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A PASTORAL  
TO THE  
WESLEYAN METHODISTS  
IN THE  
DIOCESE OF LINCOLN,  
BY THE  
BISHOP OF LINCOLN.

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NEW EDITION.

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*With a Friendly Appeal on the Owston Epitaph.*

“Speaking the truth in love . . . Endeavouring to keep the  
unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephes. iv. 3, 15.

LINCOLN :  
PRINTED BY JAMES WILLIAMSON, HIGH STREET,  
LONDON : RIVINGTONS.

1875.

*Price Threepence.*



## *A Friendly Appeal on the Owston Epitaph.*

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BRETHREN BELOVED IN THE LORD,—

Let me address you by this title, and let me assure you in all sincerity that although differing from you in some things, and though declining to side with one of your Ministers against the Vicar of Owston, and to overrule the Vicar's objection to the title of *reverend* claimed by the said Minister as his own designation on the tombstone proposed to be erected in the Churchyard of that Parish, I have done so with no other feelings than those of Christian charity to him and to you.

The present discussion, as you well know, was not of my seeking; but it has been forced upon me by that claim persistently urged, and I could not decline it. I have been required to act, and to state my reasons for acting.

But though the controversy itself is to be regretted, yet I earnestly hope that, by the divine blessing, good may arise from it. Indeed, I have reason to know that many among yourselves, and others also, have been led by this discussion to consider questions of which they had before thought little, and which are of great interest, as affecting their spiritual welfare and eternal salvation.

The thing itself may appear trivial and insignificant; but on examination it will be seen that questions are involved in it of serious importance.

They may be stated as follows:—

Has it pleased God to appoint certain persons, ordained according to certain fixed principles, to perform certain functions in His Church? And if so, is it lawful for men to dispense with this divine appointment, and to set up other persons, ordained in a new way of their own choosing?

Is there such a thing as Schism; if so, in what does it consist? Is wilful Schism condemned in Holy Scripture as deadly sin? Would the Church of Christ be faithful to her Divine Lord, if she were to connive at it, and if she did not warn men against it? Is a Wesleyan minister (pardon the question) chargeable with Schism? and if so, is he to be publicly recognized by the Church on monumental inscriptions in her churchyards, and consequently also in her churches, as entitled to reverence and honour, and to be designated by her with the same title as that which she gives to her own Ministers? Would she be justified in thus leading others to identify him with her ministers, and to regard him as equally qualified with them to minister the Holy Sacraments to her people? And if Wesleyanism in its present attitude is a Schism, and if wilful Schism is a deadly sin, would the Church be true to Christ, if she were to wink at that sin and patronize it, instead of warning her people against it? And if she were thus to countenance *one* form of Schism, where is she to stop? How would she be able to deny the same title of reverence to any Minister of any of the countless religious denominations which claim it for their own teachers? And would she not, in her own Churchyards and Churches, be encouraging religious error and confusion, rather than maintaining religious Truth and Unity? Would she not be leading her people to imagine that Episcopacy and Episcopal Ordination are matters of indifference? And would not the Church of England be thus strengthening the hands of Rome, which exults in our divisions, and foments and multiplies them by authorizing her own emissaries to personate Protestant Dissenters,\* and draws our people away from us by representing the Church of England as only one among many discordant sects, and as having no unity of teaching, and as caring nothing for an authorized appointment and succession of Ministers, and as having therefore no claim to allegiance as a sound branch of the Church of Christ?

\* Proofs may be seen of these tactics of the Church of Rome in Ep. Jewel's *Life Eccl. Biog.*, iv., p. 64; Parr's *Life of Archbishop Ussher*, Appendix, p. 611; Elrington's *Life of Ussher*, p. 263; and in Ware's *Foxes and Firebrands*; Abp. Bramhall's Works, i., p. xcvi.; Evelyn's *Diary*, 9th March, 1690; Palin's *History*, p. 93.



The Church of Rome, as you yourselves deplore, is now putting forth more ambitious claims, and is making more rapid advances. And let me assure you, that no religious community which has not an Apostolical ministry, and which scorns Apostolical succession, will be able to resist her. Rome triumphs by the divisions of Protestants. Rome exults whenever Protestants, with self-complacent infatuation, vaunting their own superior enlightenment, with intellectual pride which is spiritual darkness, sneer at Apostolical succession, and deride an Apostolic ministry, and thus prove themselves to be sectaries of yesterday. Richard Baxter himself confessed with sorrow, that at a time when every form of Protestant division had full scope for its development, after the overthrow of the Church of England in the seventeenth century, then the two bitterest enemies of the true Faith reaped the most abundant harvest of perversions—Rome on one side, and Infidelity on the other.

My dear friends ; whatever the World may think or say of these things, they are of serious concern, with regard both to this life and another.

That there is such a thing as Schism, and that wilful Schism is a deadly sin, must, I think, be confessed by all who believe the Bible to be the Word of God.

St. Paul describes Schism as a carnal thing (1 Cor. iii. 3, 4), and he says that "to be carnally minded is death" (Rom. viii. 6). But what, you may ask, is Schism? It is, I reply, that sin of which St. Jude speaks, when he says "these are they who separate themselves" (Jude 19), and who "perish in the gainsaying of Core (or Korah)" (Jude 11). As Korah, who was only a Levite, separated himself and his company from Aaron the Priest, and intruded into the Priest's office, and perished for his sin (Num. xvi. 1, 10, 35), so, in the Christian Church, they who set themselves in opposition to the lawful Ministers of the Sacraments, and draw people away from those Ministers and ministrations, have always been regarded by the wisest and most holy men since the time

of the Apostles, as followers in "the gainsaying of Core," and as exposing themselves to his punishment.

Let me confirm these statements by reference to some writers whose authority cannot be questioned.

The writings of the Apostolic Fathers (such as St. Clement, the friend of St. Paul, and St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp, the scholars of St. John) were, as you know, translated into English by an Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. William Wake. The Archbishop made that version and published it, because, as he himself says (in his Preface to that Translation, 3rd edition, A.D. 1719, pp. 107-116), those Fathers "represent in their writings the doctrine, government, and discipline of the Church such as they received it from the Apostles, and the Apostles from Christ, and from that Blessed Spirit Who directed them in what they taught and ordained." He observes also that some of them, such as Ignatius and Polycarp, proved their sincerity and courage by dying as Martyrs for what they taught. "How necessary" (says Archbishop Wake, p. 123) "they esteemed it (for Christians) to keep up a communion with their Governors (the Apostolic Orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons); and how little they thought that the name of a Church could belong to those who separated themselves from them, we are here taught (by their own writings). And however light many may make of Schism now, yet it is plain that these holy men had a very different apprehension of it, and hardly thought that such could be saved as continued in it."

Such is the testimony of Archbishop Wake as to the opinions of those who immediately succeeded the Holy Apostles.

Another Archbishop of Canterbury delivers a similar witness;

"In the Primitive Church" (says Archbishop Potter on *Church Government*, 3rd ed., p. 257,) "the Bishop consecrated the Holy Communion. In the Bishop's absence it was common for Presbyters to consecrate; but they did not this without the Bishop's direction or allowance. Let that Eucharist be accounted good (says

St. Ignatius ad Smyrn. cap. 8,)\* which is consecrated by the Bishop, or by one whom he appoints." And in another place; "without the Bishop is it neither lawful to baptize nor to consecrate the Feast of Love. And there is a large discourse in Cyprian;" (Bishop of Carthage in the third century) "where he compares the Priest who performs the offices of religion, particularly those of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, without such authority, to Korah and his rebellious associates who conspired against Aaron." (Epist. ad. Magnum, 76.)

According to the ancient Church, "the Essence of Schism" (as distinguished from Heresy) says Dr. Isaac Barrow,† "is to set up altar against altar, and priesthood against priesthood, and to draw away the sheep and lambs of the Church from their lawfully appointed Shepherds"; and "the rejection of Episcopal Government, wherever orthodox and legitimate Bishops exist, is that which properly constitutes mortal Schism."

"Nothing, says St. Chrysostom (*Homil. XI., in Epist. ad Ephes.*) so angers God as to divide His Church; they who rend Christ's mystical body, the Church, are no less guilty than they who crucified His human body;" and then he adds the saying of St. Ignatius (frag. 2, ed. Jacobson), that not even the blood of martyrdom could wipe away the sin of Schism; a saying repeated several times by St. Cyprian.‡

I am well aware, my dear friends, that such language as this will be denounced by very many at the present day, as an obsolete and superannuated utterance of priestcraft, bigotry, and intolerance. But let me ask of you, as sober-minded men,—*Who* were more likely to know the mind of Christ and of His Apostles, they who conversed with them, or immediately succeeded them, and who gained no earthly advantage by such testimonies as these, and gladly suffered martyrdom for what they taught, and whose names have

\* Cp. S. Ignat, ad Trallian. cap. 2 and 3, and 7, and ad Magnes. cap. 4, and 6 and 7, ad Ephes. cap. 3 and 4, and 5; and Abp. Potter, p. 15, 257, 314.

† In his treatise *De Regimine Episcopali*, Tom. iv., p. 17, p. 27. He quotes Cyprian and Optatus, as authorities for these statements.

‡ *De Unit. Ecclesiæ*, p. 113, ad Antontan, p. 114, de Orat. Domin., p. 150, ed. Fell.

been honoured in Christendom for nearly eighteen hundred years, or such writers of the present day,—however popular they may be—as despise and reject the testimony of the Church in her best and purest ages? And with whom would you wish to have your future lot for Eternity? with those who scorn the authority of Christ's Church, or with such holy men as St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp, the disciples of St. John, and with St. Clement, of whom St. Paul says, that his name is in the book of life? (Phil. iv. 3.)

Forgive me, brethren, for saying that the question now arises, Whether Wesleyan Teachers are liable to that charge which is brought in Holy Scripture and by the Primitive Church against the promoters of Schism?

For about seven years I have been in the habit of making tours for Confirmation and Visitation in this Diocese, especially in Lincolnshire, and I have observed with sorrow that in almost every parish a building has been erected in which (whatever its original purpose may have been in former years) the Holy Sacraments are now administered by Teachers who are opposed to the Clergy of the Church of England, and who draw away the people from her ministrations. I regret to add that many of these Teachers are Wesleyans.

The Church of England (by whose laws her Bishops and Clergy are bound) regards Wesleyan Ministers as not lawfully ordained, and as in a state of Schism. She does not allow them to preach and to minister the Sacraments in her churches.

I do not mean to say that the guilt of this Schism between ourselves and the Wesleyans—for a Schism there certainly is, and wherever there is Schism there is guilt—lies wholly with them. In the following pages it is freely acknowledged by me that members and ministers of the Church of England have much to answer for in this matter. I am only stating a fact, and deeply deploring it.

But what is the remedy for this sin? How are the miseries consequent upon it to be removed?

Not by hollow concessions, nor by cowardly compromises on either side, but by "speaking the truth in love."

This brings me to the special point before us.

As is shown in the following pages (see the *Pastoral*, pp. 6—8), the Rev. John Wesley, the founder of Wesleyanism, who was a Clergyman of the Church of England, forbade his preachers to intrude into the office of the Clergy by ministering Baptism and the Lord's Supper in their chapels; and in 1793—two years after John Wesley's death—the Wesleyan Conference forbade their Preachers to assume the title of *reverend* on pain of exclusion from the connexion.

And why was this? Because John Wesley and the Wesleyan Conference, *at that time*, earnestly desired to avoid a Schism between Wesleyanism and the Church; and because they knew that if the things were done which they forbade, a Schism must inevitably ensue.

Let me therefore ask you in all candour.—Is the Church to be required to connive at and encourage Schism, by recognizing in her own churchyards—and, if in her *churchyards*, by monumental inscriptions in her *churches* also—a Wesleyan Minister by that very title, the assumption of which was *forbidden* by Wesley and by the Conference, *because* the assumption of it showed him in their opinion to be a Schismatic, and which exposed him to expulsion as such from the Wesleyan Society?

I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say. (1 Cor. x. 15.)

It has indeed been alleged by some that the title of "reverend" does not specially belong to the Clergy.

But pardon me for saying, this is little to the purpose. The question is, What is popularly understood by a title? All our best compilers of Dictionaries (such as Dr. Johnson, Webster, and Latham), define the title of *reverend* to be a title of the Clergy of the Church of England; and this is its common signification.

Accordingly John Wesley and the Wesleyan Conference (whose authority ought to be of weight with you) forbid that title to be assumed by your preachers, *because* they regarded it as a title of the Clergy. And I fear that some of your preachers wish to have the title, and would even *force the Church of England in her own churchyards and churches to recognize them by this title*, for this very reason, *because* it is a title of the Clergy; and because the people, seeing that Wesleyan preachers are publicly *recognized by the Church* under this title, *in her own consecrated places*, would thence infer that the Church herself believes and acknowledges that Wesleyan Teachers are equally qualified with her Clergy to administer the Sacraments. This is the plain English of the present claim.

Your preachers, holding the opinions they do as to Ordination and as to Schism,—opinions which I believe to be erroneous and dangerous—are acting quite consistently with those opinions, in making the claim; at the same time, forgive me for saying, that they are not acting consistently with their own title of Wesleyans, inasmuch as that claim is one which the founder of Wesleyanism forbid them to make; and inasmuch as they would compel the Church to acknowledge them by that title which the Conference forbid them to assume, on pain of exclusion from the connexion.

But the question is,—whether the Bishops and Clergy of the Church of England, who are the appointed Guardians of her Churchyards, would be acting consistently with the canons and rules of the Church which they are bound to maintain, and which they ought to apply in the supervision of monumental inscriptions in her Churches and Churchyards, if they were to allow that claim, and to recognize that title, and to lead their people by means of that recognition, to imagine that Schism is a venial thing, and that Teachers, who are not ordained according to the laws of the Church of England and of the Church Universal (and who, in fact, as I have shewn in the following pages, are *laymen*), are equally qualified to administer the Sacraments with those who have received

Episcopal Ordination, which alone is recognized as lawful Ordination by the Church of England.

It is true that the title in question has sometimes passed unchallenged, and may be seen in some of our churchyards. Very many Epitaphs there are which are objectionable, for their vicious taste and erroneous doctrine; and what is the inference from them? They shew that more vigilance ought to be exercised by the parochial clergy who have the care of our churchyards. But when an Incumbent (as at Owston) has deemed it his duty to raise an objection to an epitaph, the matter assumes a serious character. Is the objection a reasonable one? Or is it to be overruled by the Ordinary? This is the question at issue.

Be it even allowed for argument's sake, that the term *reverend* is no title at all; and that it only signifies *venerable*. May I then be allowed to enquire—are Bishops and Clergy to recognize publicly as *venerable*, and as *entitled to reverence*, such religious Teachers as are Leaders of Schism?—pardon the word. Would this be consistent? The Church of England, in her Litany, commands us to pray “From all false doctrine, heresy, and *schism*, Good Lord deliver us,” and in her 9th Canon she censures the authors of Schism, and declares that they ought to be excommunicated. In the 10th and 11th Canons she makes similar statements; and the title of the 110th Canon is that “Schismatics are to be presented,” that is, as liable to ecclesiastical censures.

Suffer me then to ask, Are persons, whom the Church regards as liable to be excommunicated (I speak plainly), to be recognized by her Bishops and Clergy, as *venerable* and *entitled to reverence*, and to be displayed as such in her churchyards and churches to her people? For my own part, I cannot violate the laws of the Church which I am bound to obey. I cannot in conscience do any thing to efface the distinction between lawful Ordination and its opposite. I could not therefore desert the Vicar of Owston, and disallow his decision. I could not court popularity, by exposing him to obloquy.

The letter addressed by me to the Wesleyan Minister who appealed to me with a request that I would interfere and set aside that decision of the Vicar of Owston, was as follows:—

“*Rischołme, Lincoln,*

“*16th July, 1874*

“SIR,

“I beg to acknowledge your letter of yesterday, enclosing a copy of one from the Archbishop of Canterbury.

“It is to be regretted that the claim urged by you as a Wesleyan Preacher to be designated by the title of ‘*Reverend*’ upon a monument erected in a burial-place of the Church of England, should be mixed up with the question of paying a tribute of parental affection to a beloved daughter now no more.

“What title should be given you by your own co-religionists is not the point at issue; and I express no opinion upon it. But the question is, whether the title of ‘*Reverend*’ should be conceded to you, on a tomb-stone, by Ministers of the Church of England, who are the responsible guardians of her churchyards.

“It is not easy to determine what is the exact meaning of the title of ‘*Reverend*,’ as claimed by a Wesleyan Preacher.

“If that title is to be taken to imply that he is a person in holy orders, duly qualified to minister the Word of God and Sacraments in a Church, then I am bound to say that the Laws to which I am subject would not allow me to recognize him in that capacity.

“I hope to have the happiness, before long, of admitting some Wesleyan Preachers to Holy Orders in the Church of England, after due training and trial; but I should be chargeable with equivocation and duplicity towards them, and with dishonesty and treachery towards the Church of England, if I were now to designate them by the title of ‘*Reverend*,’ to which they will have a just claim after Ordination, and by its means.

“If the title of ‘*Reverend*,’ to which you lay claim, and by which you desire to be designated, in a consecrated burial place of the Church of England, is intended only to indicate that you are appointed to preach in a Wesleyan place of worship, I would venture to remind you of another epitaph, that which was inscribed on the tomb of the Founder of Wesleyanism himself. There John Wesley was described as the ‘*Patron and Friend of Lay-Preachers*’ He regarded his preachers as Laymen; he warned them against calling themselves Ministers; and after his death the Wesleyan Conference, in 1793 and 1794, forbade them to assume the title of ‘*Reverend*.’\* ”

\* See the following *Pastoral*, pp. x., xi., and pp. 6, 8, 9.



“Any one who gives them that title contravenes the injunctions of John Wesley, for whose memory I entertain sincere respect, and to whose authority I desire to defer in my relations with the members of that important religious community which derives its name from him

“A title is a distinctive attribute belonging to a special person or class. If I give a title to a person to whom it does not belong, I am liable to the charge of flattering him, and of wronging those to whom the title does belong.

“For such reasons as these I have abstained from giving the title of ‘*Reverend*’ to Wesleyan Preachers ; not (I need hardly say) from any feeling of disparagement towards them, but because I honour consistency and truth, and because I am sure they would despise me if I acted against my conscience, and were to practise that kind of liberality which courts popularity by giving away what does not belong to it.

“I am, dear Sir,

“Yours faithfully,

“C. LINCOLN.”

It has indeed been said by some very distinguished persons, that although Wesleyan Teachers reject Episcopal Ordination, and have not even a Presbyterian succession or ordination, yet inasmuch as they acknowledge the Inspiration of Holy Scripture, and other Articles of the Faith, they cannot be regarded as *schismatics*.

This allegation shows how necessary a knowledge of Theology and Ecclesiastical history is to those who have to deal with such questions as these ; and it may well make us tremble for the future of the Church of England, if Ecclesiastical Causes are to be tried and decided in legal Tribunals by Judges who are not versed in Theological learning and in Church History.

The allegation shows that they who make it have never duly considered the difference between Heresy and Schism. The Donatists were not Heretics, but they have been consigned by Optatus and St. Augustine to notoriety as Schismatics. The very essence of Schism, as distinguished from Heresy, is to set up a rival ministry to that of the Church. St. Jerome defines Schism as antagonism\*

\* *Episcopalis dissensio*, St. Jerome in Epist. ad Titum, c. 3.

to Episcopal government. And one of our most learned Prelates, Archbishop Bramhall,\* says that "whoever sets up altar against altar in Christ's Church, or wilfully breaks the line of Apostolical Succession, which is the very nerve and sinew of Ecclesiastical Unity and Communion both with the present Church and with the Catholic Church of all successive ages, he is a *schismatic*, whether he be guilty of heretical pravity or not."

A shrewd man, and learned Judge, Lord Mansfield, said to Charles Wesley (the wise, learned, and pious brother of John Wesley), in 1784, that Wesleyan "Ordination was separation from the Church;" in other words, that to set up a rival ministry to that of the Church, is an act of Schism; and Charles Wesley adds in his letter to Dr. Chandler (April 28, 1785), that he himself is of the same mind.

My dear friends, let me conclude this appeal, as I began it, with a hearty assurance that it has been prompted by sentiments of Christian charity and affection. I am aware that there are some things in it that will give you pain and cause you offence. But they are spoken in love: and the wise man says, that "faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Prov. xxvii. 6). If what has been now said by me is true (as from my heart I believe it to be) then, however unpalatable it may be, it is the language of love; and it is really more loving than that specious flattery, which would deceive and injure you while it caresses you. "A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet (Prov. xxix. 5). He that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue" (xxviii. 23). Let me also say with the Apostle, that if in such matters as these "I sought to please men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. i., 10), and that I am ready to share his lot who says that the more abundantly he loved, the less

\* *Works* 1, p. 112, ed. Oxf. 1842. See also the words of Archbishops Wake and Potter, and Dr. Barrow, quoted as above, pp. 6 and 7.

he was loved in return (2 Cor. xii. 15), and who asks,—“ Am I become your enemy because I tell you the truth ?” (Gal. iv. 16).

As there are no words strong enough to express the sorrow with which I mourn over the unhappy division which now severs you from us, so no language can adequately declare the desire I feel that the Schism between us may be healed. I cannot, indeed, surrender a single jot or tittle of those principles, and of those laws, which it is my duty to guard and administer ; but there is no earthly sacrifice which I would not gladly make to promote that union. Our unhappy divisions weaken us both. They give a triumph to our enemies, and to the adversaries of Christ and of His Truth.

But if we could be united on sound principles of Christian faith and Apostolic discipline, then the angels of heaven would rejoice over the union ; and we might hope to go forth, side by side, in a glorious campaign against Romanism and Unbelief, which are now threatening to involve England and Europe in religious strife and civil confusion. We, on our part, (let me freely confess it) might gain much from you. We should derive much benefit from your energy, your zeal, and your self-sacrifice. But it is no less true that you would receive much from us. The spiritual grace of a lawful Ordination and Apostolic Succession, (start not at the words, but examine what the holiest and wisest men of Christendom from the days of the Apostles for eighteen hundred years have thought of them,) the due administration of the Holy Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, for the remission of sins, for the regeneration and sanctification of the soul, and for a pledge and foretaste of a glorious resurrection and a happy immortality, and for spiritual communion in doctrine and discipline with Apostles and Evangelists, and with holy men of every age and clime in the mystical body of Christ which is the blessed company of all faithful people—these are inestimable blessings which we could give to you, or rather which God can impart to you by our means.

My dear friends, will you reject them ?

The next Wesleyan Conference is, I believe, to be held in this Diocese, at Nottingham. May it not be made an occasion, not for perpetuating religious strife, and for multiplying religious dissensions, but for considering the grounds of our differences, with a hearty desire to heal them, and to promote unity in the Truth? Let us join in prayer to Almighty God that we may have grace to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions; and that He would take away from us all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord, that as there is but one Body and one Spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and that we may with one mind and one mouth glorify Him through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Permit me to subscribe myself, my dear friends,

Yours sincerely,

C. LINCOLN.

## PREFACE.

---

LET me thank the kind friends who have given a welcome to this Pastoral. In some quarters it has met with a different reception. Let me here advert to some comments upon it.

And first,—to prevent misconception,—let me repeat—what is freely allowed in the following Pastoral—that we ourselves, the Clergy and Laity of the Church of England, have been much to blame; and that the unhappy separation between us and the Wesleyans is due, in no small degree, to our want of faithfulness and zeal, and to our lack of definite teaching on the doctrines, constitution, and discipline of the Christian Church; and that therefore we ought to repent and amend our ways; and to pray earnestly, and to labour diligently, that the schism may be healed; and to invite them to help us in healing it.

I have been charged with using strong language,—for instance, in saying that there may be such a sin in the Christian Church, as the “gainsaying of Core” (Korah), as St. Jude calls it, writing to Christians (Jude 11). If my readers will have the goodness to look at the Pastoral (p. 8), they will see that I was quoting John Wesley; and that they who have censured me have also condemned him.

But it has been asked, Why should a Bishop write a Pastoral to Wesleyans? Why does he not let them alone? He had better attend to his Diocese. Why does he trouble them? They are quiet and contented as they are. He is only stirring up strife, and is exposing himself to the charge of folly, pride, and presumption by meddling with them.

My friends, (let me reply to such inquirers), precisely the same questions as these were addressed more than 1,460 years ago to one of the wisest Bishops of ancient Christendom, St. Augustine, when he was endeavouring to bring back the Donatists of Africa to the communion of the Church, from which they had then separated themselves.

“Why does Augustine trouble us? Why does he not let us alone? We are quite satisfied and happy as we are. We do not belong to him. He had better look to his own Church, and leave us to take care of ours. He is acting very foolishly, and is chargeable with usurpation, and bigotry, by endeavouring to domineer over us.”

But that wise, loving, learned, and holy Bishop was not moved by such language as that. He thought that the Donatists might be led to consider whether they were in a safe condition; and for their sake, and the sake of the Church, he longed to heal the separation between them and her. He laboured to restore them to her communion; and thus encountered obloquy from them, and from some luke-warm Churchmen, who thought him a rash, and fanatical zealot, a hot-headed controversialist, and an impolitic enthusiast. But he pursued the work of “*troubling*,” (as it was called,) because it was a work of love. He compared it to the work of a surgeon, who, while he gives pain, endeavours to restore health. “Not every one (says Augustine, Epist. 93) who spares, is a friend; nor every one who wounds, is an enemy. “Open rebuke,” says the wise man, “is better than secret love; faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful” (Prov. xxvii. 5, 6). “*Melius est cum severitate diligere quàm cum lenitate decipere.*” “He who binds a man in a phrenzy, or arouses one in a lethargy, is troublesome to both, but loves both; and he would not trouble them, if he did not love them.” St. Augustine,—when preaching a Sermon on that grand homily of the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek. xxxiv.) to the Shepherds of Israel; which is a Manual for all Christian Bishops and Pastors; (see St. Augustine, Sermon xlvi.), and referring to the case of the Donatists,—thus speaks: “Many sheep stray from the fold of Christ, and are impatient with those who endeavour to bring them back to it. ‘What’ (they ask) do you want with us? Why do you seek us? My answer is, ‘because you are going astray, and are in danger of perishing.’ ‘But’ (they reply) I love to stray, I am content to perish,—as you call it.’ ‘Do you indeed desire it? How much better (I answer) do I desire that you should *not* perish,

but be saved! Doubtless I am importunate; but the Apostle commands me 'to preach the word, and to be instant in season and *out of season*' (2 Tim. iv. 2); and Almighty God condemns all careless pastors who do not seek the erring; He says, by the voice of the prophet Ezekiel, 'The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill, yea My flock was scattered upon the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against the Shepherds, and I will require My flock at their hands' (Ezek. xxxiv. 4—10). Yet, further, (says Augustine) "I have a commission from Christ, the Chief Shepherd; We must all stand before His judgment seat (2 Cor. v. 10). You cannot overturn the tribunal of Christ, and set up that of Donatus in its place. Therefore I must seek and search for Christ's sheep, when they are astray; and though in doing so I must go among thorns and briars and brambles, which pierce and wound me, yet I will gladly do it." And why? because he loved Christ, Who said, "Feed My sheep" (John xxi. 16, 17), and he did it for His sake, in order to bring back to His fold the sheep for which He shed His blood; and for which He prayed that they might all be One as He and the Father are One (John xvii. 21, 22); so that there might be one Fold and one Shepherd (John x. 16).

"Besides," adds St. Augustine, "if I do not endeavour to reclaim dissenters, but connive at schism, the members of the Church will imagine that Schism is a harmless thing, and that it matters little whether they belong to the Church or no. They will suppose that it is indifferent whether they resort to one place of worship or another. They will say, that if religious divisions are sinful, and are condemned as such by Almighty God in Holy Scripture, the Bishops and Pastors of the Church would endeavour to heal them. But if the Bishops and Clergy do not endeavour to do so, the members of the Church will infer that the sin of schism is a mere

idle and empty sound, and that only quarrelsome people ever talk about it ; and thus the children of the Church will be lost, because Bishops and Pastors do not care whether schismatics are saved."

Again, St. Augustine thus speaks (on Psalm xxi. and in other places)—"You Donatists say to me, 'You have your sheep, and we have ours. Do not be troublesome to me and to my sheep, and I will not be troublesome to you and yours.' No, my dear friends (answers Augustine), these sheep are not yours nor mine ; but they belong to CHRIST. Let His sheep follow Him. Wherever the Good Shepherd is, there let the flock be. If Christ is with you, let my sheep, as you call them, go to you. But no, you have separated yourselves from the Church ; and Christ loves unity, and blames division ; therefore let divisions be healed, and unity prevail. Come back to the communion of the Church from which you have strayed. Nothing, says St. Paul, profits without charity (1 Cor. xiii., 1—3), and no one can be rightly said to have charity who breaks the unity of the Church."

For saying such things as these, St. Augustine was called a very troublesome person by some in his own day, and was accused of stirring up strife, and was censured by many. But (said he), "The man who willingly detracts from my good name when I labour for Christ, unwillingly adds to my future reward from Him." He looked to posterity and to the judgment-seat of Christ. He looked to the commission he had received from Christ. "Nothing," he says, (Epist. xxi.) "is more easy and more popular, than the office of a Bishop or a Priest, if it be discharged in a careless and adulatory manner ; but nothing is more miserable, or more worthy of condemnation, in the sight of God, than such an Episcopate or Priesthood as that." He was, therefore, contented to be accounted troublesome, and to be called a man of strife, as Jeremiah was ; (Jerem. xv., 10.) He remembered that woe is denounced in Holy Scripture against those false teachers who said, "Peace, Peace, when there was no Peace" (Jerem. vi., 14), and who "put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, and called evil good and good evil" (Isaiah v., 20), and daubed a wall with untempered mortar (Ezek. xiii., 10),



so that it looked white and fair outside, while inside it was unsound and tottering. He remembered also that it was said of the greatest of prophets, "Art thou he that *troublest* Israel?" (1 Kings xviii., 17); and that the pool of Bethesda in the Gospel would have had no healing virtue, unless an angel had descended and *troubled* the water (John v., 4); and that it was said of St. Paul and his companions, "These men do exceedingly *trouble* our city" (Acts xvi., 20), and "they have turned the world upside down" (Acts xvii., 6), and that St. Paul was called a madman (Acts xxvi., 24; 2 Cor. v., 13.) And more than this, He who is the Lord of Apostles and Prophets, the Prince of Peace, the Incarnate Word and Wisdom of God, the Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls, had to encounter similar treatment. They said of Christ, "He stirreth up the people" (Luke xxiii., 5). "He is beside himself" (Mark iii., 21); "He is a Samaritan and hath a devil" (John viii., 48).

St. Augustine was content to be found in such company as that; and his name is now honoured on earth, and will be blessed for ever in heaven.

Besides, in addressing a Pastoral to the Wesleyans I desired to recognize them as not unwilling to be followers of John Wesley, who (as I have shewn below) solemnly charged them "never to separate from the Church." I therefore regarded them as not aliens from it, and from myself, a Pastor of the Church. Have I done them wrong in giving them credit of being ready to be loyal to their Founder, and to be true to the name they bear?

Brethren: it was for such reasons as these, that I put forth the following Pastoral. I have there invited the Wesleyans to a friendly Conference; and if a Conference with them, like the "collatio"\* of St Augustine with the Donatists, were conducted in a spirit of brotherly love and of prayer to God for the guidance of the Holy Spirit of Truth and Peace, we might hope that the temporary trouble would lead to permanent quietness and unity, and

\* St. Augustin. *Opera*; Tom. ix. p. 833, 884.

to our happiness in this life and a better; and to the advancement of God's glory, and the salvation of many souls.

It has been alleged that the prevalence of Wesleyanism is partly due to the carelessness, incapacity, or immorality of some Pastors of the Church. I fully believe it. But one of the blessings of the Church of England is, that true doctrine is taught, and grace is dispensed, in all her congregations, by reason of the Holy Scriptures read in her Churches, and by the use of her Liturgy, and by the administration of the Holy Sacraments, and by the love of Christ acting in and by His Word and Sacraments, and in answer to the prayers of the faithful. In the Holy Scriptures, Sacraments, Liturgy, Creeds, Catechism, and other formularies of the Church of England, every member of all her congregations possesses safeguards of orthodoxy and symbols of unity, whatever the personal defects or dissensions of her Ministers may be; and therefore the sheep may be saved everywhere, even though some of their shepherds may be lost. Evil Pastors will be punished hereafter, if not here. In the mean time, their failings and sins serve to try and exercise the faith, charity, patience, and steadfastness of the people, which will not fail of an eternal reward. It would also be a salutary thing, that unworthy Pastors should be publicly warned in a Conference that they are stumbling-blocks and offences to many, and be brought to repentance and amendment, and thus the discipline of the Church be strengthened. And, as Augustine and his brethren made overtures of union to the Donatist Bishops and Clergy, might not we, in a Conference, invite our Wesleyan brethren to help us in the work of the ministry, and thus the breach between us be healed, and our efficiency be increased in winning souls to Christ?

It has also been represented by some, that the tendencies to Romanism, in doctrine, practice, and ritual, which are now visible in some of our Churches, repel our Wesleyan brethren from us, and widen the separation between us. This, also, is true. But, again, let me ask, is it not very desirable that these evil results of such tendencies should be plainly set forth and brought to light, and that

Clergy who are chargeable with such delinquencies as these should be warned that they are sinning against Christ, and against souls for which He died? Is it not probable that many of them would be debarred from such uncharitable proceedings as these, by plain and affectionate words spoken in public Conference with those who are scandalized by them?

It has also been alleged by some, that Wesleyans cannot be said to be chargeable with schism, "because schism means division *in* a Church, and not separation *from it*;" and that therefore they have nothing to regret.

I should have thought, that if a rent *in* a Church were a sin, a rent *from* it was a greater one.

But I had rather reply to this allegation by words of great and good men, than by my own. The original word, which is used in the New Testament by St. Jude (*v.* 19) concerning those of whom she speaks so severely, means separatists *from* the Church. S. Cyprian says (Epist. 65), "Schisma est, quum *de Ecclesiâ* receditur, et altare foris collocatur," and St. Jerome thus writes (in Epist. Paul. ad Tit. c. iii.)—"Schisma *ab Ecclesiâ* separatur."

It has also been said by some, that the doctrine of *Apostolic Succession* on which I lay stress in the following Pastoral (pp. 14, 15,) is a fable, and Wesley is quoted in support of this statement.\* If so, it is a fable which was believed and acted upon for fifteen centuries by the Church of Christ Universal—which is His Body and Spouse (Eph. i. 23, "the Pillar and Ground of the Truth," "the House of the Living God," (1 Tim. iii. 15), to which He promised

\* *Wesley's Works* (Lond., 1812.) Vol. xv., p. 245. But in the same sentence he adds, "This does in no wise interfere with my remaining in the Church of England, from which I have no more desire to separate than I had fifty years ago. I still attend all the ordinances of the Church at all opportunities, and I constantly and earnestly desire all that are connected with me so to do." This was written in 1785, only six years before his death. He said in 1755 (*Works*, xvi. p. 4), "It is not clear to us that Presbyters, so circumstanced as we are, may appoint or ordain others." In 1738, when he was asked at Bath by what authority he preached, his reply was, "by the authority of Jesus Christ, conveyed to me by him who is now Archbishop of Canterbury, when he laid his hands upon me and said, 'take thou authority to preach the Gospel.'" (*Tyerman's Life of Wesley*, i., 238.) And in 1745, he thus wrote in his own name, and in that of his brother, the Rev. Charles Wesley, "We believe that it would not be right for us to administer either Baptism or the Lord's Supper unless we had a Commission from those Bishops whom we apprehend to be in a succession from the Apostles. We believe that the three-fold order of Ministers is not only authorized by its apostolic institution, but also by the Written Word." (*Tyerman's Life of Wesley*, i., 496. This valuable biography is by a distinguished member of the Wesleyan body.)

His presence even to the end (Matt. xxviii. 20), and the gift of the Holy Ghost to teach her all things, and to guide her into all truth (John xiv. 26, xvi. 13), and to abide with her for ever (John xiv. 6); and, therefore, if she was deceived in this, Christ's promise has failed; and the Holy Ghost has not done the work for which He was sent. Surely no thoughtful and devout Christian will entertain such a supposition as this; but will reject it with indignation and abhorrence as an insult to our adorable Redeemer, and to God the Holy Ghost the Comforter.

Let me assure you that if the Church of England were to be so ill-advised as to give up her claim to "Apostolical Succession," the person who would most exult and triumph at such a surrender on our part, would be the Bishop of Rome.

Again, it has been urged that John Wesley was of opinion that Presbyters or Priests have equal power to ordain with Bishops. Be it so. Then he was very singular in that opinion. It was the opinion of Acrius and Colluthus, and was condemned by the Church of Christ Universal. But let me be pardoned for adding, that even if this were true, it would not serve the Wesleyan cause. The present Wesleyan Ministers have not even Presbyterian ordination. In the Wesleyan Conference of 1792, it was resolved that the title of "*Reverend*" should not be assumed by Wesleyan Preachers,\* and that they "might not wear gowns or bands," and it was not till 1836 (in the Conference at Birmingham), that the "laying on of hands"† was adopted by them. And, therefore, (though I shall be said, I fear, to stir up strife,) I am bound to declare that no well-instructed Christian for the first fifteen hundred years after Christ would have thought it safe to receive the Holy Communion at their hands.

Wesleyans either hold to John Wesley, or they do not. If they do, they must acknowledge that their own Ordinations are invalid, and that the Sacraments ministered by their Preachers are irregular. For John Wesley never supposed that persons could ordain, who

\* *Peirce*, Ecclesiastical Principles and Polity of the Wesleyan Methodists, p. 278. Lond., 1873. This is an official work, published by the Conference itself.

† *Ibid.* p. 279.

are neither Bishops nor Priests; but their Preachers have not been ordained either by Bishops or Priests.

But if they do not hold to John Wesley, ought they to call themselves Wesleyans? and can they retain those chapels, which were built by him on the condition that they who held them should conform to his opinions? Might not those Chapels be claimed by persons, genuine Wesleyans, who cleave to Wesleyanism in that form in which John Wesley established it?

Wesleyanism is now in a critical condition. In 1872, while population was increasing, its members seemed to be on the decline.\* But this is not the main thing. Its Founder committed the care of its places of worship to the body called the "Conference," which was constituted by him in the year 1784 by a deed of declaration.† The Conference was composed of One Hundred persons, who were Preachers. But his Preachers (with the exception of a few who were clergymen of the Church of England) were, in his opinion, Laymen. He regarded himself as the founder of an order of *Lay* preachers. But the Conference now considers itself a body of Clergymen. Its President is a quasi-bishop, and confers Ordination, and has sometimes been styled "*Right Reverend*;" its members are called "*Reverend*," it will not admit any whom it regards as a Layman to its Councils.‡ Is not this a departure from the fundamental principles, on which the Conference, which sways all the authority of the whole body, was constituted? And will not this deviation eventually lead to consequences which may rend asunder the society itself? Would not, even in the interests of Wesleyanism, the wisest policy be, to return to those principles upon which it was based by its founder?

As to the *ordination* of Wesleyans, an appeal has been made in its favour to Stillingfleet's *Irenicum*, a juvenile work, which he himself retracted,§ see Bp. Burnet's *Own Time*, 1, 189), and all that

\* See the official returns of the Conference from 1854 to 1872. *Peirce*, p. 68. In Great Britain the entire numbers of members were in 1871, 347,090; in 1872, 346,850; and the total number throughout the world in 1871, 582,540; in 1872, 581,508.

† *Peirce*, chap. x., p. 449. *Tyerman*, iii. 417.

‡ Nor even Reports of the public press may be present at them, *Peirce*, p. 457.

§ See *Bp. Burnet's Own Time*, i., ed. Oxf., 1823, and 325. *Stillingfleet's* own avowal in his *Unreasonableness of Separation*, p. lxxii., and in his *Ecclesiastical Cases*, i., pp. 5-9.

can be said of it is, that it did not condemn *presbyterian* orders ;— which the Wesleyans have not. Let me add, that one of the most saintly and wise men that Scotland ever produced, Robert Leighton (afterwards Archbishop of Glasgow), and one of the holiest and most learned men of Lincolnshire, Simon Patrick (afterwards Bishop of Ely), having already Presbyterian orders, thought it right to receive Episcopal Ordination. No one need be ashamed to imitate such examples as those.

Much might be said in excuse of non-episcopal communities in countries where Episcopacy does not exist, or where the Church enforces sinful terms of communion, as the Church of Rome does. But this plea cannot be alleged on behalf of Wesleyanism, such as it has *now become*, since the days of Wesley, and in spite of his commands. (See below, pp. 6—8.) It now sets up a priesthood of its own,—for the administration of the Sacraments,—against the priesthood of the Church of England. This (I say it with sorrow), *if done wilfully*, is the essence of schism. Some persons have recently urged it to do this the more, in reprisals to the following Pastoral. If it does so, it will prove more clearly that the Pastoral is true.

But, brethren, I am fully aware that much of the separation, to which I have referred, is the result rather of circumstances of birth, education, and society, than to deliberate convictions. There is not sufficient room in our churches in our great towns for the population; the number and endowments of our Clergy are inadequate.

But here is another reason for conference and co-operation. If the Wesleyans would unite with us in an earnest endeavour to maintain the true faith, and to contend earnestly for it against unbelief, superstition, and vice, how great and glorious would be the result.

But as it is now, the Church of Rome points with scorn to our religious divisions, and triumphs over what she calls the chaotic confusion of our discordant Protestantism, as bearing more resemblance to a Babel, the Tower of Confusion, than to Zion, the City of Peace. And thus she draws many to herself. Not the arguments

of Rome, which are utterly unsound, but the divisions of Protestants, which are greatly to be deplored, make Romanists.

And, on the other side also, the unbeliever says to us, "First go and agree among yourselves, as to what the Truth is, and then come and preach it to us—but not till then."

Thus, brethren, Romanism and Infidelity gain by our religious divisions; and moral depravity, insubordination, and anarchy, and all their calamitous consequences, public and private, are threatening to rend asunder the fabric of civil society, and to involve England in confusion and ruin.

For the sake, therefore, of England and of Christendom, I pray for the friendly Conference of those who are separated from one another, and who ought to be united as brethren in Christ.

It would be premature to express an opinion here as to the terms of agreement that might be arranged between the Church of England and the Wesleyans. For my own part, however, I have no hesitation in saying that I would consent to such conditions as John Wesley himself would have approved: and which may be gathered from his own works, and from quotations in these pages.

What the result of the present appeal may be, God only knows. It has been said by some that the Wesleyan Society is immoveably rooted in its present position. But I have seen enough to convince me, that whatever may be the case with the Society itself as a whole, there are very many members of it, and not a few preachers in it, who are not satisfied with their present condition, and who are looking earnestly to the Church; and very many, in my own knowledge, have recently joined it, and many others at this time are preparing to do so.

I have been told that I ought not to busy myself with the affairs of Wesleyans, but to employ myself in attending to the work of my own Diocese, and to be "putting my own house in order, which is tumbling about my ears."

Let me then be permitted to say—since I am constrained to speak of myself, as St. Paul was, by accusations of others, so that he becomes, he says, "a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me"

(2 Cor. xii., 11)—that, while conscious of many short-comings, I have endeavoured to attend to the affairs of this Diocese, and may I be allowed to add, with feelings of devout thankfulness to God from Whom, and from Whom alone, all strength comes of body and mind, that I have been enabled by Him in the present year to hold Confirmations in numerous places, and to hold Visitations in almost every part of the Diocese, and that (as I have said in the Pastoral), I regard the Wesleyans as forming a very considerable part of the population of this Diocese, and that in addressing them, I was attending to the affairs of the Diocese in a very important respect.

As to the danger of our house falling about our ears, I am fully aware that it needs a good deal of care, and may be greatly strengthened, improved, and beautified; and that the Wesleyans might do much to help us in this good work. But here, again, let us thank God for His mercy. I trust that our house is built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ being the head corner stone (Eph. ii. 20). I believe it to be built upon Christ, Who is the Rock (Matt. xvi. 18); and while it remains steadfast on that foundation, it will not fall. (Matt. vii. 25).

As to the work of Christ in this Diocese, let me only mention a single specimen of it. To day is the 21st July; and if I live for another ten days I shall be called upon in that time to re-open three Churches in this Diocese, two partly re-built from their foundations, namely, at Nettleton, and West Ashby, and Helpringham, in the County of Lincoln; and my Right Reverend Brother the Bishop Suffragan, who has been holding Confirmations throughout Nottinghamshire, is engaged to re-open a fourth restored Church—Cromwell, in the County of Nottingham—in the same period of time. Nearly 100 Churches have been either restored or built in the Diocese in the last three years. This does not look as if the house were tumbling about our ears. To God be all the praise!

Let me now bid the reader farewell, with an earnest prayer for a blessing on all endeavours to promote Union in the Truth.

*Rischohne, Lincoln, July 21st, 1873: Revised, Aug. 10th, 1874.*



RISEHOLME, LINCOLN,

TUESDAY IN WHITSUN WEEK,

June 3, 1873.

BRETHREN,

A few days ago a Clergyman of this Diocese came to me for advice concerning a tombstone which had been lately placed in his churchyard, bearing the following inscription:—"In memory of ——, a happy labourer in the Wesleyan Methodist Church."

The question put by him was this:—Would he be justified in allowing a monument to remain, which might lead his parishioners to suppose that the Wesleyan Society is a Church; and that it matters little, whether they belong to it, or to the Church of England? Ought he not to protect them against such a supposition as that?

The answer given was to the following effect:—

A clergyman ought to take care that no gravestone is placed in his churchyard, without previous communication with himself. He ought to see the design of the tombstone, and to examine what is intended to be inscribed on it. He ought to see that nothing is engraved on it which is contrary to Holy Scripture, or to the doctrine of the Church of England as declared in her Articles, Canons, and Formularies. And if any dispute arises on this point, there is an appeal to the Ordinary for a final decision.\* But to remove a gravestone once placed in a churchyard is a different thing—especially to remove one which was placed there in the presence of the Sexton (as the stone in question was), who is supposed to be an officer of the Clergyman and of the Parish. Such removal would require a faculty, and this might lead to a legal process, of which it is not easy to foresee the issue. It might also be alleged, that in popular language a Christian Society, meeting for worship, is called a Church; though as I shall shew, John Wesley did not claim the word for his own Society; that Richard Hooker,†

\* Burn's *Ecclesiastical Law*, I., 273.

† Hooker's *Ecl. Pol.* Pref. § 6, Book iii., ch. xi. 14 iv. ch. xiii.

and Bishop Andrewes,\* and in our own day Mr. Keble,† speak of “Foreign Protestant Churches,”—“Swiss Churches,” &c., which have not Episcopal Ordination, and that, as is supposed by many, the Presbyterian Kirk is called the “Church of Scotland” in the Canons of 1603.‡

What, then, should be done? The advice given to the Clergyman was—Liberate your own conscience. Disabuse your people of erroneous notions. Imitate the Apostle St. Paul, who beheld an altar at Athens, and took a text from it, and preached a sermon upon it.§ Use this Inscription in your churchyard as a subject for one or more sermons to your people, on the present relation of Wesleyanism to the Church, and on the sin and unhappiness of Schism, and on the duty and blessedness of Unity in the Truth.

Brethren, I now propose to follow the advice which I then gave.

This holy season, Whitsuntide, in which we bless God for the Coming of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, Peace and Love, prompts me to do so. I have just completed a Visitation of this Diocese; and I cannot overlook you who form so large and important a part of it. I pray God to heal our divisions. My heart yearns for union with you. You often bring your children to be confirmed by me. In how many things are we united with you, and you with us. You have the same Bible with ourselves; and in many respects the same Prayer Book. Your Service Book is derived from our Liturgy.|| We have the same Creed. In how many things are we with you, and you with us. And why not in all?

Ever since the commencement of my connexion with the Diocese of Lincoln, in which Wesleyanism had its origin, and in which it largely prevails, I have longed to address you, and to speak to you “the truth in love” (Eph. iv. 15). One of the first Confirmations which I held in this Diocese, in the Spring of 1869, was at Epworth,

\* Bp. Andrewes' *Letter to Peter Moulin*, Dec. 12, 1618, and *Answer to Third Epistle*.

† Keble in his edition of *Hooker*, Vol. I., p. 169, 597, 617. Ed. Oxford, 1836.

‡ Canon lv.

§ Acts xvii., 23.

|| See *The Sunday Service of the Methodists and [other Occasional Services]*. Lond.: Mason, 1842.

where John Wesley was born, one hundred and seventy years ago. In the churchyard, on the south side of the chancel, is the gravestone of his venerable father, Samuel Wesley, thirty-nine years Rector of that Parish, who, as the inscription on it declares, died, as he had lived, "in the true Catholic Faith of the Undivided and Ever Blessed Trinity, and of the Godhead of Jesus Christ." On that stone John Wesley stood and preached.

When I visited Epworth, in 1869, I was informed that no Confirmation had been held in that important Parish\* since the 22nd August, 1686, when the Bishop of Peterborough of that day confirmed there; and it is recorded, that on that occasion a multitude of persons, about a thousand in number, was gathered together to be confirmed at once.

Is it surprising that in such a state of things Wesleyanism should have arisen.

In the course of several tours of Confirmation and Visitation from Parish to Parish in that and succeeding years, I have observed that in almost every one, especially in North Lincolnshire, Methodism presents itself in two forms, and often in three, viz., Methodism proper, Free Methodism, and Primitive Methodism.

This suggests serious reflections.

When Methodism arose, Clerical non-residence was almost the rule, and Clerical residence was the exception. The Parochial Cures were ill endowed, and there were comparatively few Parsonages. Many of the Parochial Clergy dwelt in the towns, and rode forth on Sunday mornings to serve several churches in rapid succession, and returned in the evening to the towns, and saw little of their country parishes during the week.

It reflects great credit on the piety, zeal, and self-sacrifice of the people of Lincolnshire, that they could not exist patiently in such a state of spiritual starvation. The Church did not supply them with religious food, and they resolved to provide it for themselves. Wesleyanism is due, in great measure, to the Church; it is due to Clerical Pluralities and to Clerical non-residence, and to a lack of

\* The population is 2,295.

adequate Episcopal oversight, which could hardly be exercised in this enormous Diocese, containing at that time more than 1240 parishes. This must be allowed. And of all unfair things it would be one of the most unjust, to charge the evil consequences of Wesleyanism mainly on John Wesley and his followers. "Physician, heal thyself" (Luke iv. 23). We must look at the beam in our own eye and try to cast it out (Matt. vii. 3).

But still, let us not disguise the truth, declared in God's holy Word, that wilful Schism—by whomsoever it may be caused—is a heinous sin, and a tremendous evil, for time and eternity; and that of all the blessings in this world, for which we ought to labour and pray, religious Unity is one of the best; that "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matt. v. 9).

Listen, brethren, I intreat you, not to me, but to the Holy Ghost, speaking by the Apostles, whom, as at this time, He was sent to teach, and to guide them into all truth (John xiv. 26; xvi. 13), and to abide with them for ever. Hear His divine words—"Whereas there are divisions among you, are ye not carnal?" (1 Cor. iii. 4). And "to be carnally minded is death" (Rom. viii. 6). Among the "works of the flesh" are "variance, strife, heresy" (Gal v. 20). They that "separate themselves" are described as "sensual, having not the Spirit" (Jude 19). Therefore the Apostle says, "I beseech you, brethren, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. i. 10). "I beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephes. iv. 1—3).

Brethren, if your revered founder, John Wesley, were to rise from his grave, what would his feelings be? what would be his language? If he stood once more on his father's grave at Epworth, inscribed with that profession of faith to which I have referred and if he looked down upon the town lying on the west beneath the churchyard, there he would see a large building of red brick, in which a religious sect assembles for worship, which has

split off from the Wesleyans—the sect of Kilhamites.\* And if he extended his contemplation to the neighbouring country, he would see in almost every village one or more places of worship frequented by persons who bear the name of Methodists, but who dissent, not only from the Church of England, but from the form of Methodism originated by John Wesley.

Suffer me also, to enquire, Whether, even as to Wesleyanism itself, as it is now, he would acknowledge it as his own work? Would John Wesley be a Wesleyan? Refer to the inscription on the tombstone recently erected, to which I adverted at the beginning of this letter. It describes the deceased as “a happy labourer in the Wesleyan Church.” John Wesley acknowledged only one Church in this country, the Church of England. In 1790 he thus wrote: “I never had any design of separating from the Church. I have no such design now. I declare that I live and die a Member of the Church of England; and that none who regard my judgment will ever separate from it.”† “We do not, and will not form any separate sect; but from principle we will remain what we always have been, true members of the Church of England.”‡ He did not allow his disciples to call themselves “Dissenters.”§ He would not permit his preachers to license themselves “as dissenters, but as Methodist preachers.”|| In the “Code of Directions” drawn up by him, and given to his preachers, as “the Rules by which they were to walk,” and which are described by the Wesleyan Conference in 1797 as “the Rules to which they consented when they were admitted,” are the following instructions:—“How should an Assistant be qualified for his charge?—By loving the Church of England, and by resolving not to separate from it. Let this be well observed. I fear that when the Methodists leave the Church,

\* In the description of Epworth, in White's *Directory of Lincolnshire*, p. 440, ed. 1872, it is stated that Mr. Alexander Kilham, the founder of the “New Connection,” was also a native of this parish, and died in 1798, after fighting hard against what he regarded as the “priestly domination of the Wesley Conference.”

† John Wesley in the *Arminian Magazine*, quoted in p. 172 of Mr. Umlin's volume on *John Wesley's Place in Church History*. London, 1870.

‡ Wesley's *Sermons*, i., 575.

§ *Ibid.*

|| *Minutes*, A.D. 1772. Vol. i., p. 541.

God will leave them. O, use every means to prevent this. (1) Exhort all our people to keep close to the Church and Sacrament. (2) *Warn them* all *against* niceness in hearing—a prevailing evil. (3) *Warn them* against despising the prayers of the Church; (4) *against* calling our Society ‘*a Church*,’ (5) against calling our preachers ‘*Ministers*,’ our houses ‘*Meeting Houses* :’ call them plain ‘*Preaching Houses*.’”

These “Minutes” were delivered to Wesleyan Preachers on their admission to the office, and these Preachers were then told that they would “be acknowledged as fellow-labourers in the cause as long as they freely consented to these rules, and earnestly endeavoured to walk by them.” \*

John Wesley was the founder of an Order of *Lay Preachers*. This was his special work. He desired to *supplement* the Church, not to *supplant* it. He had no intention of setting up an independent Priesthood in opposition to that of the Church, for the ministry of the Sacraments. He expressly disclaimed any such intention. Hear his own words : †

“In 1744 all the Methodist Preachers held their first Conference. But none of them dreamed that the being called to *preach* gave them any right to *administer 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 farthest from our thoughts*. And if any Preacher had taken such a step, we should have looked upon it as a palpable breach of this rule, and consequently as a recantation of our connection.

\* *Chronicles of Wesleyan Methodism*, i. p. vii. p. 78–80, 88. See also Rev. H. W. Holden’s Volume on John Wesley, p. 158. Lond., 1870. 2nd Edition.

† The Rev. John Wesley: in his Sermon preached at Cork, 4th May, 1789, and printed by him in his *Arminian Magazine* for 1790.

“ For supposing (what I utterly deny) that the receiving you as a Preacher, at the same time gave an authority to administer the Sacraments ; yet, it gave you no other authority than to do it, or anything else, where I appoint. But where did I appoint you to do this ? Nowhere at all. Therefore, by this very rule you are excluded from doing it. And in doing it you renounce the first principle of Methodism, which was *wholly and solely to preach the gospel*.

“ It was several years after our Society was formed, before any attempt of this kind was made. The first was, I apprehend, at Norwich. One of our Preachers there, yielded to the importunity of a few of the people, and baptized their children. But as soon as it was known, he was informed it must not be, unless he designed to leave our connexion. He promised to do it no more : and I suppose he kept his promise.

“ Now, so long as the Methodists keep to this plan, they cannot separate from the Church. And this is our peculiar glory. It is new upon the earth. Revolve all the histories of the Church, from the earliest ages, and you will find, whenever there was a great work of God in any particular city or nation, the subjects of that work soon said to their neighbours, ‘ Stand by yourselves, for we are holier than you ! ’ As soon as ever they separated themselves, either they retired into deserts, or they built religious houses ; or at least formed parties, into which none was admitted but such as subscribed both to their judgment and practice. But with the Methodists, it is quite otherwise. They are not a Sect or Party. They do not separate from the Religious Community to which they at first belonged. They are still members of the Church ; such they desire to live and to die. And I believe, one reason why God is pleased to continue my life so long, is to confirm them in their present purpose, *Not to separate from the Church*.

“ I wish all of you who are vulgarly termed Methodists, would seriously consider what has been said. And particularly you, whom God has commissioned to call sinners to repentance. It does by no

means follow from hence that ye are commissioned to baptize, or to administer the Lord's Supper. Ye never dreamed of this, for ten or twenty years after ye began to preach. Ye did not then, like *Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, seek the Priesthood also.*—(Num. xvi. 10.) Ye knew that “No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.”—(Heb. v. 4.) O contain yourselves within your own bounds. Be content with preaching the Gospel. *Do the work of Evangelists.* Proclaim to all the world the loving-kindness of God our Saviour; 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 that 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! Both by your preaching and example, provoke them to love and to good works. Ye are a new phenomenon in the earth; a body of people who, being of no sect or party, are friends to all parties, and endeavour to forward all, in Heart Religion, in the knowledge and love of God and man. Ye yourselves were at first called in the Church of England; and though ye have, and will have, a thousand temptations to leave it, and set up for yourselves, regard them not. Be Church of England men still. Do not cast away the peculiar glory which God hath put upon you, and frustrate the design of Providence, the very end for which God raised you up.”

Such are John Wesley's words. I beseech you, ponder them well.

After Wesley's death, his intimate friend and biographer, Dr. Whitehead, who was appointed to preach his funeral sermon,\* was chosen also to write his epitaph, which was placed on a marble tablet in the New Chapel in the City Road; and in that epitaph John Wesley was described (in words, I believe, now erased) as “the founder of the Methodists *Societies*” (they are not called

\* Wesley was born June 17, 1703, and died March, 2, 1791.



*churches*) and as “the Patron and Friend of *Lay Preachers*.”\* He regarded his Preachers as Laymen.

In the year 1793, two years after Wesley’s death, the Conference put forth certain Minutes, in which it is said that “the Wesleyan teachers are only preachers and expounders of God’s Holy Word,” and that “the attempts that have been lately made to introduce the *Ordination Scheme*, have produced many and great evils in various places, and if persisted in must divide the people, and in the end destroy the cause. We, therefore, stand forward to declare our intention of abiding by and supporting the original Methodist plan.”

It is much to be desired, that another John Wesley might arise to preach a sermon on Wesleyanism. He would say in plain words, derived from Holy Scripture, that wilful schism is a deadly sin, that it is a work of the flesh, and that to be carnally minded is death. He would say that the essence of schism (which means *division*) is to make a separation or rent in a Church, or from a Church; that it consists in setting up altar against altar, and priesthood against priesthood; and in assuming a right to minister in holy things, such as the Sacraments of the Church, without a due call and mission. He would declare that “no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.”—(Heb. v., 4.) He would remind us, that Korah and his company, (to whom he refers in the sermon which I have quoted) who were Levites, and invaded the Priest’s office, were consumed by fire from God—(Num. xvi., 35), and that St. Jude,† warns Christian men, under the Gospel dispensation, against the commission of this sin, lest they incur hereafter a punishment like that of those who “perished in the gainsaying of Korah.” These are awful words; but they are spoken in love.

Would not John Wesley entreat you, as you value your everlasting salvation, to consider carefully, whether you are guilty of

\* The Epitaph may be seen in Wesley’s Works, vi. 263, and in *Peirce*, p. 5. The following words were inscribed on his Tomb:—“This great light arose by the singular providence of God to enlighten these nations, and to revive, enforce, and defend the *pure Apostolic doctrines and practices of the Primitive Church*.” (Works vi. 262, *Peirce* p. 5.)

† Jude 11.

this sin ; or abet others in committing it ; lest you fall into the same condemnation ?

You may perhaps say in reply, that God has visibly blessed the work of those who minister the Sacraments in your congregations. We do not deny it. But are they, therefore, safe who minister ? The Israelites were refreshed by the water flowing from the rock struck by Moses ; but he was excluded from Canaan for striking it (Num. xx. 12). Balaam and Caiaphas prophesied of Christ, and many have been edified by their prophecies ; but nevertheless they who prophesied were objects of God's wrath. St. Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached, although some who preached Him "*preached in strife*" (Philip. i. 15), but yet the same Apostle says, "*Let nothing be done through strife*" (Phil. ii. 3) ; and St. James declares (James iii. 14—16) that "where there is *strife*, there is *every evil work*," and, "if ye have *strife* in your hearts, this wisdom is *earthly, sensual, devilish*." St. Paul did not rejoice in their strife, but in the Gospel of Truth and Unity, which they preached. And how much more would he have rejoiced, if they had preached it in unity ! God often elicits good from evil, and overrules evil for good ; but evil is not the less evil on that account. God brought about the greatest good, namely, the Salvation of the World, from the greatest sin, the Crucifixion of Christ.

We do not deny that persons who resort to schismatical Teachers and Ministers, and receive the Sacraments at their hands, but who are not wilfully partakers of their schism, or even conscious of it, may derive benefit from God's Word and Sacraments ministered by those Teachers and Ministers ; but this does not in any way diminish the guilt of those who schismatically preach and minister, or who knowingly and wilfully abet and encourage them in their teaching and ministrations.

It is also said by some persons, that they deem it right to go to any place of worship whatsoever, where they may "get the most good ;" and that they go to a Meeting-house, because they "get more good" there than in a Church. I do not doubt that *they think* that they get more good there than in a Church. But, my friends, we

shall be judged hereafter, not according to what *we think*, but according to what *God says*. And if God says in His Word,—as He certainly does,—that schism is a deadly sin ; then we shall not be saved by thinking that we are wiser than God, and that he was mistaken in saying so. No : the Word that He has spoken to us, “*that will judge us in the Last Day*” (John xii. 48). “*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*” (Prov. xiv. 12).

But it may be alleged by some, that, if this reasoning is correct, then the Church of England is guilty of sin for separating herself from the Church of Rome ; and it may be asked, “*If the Church of England is right in separating herself from the Church of Rome, are the Wesleyans wrong in separating themselves from the Church of England ?*”

Yes, they are ; and allow me to tell you the reason.

The Church of Rome not merely teaches many great and grievous errors, at variance with Holy Scripture, and with the doctrines of the ancient Catholic Church, but she endeavours to *impose* those errors upon all men ; and she will not hold communion with anyone who will not communicate with her in those unscriptural and anti-scriptural errors. She makes communion in her errors to be essential to communion with herself. She excommunicates all who will not accept her errors ; and thus she is guilty of the sin of the schism between the Church of England and herself. Wilful schism is always a deadly sin. But the guilt lies with those who *commit* the sin, and who cause the separation, not with those who *suffer* from its commission.

Brethren, believe me, it will not be enough for you to show that there are evil men and evil ministers in the Church of England, and that some in her communion are semi-rationalists or semi-Romanists ; it will not be enough to show that the Church of England connives at errors in doctrine, discipline, and worship. Even if all these things can be proved, they would not justify you in separating from her, and in making divisions in her. No Church on earth is free from manifold imperfections. Tares grow up among

the wheat, till the harvest. There are bad fish together with good fish in the net ; goats with sheep in the flock ; chaff with good grain on the threshing-floor ; unfruitful branches with fruitful on the Vine, in every visible Church on earth. And so it will be till the end of the world ; and then a severance will be made. But prove to us, if you can, that the Church of England has not the Holy Scriptures in her hands ; prove to us that she has not the Creeds of the ancient Catholic Church ; prove to us that she does not minister the Holy Sacraments by *that form* of Church Government which, and *which alone*, for fifteen hundred years was known and accepted by the Universal Church of Christ, to which He promised His continual presence and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost to "teach her all things," and to "guide her into all truth,"—(John xiv., 16, 26, xvi., 13) ; namely, by the three orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons ; prove to us that she *imposes* and *enforces* heretical doctrines, contrary to Holy Scripture and the teaching of the primitive Church, and then you will have said something to palliate what you must allow me to call the sin of separation from her—but not till then.

Where, then, is the remedy ?

First, in prayer to God for the outpouring of His Holy Spirit upon us, that He will "give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions ; and that He will take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord ; that, as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one Hope of our Calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify God ; through Jesus Christ Our Lord."\*

Next, let the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Church humble themselves before God, and confess their sins, and pray for pardon and grace from Him. If the Bishops and Clergy of England—

\* Prayer for Unity ; in the Book of Common Prayer.

especially in her Provincial and Diocesan Synods—had taken counsel together how to guide the great religious movement set in action by John Wesley, it might, by God's providence, have been controlled and regulated, and have done much to quicken the spiritual life of the Church, and to increase her pastoral and ministerial efficiency, and have conduced to the advancement of His glory and the diffusion of His truth, and to the salvation of souls; and the evil effects which have proceeded from it might have been averted.

But the opportunity was lost; and now we mourn over the loss.

The Laity also of the Church of England have their share of responsibility. As we have said, Wesleyanism was due in great measure to pluralities and non-residence of the Clergy; and pluralities and non-residence were due to the poverty of our parochial Cures, and to the want of Parsonages. Even at the present time the clerical income of one-ninth of the benefices in Lincolnshire is not more than £100 a year; and the income of one-third is not more than £200 a year. And more than £30,000 a year of the Tithes of this Diocese are now in the hands of laymen.

Let the Laity of the Church be entreated to remember that all property is held in trust from God and for God; and that He has said in His Holy Word that it is held in trust for certain purposes, one of the first of which is the maintenance of the Christian Ministry (Gal. vi., 6; 1 Cor. ix., 13, 14) for the salvation of souls. Can Lay impropiators of tithes be at ease in their consciences, can large Proprietors and Capitalists look forward with any comfort to the Great Day of reckoning (when they will be called upon by the Judge of all to give an account of their stewardship), if, while they themselves are living in affluence, many of the Clergy in Parishes where they themselves reside, or where they have property,—perhaps tithe property,—are left to pine in poverty, and if all the evils, spiritual and temporal, are allowed to remain unabated which prevail in our Parishes from the indigence of their Ministers? "Every Man" (says Lord Bacon) "owes to God a tenth of His substance." Let the Laity, for Christ's sake, remember these things.

Let them do their duty in this respect, and they will reap an abundant harvest, even in this world; and how blessed will be their recompense in the life which is to come!

Next, let me be permitted to exhort and entreat those, who are Wesleyan Methodists, to consider their own position, as in the sight of God, Who searcheth the hearts, and Who has revealed His Will in His Word, and Who will judge us all. Listen not to me, but to God, Who declares that schism is a sin—a deadly sin; and that Unity is a great good, which all Christians must desire to attain and hold fast. Consider with yourselves, whether Christ did not promise to be always with His Church even to the end of the world (Matt. xxviii. 20), and to send to her the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, to teach her all things, and to guide her into all truth, and to abide with her for ever (John xiv. 16, 26, xvi. 13). And then ask yourselves this question—Can these promises of Christ have been fulfilled (as assuredly they must have been, for He is the Truth), *if* the Church of Christ did *not know* for fifteen centuries *what* ought to be her own form of government in the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, and *if* it was left for men in the seventeenth century to discover it? Can we imagine that the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit of God, have failed in their Word and Work? This is impossible. Such a supposition must be repudiated with indignation by all faithful Christians, as an insult to the Son of God, and as an outrage against the Spirit of God. Well, then, Can you yourselves be safe, either in ministering the Sacraments without a due mission and ordination to minister them (in opposition to the uniform judgment and practice of the Universal Church of Christ for fifteen centuries), or in abetting and encouraging any who minister them without such mission and ordination, and in receiving the Sacraments at their hands? I think not. And as one who desires your everlasting salvation, I earnestly exhort and implore you to examine these things well, as in the presence of God; and, whatever sacrifice it may cost you, to act accordingly. Inquire whether it be not true, that the Universal Church for fifteen hundred years after Christ believed that none

but Bishops could confer Holy Orders. Inquire whether the Church did not condemn the contrary opinion when broached by Aerius.\* Inquire whether it be not true, that what is called the "Apostolical Succession of Ministers" has been actually continued from the Apostolic age? and whether this may not be reasonably inferred from the fact that the Church knew that it was necessary for her to provide for herself persons to minister the Word and Sacraments; and that she did *not know* of *any other* way of providing them than by Episcopal Ordination? In our Book of Common Prayer, which declares the Law of the Church of England, for which John Wesley ever expressed the greatest reverence, are the following words:†—"It is evident unto all men diligently reading the Holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that *from the Apostles' time* there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church—*Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*; which Offices were evermore had in such reverent estimation, that no man might presume to execute any of them, except he were first called, tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same; and also by Publick Prayer, with Imposition of Hands, were approved and admitted thereunto by lawful Authority. And, therefore, to the intent that these Orders may be continued, and reverently used and esteemed, in the United Church of *England and Ireland*, no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, in the United Church of *England and Ireland*, 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 formerly Episcopal Consecration, or Ordination." Also by the Act of Uniformity (Sect. 14) a person who is only a Deacon (*i.e.*, who has not been ordained *Priest* by a Bishop and other Priests) is liable to a heavy penalty if he presumes to consecrate and administer the Holy Communion.

And further, may I not venture to enquire, whether even in secular respects the present position of Methodism is secure? If

\* S. Augustin. *de Haeres.* § 53. Epiphanius, *de Haeret.* 75.

† Book of Common Prayer—Preface to the Ordination Service.

I rightly apprehend the matter, the tenure of its places of worship depends on the fulfilment of certain prescribed terms and stipulations. The Holy Scriptures, as explained in the *Sermons of John Wesley* and in his *Notes on the New Testament*, are, I believe, its standards of doctrine and discipline, and its places of worship are held on the condition of conformity to those standards.\* To quote the Minutes of Conference itself (Vol. I., p. 417,) "The chapels were to be held in trust for the sole use of such persons as might be appointed at the yearly Conference of the people called Methodists, *provided that the said persons preached no other doctrines than those contained in Wesley's Notes on the New Testament, and in his four volumes of Sermons.*" I have quoted extracts from his Sermons, and from other of his works. Might it not even be alleged, that the Wesleyans incur the danger of losing their own places of worship, if they drift away from what their Founder has repeatedly affirmed in the clearest and most solemn tones in those very works, which are the code and charter of their Society.

But in saying this, let me add in Christian Truth and Love, that we ourselves in the Church of England have need of you, and that you have need of us. "Sirs, ye are brethren, why do ye wrong one to another?"—(Acts vii., 26). We love you for your zeal : and there is much in your organization that we admire. You and we have common enemies, who desire our destruction ; Satan and sin, the world and the flesh. We have formidable foes leagued against us ; Romanism and Unbelief. Why do we not unite in doing battle against them, and in contending earnestly for the faith ? Our separation has lasted too long already, and if it continues, it will widen itself still more. How many discordant forms of Methodism already exist ! May you not be split into endless divisions, and perhaps lapse into secularism ? But if our separation could be healed, how much would the holy angels rejoice, and what blessings would accrue to us and to countless myriads of souls in time and eternity, from our union !

\* See John Wesley's *Journal*, Sept, 5, 1783 ; *Peirce*, p. 265, 269 ; *Tyerman's Life of Wesley* iii., 417.



I may be mistaken, but this union, of which I speak, is not impracticable; and if we would resolve not to contend for our own private opinions, but for the Truth as revealed in God's Word, and as declared by the consent and practice of the ancient Church of Christ, and would conform to that standard, the solution of the problem would be easy.

Let me be allowed to invite you to a friendly Conference on these matters; and in doing so, let me advert to some details.

You have your "Lay Preachers." We in the Church of England have our "Lay Readers." Might not these two orders be united? Your Founder, John Wesley, declared with his dying breath that he did not dissent in anything from the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England; he died in the Communion of the Church; and he solemnly conjured his followers never to separate from it. In the present address to Wesleyans I am only echoing the words of John Wesley, and of his wise and saintly brother, the Rev. Charles Wesley, who, "hoped and prayed that Methodism would merge in the Church, and that a Bishop would be found *to confer ordination on its preachers.*"\* He being dead yet speaketh (Heb. xi., 4). Will you not listen to his voice?

It is not indeed to be forgotten, that, in the year 1784—and not till then—when Wesley was more than eighty years of age, and when he had attempted in vain to obtain ordination for some of his preachers from the English Episcopate, he took upon himself to appoint two of them to America; and he gave a commission to Dr. Coke (who was also a Presbyterian of the Church of England, and who afterwards desired to be consecrated † a Bishop by American Bishops), to "superintend" the Wesleyan Society in that country. ‡

\* See *Jackson's Memoirs of the Rev. C. Wesley*, pp. 266, 306, 426, 473, cited by Urtin, p. 110.

† *Tyerman*, iii., 434.

‡ Both Wesley and Coke were Presbyters of the Church of England; and Dr. Whitehead, Wesley's biographer, said truly, "Dr. Coke had the same authority to ordain Mr. Wesley that Mr. Wesley had to ordain Dr. Coke." Wesley (says *Mr. Tyerman*, iii., 430), we think, never intended doing this, but at Dr. Coke's request he acquiesced. Wesley never gave him the title of Bishop. (*Tyerman*, iii., 437.)

John Wesley represented these acts as exceptional acts, and as necessitated by circumstances ; but it cannot be denied that they were infractions of Church discipline ; and that he thus involved himself in embarrassment, and placed himself in an attitude of inconsistency and self-contradiction, and exposed himself to the charge of doing that very thing which he most deprecated and condemned, namely, of separating himself from the Church. He set aside the judicious counsels of his pious brother,\* Charles Wesley. He took a false step ; and he was next led on to “yield to the judgment of others” (as he himself expressed it), and to appoint three preachers to minister the Sacraments in Scotland. It has been affirmed by some writers, that he was carried on still further, and was prevailed upon to appoint three of his preachers to minister also in England. But this is doubtful. In fact, after Wesley’s death, the Trustees of the Principal Wesleyan places of worship in London and Bristol made the following statement to the Wesleyan Conference in 1793 :†—“Although Mr. Wesley, *by dint of importunity*, towards the close of his life was prevailed upon to ordain a few of his preachers for *America and Scotland*, he by no means intended to extend it or make it general.”

This declaration is corroborated by Dr. Whitehead, Wesley’s biographer, who says that Wesley was prevailed on to ordain, against his own judgment ; and who contravenes the assertion that Wesley intended any of his ordinations for England.‡ Even therefore, if it could be conceded that *Presbyters* are qualified to ordain (a theory repugnant to the judgment of the Universal Church for 1,500 years), and even though Wesley, who was a Presbyter of the Church, may be appealed to, in a certain limited sense, for such an opinion as that ; yet suffer me to say, it would by no means follow that Wesleyan Ministers have been duly ordained (for they *do not possess presbyterian orders*), or that they can rightly minister the Sacraments to you, or that you can safely receive the Sacraments

\* See *Tyerman*, iii., 439—447.

† See *Urtin*, p. 162.

‡ *Ibid.* 164.

at their hands ; or that they and you can justly appeal to John Wesley for any sanction or countenance in doing so.

But, Brethren, what are men, that we should refer to them ? let me not speak to you of John Wesley, but of JESUS CHRIST. Let me affectionately entreat you, to remember the words of Our Blessed Lord and Saviour, Who has purchased to Himself His Universal Church by His own Blood, and Who will judge us all at the Great Day, and Who thus prayed for His disciples : “ As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us ; that they may be One, even as We are One ” (John xvii., 21, 22).

I am, beloved brethren in Christ,

Yours faithfully,

C. LINCOLN.

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# THE HOLY BIBLE,

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