see Gwang Seok Oh, *John Wesley’s Ecclesiology: A Study in its Sources and Development* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2008).

²⁷ John Wesley, *An extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley’s journal from his embarking for Georgia to his return to London* (Bristol, 1740). Page references hereafter are to the standard critical edition: John Wesley, *Journal and Diaries I (1735–1738)* edited by W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 18 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976–).

²⁸ Wesley, *Works* (BE) 18:123.

²⁹ Morgan, a young Irish student, was one of the first members of the Holy Club in 1729. He led the Wesleys to visit the prisoners at the Castle in Oxford and to engage in visiting the sick. Morgan,

Sir:

The occasion of my giving you this trouble is of very extraordinary nature. On Sunday last I was informed (as no doubt you will be ere long) that my brother and I had killed your son.³⁰

In doing so, Wesley did not just respond to Williams' accusations regarding his experience in Georgia, but set himself up against a much broader backdrop of God's working in his life. It is as though he is reminding his readers that this was not the first time he had been criticized. And what an introduction it is! Besides grabbing the reader's attention, and broadening the discussion beyond the Georgia episode, Wesley is clearly out to tell *his* side of the story and place it within a larger narrative of the "work of God," and to give answer to them who 'say all manner of evil of [him] falsely.'³¹

A good deal more could be said on the apologetic function of Wesley's *Journal*, but it will suffice to say that Wesley did not necessarily set out to answer the kinds of questions that a modern biographer (in the tradition of Boswell) might wish to ask about his overall trajectory in life and its significance in the broader sweep of human history. In this sense, Wesley's *Journal*, if read in isolation, leaves us with an incomplete picture of the man.³² There is, of course, no doubt as to its authorship and the general sequence of events, but the writing of the first biography of Wesley would have necessarily required its author to fill in some significant gaps.

The First Biography: Hampson's *Memoirs*

Though a number of eulogies for Wesley were published, the first writer to seriously attempt such a fully orbited portrait was John Hampson, who, at the time of Wesley's death, was serving as the Anglican minister in Sunderland. Hampson had been a preacher under Wesley, as his father of the same name had been,³³ but he had parted ways with Wesley because Wesley had named neither himself nor his father as part of the legal hundred, the list of preachers that Wesley intended to govern the Wesleyan connexion in the event of his death. Hampson seems to have had expected that Wesley would respond to his criticisms, and Wesley's untimely death appears to have caught him off guard: When

who had been in ill-health since June 1731 died August 25. His father originally attributed his unfortunate demise to the Wesley's influence.

³⁰ Introductory letter published in Wesley's journal, dated Oct. 18, 1732.

³¹ Wesley, "Preface," *Journals and Diaries I*, in *Works* (BE) 18:122.

³² Richard P. Heitzenrater's book, *The Elusive Mr. Wesley*, is a particularly helpful in showing how Wesley's contemporaries saw him.

³³ Hampson Sr.—a "man of gigantic make, well proportioned, and of the strongest muscular powers" was well-known amongst Wesley's preachers, not least for once dispersing a mob closing in on John Wesley in Norwich by threatening to "lay dead" anyone who tried to molest him (Joseph Butterworth Bulmer Clarke, *Adam Clarke*, Vol. 1), pp. 209–10.

Wesley died on March 2nd the first of his three volumes had already been printed,³⁴ leaving the Hampson in the socially awkward position of having just criticized a recently deceased man.

As might be expected, Hampson's *Memoirs* takes issue with Wesley's authoritarian control over his preachers, as well as with some of his doctrinal particularities, but otherwise it is not altogether unkind towards Wesley and more or less succeeds in his stated goal to present both his "excellencies" and his "foibles." Among those foibles, Hampson included Wesley's marriage, which he deemed both as hypocritical (because Wesley had opposed it for his preachers and had even threatened some of them with expulsion) and as evidence of Wesley's poor judgment in general. "There never was a more preposterous union," wrote Hampson:

.... had he searched the kingdom through, he could not have pitched upon a person less proper for a gentleman in his situation. The passions of this lady sometimes hurried her into outrage and indecency. More than once she laid violent hands upon his person, and tore those venerable locks which had sufficiently suffered from the ravages of time.³⁵

Such accounts did nothing to endear Hampson's work to Wesley's preachers, and shortly after its publication the following circular was issued by the executor's of Wesley's estate:

The executors of the late Rev. John Wesley think it necessary to caution his numerous friends and the public against receiving any spurious or hasty accounts of his life as three gentlemen to whom he has bequeathed his manuscripts and other valuable papers will publish an authentic narrative as soon as it be prepared for the press.³⁶

The Moore-Whitehead Controversy³⁷

But who would write this "authentic narrative"? Wesley's will had stipulated that a committee of three men should take care of his remaining manuscripts—Thomas Coke (who had since returned from America); Henry Moore (who had recently been assigned to Bristol) and Dr. John Whitehead (c. 1740–1804), who resided in London.³⁸ Besides being

³⁴ John Hampson, *Memoirs of the Late Rev. John Wesley, A.M. with a review of his life and writings and a History of Methodism, from its commencement in 1729 to the present time*. 3 Vols. Sunderland: Printed for the Author by J. Graham, 1791.

³⁵ Hampson, *Memoirs*, Vol 2, p. 127. Contra Heitzenrater in *The Elusive Mr. Wesley*, the account of Wesley being "dragged across the floor" by Mrs. Wesley was not published in Hampson's memoir, but rather appears in John Telford's biography which sources the account from the private papers of Hampson, Sr.

³⁶ Quoted from Moore, "A Plain Account," p. 91.

³⁷ This controversy is adequately documented in George Stevenson's *City Road Chapel* and its Associations and requires no further elaboration here. Moore prepared a manuscript detailing his side of the case for publication, but for whatever reason elected not to publish it. The entire text of Moore's manuscript is reproduced in Heitzenrater, *Faithful unto Death*, pp. 85–125.

³⁸ Whitehead "was born of humble but respectable provincial parents, who gave him a classical educational and early in life was connected with the Wesleys, but left them and set up as a linen

the named recipients of Wesley's manuscripts, the three men were also charged with the duty of seeing Wesley's papers "burnt or published as they see good."

On July 4th, Whitehead wrote to Moore expressing his feelings that Hampson's *Memoirs* had come "infinitely short of what [he] expected of them, except the single article of ill nature,"³⁹ and that he "was determined comply with the wishes of the executors and other friends" to write a Life of Mr. Wesley. To that end, Whitehead requested that Moore come to London so that they might meet with Dr. Coke, break the seals on the manuscripts in each other's presence, and examine them "as soon as may be" (Wesley's papers until this time had been held by Mr. Rogers, book steward, at City Road). Unable to make the trip due to his preaching duties, Moore gave permission for Rogers to deliver the manuscripts into the care of Whitehead until he could get to London.

On an earlier trip to London, Moore had called on Whitehead and suggested that it would be best for him to undertake the writing of a life of Wesley, since both he and Coke were engaged in itinerancy, and further that this proposed publication should be "chiefly a compilation from his own writings."⁴⁰ But after taking possession of the manuscripts Whitehead refused to allow Moore access to the manuscripts and demanded that he be allowed to complete his biography prior to any papers being burned. A pamphlet war then ensued between supporters of Moore and Whitehead, with Moore alleging that Whitehead had originally agreed to a sum of £100 for this task, but having consulted with booksellers now wanted to retain copyright of the work. When negotiations with Whitehead and his supporters broke down, Whitehead was disciplined by the conference and barred from the pulpit. As Whitehead still refused to hand over the manuscripts, Thomas Coke began legal proceedings against him in the Court of Chancery. By the end of the proceedings, the London society—having born the cost of both sides—had expended £2000 in legal expenses.⁴¹

Left with the task of publishing a biography themselves, Coke and Moore decided to beat Whitehead to press as a means of undercutting any damage Whitehead might do with

draper in Bristol. Having failed in business, he became a Quaker, and was placed in a school by that body at Wandsworth. He subsequently attended a son of Mr. Barclay, the brewer, to Leyden, where he studied medicine with such success and perseverance as induced Dr. Lettsom to get him nominated physician to the London Dispensary. He eventually, however, quitted the Quakers and returned to the Methodists" (John Gorton, *A General Biographical Dictionary*, 4 vols. [London: 1851], vol. 4, n.p., entry for "Whitehead, John").

³⁹ Whitehead's letter is quoted in Moore, *A Plain Account*, p. 92.

⁴⁰ Moore's preface to *Life of the Rev. John Wesley* (1824–25), vol. 1, p. x.

⁴¹ A full account may be found in George Stevenson, *City Road Chapel*, pp. 132–135.

his biography. Hastily written in a matter of months,⁴² Coke and Moore's co-authored biography was published in 1792.⁴³ It sold ten thousand copies within the year. Proceeds from the sale were designated for the preacher's fund, as was the case with most publications issued by the conference. It was also published in America in 1793 by John Dickins, who had four years earlier founded a publishing house for the Methodist Episcopal Church.⁴⁴ By 1840, this work was in its twentieth edition,⁴⁵ and as late as 1923 publishers were still reissuing the book.

Whitehead's *Life of the Rev. John Wesley*

Cut off from the Methodist pulpits and publishing channels, Whitehead completed his *Life* on his own, issuing the first of two volumes in 1793, and the second in 1796. Like Hampson, Whitehead was critical of the Deed of Declaration, calling it the cause of Methodism's "corruption and final dissolution" at the hand of powerful party of preachers (the aforementioned legal hundred) but is otherwise remarkably benevolent towards Wesley. This seems to have come as something of a surprise to John Pawson who confessed the following to Henry Moore after reading it:

I have read Dr. Whitehead's *Life of Mr. Wesley* carefully over in order to form the best idea I can of what is wrong there. I have marked every part of it which I think is wrong. But I am obliged to acknowledge that it does not appear half so bad to me as it did when the controversy respecting the manuscripts was afoot. There are some things in it misrepresented, I know, but he was led wrong by Mr. Charles Wesley's papers. These chiefly are Mr McNabb's affair, the Preaching in the New Chapel when it was first built, the Sacrament, Ordination, and the Conference Deed.⁴⁶

A number of these criticisms were addressed by Whitehead himself before he died in 1806, and may be observed in a second published in Dublin.⁴⁷ These later changes, however, did little to appease Moore, who continued to claim that Whitehead had ulterior motives:

⁴² It was perhaps written too hastily. Shortly after its appearance, *The Analytical Review* charged Moore and Coke with plagiarizing Hampson's biography. Coke answered such charges by arguing that each party had alike borrowed from the printed works of Wesley and therefore had an equal right to use public sources of information and reference (Smith, *Life*, p. 112). This is noteworthy because Moore appears to have plagiarized sections of Whitehead's biography in his later two-volume biography.

⁴³ Heitzenrater, *Faithful unto Death*, p. 25.

⁴⁴ Heitzenrater notes that this was the only one-volume biography of Wesley to appear in the first forty years after his death.

⁴⁵ Twentieth edition published by the Booksellers; England Otley, 1840, archived at MARC 662 (X). 1923 edition published by J. Robins & Co. (London, 1923), archived at MARC, MAW, M988.

⁴⁶ Letter from Pawson to Moore, D16 420 WCA.

⁴⁷ Heitzenrater, *Faithful unto Death*, p. 29.

Among gamblers, it is said, the loser is considered as having a privilege to rail: The Doctor had a feeling somewhat similar to this, added to the party spirit by which he was influenced. He had been much pleased with Mr. Wesley's exercise of that power in his Societies; and had applied to him, through the compiler of the present work, requesting to receive ordination from his hands, and to be appointed a Superintendent.⁴⁸

In 1796, following the publication of his *Life of Wesley*, Whitehead returned the bulk⁴⁹ of the papers to the book steward, Mr. George Storey. These papers were then removed to Wesley's house at City Road, where John Pawson, one of Wesley's veteran preachers, was living. Upon receiving these papers, Pawson took exception to some of them which "tended not to edification"—among these a copy of *Shakespeare's Plays* that was filled with critical marginal notes by Wesley, and began to burn (in Pawson's own words) the "old good-for-nothing letters,—not a few of which ought never to have been seen by any one but himself, and which I wonder he had not destroyed."⁵⁰

Moore, who was stationed Bath at the time, immediately wrote Pawson, reprimanding him for his rash actions and for destroying any of Wesley's papers without his knowledge or consent. Pawson replied that he would send back all of what he had preserved, including some items he deemed to be a "curiosity,"

some little books written in his own short hand,⁵¹ which you understand much better than I do, though I can read it pretty well; but as to what might properly be called manuscripts, I think Mr. Wesley wanted too much for his great work in his life time, to have left any thing behind him likely to have taken in the market.⁵²

Thus, it seems a number of Wesley's manuscript journals were preserved for posterity through Moore's persistence, though historians can only cringe at what materials might have been lost to the flames at the hands of Pawson.

Wesley for the People: Southey's *Life of Wesley*

The next biographer of Wesley,⁵³ and perhaps the most influential upon the Victorian

⁴⁸ Moore, *Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, 1:xii.

⁴⁹ Moore seems to imply in his preface to the 1824–25 edition that some of Wesley's papers had not been returned: "Wherever they are found, they belong to me; and those which have been published by Dr. Whitehead, or any other person are my property, which I shall freely use, according to my best judgment" (Moore, *Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, 1:xiii). This may partly explain why he seems to have felt free to borrow so freely from Whitehead's edition.

⁵⁰ Pawson to Moore, Sept. 1, 1797, quoted in Smith, *Life of Moore*, p. 166.

⁵¹ The shorthand Pawson refers to is Byrom's code, a system used by both John and Charles in their manuscript journals, especially when they wished to convey sensitive information. Moore knew the system well and kept his own journal in the same system.

⁵² Pawson to Moore, quoted in Smith, *Life*, p. 166.

⁵³ Though it should be noted that the abolitionist pastor George Bourne (1780–1845) published *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley A.M. with Memoirs of the Wesley family to which are subjoined Dr. Whitehead's Funeral Sermon, and a Comprehensive History of American Methodism* (Baltimore, 1807). Bourne credits Moore, Hampson and Whitehead, as his sources.

imagination, came from outside the Methodist fold in the person of the English poet Robert Southey (1774–1843). Southey had previously established himself as the skilled biographer of Admiral Horatio Nelson (1813)⁵⁴ and had been approached by a publisher to write a series of articles for the *The Correspondent*, which could later be published as a book. Southey undertook the project with great enthusiasm, judging that there were more than half a million Methodists in the British dominions and America, but “nine hundred and ninety-nine persons out of a thousand know as little about the Methodists as they do about the Cherokees or the Chiriguanas.”⁵⁵

Unlike previous biographers, Southey had not been intimately acquainted with Wesley, though the two had met each other in a chance, perhaps providential, encounter in the resort town of Bath when Southey was a child. “I remember Wesley well,” Southey once wrote to the abolitionist MP William Wilberforce, “He laid his hands upon me when I was about six years old, and blessed me.”⁵⁶ Although Southey called himself “a believer in the truth of Christianity,” his Christianity was the “reasonable” and “not mysterious” one of Deism. A Unitarian convert to Anglicanism, Southey, considered “religious enthusiasm” a highly infectious form of lunacy. The only religious tenet Southey ultimately cared about, notes one of his more recent biographers, “was belief in an afterlife.”⁵⁷

By March of 1817, Southey wrote to a friend about the sheer enormity of the task that he had undertaken:

You would be amused to see my table overlaid with Methodism and Moravianism. I am going through the whole set of the *Arminian Magazine*. This *Life of Wesley* is a more oporose business than one who is not acquainted with my habits would suppose. I am given to works of supererogation, and could do nothing to my own satisfaction if I did not take twice as much labor as any other person would bestow upon it.⁵⁸

By January of 1818, Southey was aware that this interpretation of Wesley would probably

⁵⁴ Southey would go on to write biographies of George Whitefield and John Bunyan.

⁵⁵ Southey, *Life and Correspondence, of Robert Southey*, Vol. 6, p. 34

⁵⁶ Ibid. Letter from Southey to Wilberforce, Dec. 10th, 1817.

⁵⁷ “Hemmed in by his rationalism, on one hand, and his humanism, on the other, Southey had to satisfy his spiritual needs surreptitiously by a pseudo-academic, antiquarian interest in the old mythologies ... In particular, he exhibits a peculiar and obsessive fascination with devils’ lore and all forms of diablerie” (Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch, *Robert Southey* [Boston: G.K. Ball, 1977] p. 60). A tormented dreamer, Southey kept a log of his dreams which is noteworthy for its preoccupation with “death, naked and animated corpses, live burials, murderous skeletons, and the demonic and macabre in general” (Ibid., p. 60). When an Anglican journal took issue with his description of the Devil in his *Life of Wesley* as “personified principle of evil,” he replied that anyone who believes in “anything spiritual” could not well deny the existence of “evil spirits,” though he tried to reason or ridicule them away.

⁵⁸ Letter to C. W. W. Wynnn in Robert Southey, *Robert Southey: The Story of His Life Written in his Letters* (D. Lothrop, 1887).

be controversial.

The *Life of Wesley* is my favorite employment just now, and a very curious book it will be, looking at Methodism abroad as well as at home, and comprehending our religious history for the last hundred years. I am sure I shall treat this subject with moderation. I hope I come to it with a sober judgment, a mature mind, and perfect freedom from all unjust prepossessions of any kind. There is no party which I am desirous of pleasing, none which I am fearful of offending; nor am I aware of any possible circumstance which might tend to bias me one way or other from the straight line of impartial truth. For the bigot I shall be far too philosophical: for the libertine, far too pious. The Ultra-churchman will think me little better than a Methodist, and the Methodists will wonder what I am.⁵⁹

Despite Southey's fear that he would be "abused on all sides," the resulting biography was favourably received by the reading public and booksellers alike. Whereas the biographies of Hampson, Moore and Whitehead had quoted extensively from Wesley's journals and letters, Southey's original and fast-moving narrative engaged the reader and supplied the sort of historical details and background that an outsider to Methodism needed to make sense of the events described therein. A reviewer in the *Gentlemen's Magazine* commented,

When we took up the book, we were almost afraid to lose ourselves in the perusal of two large octavos, of about 1100 pages; but as we turned over the leaves, we found such a mass of interesting matter, that instead of being angry at the Author, we found ourselves much indebted to him for the handsome and liberal manner in which he has treated his subject... Mr Southey like a Christian Philosopher (if these two words can be matched together), gently reproveth and censures the extravagancies and absurdities of some of their dogmas . . . he shews us how, when in a maturer age, he retracted what he had formerly supported.⁶⁰

Southey's biography thereby thrust John Wesley and his Methodist followers squarely into pre-Victorian British consciousness. Southey received letters from Bishop of London, the Bishop of Durham. Lord Liverpool expressed his approval of the book, and the vice-chancellor of Oxford University expressed some interest in conferring a doctor of letters upon Southey, primarily on account of his writing it.⁶¹ Southey's friend (and brother-in-law) the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge would later claim it as one of his "favourite of favourite books," one that he returned to "whenever sickness or languor made him feel the want of an old friend."⁶²

The book's reception among Methodists, on the other hand, was uneven, not least on account of Southey's final chapter, in which he had expressed hope that Methodists might

⁵⁹ Charles Cuthbert Southey, *The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey* (1850), vol. 4, p. 293.

⁶⁰ *The Gentleman's Magazine: Historical Chronicle*, Volume XC, January-June 1820, p. 582.

⁶¹ Oxford created Southey a D.C.L. in June of 1820.

⁶² Mark Storey, *Robert Southey: A Life* (Oxford University Press, 1993); Later editions of Southey's *Life of Wesley* work would be published with Coleridge's introduction and notes.

cast off their “enthusiastic extravagancies” and reunite with the Church of England.

It is not beyond the bounds of reasonable hope that, confirming itself to the original intention of its founders, [Methodism] may again draw towards the Establishment from which it is has receded, and deserve to be recognized as an auxiliary institution, its ministers being analogous to the regulars, and its members to the terries and various confraternities of the Romish church.⁶³

Passages such as this were particularly offensive to Henry Moore (whom Wesley ordained) and the Wesleyan Methodists, but they met with enthusiastic approval⁶⁴ from the “Church Methodists” in Ireland, who had recently split off from the main Wesleyan Methodists precisely over their desire to remain a society within the national church.⁶⁵

The response of Wesleyan Methodist conference of 1821 was to authorize Richard Watson to write a review of Southey’s work. The conference also requested that Adam Clarke assisted by Henry Moore, write a new biography, “suited to the present time and circumstances.”⁶⁶

Clarke’s Memoirs of the Wesley Family

Clarke immediately abandoned his other writing projects and set about his assignment by publishing a plea to senior preachers in *Methodist Magazine* for their reminiscences of Wesley. He also collected a number of letters relating to the Wesley family. (He was especially keen, he explained to one friend, to write a sympathetic depiction of Martha Wesley in light of the criticism she had faced for her marriage to Westley Hall.)

Clarke’s initial enthusiasm, however, met an encountered an unexpected⁶⁷ obstacle in the person of Henry Moore, who stubbornly refused to turn over Wesley’s papers to him. Moore, it seems, still sorely regretting his neglect of Wesley’s trust in having turned over Wesley’s papers to Whitehead, was determined not to make the same mistake twice.

Frustrated by the lack of response from preachers to his earlier mentioned request, Clarke wrote to the Wesleyan Book Committee informing them that he would not proceed with the proposed biography until the papers held by Moore were either released or

⁶³ Southey, *Life of Wesley*, vol. 2, p. 254.

⁶⁴ “Your excellent conclusion of the life of Wesley has also contributed to induce me to take the liberty of troubling you on this subject, conceiving that our plan is not very dissimilar to what you refer to,” wrote the Irish “church Methodist” Mark Robinson of Waterford (Southey, *Life and Correspondence*, pp. 161–164). Southey passed such letters on to the Bishop of London, who was doubtful of such possibilities.

⁶⁵ See chapter 6, above.

⁶⁶ *Minutes of Methodist Conferences* (London: J. Kershaw, 1825), vol. 5, p. 154.

⁶⁷ Personal correspondence of Clarke suggests that Moore was unwilling to relinquish the possession of Wesley’s papers a second time. Clarke complained bitterly about Moore’s refusal to his friend Jonathan Edmondson (Letter from Adam Clarke to Jonathan Edmondson (30 Jan 1822) in “The Papers of Adam Clarke,” MARC, PLP/25/5/15a).

published. In the meantime, he offered them the fruits of his preliminary work, and returned to his commentary project. Clarke's *Memoirs of the Wesley Family* was published later that year.⁶⁸

Watson's Observations

Richard Watson's 229-page "review" published in 1821 was entitled *Observations on A Life of Wesley by Southey*. It began by challenging Southey's qualifications for writing a biography of a man he hardly knew and questioning a faith that he clearly did not personally subscribe to. "The question is not," wrote Watson,

whether he had habits sufficiently diligent to collect the facts necessary for fairly exhibiting the character of Mr. Wesley and of Methodism, nor whether he had the ability to work them into clear and spirited narrative, Neither will be denied; but these are minor considerations. He has not contented himself with narrative; he has added "reflections to his tale," and both as a theologian, and an advocate of the National Church, he has assumed the critic and censor.⁶⁹

It was not the basic facts of Wesley's life and ministry that were offensive to Watson, but rather the "false philosophy" from which Southey's naturalistic interpretations of "enthusiastic extravagancies," and "instant conversions" (which he deemed a "mental disease") sprang. Southey's interpretation of Wesley, in Watson's view, did not take the work of the Holy Spirit seriously in accounting for the remarkable events recorded in Wesley's journal.

Somewhat paradoxically, the *The Monthly Review*⁷⁰ criticized Southey's biography with focusing too much on the supernatural:

With regard to the manner in which Mr. Southey has executed his task as the biographer of so extraordinary a personage, we began by commending in general terms: nor do we wish to be understood, by the objections which we feel ourselves bound to express, as willing to detract from the great and substantial merits of so laborious a performance.

We think, however, that Mr. Southey has given way too much to his poetical feelings, when he favours us with several pages of text and thirty pages of notes about the little spirit Jeffray,⁷¹ and says that the conversion of one stray infidel would be a good reason for the

⁶⁸ Adam Clarke, *Memoirs of the Wesley family: collected principally from original documents* (London: Printed by J. & T. Clarke, and sold by J. Kershaw, 1823).

⁶⁹ Richard Watson, *Observations on Southey's Life of Wesley: being a defence of the character, labours, and opinions of Mr. Wesley Against the Misrepresentations of that Publication* (London: T. Cordeux, 1821), pp. 2–3.

⁷⁰ *The Monthly Review* (1749–1845) was an English periodical founded by Ralph Griffiths, a Nonconformist bookseller.

⁷¹ *Sic*. "Old Jeffrey" was the name given to the ghost which purportedly haunted the Epworth manse. Southey made use of personal letters obtained (most written by and to Samuel Wesley, John's brother) and published by the Unitarian scientist and theologian Joseph Priestley in 1791 as being of "great curiosity."

appearance of a ghost now and then.⁷²

If nothing else, Watson's *Observations* pointed out that Southey was at least inconsistent in his judgements:

Mr Southey believes in one ghost storey; Wesley might believe in twenty or a hundred. Mr. Southey believes in a few preternatural dreams, say some four or five; Mr. Wesley may have believed in twice that number. This, however, proves nothing; for credulity is not to be measured by number of statements to which a person believes, but by the evidence on which he believes them.⁷³

Knox's Remarks on the Life and Character of John Wesley

Perhaps the most offensive aspect of Southey's biography, however, was his charge that Wesley was a man of "ambition," a charge that Alexander Knox, a mutual friend of both Southey and Moore, would take up by writing a brief, but perceptive critique of Southey's work.

Southey himself was apparently persuaded by Knox's arguments, but did not live long enough to revise his work accordingly. However, when a new edition of Southey's *Life of Wesley* was to be published with notes by Samuel Coleridge, Southey's son decided to include Knox's *Remarks* as an appendix.

Commenting on Knox's contribution to Wesley's legacy, Henry Rack comments that although Knox disapproved of Wesley's credulity and erratic and hasty judgments,

he was also anxious to disassociate [Wesley] from the wilder kind of "enthusiasm" associated with early Methodism and the seventeenth century. As a kind of bridge figure himself between Wesleyan perfectionism and Tractarian concerns for the pursuit of holiness, [Knox] was well fitted to appreciate this side of Wesley's legacy, though he disapproved of its more eccentric aspects. In many ways, his [analysis] remains one of the most acute and penetrating studies of Wesley's character and theology.⁷⁴

The Methodist theologian Albert Outler went so far as to suggest that, among the early biographers, it was Knox who understood best Wesley's vision of the Christian life:

The tradition of Wesley biography, formed by the first biographers (Whitehead, Moore, and Tyerman) had never been seriously challenged. It was from them that the notion derived that Wesley's theology was a subordinate interest to his really important business: managing the Revival and founding the Methodist church. Alexander Knox is almost the only exception to this general view. In a letter to Hannah More, Knox (tutor to Jebb, tutor to Keble) asserted that Wesley's interest was primarily theological—and unique in what Knox called his synthesis of Augustine and Chrysostom! The more I have read, the clearer

⁷² *The Monthly Review, or, Literary journal* (September 1821) vol. 96, p. 41.

⁷³ Watson, *Observations on Southey's Life*, p. 196.

⁷⁴ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p. 537.

is my conviction that Knox had the better of it over Wesley's Methodist biographers.⁷⁵

A Collective Memory: Moore's Final Response

In 1824 Moore published the first of his two-volume response to Southey, in which, ironically, he plagiarized a considerable portion of Whitehead's work (including some of Whitehead's personal remarks as if they were his own), though he also appended some new material and a number of personal reminiscences of John and Charles. We are, for example, solely indebted to Moore for the following account of Charles:

When he was nearly fourscore, [Charles] retained something of this eccentricity. He rode every day (clothed for winter even in summer) a little horse, gray with age. When he mounted, if a subject struck him, he proceeded to expand and put it in order. He would write a hymn thus given him, on a card (kept for the purpose) with his pencil in shorthand. Not unfrequently he has come to our house in the City-road, and, having left the pony in the *garden* in front, he would enter, crying out, "Pen and ink! pen and ink!" These being supplied, he wrote the hymn he had been composing. When this was done, he would look round on those present, and salute them with much kindness, ask after their health, give out a short hymn, and thus put all in mind of eternity.⁷⁶

Moore's two-volume biography is thus a fascinating document, useful to the historian of Methodism as a kind of harmonization of earlier works, mediated by an eye-witness who not only outlived Wesley, but most of his earliest biographers. Moore, in many instances plays one biographer off against another, thereby identifying the disputed aspects of Wesley's life and legacy, of which a few examples are worth quoting to illustrate.

The first example pertains to Wesley's credulity in believing in ghosts:

Mr Southey thinks that he had no motive to believe and insert them, except the mere pleasure of believing. I can furnish him with several other motives which, I doubt not, influenced their publication. The first was to collect remarkable accounts of such facts, and to offer them to the world. It is assumed by Mr. Southey that Mr. Wesley believed every account he published. This is not true. He frequently remarks, that he gives no opinion, or that "he knows not what to make of the account," or that "he leaves every one to form his own judgment of it... Many of these accounts, however, Mr Wesley did credit, because he thought that they stood on credible testimony; and he published them for that very purpose, for which he believed they were permitted to occur,—to confirm the faith of men in an invisible state, and the immortality of the soul."⁷⁷

What is interesting about this example is that it relates directly to Moore's own conversion. Moore himself had been lured into reading Wesley's theological writings by such accounts (see chapter 1).

⁷⁵ Albert Outler, "The Wesleyan Quadtrilateral—in John Wesley," [1985] in Thomas C. Oden and Leicester R. Longden, eds. *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage: Essays of Albert C. Outler*, ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), p. 42

⁷⁶ Moore, *Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, 2:218.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 2:263.

On the question of exhibiting poor judgement in marrying Molly Vazeille, Moore again takes issue with Whitehead's portrayal:

Dr. Whitehead, speaking of Mr. Wesley's marriage, says that "he seems to have considered St. Paul's advice to the church at Corinth, as a standing rule to christians in all circumstances; and adds, "it is really wonderful how he could fall into such an error." But Mr. Wesley did not fall into it; the wonder is, that the Doctor should assert that he did. . . . Mr Southey's account is much more correct and candid: He observes, "Mr Wesley did not suppose that such a precept could have been intended for the many;" and that "he assented fully to the sentence of the Apostle who pronounced the forbidding to marry to be a doctrine of the devils." ... The Doctor, however, observes with truth, that, "had he married a woman who could have entered into his views and accommodated herself to his situation, it might have formed a basis for much happiness. But had he searched the whole kingdom on purpose, he could hardly have found a woman more unsuitable in these respects than the one he married."⁷⁸

Here we might pause to ask what possible advantage Moore could have over Whitehead since Moore was still a young man in Ireland when Molly left John in 1774. A similar critique could be leveled at Moore for his defense of Wesley's trip to Georgia against the charge of escapism (his family's urgings to return to Epworth).

It has been my aim in stating the particulars of his life, that the reader might himself form a judgement of Mr. Wesley's character. ... An attentive reader cannot but see, that from the time he truly turned to God, he took, according to Christ's direction, the lowest seat. To escape from these 'worldly lusts,' in every sense of the expression, he would fain to have buried himself in the uncultivated wilds of America among those who roam "in quest of prey, and live upon their bow," happy in the idea of leaving all the world, to be an unknown, unhonoured instrument in the hand of God . . .⁷⁹

Moore's harshest comments, however, are obviously aimed at Southey's charge of ambition:

The reader who can believe,—that this man of "great views, great energy, and great virtues," was stimulated by a *mental disease* to unparalleled labours for the good of mankind, and those especially who most needed his labours—and that he persevered in them for threescore years, with a success which astonishes and excites the admiration of the narrator;—the man who can believe all this, must himself, it should seem, have a mental disease . . .⁸⁰

Moore's comments regarding other biographers, on the whole, were probably counter-productive in attempting to counter the popular influence of Southey's biography. "Moore's work," wrote a contemporary reviewer, "though in the main we agree with the author in his opinions respecting Mr. Wesley, we from a sense of duty—from a desire to acquire knowledge of his subject: Southey's, though we disagree with him at every turn, we

⁷⁸ Moore, *Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, 2:172.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 2:442

⁸⁰ Moore, *Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, 1:xxii.

read from a sense of pleasure.”⁸¹

Nevertheless, the value of Moore to contemporary studies of Wesley may be seen in the following passage, where Moore traces various accounts and then pronounces them false based on his own first-hand testimony:

Mr. Southey has repeated, after Mr. Hampson, “That he had a Bible in one hand, and a white handkerchief in the other; and the old clerical cap on his head.” As I was an eyewitness, I may state that there is no truth at all in this account. He had no clerical cap, old or new, in his possession; and his friends had too much sense to put any thing in to the hands of a corpse.⁸²

Unfortunately, after its first printing, Moore’s 2-volume *Life of Wesley* was never reissued in Britain, though an American edition was published in 1826 by Nathan Bangs for the Methodist Episcopal Church.

As we have noted in the previous chapter, by the end of the decade Moore was embroiled in a dispute with the trustees of City Road chapel in an attempt to protect his rights to free housing on the premises (a benefit he understood to be bequeathed to him in Wesley’s will).

Richard Watson’s *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley* appeared in 1835, supplanting Moore’s two-volume work as the official biography of Methodism’s founder. “The most approved accounts of Mr. Wesley, have been carried out to a length which obstructs their circulation, by the intermixture of details comparatively uninteresting beyond the immediate circle of Wesleyan Methodism,” explains Watson what appears to be a subtle reference to Moore’s work, “The present Life, therefore, without any design to supersede larger publications, has been prepared with more special reference to general readers.” By 1848, it was the only biography available from the Methodist Book Room.

The Significance of the Early Biographies

My focus in this chapter has not been on what we may *now* know about Wesley, but rather how Wesley was interpreted immediately after his death by his followers and subsequent generations of Methodists and Wesleyans. In this regard it is important to note that Wesley’s ownership of a printing press granted him the ability to express and project his life and his story in ways that most of us in the twenty-first century are only beginning to experience through the advent of the Internet. The difference, of course, is that Wesley’s self-expression to the world was primarily one-way, whereas contemporary social media is at least two-way affair, but more often a conversation among many individuals.

⁸¹ “Wesley and his Biographers,” in *The Methodist Review*, vol. 30, p. 431.

⁸² Moore, *Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, 2:232

(How Wesley might have fared in the era of social networking we can only guess!) What is clear is that until the first biographies were published the reading public and most Methodists were largely unaware of the details of Wesley's life that so offended Wesley's executors when they appeared in print.

Such judgments of Wesley's integrity and wisdom were obviously troubling to those who considered him a spiritual father. Moore's faithful determination to protect Wesley's memory and the special rights that were bequeathed to him in Wesley's will needs to be understood not as the nitpicking of an disgruntled old man, but rather the natural desire to see a parent's name and desires honoured. The great irony of the controversies surrounding the early biographies is that, apart from the few items listed above, they are, to the modern reader, remarkably similar. Regarding Whitehead's biography, Alexander Gordon, who wrote the original entry on Wesley for the *Dictionary of National Biography* commented that "The best proof of its worth is the constant borrowing from it by Moore in his amended *Life*."

Nevertheless, Moore's two-volume *Life* retains its usefulness as a compendium of collected memories verified by an eye-witness and close colleague of Wesley. From a publisher's perspective, its major flaw is its sheer length, which probably best explains the short life it met in America.⁸³

Whitehead's biography, on the other hand, was published on multiple occasions by publishers in Philadelphia and Boston, also in Toronto.⁸⁴ Perhaps more significantly in terms of shaping early Methodist self-identity, the first several chapters of Whitehead's biography (up until the year 1735) were prefixed to Joseph Benson's 16-volume edition of Wesley's *Works* without any acknowledgement of its authorship, or the controversies that surrounded its compilation.

Thus, Moore's influence upon the early portraits of Wesley was not limited to his own writings. Indirectly, Moore's fateful decision to release Wesley's papers to Whitehead directly resulted in three early biographies (Whitehead, Coke-Moore, and Moore 2 vols) and, regrettably, the abandonment of a promising fourth by Adam Clarke. His life-long relationship with Alexander Knox also resulted in a critique that would be appended to Southey's work throughout its long life.

Finally, Moore's significance in protecting Wesley's literary remains should also be acknowledged. Without his intervention, many resources available to contemporary scholars (notably Wesley's shorthand diaries) might have been lost to the flames. Perhaps

⁸³ There appears to have been no subsequent printings after the 1826 edition.

⁸⁴ Toronto: Williams Briggs, n.d.

this is what John Telford meant when he concluded, “[Moore] had no small annoyance as the literary executor of Wesley; but the burden could scarcely have fallen on shoulders more fit to bear it.”⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Telford, “Hinde Street Chapel and its Associations,” WMM, p. 750.

Conclusion: A Spring in the System?

“[Moore] was, owing to his greatly protracted life, a moving spring of that system . . .”
—Mrs. Smith¹

Was Henry Moore a “grumpy old man,” or a significant player in Methodism following Wesley? A “rank and file” preacher, or a man groomed to be Wesley’s replacement? In my opinion the best answer is, to some degree, all of the above.

John Kent, in seeking to emphasize the difference between Wesley and his followers has conveniently ignored him. I have demonstrated, to the contrary, that Moore exerted a considerable influence on British Methodism. Those who would counter that Moore is an exception among the second wave of Wesleyan preachers—that he stands out as an anomaly because of his Irish context and his close relationship with Wesley—only further highlight the need for having undertaken the preceding reappraisal of his life and ministry.

The problem with Kent’s presentation of Methodism is that it paints a false dichotomy between Wesley as an Anglican churchman and his later “fundamentalist” followers. Men like Henry Moore and Adam Clarke, however, do not fit especially well into either category and so—despite their enormous influence on the movement—are not mentioned in Kent’s book.

Kent concludes that Wesley, in his “refusal to modify his pre-enlightenment mind” became “caught up in a religious movement that he could not control as he wanted” and quotes Alexander Knox’s defense to make the point. Wesley, wrote Knox:

Was always gratified by hearing or reading of illapses [half-faintings of religious excitement], or raptures, or supposed extraordinary manifestations, when he was assured of the moral rectitude of the party . . . but while he thus delighted in the soarings of others, he himself could not follow them in their flights: there was a firmness in his intellectual texture which would not bend to illusion. It was easy to deceive his reasoning faculty, but there was soundness in his imagination which preserved him, personally, from all

¹ [Mary Ann] Smith, *Life of the Rev. Mr. Henry Moore*, p. xii.

contagion of actual fanaticism.²

This portrait of Wesley as a “reasonable enthusiast” claims Kent, is an “implausible figure” created by Knox to defend him against Southey’s charge of fanaticism. But Knox, says Kent “failed to find a way of turning the thrust aside.”

This confusion will not do. The necessary distinction is not between fanaticism and cool imagination. Wesley stepped back from what he registered as excess, which is the essence of fanaticism; but he accepted a wide range of phenomena as being inspired by God, and did not imagine that they were excessive.³

Moreover, Kent claims, Wesley’s “system had failed”:

On two fronts Wesleyanism achieved little by the end of eighteenth century. First, the societies gave up the attempt to sustain a holiness movement at its heart. It was left to American revivalists, most of them Methodist, to go on preaching holiness in the United States . . . Second, and much earlier, Wesleyanism stopped trying to function as a pietist reforming movement inside the Church of England . . . Wesleyans who preferred to think of themselves as Anglicans survived in some areas until John Wesley’s death, but the few thousand who remained melted back into the Establishment.⁴

The preceding study calls into question Kent’s conclusions. With regards to his criticism of Knox’s assessment, preachers such as Moore show that Methodist attempts to combine *charismatic* experience with *loyalty to the church* and *intellectual vigor* were not unique to Wesley, nor did it cease upon his death.

Instead, we have observed among early Methodist lay leadership a surprising loyalty to the church and hesitancy to separate from it. That this strain of Methodism was “squeezed out” of the main body of Wesleyan Methodists by the time of Bunting, I do not dispute. Indeed, Moore’s story confirms it. Kent’s argument could be strengthened, I think, by following William Myles’ observation that there were *three* waves of preachers:⁵ Wesley and his contemporaries, the preachers who immediately followed them, and later Wesleyans under Bunting.

Thirdly, Kent supposes a “few thousand” loyal Anglican Wesleyans “melted” back into the Establishment immediately after Wesley’s death. In the Irish context, at least, this

² Alexander Knox, “Remarks on the Life and Character of John Wesley,” in Robert Southey, *The Life of Wesley and the Rise and Progress of Methodism, with notes by Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Remarks on the Life and Character of John Wesley by Alexander Knox*, vol. 2 (Oxford University Press, 1925), p. 357.

³ Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, p. 195.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

⁵ William Myles divided preachers into three groupings based on the year they entered the itinerancy: 1739-1765, 1766-1790, 1791-1802. Coke (1776), Moore (1779) and Asbury (1767) fall into the second wave. Most of Bunting’s supporters could be placed in the third wave. (*Chronological History of Methodism*, 1803), p. 293.

clearly was not the case. Rather than abandoning their Wesleyan identity, several thousand Irish Methodists continued to provide a distinct reforming influence *from within* for half a century.

Although it would have been entirely possible to document the above observations without specific reference to the Henry Moore, my hope is that the historio-biographical approach I've taken will prevent my readers from attributing false motives to a man (and his colleagues) who were willing to suffer (and often did) for the gospel in which they sincerely believed.

My overarching argument has been that the transfer of pastoral leadership from the paternal authority of John Wesley to "members of Wesley's conference," or more accurately from lay leadership to a group of traveling lay preachers, occurred through a series of pragmatic decisions regarding how preachers would be financially remunerated and how properties would be managed. Moore was at the centre of these debates and thus played a significant, if not prominent, role in shaping Methodist identity.

These changes radically changed the self-image of Methodist lay preachers, who eventually came to see themselves as professional ministers rather than members of a fraternity. Henry Moore stands out in this process as a kind of transitional form, which explains why he found himself on the wrong side of both church Methodists and dissenters at various points in his life.

Methodism at the beginning of Moore's ministry in Ireland was still a marginalized and counter-cultural movement emphasizing the miraculous power of God against those who would suppress it. By the time of Moore's death in 1844, Methodism was well down the path towards the respectability and social influence it would enjoy until the turn of next century. It wasn't Moore that changed, it was Methodism.

Kenneth Carder, in surveying the commercialization of the evangelical church in America, has suggested that when the Wesleyan self-image as minister "was coupled with the pervasiveness of the consumerist market ideology and individualism in North American culture, ministry itself was redefined from a sharing in God's transforming mission in the world to a commodity that is dispensed by the clergy and received by the laity"⁶ That is a provocative interpretation beyond the scope of this present study, but it is perhaps worth mentioning—if only to reassure the reader that a historical study such as this might help speak into larger questions relevant to the church today.

In conclusion I would suggest that it is not be difficult to draw parallels between

⁶ Kenneth L. Carder, "What Difference Does Knowing Wesley Make?" In *Rethinking Wesleyan Theology for Contemporary Methodism*, edited by R. Maddox. Nashville: Kingswood Books [Abingdon], 1998.

Methodism in Moore's day and contemporary emerging Christian movements in the global south, where charismatic Christianity flourishes in the midst of social and economic transition. Perhaps if there is warning that might be gleaned from the life of Henry Moore, it is these charismatic religious movements change from culturally insignificant sects to significant international movements—even, as Moore discovered, within the span of a human life.

Kent and the Centrality of John Wesley

As this study began reflecting on John Kent's *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, it seems only fitting to conclude it by stating that I agree with Kent and others who have pointed out that Wesley's movement did not grow *primarily* on account of Wesley's theological contributions. Wesley, as Albert Outler and others have observed, was far more of a theological borrower and popularizer of other people's ideas than a systematic theologian in his own right.

Such an assertion, however, should in no way should force us to conclude that Wesley, as an individual, was insignificant to the rise of evangelicalism and the plight of eighteenth-century England. The kind of phenomenological explanation of Methodism's growth prior to 1770 offered by Kent seems to oversimplify what is, in my opinion, a startling convergence of collective human religious experiences around one man. One may well reject *providence* as an explanation for this "confluence of events" on naturalistic grounds, but the only satisfactory alternative one is left with is that of *coincidence*—i.e., Wesley *just happened* to be in the *right place* at the *right time* with a *unique upbringing* and necessary *legal status* to functional as a central hub of the evangelical revival. To observe that Methodism took place within the context of dramatic social and economic upheaval only highlights the uniqueness of Wesley's role in the process. John Wesley was central, both for his personal oversight over his preachers, as well as for his formation of them through his writings.

The question I have attempted to answer in this study, therefore, is not so much *whether* Wesley himself was significant to Methodism, but rather *how* Wesley became that catalyst. I conclude that Moore's life trajectory is especially helpful in showing that

(1) John Wesley's Methodism grew, in large part, because Wesley was, what we might call in contemporary parlance, a "social networker,"⁷ In the eighteenth century one could only build a social network by physically travelling to new territories and meeting new

⁷ It is worth noting, in passing, that very word "connection," which was used to describe the networks of voluntary societies in this period, bears remarkable similarities to twenty-first terminology surrounding social networking services such as Facebook and Linked-in.

people face-to-face. What made Wesley unique among other preachers such as John Cennick and George Whitefield, who were engaging in similar activity, was not Wesley's incessant travelling. Rather, it was his ability to capture and maintain these newfound relationships by organizing regularly gatherings of his connections around himself, whilst at the same time exercising a kind of priestly authority over his peers (those who like him were ordained in the established church) and then educating his so-called "social inferiors" (lay preachers and leaders) through the dissemination of affordable Christian literature.

(2) Wesley's sense of authority was derived from the Church of England itself, not merely in a legal sense, but also in terms of a ministry praxis and self-understanding, which he largely inherited from his father, Samuel. Moore's story is particularly interesting because it demonstrates that Wesley's paternalism—far from being repulsive—actually attracted young men like Moore (who lost his father at a young age) and Mather (turned out of home by his father). There is, therefore, much to be said in favour of Kent's insightful observation that

Wesleyanism coped well with the early phases of this economic and social change because its societies were not imposing a radical religious break with the primary religion of the past, but constructing a cultural shelter which appealed to many people who felt as though they were looking for asylum in their own country. . . . Wesleyanism was one way in which the sufferers themselves improvised order on the spot out of potential chaos.⁸

(3) In the British context, the Clarendon codes continued to provide a kind of osmotic pressure that caused the inward flow of people through the semi-permeable membrane of church Methodism. As those external pressures were removed—both legally and intellectually—however, one may observe a loss of pressure due to the outflow of members to break-away groups such as the English Primitives and "Bible Christians"—a Methodist denomination whose very name denotes a desire to escape historical continuity with the Church of England and start afresh on a purely biblical basis.

An even more radical disaffection from Wesleyan-Methodism in Moore's lifetime may be observed in the manufacturing centres of Liverpool and Manchester, where a substantial number of Methodists fell under the influence of early Mormon missionaries sent to pursue converts in Great Britain by Joseph Smith (who sometime prior to the first publication of his revelations in 1830, had once been described as "a very passable [Methodist] exhorter.")⁹ Amongst these early missionaries was Brigham Young, who

⁸ Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, p. 82

⁹ Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1984), p. 36. For a discussion of Methodism's role in preparing a cultural milieu favourable to Mormonism in upstate New York see Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-over District; the*

would take over leadership of the movement after Smith was killed by an armed mob in 1844. Arriving in Liverpool in 1837, the missionaries set up churches throughout the Methodist heartland of Lancashire and, by 1850 some 42,316 had been baptized into the “latter day” faith.¹⁰ The majority of these emigrated to the American West on ships chartered by the Mormon church for expressly for that purpose.¹¹ (It is worth noting that a monument commemorating this mass migration now stands at the Albert Docks, only blocks away from Mount Pleasant chapel, where Moore laboured in Liverpool, first in 1799–1801 and then from 1814–1816). “There is a strange power with them that fascinates the people and draws them into their meshes in spite of themselves,” warned one observer about the Mormon missionaries. “Let me entreat you not to go near them. Do not trust yourself at one of their meetings, or the delusion will take hold of *you* too.”¹² Such accounts strongly suggest that Mormonism—with its emphasis on feeling rather than historical dogma as the way to God, had tapped into the same well of primary religious energy from which Methodism had benefited in earlier decades.¹³

Meanwhile, those Methodists who remained within the realm of historic orthodoxy found themselves internally conflicted on both sides of the Atlantic. The expulsion of Alexander Kilham and secession of the New Connexion Methodists had only been the first skirmish in what would be a half-century battle for lay representation in the polity of Wesleyan-Methodism. On-going disputes over the governance and polity of Methodism would result in several more splits from the main body of Wesleyan-Methodists.

Taken together, the stagnation of British Methodist growth leading up to the Victorian period, lends considerable support to Kent’s assertion that the eighteenth-century evangelical revival may be explained, in some sense, as the partial replacement of a form of Anglicanism. Sketching Moore’s life has helpfully shown us that (a) Wesley’s sense of authority was rooted in Puritanism (b) that the precondition of the revival was the

Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950).

¹⁰ A recent analysis of this group suggests that at least one quarter of these were from Methodist backgrounds, see Stephen J. Fleming, “The Religious Heritage of the British Northwest and the Rise of Mormonism,” *Church History*, Vol. 77, pp. 73-104.

¹¹ The Church had its own charter and supply agent in Liverpool. Numbers are sourced from “Mormon Emigration,” Merseyside Maritime Archives & Library, Information Sheet No. 29 and David M. Pickup, *The Pick and Flower of England: The Story of the Mormons in Victorian Lancashire* (Burnley: Living Legend, 1991).

¹² Quoted from T. B. H. Stenhouse, “*Tell it all*”: *The Story of a Life’s Experience in Mormonism. An Autobiography* (A.D. Worthington, 1875).

¹³ Though the relationship between Methodism and Mormonism was downplayed by both sides, connections were evident to at least some within the movement, see Christopher Jones, “‘We Latter-Day Saints are Methodists’: The influence of Methodism on Early Mormon Religiosity.” MA Thesis. Brigham Young University, 2009.

proliferation of voluntary societies; (c) that Wesley's unique influence was directly connected to his being ordained and a tutor of Oxford. We see in Moore's life the evolution of a parallel system of spiritual leadership and association that is financially independent of the state. The irony is that in attaining *complete* autonomy from the established church, Methodism cut itself off from the very factors that caused its birth, and rapid growth. By the end of Moore's life, Methodism was merely one of hundreds of voluntary religious associations with no legal advantage over competing religious groups.

Conclusion

Henry Moore, for better or for worse, lived long enough to see Methodism evolve from a grassroots movement into a centralized religious institution. He stands in the history of Methodism as a kind of personification of the inherent tensions within Wesley's ecclesiology. Though he was not the most influential planet in the Methodist solar system, Moore was weightier and exerted more influence than he has been given credit for, and tracing out his unique orbital path in this study has allowed us to view a number of early Methodist figures and events from different angles.

To those unfamiliar with the finer contours of John Wesley's thought, Moore no doubt must often have appeared to be self-contradictory at best, and an agitator at worst. Yet his failure to persuade his fellow preachers to stay within the established Church says as much about tensions in Wesley's own thinking about the nature of the Church as it does about Moore's leadership abilities. Despite Moore's best attempts to be faithful to his mentor's wishes, the long eighteenth century was coming to an end and Methodism needed to adapt to new realities, both financial and legal. It would be left to the next generation of Methodists to resolve the ever-present tension between "the preachers" and "the people."

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Moore, Henry, 1835, July 17, London, to the Methodist Conference at Sheffield, address wanting. ALS

Methodist Archive and Research Centre, John Rylands University Library, Manchester

Moore had no children by either his first or second wife. Alexander Gordon states in his DNB entry on John Wesley that he had access to Henry Moore's papers, then in the private collection of by the late J. J. Colman, esq., M.P. (a collector of Methodist memorabilia) which had been acquired from William Gandy, Moore's executor. These papers were probably transferred to the Methodist Archives in London in the 1930s when it was at City Road, and later transferred to the Rylands c. 1977. PLP 77 contains seven folders of correspondence by Moore and his first and second wife. The vast majority of

correspondence is personal and largely unrelated to the development of Methodism. The following items, however, are particularly relevant to this study:

- PLP 77-5 Published statement to Book Committee by Moore regarding its premature review of Wesley's biography, and letter to Elizabeth Taylor regarding the matter
- PLP 77-5-14 Statement to the trustees of New Chapel (4 pp.).
- PLP 77-5-22 Letter to Jabez Bunting, Oct. 12, 1821
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See also Moore's correspondence in DDPr 2/43ff. (formerly Leather Volume V - Letters of Methodist Preachers, p.43)

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GB 135 MAM/FL/1

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