THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN JOHN WESLEY AND THE COUNTESS
OF HUNTINGDON: ITS ORIGIN, DEVELOPMENT AND CONSEQUENCES

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Divinity of the University of Edinburgh in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Ph.D.

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The uncompromising individualism which characterized all of Eighteenth Century England also penetrated the religious scene and was incorporated in the life and work of both John Wesley and the Countess of Huntingdon. The treatment of the major controversy between these two rugged individualists naturally must begin, in Chapter One, with a brief survey of their period, its specific characteristics and needs, and the climate which it provided for the development of the children of the Evangelical Revival. Chapters Two and Three are a brief study of the two major figures in this controversy, but are not primarily biographical. However, since Lady Huntingdon has been so unfortunate in her biographers, it was necessary to ascertain exact dates and to amplify relevant facts about her life in Chapter Three. It was also necessary to re-evaluate her hitherto largely overlooked contribution to the Eighteenth Century and to the Evangelical Revival, this being unnecessary in the case of John Wesley who has always held the prominent place. In Chapter Four a specific analysis is made of Wesley's and Lady Huntingdon's basic character traits and theological presuppositions which brought them into open conflict. The myth that Lady Huntingdon held a hyper-Calvinistic viewpoint from the moment of her religious "awakening" is examined and rejected, and the personal determinant in this theological controversy is examined in detail. Chapters Five, Six and Seven deal directly with the controversy itself, tracing its development from the time of their first meeting to their deaths in 1791. The final chapter
assesses the disastrous consequences of this controversy for all parties concerned, and for the Church universal.

In an attempt to be uniform throughout the thesis, I have used American spelling and punctuation. I have also used the term "Wesley" to denote John, and have always so indicated when referring to his brother, Charles Wesley.

This study of the controversy between Wesley and Lady Huntingdon would not have been accomplished without much encouragement and help from many sources. It is with real appreciation that I tender my thanks to the Very Reverend Principal Emeritus Watt, who first saw the possibilities in the topic as a specific area of research, and to Professor James S. McEwan, now of Aberdeen University, for his initial interest and encouragement. With deep appreciation I acknowledge the invaluable assistance and guidance of my friend, Principal Charles S. Duthie, of the Scottish Congregational College, who aided me in countless ways as my Senior Advisor, and who has read this manuscript with scholarly eye and offered most constructive criticism. I am indebted to President A. Victor Murray of Cheshunt College, Cambridge, who made available to me the unpublished Cheshunt MSS Letters, allowing me to peruse them in the Cheshunt Library, and who was exceptionally kind to me and my family during our stay at Cambridge. To the Reverend Dr. Frank Baker, Secretary of the Wesley Historical Society, I owe a special debt of gratitude, for the sharing of his vast fund of knowledge thereby helping me to maintain accurate historical dates, and for his kindness in allowing me to use both his personal MSS
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JAMES E. HULL
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Chapter One

BROKEN LIGHTS
INTRODUCTION

Had a survey been taken in England in the 1750's concerning the most significant events of the first decade of the eighteenth century, doubtless those mentioned foremost would have been: the declaration of war by England and Holland against France in 1702; the union between England and Scotland in 1707; the invention of the steamboat by Papini, and the formation of the English South Sea Company in 1710. Yet, important as these events were, it is just possible that the first ten years contained others which were to have a much greater influence on the future history of these old islands.

No real significance was seemingly attached to two births at that time, which socially were poles apart; the one, that in 1703 of a second son and fifteenth child into the rectory of an obscure clergyman in the Fenlands of northern Lincolnshire, and the other, the birth in 1707 of a second daughter to a titled family. These two contemporaries, however, were in their day to initiate a tidal wave of change and reform which was to sweep away many of the clay gods which their age held so dear.

Attempting to encompass the eighteenth century in one chapter is like trying to scan eternity in an hour. It is necessary, however, to draw attention to some of its characteristics in bold outline, for against the dark backdrop of this age there were to converge some unbroken lights who were to illuminate and bring life into a valley of darkness. Let us turn now to a brief survey of three facets of this century of Reason - the political, the social, and the religious.
A. THE POLITICAL SCENE - "Let Sleeping Dogs Lie"

In order to understand and estimate the aims - and fears - of the Augustan Age, it must be remembered that the seventeenth century was a century of unceasing struggle. One cannot magnify the intensity of passion that could send to the block the King and the Archbishop of Canterbury. Civil war divided the nation, separated families, and split the churches. The country oscillated from one extreme to another and, although with the Restoration the Clergy returned to their charges, the leading Puritans were ejected from their parishes and many were imprisoned.

The eighteenth century really began while Queen Anne was still on the throne and the question of the day leading to much intrigue was whether the Stuarts or the Hanovers would succeed. Queen Anne died suddenly in 1714, while the Tories were somewhat disorganised, and so was succeeded by a Hanoverian, George I, who was invited over from the Continent by the Whig members of the Privy Council. Internal and external pressures had combined to crush the spirit of England, and the people were sick of strife.

All they asked was to rest and lick their wounds. To a tired and disillusioned England Walpole seemed the ideal Prime Minister. His coarseness and cynicism, even his blatant political corruption, weighed little against the fact that he gave the nation a long period of peace. His motto, quieta non movere, "let sleeping dogs lie", sounded almost a gospel to men deafened by the din of revolution and civil war. Ideas, principles, enthusiasm, crusades - the country had had its fill! Under Walpole there would be no more heroics.  

The Tories and the Whigs fought bitterly in the early years of this age. They represented differing points of view, and not until George I and Walpole took over the reins were affairs settled in favor of the Whigs. For the most part, the Tories were strong Churchmen and were uneasy about the doctrine of the supremacy of Parliament, but they often were at odds with each other. The Whigs, although they did not have the political support of the majority of their countrymen, and although Swift poured ridicule upon them by grouping them as a band of Dissenters, anarchists, and atheists, were nevertheless more united, and represented the mercantile interests of England. They were vocal for the Protestant succession and they had an abiding antipathy to the Tory-Anglicen alliance against Dissent.

The Augustan Age might well be termed the Age of Disillusionment in England, and Dr. H. W. V. Temperley characterizes it thus: "The earlier half of the eighteenth century in England was an age of materialism, a period of dim ideals, of expiring hopes." Walpole, as much as any man, reflected this spirit of the early years of the period. He lived in open adultery and, even in this insensitive age was noted for his coarse language and his drunken revels. His cynical comment, on looking over the Members of Parliament, "All these men have their price" was too realistic to have any trace of humor in it. Nor was Walpole merely content to

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bribe the members of Parliament.

He bribed George II by obtaining for him a civil list exceeding by more than £100,000 a year that of his father. He bribed the Queen by securing for her a jointure of £100,000 a year, when his rival, Sir Spencer Compton, could only venture to promise £60,000.1

For breaking the absolute power of the king, and for helping to establish the idea of a government ruled by a Prime Minister and his Cabinet accountable to the Legislature, he was in a large measure responsible; nevertheless, there can also be traced to him much of the cynical and brutal tone of the early part of his century. Chesterfield wrote that Robert Walpole was not a person to "die for a cause or to live for an ideal". As Dr. Temperley says,

There were other ways of governing England than by lulling her to sleep, other ways of dealing with corruption than by sneering at virtue, and another way to popularity than that of following the people's wishes.2

B. THE SOCIAL SCENE - "Gin Alley"

If the political scene was one of cynicism and blatant self-seeking, if it was a time of political change and of the via media, our survey shows that the social scene was one of instability and of violent upheaval in the status quo. Although the facade of this Age of Reason was one of glitter, polish, and learning, it


2F. W. V. Temperley, op. cit., p. 73.
was but a veneer, for the submerged masses of humanity, caught up in the miseries of their station, knew nothing of the glories of this classical age.

The Enclosure Act, although beneficial financially and eventually resulting in agricultural efficiency, was a catastrophe of the first order from the standpoint of social consequences. The class of the yeoman farmer disappeared, and Oliver Goldsmith lamented to the world in the following lines of the "bold peasanty" passing from the scene:

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made:
But a bold peasanty, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied. ¹

Most of these yeoman farmers joined the exodus of their age into the towns; the others, who were the remnant residuum, lost their small parcels of land and their independence. Professor Turberville discerns that:

Such acquiescence too often meant a moral reverse, the loss of something more valuable than land—hope, courage, initiative, even self-respect. By such a failure in moral stamina the whole country was made the poorer. As Arthur Young put it in words which have become famous: "For whom are they to be sober? For whom are they to save? For the parish? If I am sober, shall I have land for a cow? If I am frugal, shall I have an acre of potatoes? You offer no motives; you have nothing but a parish officer and a workhouse!—Bring me another pot—". ²

In the rural areas the aristocracy and the peasantry plied their tasks side by side, and there was always the common bond of the soil which served as a bridge of understanding. When the yeoman farmer moved into the towns, however, there was no bond of community or of communication between him and the ruling classes. As the land sank away, a chasm was formed and there was no bridge across. This chasm between the higher and lower classes "is one of the tragic features of the eighteenth century". ¹

As England moved into the full sweep of the Industrial Period, the "real ulcer of the age" was laid bare, which was "its uncompromising individualism, and ..... the inadequacy of existing social organizations to cope with those evils". ² Dr. Trevelyan documents this fact, with a slight shift in emphasis:

It is not, therefore, surprising that the greatness of England during the Epoch that followed the Revolution is to be judged by her individual men, by the unofficial achievements of her free and vigorous population, by the open competition of her merchants and industrialists in the markets of the world, rather than by her corporate institutions such as Church, Universities, Schools, Civil Service, and town corporations, which were all of them half asleep. The glory of the eighteenth century in Britain lay in the genius and energy of individuals acting freely in a free community. ³

The corporations that governed the towns and cities were powerless to deal with the legion of devils which were to accompany this

¹Ibid., p.163.
²Temperley, op. cit., p.80.
rapid industrialization. A cancer-like growth accompanied the sudden shift in population from the country to the towns and cities. With the lack of even primitive sanitary facilities for the masses and with the limited scope of medicine, it is not surprising that diseases such as typhus and smallpox were prevalent, and that the death rate was shockingly high.1

The progress of industrialization grew rapidly from 1708 onward, when Abraham Darby took over an old forge and furnace at Coalbrookdale on the Severn, and by smelting with coke rather than charcoal, channelled the liquid ore into better moulds, producing a higher grade of cast iron. Foundries soon spread through Stirlingshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, South Yorkshire and Clydesdale. Coal mining was further developed and its use increased rapidly as new industries were organized. The hours the laborers worked were long. "There were no regulations", declares Miss Bayne-Powell, "and in some cases mills and factories were working their employees sixteen or eighteen hours a day."2 Over this evil and that of African slave trading, another profitable branch

1 Miss Bayne-Powell states that smallpox spread rapidly in this century, possibly due to excessive drinking. "It was computed that sixty persons out of every hundred caught smallpox, and that twenty out of that number died of it....."Just have had smallpox" was frequently inserted in advertisements for servants." Rosamond Bayne-Powell, Eighteenth-Century London Life, (London, 1937), p.226. Charles Wesley's family was decimated by smallpox; from it two of his children died in infancy, and his wife's face was permanently marred.

2Ibid., p.86.
of British enterprise, the conscience of the day was sleeping. ¹

When masses of people leave their homes and flood into cities not prepared to receive them, the consequences are certain to be tragic. But in the eighteenth century this tragedy was magnified by the paralysis that gripped the corporate life of the nation—the Church, the national and city governments, and the medieval town corporations. Though the upper stratum of society thought primarily of this century as the Age of Reason, it was small wonder that for the submerged masses it was the age of coarseness. To see this, we have only to turn to the novel, whose development is the outstanding literary feature of this century, for the works of Defoe, Sterne, Fielding, and Smollett all bear testimony of this fact. Dr. Turberville extends this idea of coarseness in the novel when he states:

It is a coarseness of fibre as well as a mere coarseness of language....and a certain brutality of manners, which from the pages of the novelist we should infer to have actually existed and the reality of which is confirmed by the picture which we get in contemporary memoirs, not solely of the court circle. ²

This characteristic can be evidenced in the language of the age. Principal Pitchett speaks thus of the language of the day:

.....foulness stained the general speech. Judges swore on the bench; the chaplain cursed the sailors to make them attentive to his sermons; the king swore incoherently and at the top of his voice. The Duchess of Marlborough

¹Lecky, op. cit., p. 504.
²Turberville, op. cit., p. 6.
a story runs, called on a lawyer without leaving her name. 'I could not make out who she was', said the clerk afterwards, 'but she swore so dreadfully she must be a lady of quality.'

After attending a service in Kew Church, in which the minister had preached on the sinfulness of swearing, the Duke of Cambridge announced to his equerry on leaving that that was "a damned good sermon, by Gad!" Coarse language was not confined to those outside the church, however, for Jonathan Trelawney, the Bishop of Winchester during the first part of this century, "excused himself for his much swearing by saying that he swore as a baronet and not as a bishop". It must be stated, however, that George III was an exception to this practice.

The upper classes had their brutal and pagan clubs which they could join for excitement, and the notoriously dissolute affairs of the Hell Fire Club, the Mohocks, and the Huguenot Brotherhood are well documented. For diversion, for excitement, and for relief from the dreadful monotony of their lives, the lower classes could not be so cavalier in their choice of a fraternity and they tried to forget their wretched lot by drinking spirits, primarily gin. The government was responsible for this easy access to cheap spirituous liquors, for in 1689 a law was passed barring all

3Bayne-Powell, op. cit., p.52.
importation of spirits and throwing open the trade of distilling
to Englishmen on the payment of a small sum. Lecky asserts that
this seemingly insignificant law is, rather, one of the pivotal
points of this century:

It was not till 1724 that the passion for gin-drinking
appears to have infected the masses of the population,
and it spread with the rapidity and the violence of an
epidemic. Small as the place which fact occupies in
English history, it was probably, if we consider all the
consequences that have flowed from it, the most momentous
in that of the eighteenth century - incomparably more so
than any event in the purely political or military annals
of the country. The fatal passion for drink was at
once, and irrevocably planted in the nation.¹

Lecky further documents with numbing efficiency the direct
consequences of this "fatal passion", in the increase of murders,
robberies, and other crimes, and he establishes that this became
a "new and terrible source of mortality.....opened for the poor".²

Anyone familiar with Hogarth's London remembers one of his
most celebrated prints; that of "Gin Lane" in 1751, in which

¹Lecky, op. cit., p. 479.
²Idem. Lecky here verified the judgment pronounced by
Wesley years earlier as is evident in Wesley's letter to the Editor
of Lloyds' Evening Post' in December, 1772: "Why is breadcorn so
dear? .... have we not reason to believe that half of the wheat
produced in the kingdom is every year consumed not by so harmless
a way as throwing it into the sea, but by converting it into
deadly poison - poison that naturally destroys, not only the strength
and life, but also the morals of our countrymen! 'Well, but this
brings in a large revenue to the King.' Is this an equivalent
for the lives of his subjects? Would His Majesty sell an hundred
thousand of his subjects yearly to Algiers for four hundred
thousand pounds? Surely no. Will he, then, sell them for that
sun to be butchered by their own countrymen?". The Letters of the
Rev. John Wesley, A.M., John Telford, Editor, Standard First
there is the common sign of the day over the door of the gin shop:

Drunk for a Penny
Dread drunk for two pence
Clean Strew for Nothing.

This was not a quaint print, and Hogarth was speaking here "in terms not of caricature, but of realistic characters, so that his world is the actual world". Nor was drunkenness confined to the lower classes; it was cultivated as an art among the gentlemen of the day. In addition to the two-bottle men, there was the fraternity of the three-bottle men which claimed such celebrities as Pitt and Carteret. Some judges and country squires even boasted that they had attained the status of four- and five-bottle men. The clergy were not free from the taint of alcoholism either, for

Even lord-bishops at this time too commonly were 'good fellows' among the country gentry; and when they became 'over merrie', a favourite witticism was to imply that 'only as lords, and not as bishops', did they imbibe so freely: for the phrase 'drunk as a lord' carried then a peculiar pertinence.

Few ages could compare with this in low moral tone. When people patterned their code of ethics on the behavior of some of the leaders of high society, such as George II and Walpole, both of whom lived in open adultery, the results were fatal to the


nation's moral fibre. Miss Bayne-Powell states that

Many, perhaps we must say the majority, of the men in the upper classes and a large number of women, lived a life of habitual immorality. The men took their pleasure where they pleased. They would keep a mistress until they were tired of her, and would then cast her out into the street. London was crowded with these unhappy women, every place of amusement and public resort was full of them. That a wealthy man should lead a decent life and be a faithful husband was considered to be almost an anomaly. 1

The oldest profession in the world was well represented in this century. Dr. Bready affirms that "The Drury Lane district of West London was an extensive seraglio, and such terms as 'Drury Lane Vestal', 'Covent Garden Virgin' and 'Newgate Saint' were ironical designations of different classes of prostitutes." 2

The Government pandered to mob desires by permitting brutal and vicious sports. The events of bull-baiting, bear-baiting, badger-baiting, and the national sport of cock-fighting (further refined in the eighteenth century by the introduction of steel spurs to the cocks' legs) were often announced by the ringing of church bells and frequently held in the village churchyards where only the death of one of the performers stopped the fight.

Gambling on favorite animals was a mania for the lower classes, while "gambling hells" spelled financial ruin for many eminent men, including Goldsmith, Miss Pelham (daughter of the Prime Minister), and Lord Mountford, who committed suicide because of

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1Bayne-Powell, op. cit., p. 52.
2Bready, op. cit., p. 158.
his losses.  

The penal code of this century, while superior to that in other countries, was still brutal. There were one hundred and sixty capital offences; in 1732 alone seventy persons were sentenced to death at the Old Bailey and until 1790 women were burned at the stake. Executions were a public affair, and turnkeys made extra money by exhibiting to the public some of their more prominent charges. It was not uncommon to leave the corpses to rot in the chains which bound them, while the Government truckled to the desire of the public by exhibiting the heads of the rebels of 1745 on a row of spikes along the top of Temple Bar.  

Carlyle's comment on the eighteenth century - "Soul extinct - Stomach well-alive" contains the germ of truth. The least we can say of this age is that the social conscience was insensitive. Injustice, which society in general, either through ignorance or apathy, did little to alleviate, was rampant. The strong points of this age, elegance, wit, and tolerance, were erected over a pit of despair, suffering, and "man's inhumanity to man". We will turn our attention to the one agency which should have simultaneously proclaimed judgment upon this pagan society, and pointed it toward its source of hope.

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1 Ibid., p. 155 passim.
2 Lecky, op. cit., p. 505 et seqq.
C. THE RELIGIOUS SCENE - "Missed Opportunities"

We have stated that the corporate institutions were asleep, and that this century must be judged by her individuals, rather than by her institutions. That the Church is here included, and that religious life was one of spiritual decay, is documented by such widely divergent historians as Trevelyan, Lecky, Abbey, Overton, Simon, Sykes, Green, Stoughton, Bready, et al.

There are many reasons for this decline in religious ideals and fervor, some going back to the previous century.

In 1662 the Act of Uniformity which was directed against the Puritans became law and as a result, one-fifth or nearly two thousand of the English clergy were expelled. Included among these were men of such caliber as Baxter, Calamy, Susannah Wesley's father, Dr. Samuel Annesley, who was often called the St. Paul of Non-Conformity, and John and Dr. Bartholomew Wesley, grandfather and great-grandfather respectively of John Wesley.¹

As if this act of emasculation did not rob the Church of enough of its power, in 1689 the Non-Jurors, or the clergy who refused to take the oath of allegiance to King William III were also expelled. These four hundred clergymen, and they included such lights of the Church as the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishops of Norwich, Chichester, Ely, Gloucester, Worcester, Peterborough, Bath and Wells, put principle before self-interest.

¹Bready, op. cit., p. 21.
Thus one writer states that

The loss of the Nonjuring clergy was morally disastrous..... Whether the expelled clergy were right or wrong, they command respect as men who possessed the fine courage of minorities, and who had given up all hope of reward or proferment on a matter of conscience. Probably they represented the best, the most learned and most religious elements in the Church....Not only was the official Church deprived of the service and influence of a number of brilliant and courageous men, but the fear of disturbance had a fatal effect upon the ecclesiastical policy of Walpole.1

"The Church of Missed Opportunities", as Anglicanism has sometimes been called, was at peace; outwardly prosperous, but inwardly decayed. Church and State were so intertwined that it was difficult to separate the two. Convocation was prorogued by George I, thereby lapsing the Church into silence, and making her unable any longer to meet and regulate her own affairs. From this wedding of Church and State there came twins - a Church more political, a State less spiritual.

Canon Overton, in his judgment of the religious scene, finds that "The Church partook of the general sordidness of the age; it was an age of great material prosperity, but of moral and spiritual poverty, such as hardly finds a parallel in our history."2 He also connects the influence of Walpole with the quiescent state of the Church to which, he says, Walpole applied his motto "Quieta

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1C. E. Vulliemy, John Wesley, (London, 1931), pp.16 et seq.
non movere" long before he applied it to the affairs of the State. 1
Far too many leaders supported the Established Church with the
selfish motive of thereby securing the submission of the vulgar.
Included among these were Walpole who publicly professed his
faith in the Church, but privately admitted that he was a sceptic,
and Bolingbroke, who openly embraced the tenets of orthodoxy, yet
passionately maintained his position as a free-thinker.
Dr. Temperley points out that "When Bolingbroke and Walpole agreed
on a principle, it is hardly rash to conclude that the governing
classes as a whole acquiesced in it". 2 They looked on the
Establishment - and Christianity as a necessary evil. "The
classics had taught them their creed of isolation and their
doctrine of Deism. They almost considered themselves of another
race and religion." 3

That religion was useful, that it guaranteed dividends in
this life was attested to by Swift when he recorded the following
scene: "Nov. 25, 1711. I was early with the Secretary (Bolingbroke)
today, but he was gone to his devotions, and to receive the
sacrament: several rakes did the same; it was not for piety,
but employments; according to Act of Parliament." 4 Canon Overton

1Idem. Canon Overton suggests that this period of the first
two Georges could well be termed the "Walpolian Period".

2Temperley, op. cit., p. 78.

3Idem.

4Jonathan Swift, The Journal to Stella, ed. by George A. Aitken,
(London, 1901), p. 345 et seq.
rightly assesses that the Church really suffered not so much from the attacks of the free-thinkers as from those of the free-livers. 1

Churchmanship in this age was not one which excited heroic virtues, nor was it of a mystical nature. Dr. Sykes comments trenchantly:

Like the epoch of which it was born, it was prosaic and calculating, conceived as a prudent investment promising assured blessings both temporal and celestial. The doctrine of moderation showed to least advantage when applied to religion, and the virtues upon which it laid chief emphasis were those of self-control, temperance, and rational conduct, such indeed as were native and necessary to a century of commercial prosperity and the acquisition of wealth. 2

The State Church was gripped by Latitudinarianism. This was a way of thinking, a theology rather than an official policy, and like so many other theologies it arose as an admirable attempt to make Anglicanism so inclusive that it would welcome even the Nonconformists. Latitudinarianism, which arose during the reign of William and Mary, had Tillotson as its leader, and he expounded the doctrine of expediency in morality. He took the stand that

In matters of great concernment (i.e. in religion) a prudent man will incline to the safest side of the question. We have considered which side of these questions is most reasonable: let us now think which is safest. For it is certainly most prudent to incline to the safest side of the question. So that it is no advantage to any man to be vicious.

1Abbey and Overton, op. cit., p.280.
Tillotson encouraged the idea of reason as the ultimate test in religion, thereby preparing the way for philosophic deism. This school ignored as irrelevant and unnecessary the parts of the Creed which were mysterious or transcendent (i.e. that went beyond natural reason). Thus Abbey writes:

and in their dread of a correct theology doing duty for a correct life, they were apt grievously to underestimate the influences of theology upon life. When religion, in fear lest it should become unpractical, relaxes its hold upon what may properly be called the mysteries of faith, it not only loses in elevation and grandeur, but it defeats the very end it aimed at. It takes a lower ethical tone, and loses in moral power.

This inclusive theology as propounded by Tillotson was so catholic that it had no boundaries. He was a child of his century, held captive to the use of reason as the final test, and recommending religion because it was utilitarian. It is easy to see the alliance between the latitudinarianism which pervaded the Church and the gospel of expediency, as preached by Walpole, which permeated the government.

The way was prepared for Deism, and it enjoyed immense popularity in the court circles. Deism did not win the day, however, for the Church sallied forth to do battle with Toland,

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1Vulliamy, op. cit., p.18.

2Abbey and Overton, op. cit., p.146. Howell Harris in a letter to Charles Wesley in 1742 gives the following contemporary estimate: "(The clergy) I believe in all respects are Christ's greatest Enemies now among us, and the greatest Hinderers of his work, and oppose his coming most; but still let us mourn for them as such as do say they know Christ and do not, and so rest in their sins." Unpublished Trevecks MSS Letter 613, August 28, 1742.
John Locke's young disciple, with Thomas Woolston, and especially with Matthew Tindal. Tindal's work, *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, was regarded as "the Deists' Bible". In this title, the author gave the clue to his thought for he contended that God was nature and that human nature was unchangeable. All that was authentic in Christianity came via natural religion and had been present at creation. Christianity thus had centuries of superstitious accretions, which were incredible, irrelevant, and unnatural.

The Christian apologists, among them Berkeley, Conybeare, Butler, Law, *et al.*, advanced into the fray armed with reason, the ally of their faith. Their was a Pyrrhic victory, however, for gradually reason supplanted the historic Christian faith, and eighteenth century theology was robbed of revelation. This latitudinarian concept, so prevalent in his day, Pope succinctly expresses in the *Universal Prayer*:

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Father of all, in every age,  
In every clime adored  
By Saint, by Savage, and by Sage,  
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord.
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Canon Overton finds that the Deists did a disservice to the nation, 1) by indirectly encouraging a lowering of morals, and 2) by drawing the clergymen of the day away from their parochial tasks to answer deistic attacks. However, this is as damning an indictment against the clergy as against the Deists.

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1 Abbey and Overton, *op. cit.*, p.107.
There were many diseases infecting the body of the State Church. Perhaps the most malignant was the system of pluralities and the evils attending non-residence. Even some of the ablest and most discerning men, such as Bishop Newton and Dr. Porteus, thought nothing of taking various preferments, even though they never saw some of their parishes. As late as 1785 one bishop urged that the non-resident clergymen should consider distributing tracts in their parishes, so that the people would not be reared in ignorance of the Christian faith.¹

It is obvious that there were many attendant infamies in such a system. If a non-resident clergyman celebrated Holy Communion twice a year, the parishioners considered themselves indeed fortunate, which catechising was looked upon by all as going the second mile. Clerical poverty was magnified by the policy of a select few of the clergymen holding multiple benefices of the choicest type. The usual stipend of a clergyman at this time was only £30 a year, while many lay impropriators were hired by the non-resident clergy to read the prayers for five or six pounds a year. There was a breed of clergymen, known as Mess Johns or trencher chaplains, who lived with noblemen or with country squires, and who taught the children in the family. They were treated as servants

were made the butt of the squire and of his children, were dismissed from the dinner table as soon as the pastry appeared, and......they often closed their

¹Ibid., p. 286.
career by purchasing some small living at the expense of a marriage with the cast-off mistress of their patron.  
While there were many honest clergy, perpetually struggling against the pressure of poverty, there were far too many others who sold their ordination vows for a mess of pottage. The gin-houses around Fleet Street maintained their own chaplains for the convenience of their patrons, and in 1753, when Parliament abolished the quick "Fleet Street Marriages", many clergymen were discarded by the gin-mills and had to seek other means of employment. 

The playwrights were furnished with a universal figure of the day on which they could pour contempt and ridicule. This low opinion of the cleric is further preserved for us by Hogarth in two of his best engravings: a scene from a Harlot's Progress (1732) and The Midnight Modern Conversation (1733). Even in the solemn words of warning which Chesterfield wrote to his son that

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1 Lecky, op. cit., p. 77.  
2 John Wesley's father, Samuel, was imprisoned for several months for debts, contracted by him to provide the barest necessities of life for his large family.  
3 In a letter to George Montague dated September 3, 1748, Horace Walpole related the details whereby a drunken nobleman was tricked into a midnight marriage to a butterwoman's daughter. The incumbent clergymen, Alexander Keith, was then in prison, and one of his four deputies performed this ceremony. The Letters of Horace Walpole, Fourth Earl of Oxford, Chronologically Arranged and Edited with Notes and Indices by Mrs. Paget Toynbee, 1903, II, p. 339.
indeed it was "a vulgar error to regard clergymen as necessarily hypocrites", we can see that seldom had the cleric been held in such contempt.

In the early part of this century, Church preferments were too often the tool of the State. Bishop Newton's memoirs describe in detail the race among the clergy to secure these, and from his words one gathers that Court-subservience was the order of the day. An example in point is Bishop Hoadley, who was able to gather from the Whigs the following sees: Bangor (1715) which he never visited, Hereford (1721), Salisbury (1723) and the wealthy see of Winchester (1734). Lord North, the Tory Prime Minister from 1770 to the year 1781 was able to arrange for his half-brother, Brownlow North, to become a canon at the age of twenty-seven, the Dean of Canterbury at twenty-nine, and the Bishop of Coventry at thirty. Some were shocked at this rather rapid advancement, but Lord North explained for the simple-minded that he might not be a Prime Minister forever, and, although Brownlow was quite young, he could not risk the danger of waiting.

Bishop Watson complained bitterly over his lot in life, in spite of his being in receipt of a clerical income of £2,000 a year. He explained his source of income as follows: "The provision of £2,000 a year which I possess from the Church, arises from the

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1Temperley, op. cit., p. 79.
2Humphreys, op. cit., p. 153 et seq.
tithes of two churches in Shropshire, two in Leicestershire, two in my diocese, three in Huntingdonshire, on all of which I have resident curates."\(^1\) At the age of twenty-seven he was appointed a professor in chemistry at Cambridge, admitting that he knew nothing at all about the subject, nor had as much as ever read a word concerning it. As insensitive as Bishop Watson was, still he could judge his confreres thus: "For I saw the generality of bishops bartering their independence and dignity of their order for the chance of a translation, and polluting Gospel humility by the pride of prelacy."\(^2\) He quoted approvingly the cynical adage of D'Alembert, describing Catholic pre-Revolution France: "The highest offices in Church and State resemble a pyramid, whose top is accessible to only two sorts of animals, eagles and reptiles."\(^3\)

Professor Sykes sums up the reasons why the Established Church failed this century:

In part the paralysis of the Established Church in prospect of the emergence of social problems of such importance lay in the circumstance that for the creation of each new parish, a private act of parliament was requisite, a cumbersome method of procedure which effectively prevented the task of parochial subdivision, in part in the lack of missionary and evangelistic enterprise characteristic of the churchmanship of the century, and in part in the fear of financial readjustment and the disturbance of vested interests which a thoroughgoing reform of its administration might involve.\(^4\)

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\(^1\) Baynham-Powell, *op. cit.*, p. 284.

\(^2\) Abbey and Overton, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

\(^3\) Idem.

The fortunes of Dissenters were at a low ebb during this century. The Act of Toleration (1689), with only a few minor changes, remained as law throughout the period. Under this Act, Dissenters had freedom of worship, but could not hold any office in any local or central government, and were barred from the Army, the Navy and the Universities. The Regium Donum, or the royal gift of £500 for the widows of Dissenting Ministers, was embraced by Walpole as a means of keeping the Dissenters within bounds. The Regium Donum was a violation of a principle the Dissenters had cherished, and the acceptance of this annual gift made many Dissenters uneasy.1

The Congregationalists tended to confine themselves ecclesiastically to their own members, which Dr. Watts expressed in these words:

We are a garden wall'd around,
Chosen and made peculiar ground;
A little spot, enclos'd by grace,
Out of the world's wide wilderness.2

Principal Selbie describes their status thus:

Occupied as they were with the defence of their own position and the maintenance of their liberties, they had little leisure and less inclination to concern themselves with the religious interests of the people at large. The spiritual decline which all the Churches suffered in the eighteenth century had many causes, but


not the least among them was the preoccupation of Churches with their own concerns. A Christianity which ceases to be aggressive and evangelistic soon ceases to live, and no clearer illustration of this law is to be found than among the Dissenters of this period.¹

In 1718/19 the Assembly of the Baptists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists met at Salter's Hall, London, to judge three Presbyterian ministers from Exeter, who were condemned for holding Arien views. This conference collapsed and in so doing revealed a weakness hitherto unknown. Instead of being more unified as a result of its isolation, it was revealed as a loose collection of churches. Salter's Hall indicated a tendency toward Socinianism among the general Baptists and Presbyterians and soon they were riddled with it, while the Congregationalists were revealed as the vocal advocates of orthodoxy. Dr. Clark maintains that the Presbyterians furnished the "first congregations of that organised Unitarian Church which has been living and active in England from then till now".² Hay Colligen summarizes the reason for the failure of Nonconformity to meet the challenge of its day:

One of the explanations which accounts for the failure of eighteenth century nonconformity is the fact that all parties neglected the doctrine of the Church. Churchmanship was a thing unknown to the ministers, except as it


²Henry W. Clark, History of English Nonconformity, (London, 1913), Vol. II, p.196. He states that English Presbyterianism had over five hundred Churches at the beginning of this century, but by 1770 they had less than three hundred.
concerned the knowledge necessary for stating their own position, and for refuting the arguments of their opponents.... Neglect of united action by the Dissenters and their lack of interest in the Catholic ideals of Ministry, Worship and Sacraments in connexion with the visible Church was a sad contrast to their fine Churchmanship of the previous century. It can only be interpreted as an excessive application of the Protestant principle, whereby individual liberty and individual opinion were elevated above Tradition of every kind. 1

The spiritual force of the seventeenth century, which produced such leaders as Cromwell and Milton, Bunyan and Baxter, seemed spent and Dissenters were affected by the resultant lethargic spirit. When we turn from the impotence of the Anglicans and the Dissenters to the worshipping congregations, especially those in the Established Church, we see evidence of individuals behaving with execrable impiety. Many came, not for an act of corporate worship, but as though this were just another social affair. The Tatler carried the following report of a scene in Church:

Lady Autumn made me a very low courtesey the other day from the next pew and with the most courtly air imaginable called herself 'miserable sinner'. Her niece, soon after, in saying 'Forgive us our trespasses' courtesy'd with a gloating look at my brother. He returned it by opening his snuff-box, and repeating a yet more solemn expression. 2

The worshippers talked in their pews, bowed and smiled at neighbors, stood on small stools in order to see friends, and some went so far as to deposit their hats on the Communion Table. 3

1 Hay Colligan, Eighteenth Century Nonconformity, quoted by Coomer, op. cit., p.123.
2 Beyne-Powell, op. cit., p.286.
3 Vulliamy, op. cit., pp.18 et seqq.
Some of the more desirable pews, rented to the wealthy members, were furnished with tables and chairs where one might dine during services, and some even had their own fireplaces. ¹

Dr. Sykes states that "The provision of pews was the chief feature (in churches) of the Hanoverian century, ministering to the pride and ostentation of individuals rather than contributing to the decorum of public worship."² It is interesting to note that Swift, searching for a piece of furniture which would be best suited for remodelling into a pew, found the proper article in

A bedstead of the antique mode,
Compact of timber many a load,
Such as our ancestors did use,
Was metamorphosed into pews:
Which still their ancient nature keep,
By lodging folks disposed to sleep. ³

Dr. Sykes maintains that:

the size and character of the private pews contributed undoubtedly to the prevalence of a standard of behaviour during divine services reminiscent of the irreverencies of the middle ages. For the poorer people whose places in church were encroached upon by this intrusion of pews, and who were relegated to seats with little prospect of the Holy Table or even of the pulpit, few accessories of worship were provided.³

Horace Walpole told of a Mrs. Cotton, an influential lady who in 1753 contributed a large sum of money to whitewash Gloucester Cathedral. She believed that the soul of her late daughter had

¹Bayne-Fowell, op. cit., p. 288.
²Sykes, op. cit., p. 236.
³Ibid., p. 237.
gone into a robin, and was permitted by the Dean and the Chapter of the Cathedral, to maintain an aviary in her private pew.  

Walpole gives us a description: "just by the high alter is a small pew hung with green damask, with curtains of the same; a small corner cupboard painted, carved, and gilt, for books in one corner, and two troughs of a bird-cage with seeds and water".  

Architecture speaks for the faith of its age, and this century, disliking Gothic and all that it symbolized, turned to the neo-classic style of the Graeco-Roman school. Mysticism and Milton's sublime "storied windows richly dight" were dispersed by the clear light of pure reason, and the symbolic agent of white-wash created the illusion that mystery and awe had been permanently dispelled from religion.  

The cancellation of the emotional aspect of Christianity, the purging of Christianity from the essentials of the faith, and the loss of introspection, abandoned man to his baser emotions, and then, when he was dying, offered him a transfusion of anaemic religion. When Bolingbroke, who earned the title of the "prince of political charlatans" and who defended the Christianity of his day as being highly convenient and necessary "varnish"2, could agree with a man like Wesley who described the Christianity he knew as "Painted Fire" meaning that "it was a sham, worse than none at

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2Bready, op. cit., p.52.
all - an illusion of reality"¹, then the nadir was reached. For while the Georgian Church was to continue down the primrose path of peace, there were new forces being unleashed to do battle with the accumulated wickedness of the day. Dr. Sykes affirms that "The religious influence which permeated society as a result of the Methodist and Evangelical movements was of greater value by reason of the unchangeable condition of the established Church in respect of revenues, administration and the temporal situation."² The long reign of George III, who valued above all else his royal prerogative of nominating men to the episcopacy, accentuated this facade of an unchanging order.³

Thus a situation was created whereby the unlearned and the vulgar, turned away from their rightful altars and wandering in the wilderness of the Age of Reason, were to hear the unreasonable and highly irregular news that the Almighty was a God of universal Love, accessible to all men. Furthermore, contrary to the prevalent Deistic philosophy, He had consistently intervened in history and had now placed within the hearing of vulgar and genteel alike new voices crying in the wilderness of the eighteenth century. Those who heeded caught a vision which transformed the rank and file of society.

As early as 1741 an advertisement appeared, which seemed an impertinent and audacious attempt by unordained commoners to stand

¹Harvey, op. cit., p. 52.
²Sykes, op. cit., p. 399 (my italics).
³Idem.
as judges over their spiritual superiors. It was the following announcement:

Lately published
The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, on a broad Sheet of Paper; Whereby all men may at one View see how far the Generality of the present Clergy are fallen, and have deviated from their own proper institution.¹

This must have caused some strokes of apoplexy among the clergy.

We now turn to study the significance of two of these eighteenth century voices and their influence on their age and upon each other. These two, who lived in every decade of this century, were to embody all that the Evangelical Revival symbolizes; its weaknesses as well as its strengths.

We close this chapter with words which incorporate the mission before them:

The first task was to rescue religion from the palsied hands of an institution moribund with respectability and complacency, and cursed with academic irrelevance... That religion, (once) released from the dim aisles and naves and crypts where it had been so long imprisoned and befouled, (was to pour) like a tonic whirlwind across the fields and hills of the countryside, into the hovels and alleys, the slums and the streets, the factories and mines of the new industrial cities and of the growing metropolis — a rushing mighty wind of the Spirit (which was) destined to blow those cities at long last very clean.²

¹The Weekly History or, An Account of the most Remarkable Particulars relating to the present Progress of the Gospel, (London, 1741), Numb. 7, p. 4.
Chapter Two

THE IMPERFECT PERFECTIONIST
INTRODUCTION

You may have pictured in the England of the eighteenth century a moorland on a windy winter evening, and on the near horizon the glare of an ill-lit manufacturing town, and a single figure small and slight, his long gray hair falling over his shoulders, sitting on a tired horse plodding forward with loosened rein. It is a subject the genius of a Millet might have made as memorable as his famous "Angelus", ....1

This is one man's portrayal of John Wesley. There are as many other estimates of him, his contribution to his century, and his influence on succeeding generations, as there are Wesleyan biographers. Countless volumes have been written covering in comprehensive fashion the many facets of his personality and his ministry. Rather than embark upon an obviously impossible biographical survey in one chapter, it will serve us better to attempt to indicate only those aspects which have definite bearing on this conflict. Certain inherent personal qualities and environmental factors made Wesley a complex character, and we turn now to a brief study of the most dominant of these as they colored his relationships with others in the Evangelical Revival.

A. JOHN WESLEY - MAN OF PARADOX

John Wesley, like all men, harbored many inconsistencies within his breast. He was predisposed to take one line of action, but necessity often forced him to take another. The

Wesley seal with the words "Nuncia Pacis" encircling a dove with an olive branch, is ironical when we remember that he was constantly embroiled in controversies, and seldom led a peaceful life. To begin with, John Wesley battled with Deistic dogmas all his days in an attempt to prove them wrong. Believing in special acts of Providence, he constantly cited specific cases of what he observed to be Divine intervention. One example out of innumerable such Journal entries is:

Sat. 20. - (October, 1770) I returned to London. So rainy a week I have seldom seen; yet we have not had one shower while we were abroad except on Monday morning. Poor reasoners! who think any instance of providence too small to be observed or acknowledged!\(^1\)

Wesley did not believe in chance, but rather believed "that fortune is only another name for Providence"\(^2\) and in critical moments, especially, he depended on the sortes liturgicae to solve his problems. Knox conjectures about the outcome of Evangelical Christianity had not the bidding of the lot been strictly followed.\(^3\) For example, Wesley would have married Sophey Hopkey in Georgia; Wesley would never have gone to Bristol to begin open air preaching; and his famous sermon on Free Grace

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(which was the immediate cause of an overt split within the ranks of Methodism), would never have been preached or printed.¹

John Wesley's credulity, as well as his piety was hereditary, and the two are so blended together that it is difficult to disentangle them. His piety made him resolve to be homo unius libri; but his credulity led him to use that one book in a way in which it was never intended to be used.... His piety led him to believe in the direct interposition of Divine Providence in human affairs; but his credulity prevented him from remembering that second causes frequently intervened.²

His lifelong affirmation of God's special intervention in human affairs and his too ready acceptance of the accounts of human reporters, often led him into difficulty. An illustration of this is seen in his account of a visit to Darlington in the year 1788:

*Tues. 10. — ....* Before I left Newcastle, I was desired to read a strange account of a young woman, late of Darlington. But I told the person who brought it, 'I can form no judgment till I talk with Margaret Barlow herself.' This morning she came to me, and again in the afternoon; and I asked her abundance of questions. I was soon convinced that she was not only sincere, but deep in grace; and therefore incapable of deceit. I was convinced, likewise, that she had frequent intercourse with a spirit that appeared in the form of an angel.³

He, however, did not know what to think of her report from this angel that his brother, Charles, was dead and in heaven, or of her

¹Idem.
prediction that Wesley himself would die some time within the year. On another occasion in his Journal, he included a long account of Elizabeth Robson of Sunderland, who possessed ability to foretell forthcoming deaths, who often communed with the dead, and who was frequently visited by the spirits of her dying relatives. Wesley said of her account:

I can find no pretence to disbelieve it. The well-known character of the person excluded all suspicion of fraud; ..... It is true, likewise, that the English in general, and indeed most of the men of learning in Europe, have given up all accounts of witches and apparitions, as mere old wives’ fables. ..... They well know (whether Christians know it or not), that the giving up witchcraft is, in effect, giving up the Bible; and they know, on the other hand, that if but one account of the intercourse of men with separate spirits be admitted, their whole castle in the air (Deism, Atheism, Materialism) falls to the ground. I know no reason, therefore, why we should suffer even this weapon to be wrested out of our hands. 1

We must remember that credulity does not carry in the twentieth century the stigma that it did for the eighteenth century man. Sir Isaac Newton propounded his third law of motion in which he stated that to every action there was an equal and opposing reaction. He might just as easily have been describing a theological law for the eighteenth century, for the scientific philosophy of reducing all knowledge to tangible facts and the religious climate of Deism produced its reaction in the persons of William Law and John Wesley. Wesley was interested in all of life, and when he heard of an unusual, inexplicable phenomenon

1Ibid., V, p.265 et seqq., May 25, 1768.
he wanted to know all of the details. In a letter to Adam Clark, toward the end of his life, he inquired about a Mrs. Harris in Ireland, whose hair grew out eight or nine inches in one night and on two separate occasions asked for the full particulars of this remarkable occurrence, seeking her age when this happened and whether there were eyewitnesses or not.\(^1\) One of his missions in life was to prove the Deists wrong in their assertion that in the eighteenth century world God did not govern directly and personally. Miss Wedgwood sees this as the central point in her answer to the question of Wesley's contribution to his day:

(The Church of England) thought that the direct action of God on man was a peculiarity of the period recorded in the Scriptures; and that to seek to discover any continuity of that action in their own time was (the words are not too strong) a kind of blasphemy.\(^2\)

John Wesley was willing to risk this accusation of being "blasphemous" in order to emphasize an element in Christianity rejected by the established church. Despite his sound academic background and specific training in logic, he swung in this attempt to an extreme in his belief in the unseen world. When his brother expressed annoyance with his characteristic credulity, Wesley replied in a letter to Samuel Purly:

When my brother has told me ten times, 'You are credulous', I have asked, 'Show me instances'. He could not do it. No, nor any man else....I believe nothing great or small, without such kind of proof as the nature of the thing allows.\(^3\)

\(^1\)Wesley's Letters, op. cit., VIII, p. 33. Adam Clark, January 8, 1788.


A second point of tension within John Wesley arose from his attitude toward and associations with women. Certainly these relationships were on the whole marked with naivete. In 1743 he published his small tract on "Thoughts on Marriage and a Single Life", but does not therein enlighten us whether it is better to remain single or to be married. In 1765, he published an eleven-page tract on "Thoughts on a Single Life" which Tyerman described as a queer tract; and the less said about it the better.

A man holding such sentiments had no right to have a wife; and yet Wesley declares: 'My present thoughts upon a single life are just the same they have been these thirty years, and the same they must be, unless I give up my Bible.'

The mistake of Wesley's marriage to Molly Vazeille has been amply described elsewhere. Suffice it to say that it was a major tragedy in his life, and caused him much pain and embarrassment. Having remained single for forty-eight years, and having emphasized the blessed state of celibacy, he should never have married. Trouble began shortly after his wedding, for Charles Wesley reported that "his easily-won lady sat open-eyed" at Wesley's apology to the West Street society for having married, stating he did it "to break down the prejudice about the world and him".

Wesley never knew the happiness of home life, and in order to

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escape Molly's jealous bickering he must have welcomed even some of his most trying journeys. In a letter to his wife written in March, 1760, Wesley spoke of her squabbling for almost these ten years.... till (1) I am an adulterer; (2) you can prove it.... I have the same right to claim obedience from you as you have to claim it from Noah Vazeille (her son by a previous marriage). Consequently, every act of disobedience is an act of rebellion against God and the King, as well as against Your affectionate Husband.¹

As can be noted in the above letter, Wesley had very definite ideas about a wife's subjection to her husband. Yet, in contradiction, Wesley's letters reveal that he was influenced by women more than he ever realized. The Rev. John Telford is surely correct in describing the inestimable debt John owed to Susanna, "the Mother of Methodism":

He owed much to his mother, as the earliest letters prove. The deepest subjects are discussed with her on equal footing. She was the greatest formative influence on his character in its most impressionable stage, and he never ceased to turn to her as his wisest counsellor.²

Alexander Knox, who often heard Wesley preach, made the following observations about his attitude toward women:

It is certain that Mr. Wesley had a predilection for the female character; partly because he had a mind ever alive to amiability, and partly from his generally finding in females a quicker and fuller responsiveness to his own ideas of interior piety.... (in discussions with women) all Mr. Wesley's peculiarities are in fullest display: his confident

¹Wesley's Letters, op. cit., IV, p. 89. To Molly V. Wesley, March 23, 1760.
²Wesley's Letters, op. cit., I, p. xvi.
conclusions from scanty or fallacious premises; his unwarrantable value for sudden revolutions of the mind; (and) his proneness to attribute to the Spirit of God what might more reasonable by resolved into natural emotions or illusive impressions; .... (Amid) this anomaly of mind, there is no anomaly of heart: the point aimed at is consummate virtue in every temper and in every action. 1

Wesley never clearly defined his ideas about women preachers. In 1761, Sarah Crosby began meeting classes, and was so successful that these increased to sizeable congregations. She wrote Wesley for his advice about speaking before congregations, and his non-committal reply is a classic of evasion of the issue at hand. 2 Thus, women began preaching in the Methodist societies, "a thing never formally sanctioned by Wesley's conference, but which was practised to the end of Wesley's life. Sarah Crosby continued preaching till her death..... and (was joined by) Hannah Harrison, Miss Bosanquet, Miss Horral, Miss Newman, Mary Barrett, and others. To say the least, Wesley connived at it..... " 3 This conflict between Wesley's belief in the inferior status of women, and the influence they had over him was also made evident in his relationship with the Countess of Huntington, as we shall see in Chapter Four. The least we can say then, is that Wesley, while retaining the eighteenth century idea of male superiority, gave

1 Ibid., p. xix et seq.
2 Wesley's Letters, op. cit., IV, p. 133. To Mrs. Sarah Crosby, February 14, 1761.
3 Tyerman's Wesley, op. cit., II, p. 399.
far greater prominence to women than this idea would suggest.

Another inner tension never resolved by Wesley, was the problem of power and its use. He had exceeding difficulty in delegating some of the authority which came to him through his capacity for leadership. It must be remembered that Wesley never sought power. It was in almost every case thrust upon him, even from the earliest days. He did not pursue the position of leadership of the Oxford Holy Club, but upon recognizing the need, he assumed it and gave the Club scope and a cohesion which it had lacked before. Oglethorpe pressed upon him the claims of the heathen in America, and the result was he took over the direction of the work there. Again, it was not his love or power, but rather a Moravian influence, which led to the organization of the London Methodist Society. Furthermore, it was very reluctantly, and only at Whitefield's insistence that Wesley began field preaching, a practice which was to become Methodism's greatest source of strength and glory. This eventually resulted in his greatest source of control.

Once he had assumed leadership of an organization, however, Wesley had trouble in delegating responsibility, and consequently was greatly overworked. He was the only one who could settle quarrels, and therefore, when he could not visit every society frequently, there were bound to be disputes. He wrote Samuel Furly in 1760, "I am now entering Cornwall, which I have not visited these three years, and consequently all things in it are
out of order. Several persons talk of sharing my burden, but none does it, so I must wear out one first."¹ Miss March, describing the 1774 Conference, stated, "The preachers said there was much concord amongst them, and one observed Mr. Wesley seemed to do all the business himself."² Wesley explained to Edward Perronet, "I have scarce anyone on whom I can depend, when I am an hundred miles off. 'Tis well if I do not run away soon, and leave them to cut and shuffle for themselves."³ Later in an undated letter he further stated to Edward Perronet, "I have not one preacher with me, and not six in England, whose wills are broken enough to serve me as sons in the gospel."⁴ In another letter Wesley thus reprimanded him for not responding to Wesleyan authority as had been expected:

Charles (Perronet) and you behave as I want you to do; but you cannot or will not preach where I desire. Others can and will preach where I desire; but they do not behave as I want them to do. I have a fine time between one and the other.⁵

Wesley gives his own conception of his authority in Question 27 of the revised 1744-1789 "Large Minutes":

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⁵Idem.
What is that power? It is (merely) a power of admitting into, and excluding from, the societies under my care; of choosing and removing Stewards; of receiving or not receiving Helpers; of appointing them when, where, and how to help me, and of desiring any of them to confer with me when I see good.  

Wesley also firmly answered objections to his power:

But some of our Helpers say, 'This is shackling free-born Englishmen'; and demand a free Conference, that is, a meeting of all the Preachers, wherein all things shall be determined by most votes. I answer, It is possible, after my death, something of this kind may take place; but not while I live. To me the Preachers have engaged themselves to submit, to serve me as sons in the gospel; but they are not thus engaged to any man or number of men besides. To me the people in general will submit; but they will not thus submit to any other.

It is nonsense, then, to call my using this power, 'shackling free-born Englishmen'. None needs to submit to it unless he will; so that there is no shackling in the case. Every Preacher and every member may leave me when he pleases. But while he chooses to stay, it is on the same terms that he joined me at first.

Sometimes also, Wesley had great difficulty in securing cooperation from his free-lance brother, who frequently visited societies in England without consulting him. At times Charles chafed under his older brother's orders, and Wesley wrote to him:

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2 Ibid., VIII, p. 313. Regarding selection of Methodist stewards and leaders by society members, Wesley states further: "We are no republicans and never intend to be. It would be better for those that are so minded to go quietly away. I have been uniform both in doctrine and discipline for above these fifty years; and it is a little too late for me to turn into a new path now I am grey-headed." Wesley's Letters, op. cit., VIII, p. 196. To John Mason, January 13, 1790.
In what respect do you judge it needful to break my power and to reduce my authority within due bounds. I am quite ready to part with the whole or any part of it. It is no pleasure to me, nor ever was.1

In October 1753 Charles received a blunt letter from John, which he endorsed "Brother, Oct. 31, 1753. Trying to bring me under his yoke". The letter read in part:

What I have desired any time these ten years is, either that you would really act in connexion, or that you would never say you do. Either leave off professing or begin performing.2

Wesley could never pin Charles down, and even in June 1768 he was still writing, "I think it is high time that you and I at least should come to a point.....I am weary of intestine war, of preachers quoting one of us against the other."3

Wesley was a lonely man, for not only had he difficulty in securing the active cooperation of his brother, Charles, and other of his compatriots, but he was even more perplexed by his fellow Anglican clergymen. He never recognized the dilemma created by his simultaneous assumption of control over his own ministers, and his rejection of that control held by Anglican bishops; and therefore, he failed to understand why other evangelicals would not put themselves under his authority, or even act in alliance

1Wesley's Letters, op. cit., III, p.76. To Charles Wesley, December 4, 1751.

2Ibid., III, p.113 et seq. To Charles Wesley, October 31, 1763.

with him. He stated:

I have sometimes wondered that not one of all the clergymen we have known should ever cleave to me for God's sake, nor one man of learning which would ease me exceedingly.¹

He longed for a union of all the Evangelical clergy and made several overtures to them for a general plan of union. "But", he records:

.....all my overtures have been constantly rejected; almost all of them stand aloof, and at length they have carried their point. I let them alone.....The grand breach is now between the irregular and regular clergy.²

Wesley would not allow other Evangelical clergymen to have equal power with him over his societies, and this undoubtedly made many of the regular ministers choose the looser and less binding organization of Lady Huntingdon.³ The cause was such a great one and once Wesley had taken on responsibility for it, he found it well nigh impossible to entrust any of it to men who might not be as effective as he knew from experience he himself could be.

Finally, and perhaps the greatest source of tension in Wesley's life occurred at the point of his lack of emotional involvement and identification with others for this was opposed to his deep compassion for the common man. Unlike Charles, John Wesley had

¹Wesley's Letters, op. cit., IV, p.132. To Dorothy Furly, January 18, 1761.
²Ibid., IV, p.143. To James Rouquet, March 30, 1761.
³Another reason for not allying themselves with Wesley was doctrinal, however, for the leading Evangelical clergy within the Church of England were for the most part strongly Calvinistic in their theology.
difficulty in establishing long-term and abiding relationships with others. Dr. Frank Baker contrasts these two brothers in the following manner:

(Charles Wesley) was a man of deep mystical experience, yet deeply sensitive also to the joys and anxieties of common life. Home ties helped to prevent his becoming impersonal, a danger his brother John did not always avoid.  

Even Charles was unable to pierce this armor of reason within which Wesley encased himself. In October 1778, he wrote to his wife, Sally, "I am nourishing myself up for a journey with my philosophical brother". John on the other hand was never able to understand why Charles preferred remaining with his wife and family, to accompanying him in extensive travelling and preaching. "His own temptations were those of a cold temperament, and he never considered any other." In a 1773 letter to Philothea Briggs, Wesley described more accurately than he knew the difference between Charles, whose emotional, poetical nature corresponded more nearly to his father's, and himself, whose logical, impersonal, rather unemotional nature was more akin to his mother's:


2 There was an exception to this which occurred in a letter of June 27, 1766, to Charles. As Telford rightly observes, "This is an extraordinary outpouring of Wesley's deepest religious feeling. . . . It is no wonder that the words in brackets were in shorthand, as only intended for his brother's eye." Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, p. 15 et seq.


4 Edgwood, op. cit., p. 354.
I often heard my own mother make the same complaint with you. She did not feel for others near so much as my father did; but she did ten times more than he did.\textsuperscript{1}

An illustration of this emotional detachment is seen in Susanna's reply to Wesley's letter of March 1727, in which he altered his usual closing, "Your dutiful son", to "Your affectionate, dutiful son":

Dear Son, the conclusion of your letter is very kind. That you were ever dutiful, I very well know. But I know myself enough to rest satisfied with a moderate degree of your affection. Indeed, it would be unjust in me to desire the love of any one.\textsuperscript{2}

John inherited more than he ever knew of his mother's nature, and its imprint upon Methodism is clearly visible.\textsuperscript{3}

A lack of emotional response is clearly evident in Wesley's unromantic and rather cold-blooded explanation of his marriage to Molly Vazeille to one of his London societies—viz., that he married to break down the prejudice about him in the world. To say the least, it was ungallant of Wesley to attempt to justify his recent marriage in the presence of his bride. Romance did not blossom within his later life either, for in 1790 he writes to J. Dickens, giving the following purely pragmatic view towards his marital status:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1}Wesley's Letters, op. cit., VI, p. 18. To Philothea Briggs, February 20, 1773.
  \item \textsuperscript{2}Wesley's Letters, op. cit., I, p. 41, May 14, 1727.
  \item \textsuperscript{3}Temperley, op. cit., p. 82.
\end{itemize}
I was surprised when Lady Huntingdon absolutely forbade any Preacher in her Connexion to marry. I married because I needed a home, in order to recover my health, and I did recover it. But I did not seek happiness thereby, and I did not find it. We know this may be found in the knowledge and enjoyment and service of God, whether in a married or single state.

A further illustration of Wesley's inability to establish empathy with others is seen in letters he wrote to men and women who had suffered the bereavement of a loved one. To Mrs. Hall (his sister, Martha Wesley, who lost nine of her ten children in infancy) he wrote:

Dear Sister, — I believe the death of your children is a great instance of the goodness of God toward you. You have often mentioned to me how much of your time they took up! Now that time is restored to you, and you have nothing to do but to serve our Lord without carefulness and without distraction till you are sanctified in body, or spirit.

This might have been just the letter to send to a person like Wesley, but hardly appropriate to his sister who had so deeply suffered. The same tone is evident in a letter to Francis Wolfe in December 1775, in which Wesley mentioned the death of Wolfe's wife, whom he regarded as a favorite among his preachers' wives.

Shortly before his death, Wesley wrote another such letter to Adam Clarke, whose oldest daughter had died in December 1790:

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1Wesley's Letters, op. cit., VIII, p. 223. To John Dickens, June 19, 1790.


3Ibid., VI, p. 199 et seq. To Francis Wolfe, December 26, 1775.
But you startle me when you talk of grieving so much for the death of an infant. This was certainly a proof of inordinate affection; and if you love them thus all your children will die.¹

Very likely this peculiar feature was a source of some of Wesley's strained personal relationships and of his difficulty in remaining for long periods to work consistently with any one group. His entire ministry was characterized by mobility. He would most likely have failed had he tried to stay in one parish, but in the economy of God he was mightily used in the dispersion of the gospel to every corner of Great Britain.

In vivid contrast to this lack of emotional warmth and personal identification with others, was Wesley's deep compassion for the common man. As Dr. Umphrey Lee states, Wesley "discovered the common man before anyone invented that supercilious term".² Wesley might have said with George Herbert in his Church Militant:

*Gold and the Gospel never did agree: Religion always sides with Poverty.*

Wesley was always more at home with the poor or the "plain people", as he termed them, than with the "great vulgar", as he called those of noble birth. He addressed himself to the task of bringing religion to the poor and the dispossessed; it was not for him to be a tamed lap-dog chaplain, petted by the nobility in Lady Huntington's drawing rooms. In violent contrast to his otherwise

¹Ibid., VIII, p. 253. To Adam Clarke, December 1790.

apparent disinterest in human grief, Wesley had a passionate feeling for the common folk of his day. He recognized their deep need and the fact that they were neglected by the Established Church, and therefore dedicated his ministry to the poor and middle classes. Champion of the eighteenth century underdog, he boasted of them often: "How unspeakable is the advantage, in point of common sense, which middling people have over the rich". It was his concept that often "God hath chosen the weak to confound the strong". There is evidence in many of his letters of his sympathy for the lower classes, and his recognition of their readiness to listen to the claims of the Gospel. In one written to Dorothy Furly in September 1757 he wrote: "I love the poor; in many of them I find pure, genuine grace, unmixed with paint, folly, and affectation." He could never speak about the places of worship for the rich without a touch of sarcasm. For one example out of many, let us note an account of two services he held on Good Friday at Bethesda:

At both times we had a Brilliant congregation, among whom were Honourable and Right Honourable persons; but I felt they were all given unto my hands; for God was in the midst. What a mercy it is, what a marvellous condescension in God, to provide such places as Bethesda, and Lady Huntingdon's chapels, for these delicate hearers, who could not bear sound doctrine if it were not set off with these pretty trifles.

2Wesley's Letters, op. cit., VI, p.147. To Thomas Rankin, April 21, 1773.
3Ibid., III, p.223. To Dorothy Furly, September 25, 1757.
Whenever Wesley contrasted the poor and the rich, you could be certain that his sympathies would be with the less fortunate.

He wrote:

On Saturday the 28th, at noon, I preached at Bath, but I had only the poor to hear, there being service at the same time in Lady R. (untingdon)’s chapel. So I was just in my element. I have scarce ever found such liberty at Bath before.¹

Until the end of his life, Wesley directed his ministry to the down-trodden, and as a result Whitefield, not Wesley, was the popular Methodist preacher with the "great vulgar". His major contribution, therefore, was not to those of high birth, for he did not hasten to establish societies in the fashionable eighteenth century resort centers. Content to preach to the newly-rising industrial classes, he realized that his primary mission was to the masses which the Established Church had neglected. A letter to Mrs. Woodhouse in November 1780, observed: "In gentlefolks there is very little sincerity; in plain folks there is much. I believe never so much as there is now."²

In contrast to Wesley’s oft-repeated statement of loyalty to the Established Church was his ecclesiastical irregularity, which was prompted by his ardent attempt to reach the submerged masses. He answered the charge of non-conformity in replying to John Smith (Bishop Secker’s alias):

¹Ibid., V, p.148. September 28, 1765.
I would inquire, what is the end of all ecclesiastical order? Is it not to bring souls from the power of Satan to God, and to build them up in His fear and love? Order, then, is so far valuable as it answers these ends; and if it answers them not, it is nothing worth. 1

Often attacked by clergymen for employing lay-preachers, Wesley could find nothing in Scripture which forbade him utilizing their services; and they provided him with one more medium for communicating the gospel to the man in the street. As he said in a letter to the Rev. Thomas Adam in October 1755, "Soul-damning clergymen lay me under more difficulties than soul-saving laymen." 2 To another minister he exclaimed: "O sir, what an idle thing it is for you to dispute about lay preachers! Is not a lay preacher preferable to a drunken preacher, to a cursing, swearing preacher?" 3 To Nicholas Norton, who had attacked him for allowing unordained men to preach in the Methodist societies, Wesley emphasized his guiding maxim:

My principle (frequently declared) is this: 'I submit to every ordinance of man wherever I do not conceive there is an absolute necessity for acting contrary to it'. . . . I do tolerate lay-preaching, because I conceive there is an absolute necessity for it; inasmuch as, were it not, thousands of souls would perish everlastingly. Yet I do not tolerate lay-administering because I do not conceive there is any such necessity for it; seeing it does not appear that. . . . one soul will perish for want of it. 4

1 Wesley's Letters, op. cit., II, p. 77. To John Smith, June 1746.

2 Ibid., III, p. 151. To Thomas Adams, October 1755.

3 Ibid., III, p. 20. To James Clark, September 18, 1756.

When James Hervey, an Oxford Methodist and a former pupil of Wesley's, wrote chiding him for invading other men's parishes, Wesley replied:

If by catholic principles you mean any other than scriptural, they weigh nothing with me. I allow no other rule, whether of faith or practice, than the Holy Scriptures; but on scriptural principles I do not think it hard to justify whatever I do. God in Scripture commands me, according to my power, to instruct the ignorant, reform the wicked, confirm the virtuous. Man forbids me to do this in another's parish: that is, in effect, to do it all; seeing I have now no parish of my own, nor probably ever shall. Whom, then, shall I hear, God or man? ..... Suffer me now to tell you my principles in this matter. I look upon all the world as my parish.¹

As much as he cherished decency and order, after hearing the passionate plea of the masses, Wesley could not allow it to be his ruling principle. He saw a need which was not being met and whether this involved ecclesiastical irregularity or no, he answered to a higher authority than the "successors of the apostles". In this, his shame was his glory.

B. THE DISCIPLINED LIFE

John Wesley, like Brother Lawrence, did not need the quiet of a cloister to enable him to carry out his great work. Using every hour to the fullest, he learned to read on horseback by day and at night to ignore the noisy surroundings of a country inn in order to carry on his ministry through correspondence or to prepare

¹Ibid., I, p. 285 et seq. To James Hervey, March 20, 1739.
for publication a book for his Christian Library. Only a disciplined life could have accomplished what has been characterized as the work of three men.

Wesley possessed a remarkably serene spirit, but it was not until after his heartwarming experience in 1738 that the deeper tranquility settled over his life and work. He wrote to Miss March:

Though I am always in haste, I am never in a hurry; because I never undertake any more work than I can go through with perfect calmness of spirit. It is true I travel four or five thousand miles in a year. But I generally travel alone in my carriage, and consequently am as retired ten hours in a day as if I was in a wilderness.... When I was at Oxford, and lived almost like an hermit, I saw not how any busy man could be saved. I scarce thought it possible for a man to retain the Christian spirit amidst the noise and bustle of the world. God taught me better by my own experience. 1

It is estimated that he travelled over two hundred and twenty five thousand miles and preached forty thousand sermons. Until 1772, when an injury made it necessary for him to go by carriage, he travelled entirely by horseback, insisting it was the most healthful. 2 He once wrote to Ebenezer Blackwell advising him to give up the chariot and ride horseback, or else he would lose his health, adding, "I judge of your case by my own. I must be on horseback for life, if I would be healthy". 3 He disciplined

1 Wesley's Letters, op. cit., VI, p. 292. To Miss March, December 10, 1777.
his body to the rigors of eighteenth century travel. Even in the present day with our modern means of transportation, it would tax the strength of any man to attempt to emulate Wesley's work. Roads were exceedingly poor, and there were no turnpikes in the north of England. In the early days of the Revival Wesley suffered other hardships as well; for instance, in September 1743 he recorded, "I had only blackberries to eat in Cornwall, still God gave me strength sufficient for my work". 1

Dependability and punctuality were among his strongest traits, and if a congregation were expecting John Wesley to arrive for a specific service, he would be there, regardless of almost any obstacle. In February 1747 he noted in his Journal:

Sun. 15 - ..... I was wondering, the day before, at the mildness of the weather; such as seldom attends me in my journeys. But my wonder now ceased: the wind was turned full north, and blew so exceeding hard and keen that when we came to Hatfield neither my companions nor I had much use of our hands or feet. After resting an hour, we bore up again, through the wind and snow, which drove full in our faces. But this was only a squall. In Beldock Field the storm began in earnest. The large hail drove so vehemently in our faces that we could not see, nor hardly breathe. ..... About six I preached to a serious congregation.

Tues. 17 - ..... we pushed on, and were met in the middle of an open field with so violent a storm of rain and hail as we had not had before. It drove through our coats, great and small, boots and everything, and yet froze as it fell, even upon our eye-brows; so that we had scarce either strength or motion left when we came into our inn at Stilton.

Wed. 18 - Our servant came up and said, 'Sir, there is no

1Wesley's Letters, op. cit., VIII, p.11. To Jonathan Crowther, September 25, 1787.
travelling today. Such a quantity of snow has fallen in the night that the roads are quite filled up.' I told him, 'At least we can walk twenty miles a day, with our horses in our hands'. So in the name of God we set out.

This was far from being the only time when God and John Wesley were victorious over the elements. On another journey, Wesley found the road to St. Ives was covered by water. After travelling as far as possible by chaise, he left it, and "borrowed a horse and rode forward; but not far, for all the grounds were under water. Here, therefore, I procured a boat full twice as large as a kneading-trough.....(we) paddled safe to Earith. There Miss L waited for me with another chaise, which brought me to St. Ives." There was nothing unusual in this incident either; nothing that is except that at this time Wesley was in his seventy-second year. Apparently thriving upon such hardships, he wrote later to Charles, "This is the last day of my seventy-eighth year; and (such is the power of God) I feel as if it were my twenty-eighth".

Countless other characteristics marked Wesley as an extremely self-disciplined man - he was methodical in all he did, he went to bed early and arose early, he was frugal, he was neat in appearance and always punctual for appointments. This personal discipline extended a control into the lives of his society members, and of

both his students and preachers. While in his societies he did not exact a conformity to certain opinions, he did require uniformity in the conduct of his members, and The General Rules were issued as a guide to all Methodists. These were a comprehensive list which covered all areas of behavior, and strict adherence to them was enforced by quarterly examination. Wesley's campaign against self-indulgence extended from such minutiae as the wearing of ruffles by Methodist women to the drinking of tea.1

Wesley's severe discipline was also experienced by the students of his Kingswood School. There were required to rise at four, spend from four o'clock until five in private reading and prayer, attend the five a.m. sermon each morning, meet classes from six o'clock until eleven and again from one o'clock until five, and all without play periods or holidays.2 In addition, the students were not allowed to speak to anyone other than their masters, and all who were healthy had to fast until three o'clock in the afternoon every Friday.3 As Dr. Jones stated:

1Ibid., VI, p. 324 et seq. To William Church, October 13, 1778; II, p. 161 et seqq. To a Friend, December 10, 1748.


3Ibid. Dr. Rupp states that the major principles of Tyndale's Obedience of a Christian Man are found in Wesley's writings, particularly in Wesley's thoughts on family life and the education of children. E. G. Rupp, Studies in the Making of the English Protestant Tradition, (Cambridge, 1947), p. 75.
The main defects in the early Private Societies (English and Welsh) lay in their excessive stress on introspection and self-condemnation, as well as in their inability to understand the life and religion of a child. A premium was put on Adultism, on conversion and on the gloomier aspects of other-worldism; and not until the Sunday School's arose as adjuncts to the Church, were the children and adolescents given their proper place.

If Wesley were strict with his students and members of his societies, he was doubly strict with his preachers. He drew up a list of regulations which he expected to be carried out to the fullest, but it must be remembered that anything he demanded of his preachers he more than fulfilled in his own life. This was one reason for their unquestioning loyalty to their leader. A Methodist Helper was to:

1. Be diligent. Never be unemployed a moment. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away time; neither spend any more time at any place, than is strictly necessary.
2. Be serious. Let your motto be, 'holiness to the Lord'. Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.
3. Converse sparingly and cautiously with women; particularly with young women.
4. Take no step toward marriage, without first consulting your brethren.
5. Believe evil of no one ...
6. Speak evil of no one ...
7. Tell every one what you think wrong in him ...
8. Do not affect the gentleman. You have no more to do with this character than with that of a dancing master ...
9. Be ashamed of nothing but sin: not of fetching wood (if time permit) or drawing water; not of cleaning your own shoes, or your neighbour's.
10. Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. And, in general, do not mend our rules, but keep them; not for wrath, but for conscience' sake.

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11. You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work ... Observe: it is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society; but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord. And remember! A Methodist preacher is to mind every point, great and small, in the Methodist discipline! Therefore you will need all the sense you have, and to have all your wits about you!

12. Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the gospel. As such, it is your part to employ your time in the manner which we direct; partly, in preaching and visiting from house to house; partly, in reading, meditation, and prayer. Above all, if you labour with us in our Lord's vineyard, it is needful that you should do that part of the work which we advise, at those times and places which we judge most for his glory. ¹

Wesley was not above implementing these rules for his preachers as in a letter to Thomas Rankin:

Only one thing I desire you to remember: never sit up later than ten o'clock - no, not for any reason (except a watch-night), not on any pretence whatsoever. In general, I desire you would go to bed about a quarter after nine. ²

This is to illustrate that Wesley felt every detail of life to have direct bearing upon one's Christian witness, and all matters were subject to regulation. He assumed control over the affairs of his preachers, almost to an unprecedented degree. For example, when he learned that Thomas Mason was thinking of marrying

¹ Wesley's Works, op. cit., Question 26 "Large Minutes", Vol. VIII, p. 309 et seq. (my italics)
² Wesley's Letters, op. cit., IV, p. 315. To Thomas Rankin, November 18, 1765.
a certain woman, Wesley wrote:

The person at Birr will not do: ..... You want a woman of middle age, well tried, of good sense, and of deep experience. Such an one in every respect is Molly Penington; but whether she is willing to marry or no, I cannot tell ..... If I meet with any, I will send you word.\footnote{Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, p. 254. To Thomas Mason, May 3 1771.}

Even the wives of his preachers were not beyond the notice of John Wesley, for in June 1776 he wrote to William Severn:

.....observe, I speak in your ear! Sister Snowden (wife of George Snowden, a preacher in the Wiltshire circuits) is good-natured, but is a consummate slut: explain with her largely on this head; convince her that it is both a sin and a shame. She came into a clean house at Stroud; let her take care to keep it clean for the honour of God - for the honour of her husband - for the honour of her country.\footnote{Ibid., VI, p. 224. To William Severn, June 1776. In this connection, the question was asked at the 1776 Conference, "complaint is made that sluts spoil our houses. How can we prevent this? Answer. Let no known slut live in any of them." Idem.}

While these incidents appear to reveal an autocratic presumptuousness on the part of Wesley, it must be recalled that underlying these extreme demands in what seems superficial matters was his firm conviction that all of one's life, time, and possessions were a trust from God. Time and opportunities must be accounted for, and the following letter reveals the sense of urgency which typified Wesley's concept of Christian stewardship:

But you do not intend to stand in the vineyard all the day idle. You will but wait a while longer. Well, how long will you be as a dumb dog? Twenty years? or ten? or one and a half? If you have a
lease of your life, well. But what if you are called in one year to give an account of your stewardship? O live today.  

C. THE DEVOUT LIFE

Among the last words ever spoken by the Reverend Samuel Wesley, Rector of the Epworth Parish Church, were: "Be steady. The Christian faith will surely revive in this kingdom; you shall see it, though I shall not." As Dr. Baker observes, "that dying prophecy was soon to be fulfilled", and Samuel Wesley's own son was to embody this spiritual revival. While all of the previously discussed characteristics - the negative along with the positive - were certainly apparent within his personality and work, there was underlying and permeating every act and motive, John Wesley's purity of heart and singleness of purpose.

Wesley's spiritual pilgrimage was marked by a violent change from the High Church Anglicanism of his early years to the evangelical doctrines of his post-1738 life. His religious life is the story of spiritual metamorphoses, in which he discarded both the legalism of the Oxford Club and the extreme mysticism of the Moravians. He envisioned a Christian fellowship,

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1Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, p. 293. To S. L. of Scilly, December 14, 1771.


3Idem.

4The Moravian failure to share his Anglican sympathies as well as their extreme mysticism led Wesley to break from this group.
organized on similar lines to his own Holy Club at Oxford, but concerned primarily with "heart religion"\(^1\), and open to any and all, regardless of their religious affiliation. Basic to his philosophy was the principle of love and catholicity, rather than uniformity of belief. Always more concerned about a correct life than a correct theology, Wesley wrote to his Moravian acquaintance, James Hutton: "If we do not yet think alike, we may at least love alike. And, indeed, unity of affection is a good step forward toward unity of judgment."\(^2\)

And, in a letter to a Roman Catholic in July 1749, he stated: "Then if we cannot as yet think alike in all things, at least we may love alike. Herein we cannot possibly do amiss."\(^3\) As Dr. Sykes observed:

(Beneath varied outward changes) which caused him to part company with a number of teachers and colleagues in turn, William Law, Peter Böhler, and George Whitefield, not always without some sharpness of judgment upon their shortcomings, he retained a constant Arminian conviction

\(^1\)Dr. Nuttall admonishes those whose current thinking regards "heart religion" as too subjective: "Where we go wrong in flinging the charge of subjectivism, introversion and pietism against these men who made so much of 'Heart-work' is that we overlook the way in which they combined it with 'Heaven-work'. Or do we think that 'Heaven-work' is equally 'subjective'? If we do, we show that materialism and temporalism have so far infected us as to make it hard for us to share, even imaginatively, the vision by which these men lived." Geoffrey F. Nuttall, Richard Baxter and Philip Doddridge: A Study In a Tradition (London, 1951), p.15. Surely this is as apropos to John Wesley in the eighteenth century as it is to Richard Baxter and other seventeenth century counterparts.


that Christ died for all and that the Father willed all men to come to a knowledge of His saving truth, and an abiding sympathy with all true religion of the heart, which led him to a steady avoidance of controversy for its own sake and to a generous tendency to accept good works as of greater importance than correctness of theological opinion.¹

From the earliest days of the revival Wesley proclaimed this attitude of freedom, and as late as May 1788 he still asserted the latitude allowed within Methodism:

Sun. 18 - ..... The Methodists alone do not insist on your holding this or that opinion; but they think and let think. Neither do they impose any particular mode of worship, but you may continue to worship in your former manner.....²

His belief in Christian tolerance and insistence upon peaceful co-existence with those with whom one disagreed was frequently re-asserted:

I have no more right to object to a man for holding a different opinion from mine than I have to differ with a man because he wears a wig and I wear my own hair; but if he takes his wig off and shakes the powder in my eyes, I shall consider it my duty to get quit of him as soon as possible.³

Wesley's one point of dogmatism was on the doctrine of absolute predestination, and yet he tried to prevent even this from becoming a source of contention and bigotry. In 1747 he instructed his preachers:

In public meetings, speak not one word against opinions of any kind. We are not to fight against notions, but sins. Least of all should I advise you once to open your lips against predestination. It would do more mischief than you are aware of. Keep to one point, present inward salvation by faith, by the divine evidence of sins forgiven.1

One of Wesley's favorite maxims appeared in several of his letters: "Orthodoxy, I say, or right opinion is but a slender part of religion at best, and sometimes no part at all."2

Wesley's attitude toward correct theological beliefs softened even further with the passing years, for in 1762 he advised open-mindedness to one of his young friends:

.....I was likewise as much bigoted to my own opinions as you can be for your life; that is, I thought them deeply important, and that all contrary opinions were damnable errors. Have patience and you will see farther. In a few years you will find out that neither these are half so necessary to salvation, nor those half so destructive as you now imagine.3

In the eighteenth century, however, it was impossible not to take a stand either for or against Calvinism, unless one escaped by Sacramentarianism into the arms of the English Mother Church. Wesley once said, "The true gospel touches the very edge of both Calvinism and Antinomianism; so that nothing but the mighty power of God can prevent our sliding either into the one or the

3Ibid., VIII, p.271. To Samuel Furly, March 20, 1762.
Dr. J. Scott Lidgett explains that:

Wesley's Theology was based upon the Fatherhood of God rather than upon His Sovereignty. In particular it was the influence of the Fatherhood of God which led him to the rejection of Calvinism and to life-long proclamation of the truth that God 'willeth that all men should be saved, and should come to the knowledge of the truth'.

Indeed, this firm belief in every man's right to hear the gospel message and each one's ability to respond to the saving grace of God was a central tenet in Wesley's faith. It became a major source of controversy with the opposing Calvinists of the day, as did his conviction that after conversion there was spiritual growth toward Perfection. Opposed as he was to the perversions of some of the Calvinists, he noted in a letter to Mary Bishop during the height of the controversy:

...this is the great work: not only to bring souls to believe in Christ, but to build them up in our most holy faith. How grievously are they mistaken (as are well nigh the whole body of modern Calvinists) who imagine that as soon as the children are born they need take no more care of them! We do not find it so. The chief care than begins.

Wesley felt that the hyper-Calvinism of his day was "the direct antidote to Methodism - that is heart religion ...".

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1Wesley's Letters, op. cit., IV, p.208. To Miss March, April 7, 1763.
3Vide Wesley's Letters, op. cit., VI, p.224. To Isaac Andrews, June 24, 1776; Ibid., V, p.89. To Mr. Flenderleith, May 23, 1768; et al.
4Ibid., V, p.344. To Mary Bishop, November 4, 1772.
5Ibid., VIII, p.256. To Robert Dall, January 19, 1791.
Wesley expressed great dislike for theological quarrels. He was seldom guilty of using intemperate language when he disagreed with anyone, and he did not take advantage of his opponents by publicly exposing their errors in scholarship; but advised them instead by private letter.¹ He tried not to involve personalities in any argument, and during the Calvinistic Controversy verified this in a letter to Mrs. Turner:

Many years ago, when my son (as he styled himself for several years) Mr. Whitefield declared war against me, several asked, and that over and over, 'When will you answer Mr. Whitefield's book? I answered, 'Never. You have heard the cry Whitefield against Wesley; but you shall never hear Wesley against Whitefield.' I have been ever since a follower after peace.²

Wesley recognized that he and Whitefield had not the same gifts, and while differing greatly from him in approach, he described Whitefield's sermon in the Foundery with generosity:

Sun. 28 (Jan., 1750) - I read prayers, and Mr. Whitefield preached. How wise is God in giving different talents to different preachers. Even the little improprieties both of his language and manner were a means of profiting many who would not have been touched by a more correct discourse, or a more calm and regular manner of speaking.³

Such was his usual policy toward all. Wesley could also have properly and justly retaliated against his helper Cennick, who suddenly joined the Calvinists, disrupting the Kingswood Society, and who wrote to Whitefield attacking the Wesleys: "I believe

²Ibid., V, p.339. To Mrs. Turner, September 18, 1772.
no atheist can more preach against Predestination than they: (John and Charles Wesley); and all who believe Election are counted enemies to God and called so. Fly dear brother. I am as alone; I am in the midst of the plague.1 Rather than exhibit great bitterness against this unjust and dishonorable attack, John Wesley later helped Cennick prepare the hymns he wrote for publication.

Wesley's sincere effort to be fair in all his relationships extended to the evangelical clergy as well. After the Methodist Society had already been established at Huddersfield, Venn entered the community as an evangelical minister and requested the Methodist preachers to withdraw. Faced with this problem Wesley attempted a compromise and after a settlement was reached, wherein the Methodist preachers would not invade Venn's parish but once a month, he yielded further, agreeing to hold Methodist services only once a year. Huddersfield Methodists rebelled against these concessions and Wesley, in writing to his friend Ebenezer Blackwell in July 1761, thus revealed his problem:

.....It is a tender point. Where there is a gospel ministry already, we do not desire to preach; but where we can leave off preaching because such an one comes after is another question, especially when those who were awakened and convinced by us beg and require the countenance of our assistance. I love peace, and follow it, but whether I am at liberty to purchase it at such a price I really cannot tell.2

Summarizing his primary aims, Wesley once wrote to the saintly Fletcher, "Unity and holiness are the two things I want among the Methodists"; and to Samuel Walker of Truro, "I have one point in view - to promote, so far as I am able, vital, practical religion; and by the grace of God to beget, preserve, and increase the life of God in the souls of men". Repeatedly he insisted to his preachers, "You have one business on earth - to save souls. Give yourself wholly to this."

Wesley was a seeker, never satisfied with himself, but always striving for deeper holiness. He exhorted his preachers and his people to do likewise, endeavoring always to attain a more devout consecration. To illustrate, he wrote to Samuel Bardsley in 1772: "Press all believers to go on to perfection", and this is the most prevalent theme recurring in all of his writings during the period onward from 1760.

He was occupied solely with bringing the claims of God to act on the whole of life. It might be said that everything he ever did, he did with an eye to the possibility of bringing God into the situation. For example, he wrote to Charles in 1774: "My view in writing history (as in writing philosophy) is to bring

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1Ibid., V, p.3. To John Fletcher, February 28, 1766.
3Ibid., III, p.148. To Christopher Hopper, October 8, 1755.
God into it."¹

Methodism's major contribution was not the initiating of a radical doctrine or a new theology. It was rather the recapturing for the Church of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's "direct witness" to the believer, whereby he might be assured of his adoption as a son of God. This was at the root of Wesley's spirituality and was a concept of vital importance to him. It is grossly inaccurate to seek the explanation of the vitality of the Evangelical Awakening in the preaching of George Whitefield, the peacemaking of Howell Harris, the poetry of Charles Wesley, the organization of John Wesley, or the promotional efforts of Lady Huntingdon. These were but the fruits of their faith. Instead, to discover the key to this renewed spirituality we must look to a small bedroom at Oxford in the Spring of 1735; to a Communion service at the Talgarth Church in Wales in that same year; to two brothers' experiences in 1738, one on Whitsunday, the other three days later; and to a sickbed where a titled lady tossed with fevered body and troubled spirit. In each case this was not Conversion, but was rather their first experience of the doctrine of Assurance, or the "Witness of the Holy Spirit". Following this watershed in their lives, they were never the same. They knew the nullity of their ordinary faith, the barrenness of depending on their own righteousness

¹Wesley's Letters, op. cit., VI, p. 67 et seq. To Charles Wesley, January 13, 1774.
to save them, and the stagnant effect of the Established Church upon their spirits. This recapture of the doctrine of the witness of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life, which all could experience whether learned or ignorant, rich or poor, gave to Methodism its power. And it was John Wesley's spiritual sensitivity that took this basic belief and enlarged it, clarified it, and offered it to all who would come. Since, however, he could never be satisfied merely with an initial experience, he extended it to include growth toward Christian perfection, defining it as "only another term for holiness, or the image of God in man".¹ Dr. Jones summarizes for us the genius of all of Methodism:

(They) did not set out to discover buried theological truth but to live out a forgotten life. They rested satisfied with the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, Calvinistically or otherwise interpreted; and the only Articles of Faith which they galvanized into life were Regeneration and Sanctification of character. The genius of Early Methodism was practical rather than theological; and the central topics of discussion in the Private Societies were the necessity of the New Birth; the doctrine of Assurance as an appeal to experience; and Holiness, not as a theory but as an experience of life.²

These were the direct results of the fervent faith and passionate sense of mission of Methodism's Big Five - one of whom held the pivotal position, providing direction, cohesiveness and vitality to all. Truly each facet of John Wesley's background, personality


²Jones, Harris, op. cit., p.244.
and life played its part in moulding this eighteenth century movement and influencing its controversies, but none left its imprint quite so vividly as did his dedicated and sensitive spiritual awareness.
Chapter Three

THE UMBRELLA OF THE REVIVAL
A.  THE MOTHER OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ISRAEL - HER LIFE AND WORK

Shortly after five o'clock on Friday afternoon, June 17, 1791, Selina Shirley Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon, "breathed her last sigh ..... and fell asleep in Jesus.  Almost her last words were, - My work is done; I have nothing to do but to go to my Father".  

It is of some pertinence to note this recognition by her that her work was finished, for the hour before her death she was still engaged in directing the lives of others for the sake of the Gospel and was particularly anxious to know whether the Rev. Thomas Charles of Bala would serve as a supply preacher to her chapel in Spa Fields.  His written reply arrived and Lady Anne Erskine, in an attempt to keep her quiet, said, "I will go and open it".  Lady Huntingdon, anxious lest she should die before she heard the full contents, said, "To know if he comes, that's the point".  

Just prior to this she was busy with her plan to send to Otaheite in the South Sea Islands two preachers as missionaries of the Gospel under her patronage.  

_Please note the numbered footnotes at the end of the text._

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3 Her last letter was to the Rev. Dr. Charles of Bala, dated June 9, 1791, in which she stated, "I am week and low and immersed in the great business of preparing missions for the South Sea and the Indian islands in America.  I wish to die immersed in my dear and blessed Master's business.  I can do no more (writing) from weakness (sic).  Idem."
accomplished what the sneers of Horace Walpole and the ridicule of
Archbishop Cornwallis could not do - it stilled the voice of the
most remarkable and controversial lady of eighteenth century
England.

There were many estimates of this woman during her lifetime.
Whitefield affectionately referred to her as "A nursing mother to
our Israel". ¹ Dr. Doddridge was less extravagant but no less
laudatory when he declared: "I think I never saw so much of the
image of God in any woman upon earth". ² Toplady extolled her as
"the most precious saint of God I ever knew". ³ The saintly
Fletcher of Madeley, in two letters to Charles Wesley stated:
"(I) passed three hours with a modern prodigy - a pious and humble
Countess" and again "..... I sat like Saul at the feet of Gamaliel". ⁴
On another occasion Fletcher asserted: "I am greatly indebted
to your Ladyship for what light I have into the nature of the
foundation of Christianity". ⁵

Nothing in Lady Huntingdon's birth in August, 1707, presaged

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¹Rev. L. Tyerman, The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield,

Fawcett, June 26, 1750.


⁴Ibid., I, p.232. Two letters to Charles Wesley, November 1759
and March 22, 1759, Mss Letters in "The Bridgewater Letters", The
New Room, Bristol.

⁵Ibid., I, p.234. Letter to Lady Huntingdon, September 6, 1760.
this singular life which was to influence so many; nothing, that is, except that she was the second daughter of the second Earl of Ferrara, the Honorable Washington Shirley, and of royal, pre-Conquest lineage. In the eighteenth century such a person was set apart from birth and considered by the commoners almost as of another race. Indeed, this idea of innate superiority was so instilled and communicated to the elect nobility that it was sometimes difficult to persuade them that everyone was equal in the sight of God. Certainly, Aaron Crossley Hobart Seymour, the official biographer of the Countess of Huntingdon, is convinced of this class distinction and this attitude pervades his every page. Monseigneur Knox says of her biographer that "he (or she) had no idea how to write a book, let alone a biography, and has contrived to surround the whole story with an atmosphere of stuffiness which the period of composition only partly extenuates". He characterizes the book in an apt phrase as "a monument of pietism, and pietism disfigured by unremitting snobbishness". It would be easy, were she judged by Seymour's work alone, to dismiss Lady Huntingdon as a Gospel snob.

Selina possessed a highly intelligent mind, was quick to learn, and had a most retentive memory, of which Wesley was to

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2Idem.
acquire a first-hand knowledge. From her early childhood she was of a serious disposition. When she was nine years old she saw a corpse of another child, and felt an inner compulsion to attend the funeral. She was much affected by this event and often returned to this particular grave to beg God to "deliver her from all her fears, and give her a happy departure".\(^1\) To this traumatic experience she often indirectly referred in her later life, and her letters reveal latent and unconscious allusions to the subject of death and to her desire to escape this life. One of her most frequent intercessions as a teen-ager was that she "might marry into a serious family".\(^2\) Her prayer was granted when on June 3, 1728, she married Theophilus Hastings, ninth Earl of Huntingdon, and this marriage was indeed fortunate in giving to Lady Huntingdon two sisters-in-law, Lady Margaret and Lady Betty Hastings, both of whom possessed rare degrees of spiritual sensitivity and perception.

Because of her deeds of mercy, Lady Huntingdon was characterized as the Lady Bountiful by the people who lived around the Huntingdon Estate, Donnington Park. She afterwards asserted that before her conversion she was really attempting to establish her own righteousness by works, hoping "by prayer, and fasting, and alms deeds to commend herself to the favour of the Most High".\(^3\) At Court she

\(^1\)Seymour, \textit{op. cit.}, I, p.8.
\(^2\)Idem.
\(^3\)\textit{Ibid.}, I, p.10.
was considered one of the leading figures, and in a letter dated in January 1738 (-9) describing the ladies' dresses at the Royal Birthday Party for the Prince, Mrs. Pendarves wrote: "I never saw so much finery, without any mixture of trumpery in my life. Lady Huntingdon's, as the most extraordinary, I must describe first". 1 There follows a description of one of the most elaborate dresses of the century, and Mrs. Pendarves concludes by saying of Lady Huntingdon: "a mere shadow that tottered under every step she took under the load". 2 Had Lady Huntingdon read these words she would have used them as a symbol of her unredeemed state. Before conversion she had thought herself "abundantly superior to the common herd of mankind" 3, and it is evident that she did not entirely lose this attitude with her cataclysmic regeneration.

In 1737, extempore sermons preached by a group called Methodists, whom out of curiosity the Ladies Hastings went to hear, caused great excitement in the community around Ledstone Hall in Yorkshire, the home of Lady Betty Hastings. Lady Margaret Hastings was converted under the preaching of the Rev. B. Ingham, an original member of the Holy Club at Oxford, whom she later married, much to the scandal of society. One day after her

1The Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs. Delany: With Interesting Reminiscences of King George The Third and Queen Charlotte. Edited by the Right Honourable Lady Hanover, (London, 1861), II, p. 28.

2Idem.

3Seymour, op. cit., I, p. 11.
conversion she remarked to Lady Huntingdon "that since she had
known and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, for life and salvation,
she had been as happy as an angel". Lady Huntingdon's heart
was pierced by these words, for she enjoyed no such assurance.
Shortly afterward, (as usual, Seymour gives no date but as we
shall see in Chapter V, it was probably 1739) during a serious
illness her fear of death which had returned as well as this lack
of assurance of the future life, converged to bring upon her a
terrible distress of mind and soul. She suddenly recalled the
words of Lady Margaret and instantaneously felt the assurance
of the forgiveness of her sins. After this experience she
gradually ceased to be a social butterfly, but she did maintain,
much to the advantage of Methodism, the prerogatives of her rank
and the advantages of her authority as a peeress of the realm.

Lady Huntingdon would not be remembered today, however, had
she retired quietly from society after her conversion. Dr.
Elliott-Binns regards it as significant:

that one of the most active and influential leaders of the
revival should have been a woman, and a woman of quality,
..... for women in the eighteenth century were expected to
keep in the background and to submit to the guidance and
control of their fathers and husbands. 2

But Lady Huntingdon, having once tested the dramatic doctrines of

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2L. E. Elliott-Binns, The Early Evangelicals: A Religious
the Methodists, could no longer be satisfied with the mundane sermons offered in the average parish church. Therefore she allied herself with the Methodists at her earliest opportunity. It was during their yearly residences in London that she must have persuaded her husband to attend the Fetter Lane services although her name never appeared on the membership rolls of this Society.

Although she knew John and Charles in 1740, it was not until 1742 that the Wesley brothers became constant and welcome guests of Lord and Lady Huntingdon at Donnington Park. In 1744 the Countess opened her London residence to the members of the first Methodist Conference and from this moment on there was no intermission in the drama of salvation in which the Countess appeared as the leading lady. Apparently this initiatory service in her home only whetted her appetite to do more for the cause for in a letter to John Wesley she revealed a deep longing to be fully involved in this new enterprise.

The Earl of Huntingdon accompanied his wife on her spiritual excursions, but no mention is ever made by Whitefield or the Wesleys that he embraced the evangelical faith. Lady Huntingdon studiously avoided any comment on his religious sentiments, and we can assume by her silence that although he did not oppose, he

1Seymour, op. cit., I, p. 62 et seq.
2Ibid., I, p. 74. To John Wesley, June 16, 1746.
could not share fully in his wife's evangelical opinions. He died in a "fit of apoplexy" on the 13th of October, 1746, leaving his rather considerable fortune to his wife.

Lady Huntingdon suffered many bereavements in her life. In less than a decade she buried her husband, two sons (who died of smallpox), and a daughter. After her husband's death, Francis, her eldest and only surviving son, now the new Earl of Huntingdon, came more and more under the influence of his godfather, Lord Chesterfield. He made the Grand Tour with him, and Dr. Belden notes:

> It was a dangerous alliance this - between the blase, cynical, aristocratic roue, and the sheltered, well-bred, innocent youth..... From that time the mother had the bitterness of seeing her son estranged by a deepening infidelity from the faith that was life itself to her. 2

This estrangement between son and mother lasted throughout their lives. In addition to the deaths of her three children already mentioned, she suffered the loss of another son, Henry, who died in 1757, and of her daughter Selina, who died in 1763. She was constantly plagued by sickness, and she suffered from gout and dropsy (edema) for most of her life. Against this background of tragedy and suffering she spent her life in the extension of the

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1Ibid., I, p.75.

2Albert D. Belden, George Whitefield - The Awakener: A Modern Study of the Evangelical Revival, (London, 1930), p.167. Unpublished Cheshunt MS Letter 869, dated Dec. 21, 1782, is a letter from Lord Huntingdon to his mother, informing her that he will finally pay her a visit. His signature to this letter, "Your affectionate Son", does not hide the cold, reserved tone of the letter. Other Unpublished Cheshunt MS Letters, notably Nos. 872-77, reveal that Lord Quantock of Cowdray unsuccessfully attempted to act as the intermediary between mother and son. Lady Huntingdon also corresponded with Lord Bolingbrooke about this matter, vide Unpublished Cheshunt MS Letter 218, n.d.
Evangelical Revival.

Her husband's death in 1746 allowed the Countess to devote all of her time and money to the Evangelical Awakening in Great Britain. She stated her mission in these words:

For when I gave myself up to the Lord, I likewise devoted to him all my fortune; with this reserve, that I would take with a sparing hand what might be necessary for my food and raiment, and for the support of my children, should they live to be reduced. I was led to this from a consideration, that there were many benevolent persons who had no religion, who would feel for the temporal miseries of others, and help them; but few, even among professors, who had a proper concern for the awful condition of ignorant and perishing souls.¹

Her primary mission was to the nobility, but she also devoted time and money to the lower classes. She opened her drawing room on Sundays to the nobility and her kitchen on week-days to the poor. She was evidently not aware of her condescending and rather patronising tone, and she associated with the lower classes far more than any of the other nobility. If any fault is found with this attitude, it must be remembered that it was not her own so much as the eighteenth century concept of the Divine ordering of life. She was born the daughter of an Earl - she married an Earl, and this primary fact she could never forget, nor, as Wesley was soon to discover, let others forget. The poor, however, held her in high esteem and she sometimes received their children as a legacy when they died. She liberated many offenders from Newgate prison, some of whom had been sent there

¹Seymour, op. cit., I, p.315.
for trifling debts, often under ten pounds, and these men and
women could have been imprisoned all their lives for these
trivial sums. Lady Huntingdon further scandalized the nobility
by patronising the Methodist preachers. A letter from one of
her distant relatives, the Duchess of Buckingham, to the Countess
reveals society's estimate of these methodistical doctrines:

I thank your Ladyship for the information concerning
the Methodist preachers; their doctrines are most
repulsive, and strongly tinctured with impertinence and
disrespect towards their superiors, in perpetually
endeavouring to level all ranks, and do away with all
distinctions. It is monstrous to be told that you have
a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on
the earth. This is highly offensive and insulting;
and I cannot but wonder that your Ladyship should relish
any sentiments so much at variance with high rank and
good breeding. 

Another illustration of Lady Huntingdon's social treason concerns
Lady Suffolk, the aristocratic whore and sometime mistress to
George II, who was prevailed upon to attend one of the "spiritual
routs" in the Countess' drawing-room. Whitefield was preaching,
and though knowing "nothing of her presence: he drew his bow at
a venture, but every arrow seemed aimed at her (Lady Suffolk)". When Whitefield left the drawing-room, this titled beauty "flew
into violent passion, abused Lady Huntingdon to her face, and

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1Ibid., I, p.87. Letter from Dr. Doddridge to his wife, n.d.,
Unpublished Coshunt MSS Letter 1037, n.d., is an appeal from
the Debtors of Newgate Prison, requesting her interest in their
behalf.

2Ibid., I, p.27.

3Ibid., I, p.98 et seq.
denounced the sermon as a deliberate attack on herself.\textsuperscript{1} Her relatives, who were present, commanded her to be silent and demanded she apologize to Lady Huntingdon which she did with ill-concealed malice. But she never forgave, and even on her deathbed would not allow the Countess to talk with her.\textsuperscript{2} Lady Huntingdon's drawing-room then, was for half the peerage, a hall of judgment.

Lady Huntingdon struggled with the strange amalgam of inherited class distinction and her newly-acquired sense of Christian mission. Still, it takes one aback to read that they (i.e., the Hastings sisters and Lady Huntingdon) were a pattern to all, especially to those of their own rank and station. They were amiably condescending to all their inferiors, even to the poorest, and more especially to the pious poor ....\textsuperscript{3}

One, then, can understand how on occasion Wesley was irritated by this good lady when we read that as late as 1790, the year before her death, she purchased a former amusement center, converted it into Sion Chapel, and retained the pit and the galleries of the theater, as according to her biographer "The pit was designed for the poor, and the galleries for the more decent hearers of the word of life".\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., I, p. 99.
\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., I, p. 249.
\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., II, p. 323.
Notwithstanding the difference in personalities and temperaments, the outside world looked upon the Methodists as an aggregate, and did not differentiate between the parties and factions. Because of the publicity which attended Whitefield's preaching, the hymns penned by Charles, and the organization which John created, it is often assumed that these were in fact the Big Three of Methodism. This is grossly inaccurate, for Lady Huntingdon was in actuality the rallying point of the Methodist left wing. It was she, not Whitefield or Wesley, who was the center of the Evangelical Awakening. Monseigneur Knox is correct in observing that the Countess of Huntingdon, while not dominating the entire picture, did unify and interpret the evangelical scene. With the exception of Fletcher and Charles, John Wesley was out of step on one point, that of Calvinism, with almost all of the leading Evangelicals. And, to the above four leaders another name which is frequently omitted must also be added - that of Howell Harris of Wales. Thus, instead of a Trio, or even a Quartet, there is rather the Quintet of the Evangelical Awakening: namely, John Wesley, Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, Lady Huntingdon and Howell Harris, or listed respectively with their major contribution to this movement they are the promoter, poet, preacher, protectress, and peacemaker. This is not to suggest that any of these five could not at times act in other capacities, but the major

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1Knox, op. cit., p.484.
contribution of each was to be channelled through their primary talents and respective positions of birth. It is well to note that, while this quintet shared the common baptism of the Church of England and the common bond of the Evangelical faith, these strong ties of oneness were eventually sundered into a definite breach, each aligning himself with either the Arminian or the Calvinistic faction, and that as a result their common points of reference were repeatedly overlooked. The only question of importance came to be their theological views on the decrees versus free will. From the standpoint both of theology and organization, Methodism in its early stages was essentially a fluid movement, and this quintet crossed and recrossed the boundaries of the other members' playing field. As the movement gathered converts and achieved more stability, however, the lines began to form and "No Trespassing" signs were erected.

By 1746 Lady Huntingdon became involved with Whitefield's cause, and although no exact date is given we know that shortly after August 1748 she appointed him as one of her chaplains. At this time she began holding "spiritual routs", as Whitefield was wont to call them, and she gathered the nobility into her drawing-rooms to hear her favorite chaplain. With the notable exceptions of the two Johns - Berridge and Wesley, Whitefield, along with everyone else, was always servile toward Lady Huntingdon. As an example in point he writes that "Tears trickle from my eyes, whilst I am thinking of your Ladyship's condescending to patronize such
a dead dog as I am. Whitefield chose her as the leader for his converts, and she accepted this responsibility with alacrity.

First she established chapels in the leading pleasure resorts of the nobility: Bath, Brighton, Cheltenham and Tunbridge Wells, but as her influence grew so did her chapel extension scheme. Certainly one of her most notable acts was in 1768 when she established at Trevecca in Wales a training college for ministers, whether Anglicans or Dissenters, of the evangelical persuasion. She was prompted to do this by the discreditable St. Edmund Hall episode, when six Anglican students were expelled for an alleged sympathy to Methodism. For twenty-three years she was the sole support of Trevecca, and furnished three years of education without cost to no fewer than one hundred and sixty ministers. She also provided board lodging and subject to her approval a new suit of clothes once a year. In a letter dated 1st December, 1774, London, she advised George Clayton, one of her ministers, as follows:

Could your clothes do tolerably, till this very bad weather is a little over, it would be well. I know you are so clean and careful. I can never wish you to have less; but new clothes to ride in must so soon be spoiled at this season, that I will leave it to you to judge.

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1 The Works of the Reverend George Whitefield, M.A., Containing a Select Collection of Letters, (London, 1772), III, p.120.


3 Thomas W. Aveling, Memorials of the Clayton Family with Unpublished Correspondence of the Countess of Huntingdon, (London, 1867), p.18. She received many requests for financial aid - more than Wesley ever received - because she was known to possess a fortune. Vide Unpublished Cheshunt Letter 1032, n.d.
She was a shrewd and capable business woman, and seldom was she ever cheated. She was generous to a fault and contributed liberally to the Dissenting Academies as well as to Whitefield and Wesley's Kingswood School.  

She was keenly interested in foreign missions and heartily endorsed Whitefield's work in North America. After his death, she sent out a circular to all of her students inviting them to a missionary conference in Wales. The circular was so written that it aroused considerable interest, for among other items it claimed that "..... As Lady Huntingdon supposes this the most important event of her whole life, so all that bear her any regard, in connexion with her, she must entreat to be present, and is bound to believe great blessings from the Lord Jesus Christ will descend upon all who are made willing to help her with their presence and their prayers". After this conference, passage was secured for her missionary volunteers, but their ship was delayed by contrary winds. These missionaries went ashore to preach in the surrounding countryside, when suddenly "A fair and brisk gale springing up in the night, the ship sailed, and most of them were left behind". This was an anticlimactic end

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1 Seymour, op. cit., I, p.143 et seq.; II, p.366.  
2 Ibid., II, p.258. "Circular Notice from the Countess of Huntingdon to All the Clergy and Students, and to All the Congregations, Managers, and Trustees of Chapels in Connexion with Her", n.d.  
3 Ibid., II, p.261.
inauspicious beginning for the conversion of "the heathen nations"\(^1\) (i.e., North America), and these missionaries embarked without fanfare on a later ship.

Lady Huntingdon was also troubled over the spiritual condition of Brussels. A Lord Douglass who came to England in the 1770's purporting to be a papist-turned-protestant, enlisted her support, especially financial, to convert Brussels. She was in fact invited to Brussels in the summer of 1787 and she "had a new equipage prepared for the expedition\(^2\); however, on her way from Wales to London, where she was to complete her journey to Brussels by ship, she had to stop at the different town which had chapels belonging to her Connexion "in order to regulate matters connected with them, by which means she was unavoidably detained longer than the day appointed for their embarkation"\(^3\). A few days after her ship sailed without her, letters arrived from the Continent with the information that Lord Douglass was luring her over to Brussels in order to murder her. Apparently he was convinced that this good lady was far too influential and powerful a heretic to be allowed to live. Lady Huntingdon did establish a ministry in Brussels for in the following year she wrote that "..... I have

\(^1\)Ibid., II, p.257. Circular Notice etc.
\(^2\)Ibid., II, p.479. Seymour gives the date as 1786 but the Cheshunt MSS Letters give the date as 1787.
\(^3\)Ibid.
a large chapel taken for me at Brussels; and thus, for the occasional use of all the ministers in my Connexion in England".\(^1\)

Whitefield had willed to Lady Huntingdon his entire orphanage at Bethesda, including his negro slaves. Her work with this institution was one of tragedy; and the American colonies finally relieved her of this burden by appropriating her property during the American Revolution. Before the confiscation of this property, however, she was swindled out of thousands of pounds through the chicanery and corruption of her manager at Bethesda, by whose fraudulent actions her good name was sullied.\(^2\) This was a most disillusioning experience for her.

In any assessment of her life and work, some account must be taken of her nature and temperament which brought her into inevitable conflict with John Wesley. She was a generous woman, and Grimshaw, in a letter to Lady Huntingdon rightly asserts that "you would give, even to the gown on your back, if the case required it".\(^3\) Indeed she would have done just that, but as she was giving you the gown off her back she would be sewing on it an inscription stating that this gown was a gift from Lady

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\(^1\)Ibid., II, p.480. To Friends at Norwich. T. Wills of Bath, in a letter dated April 30, 1787, warned Lady Huntingdon of a "Popish plot" on her life and further stated that she would be murdered by either gunpowder or poison in Brussels. Unpublished Cheshunt MSS Letter 640, April 30, 1787.

\(^2\)In the Cheshunt Letters, there is a MSS document which is in the form of a bank statement for the years 1739-73. It states "General account of moneys expended for the Orphan House since its first Institution in the year 1739 and of moneys received for the same £17,011:5:14. Unpublished Cheshunt Letter 637, n.d.

\(^3\)Ibid., I, p.284.
Huntingdon! But what other Countess of the eighteenth century would venture, when funds were exhausted, to sell her jewels to build a chapel? Lady Huntingdon went to this extent and in 1761 she opened her Brighton Chapel which had been built with money thus obtained. She was an impetuous and imperious strong-willed woman who enjoyed to the fullest the power she held as the Directress of more than sixty ministers. At Swansea, before she established her chapel, she directed one of her Trevecca students to preach - she even gave him instructions on the exact spot where he should stand while preaching, and undoubtedly had some comment on the style and content of his sermon.¹ She enjoyed manipulating the lives of her preachers and after she chose her missionaries for North America we are told that:

> to preserve on their minds a lively sense of the nature and importance of the missionary work, Lady Huntingdon planned several judicious regulations during the voyage. She recommended that there should be public service every day, in which all the students should engage by rotation; and that they should meet, at certain parts of every day, for the purpose of social prayer, and the strengthening each other's hands by mutually relating their Christian experiences, and reading such works as might be of important benefit to them in their arduous undertaking.²

Lady Huntingdon's recommendations were more in the form of an order, and whenever she was financing any enterprise, she was going to be certain that nothing was left to change or chance.

¹Ibid., II, p. 115.
²Ibid., II, p. 259.
On another occasion, two young students expelled from St. Edmund's Hall visited Lady Huntingdon at Tunbridge Wells seeking admission into her college and they too felt her iron hand. The following scene is recorded:

It occurred to Lady Huntingdon, that as she had two ministers in her house, one of them should preach. Notice was accordingly sent round that on such an evening there would be preaching before the door. At the appointed time, a great many people had collected together, which the young men seeing, inquired what it meant? Her Ladyship said, "As I have two preachers in my house, one of you must preach to the people". In reply, they said they had never preached publicly, and wished to be excused. Mr. Shipman was a ready speaker, but Mr. Matthews was remarkably diffident. Lady Huntingdon, therefore, judged it best for Mr. Shipman to make the first attempt. While he hesitated, she put a Bible into his hand, insisting upon his appearing before the people, and either tell them he was afraid to trust to God, or to do the best he could. On the servants opening the door, her Ladyship thrust him out with her blessing, saying, "The Lord be with you - do the best you can".

Such were the perils of visiting this formidable lady.

One writer gives us the following description of the cozy domestic scene at Trevecca with Mother Superior in full charge:

her ladyship was a stern disciplinarian, in the government of her students - as they all found - in the domestic as well as the scholastic arrangements of the college. They rose at five o'clock, and were expected to appear in the hall for divine worship punctually at six; at which hour the prayer-ball rang, and she herself was always present. She cast a searching glance around her, to satisfy herself that none appeared in negligent attire, or betrayed an inattention to the requirements of cleanliness and neatness, on which she was wont to lay great stress.


2Aveling, op. cit., p.17.
There was none of this slipshod "let your conscience be your guide" philosophy at Trevecca. She was the guide there and no one was ever allowed to forget it.

Another chink in Lady Huntingdon's armor, which often made personal relationships trying, was her inability to forgive freely or easily, especially if she thought she had been ridiculed. When he was disowned by his father and mother, Sir Rowland and Lady Hill, who strongly disapproved of his embracing the evangelical tenets, The Rev. Rowland Hill had found shelter under the wing of Lady Huntingdon, who states that "he was as my own son received into my house, (and) preached in my pulpits ...." 1 Although an unpleasant difference arose between Sir Rowland and this Lady about the administration of the Welsh Association, this was not the major reason for her disaffection. She declares:

All this, though not fair or upright, I should have so far despised, as for peace sake to have passed over; but the worm that still lies at the bottom of the gourd, is his taking us all up into the pulpit, as his merry andrews, and, through his evil jokes, leaving a bitter sting behind. 2

This "worn, lying at the bottom of the gourd" attempted to win back her good graces, but, as her biographer understates so beautifully, "the prejudice and suspicions of her Ladyship were not so easily done away with". 3 One of her friends wrote in

1 Seymour, op. cit., II, p. 317.
2 Idem.
3 Ibid., II, p. 317.
1781 requesting that Rowland Hill, now at the zenith of his popularity as a preacher in the Whitefield tradition, be allowed to preach in her Spa Fields chapel. This correspondent, in reporting to Lady Huntingdon of Rowland Hill, writes: "..... He says he will preach in the great Spafields chapel, if your Ladyship will give him leave. The committee (of the chapel) have been told of it, and they are well pleased, if you will but approve him. I hope the Lord will incline your heart to make peace."\(^1\) The Countess, now seventy-four years old, was not to be pressured by this letter for she wrote back that "..... Without reserve to you, my kind friend, and with every best wish to dear Mr. Venn, Mr. Hill CANNOT preach for me. This must not be pressed ..... Should any future day prove it expedient, it may be considered, but be assured it cannot be NOW".\(^2\)

Still, when one has listed all of her human traits, there remains this authentic note: that she was the most eminent lady of eighteenth century England. For who else would spend a fortune of one hundred thousand pounds and a life-time in such unwavering dedication to so noble a cause!

\(^1\)Ibid.

\(^2\)Ibid., II, p.318. The Cheshunt Letters reveal that there were at least two quarrels and one reconciliation between Rowland Hill and Lady Huntingdon. Vide Unpublished Cheshunt MSS Letters No. 103 from J. Smith to her, dated June 8, 1768; No. 267 dated April 30, 1774, and No. 298 dated July 12, 1774.
B. UNSYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Attempting to formulate a theology or systematized faith for Lady Huntingdon is a well-nigh impossible undertaking. The word "Calvinist" is usually thought applicable to her but this label is highly inadequate, for if we grant that she was a Calvinist, we must also acknowledge that it was a perverted Calvinism to which she subscribed.

The Countess began her "theology" with her conversion experience, worked backward through the Thirty-Nine Articles, and finally back to the Bible itself. She held up her own dramatic spiritual renaissance as the norm for all who would be Christians. She often used phrases which she gathered from sermons she had heard—a highly dangerous practice, especially when we remember that Whitefield was her favorite preacher. Once Whitefield wrote her that "... Goodness and mercy will follow your ladyship all the days of your life, and you shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever!".¹ It is certainly not entirely clear whether Whitefield was referring to Lord Huntingdon or the Deity. Lady Huntingdon's spiritual concepts were greatly colored by those of Whitefield, and she recorded his extravagant, inapt, and often inaccurate Biblical phrases in her letters, thus accounting for some of the strange metaphors she used. An example of this practice is seen in her florid description of a

¹Ibid., I, p. 122. George Whitefield to the Countess of Huntingdon, n.d.
woman's rebirth which she witnessed:

she was seized with a cold shivering fit, and was in the agonies of death, and had desired to take leave of her children. This was her last plunge into the deep. Her soul and body were as if in hell. Four men were not sufficient to hold her in bed, so great was Satan's power over her. After these hours of sufferings, the heavenly child was born. The poor people were surprised to find her on a sudden lie so still: and she continued twelve hours, as it were, feeding on the fatted calf. She told them, 'I have not slept, but have been all night partaking of the joys of heaven'.

In a letter to Lady Fanny Shirley, Selina once pleaded: "May we be continually on the stretch for God - now is the time". She was "a debtor both to the Greeks and the Barbarians" and Wesley had no difficulty in ascertaining to which group he belonged.

She often characterized herself as a poor, helpless, vile worm, which reveals something of her theological temperament. This she continued to do until the end of her life. In a letter to Charles Wesley, she says of herself, "For a weker (sic) or more unworthy worm does not breathe ....."; and again, in another letter to him she terms herself "..... the poorest worm on earth". Some have noted, however, that never did a worm

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1 Ibid., I, p.55 et seq. (my italics) Countess of Huntingdon to John Wesley, n.d. (1743?).
3 Ibid., I, p.88.
turn so often or so furiously. She debased herself in her correspondence with others, but never could she brook criticism from anyone else. In 1770 she could say in language far removed from that of Wesley's self-assured saints:

I am keenly penetrated with a sense of my own utter helplessness, nothingness, and depravity. Oh! the desperate deceitfulness of the human heart! What depths of depravity are within! I am a very Judas, ready to betray my Lord and Master, and did not mighty grace prevent, would have been a traitor long since.1

Ironically, this saintly woman lacked the inner assurance which Wesley deemed so vital to Christianity, and, like so many eighteenth century Calvinists, she was never quite certain of her election. While Wesley's religious life was not completely devoid of undulations, it was as a level plateau when compared with the spiritual peaks and valleys of Lady Huntingdon's. Undoubtedly her many illnesses, especially that of dropsy, had some effect upon her religious moods. Steadily she became more opposed to Wesley's concept of perfection, and the 1760 decade brought from her sporadic fulminations against this doctrine. 2

Lady Huntingdon conceived of herself as one of the "brands plucked from the burning", for though this was originally Wesley's phrase to describe a literal event and a spiritual experience, he

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2 Ibid., I, pp.261, 322, 330.
lost the exclusive monopoly to other Methodists and the Countess herself used it to describe the experience of conversion.\(^1\) In 1750, Whitefield wrote:

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\text{I trust, honoured Madam, you have been brought to believe on the Lord Jesus and have experienced the beginning of a real salvation in your heart. What a mercy is this! To be plucked as a brand out of the burning - to be one of those few mighty and noble that are called effectually by the grace of God; what consolation must this administer to your Ladyship under all afflictions.}\(^2\)
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If all the brands plucked from the burning in the eighteenth century had been placed together, what a commodious, though charred, tabernacle could have been erected!

Because of her spiritual scepticism, however unconscious it may have been, Lady Huntingdon despite a continual struggle to free herself from it, was plagued all of her life by the albatross of legalism. No doubt this accounts in part for her zealous pursuit of what she termed the "essentials" of the faith. Primarily the Christian life was centered, as previously indicated, around a conversion which everyone could - indeed must - experience. Her biographer, in attempting a summation of her religious ideas, states:

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\text{There was a publicity in her religion which no other, Dissenter, Puritan, Churchman, or Reformer, had ever displayed, at least since the Reformation. Wherever she was, and in whatever company, her conversation was}
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\(^1\)Ibid., I, p.192. Letter to Lady Fanny Shirley, n.d.

\(^2\)Ibid., I, p.133. Letter to Countess of Huntingdon (1751?).
on religion, in which there was this peculiarity, that she spoke of the sins and errors of her former life, her conversion to God, the alteration in her heart and conduct; and she plainly said to all, it was absolutely necessary that the same change should take place in them, if they would have any hope in death.\footnote{Ibid., I, p.443.}

In these words, even if we disregard his extravagant claims for her, he nevertheless reveals the core of her faith.

She was continually and fervently engaged in this working out of her own salvation, even with fear and trembling. Her benevolent acts, though pregnant with abundant by-products for the evangelical movement, were also the source of much comfort and assurance for the Countess herself. This she admits in one of her letters: "..... I shall return to Bath in my way to my much-loved college, where I have found so much of that fuel that is kindled only by the true fire from off the altar."\footnote{Ibid., II, p.58. Letter to unknown correspondent, October, 1773.}

Nevertheless, a missionary consciousness prompted her to send her preachers everywhere, and from the ministers of the invaded parishes she often received rebuffs, which, incidentally, failed to hinder her or her work. One such letter of protest was from a "Perpetual Curate" who directed that the following should be sent to old Mother Huntingdon:

Madam, — I am surprised at your intruding yourself upon me and my parishioners. A woman of your rank and education I should have thought would have known better
than to be guilty of any such rudeness. Pray who gave you leave to send your preaching-fellows into my parish? I desire you will command them to withdraw from Deal forthwith, or I shall take steps to compel them to make a hasty retreat. They have done plenty of mischief, I understand, at Dover, and other places by such preachments, and the introduction of new doctrines, disturbing people's minds, and causing divisions and dissensions. I had enough of this sort of business after your favourite Whitefield preached here many years ago, and I will not suffer a repetition of the same, though these impudent Wesleys and their followers have often annoyed me, hoping to establish themselves here also. I desire, Madam, that you will immediately withdraw your preachers from this place, and give me no more cause of complaint. Yours, etc., N. Carter, Perpetual Curate of St. George's Chapel, Deal.¹

Dr. Carter saw fit to print several sermons, rebutting the doctrines of the Methodists. Years later, an interesting sequel occurred when Lady Huntingdon reported to the Bishop of Gloucester on the extraordinary results attending Whitlefield and Wesley's preaching. Elizabeth Carter, the daughter of Dr. Carter, was present and challenged Lady Huntingdon's account, explaining why her father had written a book of sermons directed against the Methodists. Lady Huntingdon, her eyes crackling, rendered for this unenlightened curate's daughter, the following interpretation of the Gospel in which she also unwittingly revealed something of her Christology and eschatology:

Madam, every thing depends on the right interpretation of the term gospel. In my humble opinion it signifies good news—glad tidings of great joy—a gracious declaration of mercy to the guilty and the ruined—salvation from the wrath to come—salvation from the

guilt and power of sin, through the meritorious righteousness and blood-shedding of the Lord of life and glory. But of this interpretation I can find no trace in the sermons of Dr. Carter; and I am well aware that, in the present day, many who call themselves Christians substitute a system of heathen ethics, varnished over with the name of Christian morality, for the vicarious sacrifice offered on the cross as the sure foundation of a sinner's hope. This, and only this, will avail you or me, my dear Madam, in the great and terrible day of the Lord, when summoned to appear at his tribunal.¹

One wonders if she paused for breath while delivering herself of her "humble opinion". Unfortunately her biographer mistook this torrent of words for a systematic theology and he comments "This was sufficient to silence Mrs. (sic) Carter, who, though a lady of profound learning and genius, was no theologian, and never after wished to encounter Lady Huntington".²

This same intensity of purpose and zeal for activistic Christianity made the Countess exacting, especially where the character of others was concerned. Bordering on being a doctrinaire, she must have been a difficult woman with whom to live, for she enjoyed regulating and ordering the lives of others in an effort to instill her own dogmas. This her cousin, Earl Ferrera, came to know only too well. The notable gentleman while under the influence of alcohol had cold-bloodedly murdered his land-steward, Johnson. His crime was the sensation of the century and he was sentenced to be hanged. "The very night he

¹Ibid., II, p.134 (her italics).
²Idem.
received sentence he played at picquet, and would have continued to play every evening, had not permission been refused, at the particular request of Lady Huntingdon and other members of his family.\textsuperscript{1} To convert Lord Ferrers now became her main object and she set about her task with unflagging persistence. Lord Ferrers "grew tired of her Ladyship's unwearied exertions .... and complained that she was enough to provoke anybody".\textsuperscript{2} Perhaps his greatest irritation with her occurred when he requested that his mistress, by whom he had several children, be allowed to visit him. The officials of the prison asked Lady Huntingdon whether Lord Ferrers should be permitted this freedom and she effectively thwarted the rendezvous by exclaiming "Oh! by no means; it would be letting him die in adultery".\textsuperscript{3} His hanging was a public spectacle and the streets were lined with crowds pressing forward to catch a glimpse of this noble murderer. Lord Ferrers accounted for the throng of curious spectators, explaining "But they never saw a lord hanged, and perhaps will never see another".\textsuperscript{4} He wore his silver-embroidered wedding suit for his execution and he rode in his own landau and six. Lady Huntingdon was convinced that his bravado would crack

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., I, p.404.  
\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., I, p.405.  
\textsuperscript{3}Idem.  
\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., I, p.407.
and he would finally repent, but in this she was disappointed. The affair brought much ridicule and embarrassment to his family, and particularly to Lady Huntingdon. Horace Walpole reported that Lord Ferrers "shamed heroes. With all his madness, he was not mad enough to be struck with Lady Huntingdon's sermons".  

Her demands for reformation extended into the ranks of the Established clergy, and her adamantly opposition to the system of pluralities was undoubtedly delivered to every bishop she knew or met. Of clerical pluralists she states that "The awful responsibility of such men makes me tremble. How the blood of lost, neglected souls will cry against them in that great day when the Chief Shepherd shall summon them to His tribunal."  

But, if she were severe on the Established clergy, she could be equally unrelenting toward her own preachers. In a letter to the saintly Venn she could admonish:

..... no longer let false doctrine disgrace your pulpit. Preach Christ crucified as the only foundation of the sinner's hope. Preach him as the Author and Finisher, as well as the sole object of faith - that faith which is the gift of God. Exhort Christless, impenitent sinners to fly to this city of refuge.

Underlying these theological characteristics was the Countess' doctrine of God. Perhaps much of her emphasis upon the extreme

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2 Seymour, op. cit., I, p.39.
demands resulting from a soul-shaking conversion may be attributed to the fact that the God she knew was remote and austere. She imbibed just enough of Calvinism to give her the idea that God was exalted to the point of being tyrannical, and she always was somewhat terrified by Him. He was a stern judge, swift to chide and slow to bless. She was protected from God by Jesus. She could be justly charged with "Jesusology", for although always a trifle afraid of God the Father, she could speak of Jesus with a warmth and intimacy which at times bordered on the sacriligious. Sometimes she even coalesced the first two persons of the Godhead into one, as in the following passage: "My heart seems strongly set upon having this temple of folly dedicated to Jehovah Jesus, the great Head of his church and people".  

Because Jesus was "the Head of his church", Lady Huntingdon was most intent upon making it more worthy of His name. Her concept of the Christian koinonia revealed perception and a deep concern for the condition of the churches of the day.

... coldness and indifference have much to do with the desertion so often and so justly complained of. Were the Gospel of our adorable Saviour preached in purity and with zeal, the places would be filled with hearers, and God would bless his own word to the conversion of souls. Witness the effects produced by those whom he hath sent forth of late to proclaim his salvation. What numbers hath been converted to God, and what multitudes attend to hear the word wherever it is proclaimed in the light and love of it. 

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1Ibid., II, p. 304. Letter to unknown correspondent, n.d. (c. late 1770's).

2Ibid., I, p. 144. Letter to Dr. Doddridge (?), n.d. (c. 1753).
Despite her attack upon the Church and her effort to purge it, she was not fully successful, and in 1781 was forced to secede from the Established Church. She had fifteen Articles of Faith drawn up, based upon the Thirty-Nine Articles, but with special reference to the peculiar situation of her sixty-seven chapels.

Dr. Haweis, who was appointed a trustee of these chapels upon the death of Lady Huntingdon, described the faith of her Connexion thus: "The doctrines we subscribe are those of the Church of England in the literal and grammatical sense."\(^1\)

This feminine fountainhead of the eighteenth century revival also possessed her blind spots, among which was an unenlightened conscience on many social evils of the day. She was "agin sin" - but she, for example, condoned Whitefield's ownership of Negro slaves, and furthermore upon Whitefield's death accepted the slaves as her own. There is a letter extant with the following direction to her attorneys: "..... I must, therefore, request that a woman-slave be purchased with it (£26 : 10 : 5), and that she may be called SELINA, after me, ....."\(^2\) In another letter she refers to an account she had received of the driving "to Boston (of) forty-one of my best slaves"\(^3\) to be sold in the slave market there.

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\(^2\)Seymour, op. cit., II, p.266. Letter to J. Tatnall, J. Glenn and N. Hall, Attorneys for the Orphan House Trust (c. late 1770-early 1771).
A second blind spot meriting attention is evidenced in her attitude toward the education of ministers. She established a false dichotomy between human and divine learning, and the stress she placed upon the active and practical phase of the ministry frequently detracted from the importance of the academic aspect. This is always a pitfall of constant evangelism, and Trevecca did not entirely escape this danger. While Whitefield could decry human learning and refuse to study, she sometimes forgot that not every one of her preachers had the golden tongue of her chief chaplain. Academic studies were not particularly stressed at Trevecca. An example in point of Lady Huntingdon's sentiments is seen in the case of a Mr. Crole, who, upon arriving at Trevecca, began studying Greek and Hebrew and reviewing his knowledge of Latin. Seymour states that:

The excellent patroness of that institution knew how to appreciate his talents, but did not fully enter into his ideas respecting the necessity of improving them by an unrelenting application to academical studies; and she, therefore, urged him immediately to commence his ministerial course.  

We recognize then that the Countess did possess basic theological assumptions, as do all people, and that they penetrated her every word and action. Even the Lady herself, however, would find it well-nigh impossible to discern a clearly defined, systematic theology within the confines of her devout life. She had firm convictions and noble aspirations and was forever seeking creedal certitude. Nevertheless, Lady Huntingdon's doctrinal

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1Ibid., II, p. 349.
line apparently became as vague in her mind as the meridian of Greenwich. Perhaps she herself can best summarize for us her basic precepts in the following equivocal words:

I do not admire so much zeal in things of inferior consequence; the Gospel of our adorable Lord, and the salvation of the perishing multitude, claim all my best wishes and meanings .... So much contention for order and church discipline, subscription to Articles, etc. may tend to extinguish the light, and quench the flame of Gospel truth and holiness. To contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints is our duty, but to contend for non-essentials, the hay, the wood, and stubble, when darkness reigns around us, and the most awful ignorance prevails, is a device of the great enemy, and ought to be avoided. My one object on earth is to serve my dear Lord and Master, and endeavour by every means to extend his kingdom among men. I wish all success, though they gather not with me. 1

C. THE RADIUS OF THE UMBRELLA

Napoleon once said, "No one has any right to be counted great until he has been dead a hundred years". Thus, at least by this criterion, the Countess of Huntingdon can be considered.

There are many contemporary estimates of this influential dowager. For example, Mr. Vulliamy, in his otherwise excellent book, minimizes the role of Lady Huntingdon in the Revival of her day. He asserts that "She was not really the Queen of the Methodists. She was only a patron". 2 Dr. Elliott-Binns, on the other hand, states that her influence, which has been largely

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1Ibid., II, p. 420.

2Vulliamy, op. cit., p. 173.
ignored "had no equal in her day and generation".¹ Monseigneur Knox in his illuminating book devotes a chapter on the study of enthusiasm to Lady Huntingdon and assigns to her the key role in the Evangelical Revival.² Most writers, however, have been inclined to ignore her influence, possibly because she was so unfortunate in her biographers, but more probably because Whitefield and the Wesleys tended to overshadow their contemporaries. The Rev. Alfred H. New attempted to trace the influence of the Countess in his book The Coronet and the Cross, published in 1858, but the central person in this book is Whitefield, not Lady Huntingdon. In 1853, Mrs. Helen C. Knight had written for the American Tract Society a book entitled Lady Huntington (sic) and Her Friends but to the information we have about the Countess it adds nothing new except another way of spelling her last name. The Rev. F. F. Bretherton has given us a brief but discerning account of her life and influence, which was given as the Wesley Historical Society Lecture No. 6 at the Sheffield Conference in July of 1940.

Of all these, however, the estimates given by Knox and Elliott-Binns³ of the specific role and contribution of this Lady

¹Elliott-Binns, op. cit., p.142.
²Knox, op. cit., p.483 et seqq.
³Dr. Elliott-Binns, who is not alone in quoting erroneous dates in the chronology of Lady Huntingdon's life, gives her wedding date (1728) as her birth date, and thus errs in giving the dates of her marriage and her husband's death. This detracts from his otherwise excellent chapter on Lady Huntingdon.
are the most perceptive, although neither addressed himself to a comprehensive study. It is the present writer's thesis that the Countess of Huntingdon holds the key to the understanding and appreciation of the Evangelical Revival. By genius of her position she bridged the chasm between court and commoner and served as "the Umbrella" for all three branches of Methodism, sheltering them from the downpour of religious, social and political ridicule and persecution.

It is always difficult to reach the upper classes in any revival of religion. In the eighteenth century this task was accentuated because of the limited social position of the average clergyman. Without the Countess' influence there would have been no opportunity of Whitefield's ministry extending beyond the confined quarters of the ordinary man and woman. Her social position was indeed eminent in the England of her day, for she could boast that she was of royal blood. Her husband, Lord Huntingdon, carried the sword of State at the Coronation of George II, while her daughter, Selina, was selected as one of six Earl's daughters to carry Queen Charlotte's train at the Queen's coronation in 1761. Her eldest and only surviving son, the new Lord Huntingdon and a leading figure in the Court circle, was at the Palace on August 12, 1762, and delivered to the King the news of the new princess' birth. Her eldest daughter,

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1Seymour, op. cit., I, p.9 and p.332.

Elizabeth, afterward the Countess of Moirc, was appointed in 1749 Lady of the Bedchamber to the Princesses Caroline and Amelia. She held this position only a few months and Seymour lends credibility to Horace Walpole's report by quoting that "The Queen of the Methodists got her daughter named for Lady of the Bedchamber to the Princesses; but it is all off again, as she will not let her play cards on Sundays".¹

Her social position and influence was extremely useful to the Methodists, whenever she did battle with local or national magistrates. Whenever she desired it, Lady Huntingdon had access to the King, a privilege certainly denied to the Wesleys, Whitefield and Harris. When Howell Harris complained to her that an influential Welsh magistrate was fining the Methodists for assembling to hear their own preachers, she immediately applied for redress to the Government in London and an order went out that these fines should be repaid forthwith.² She used her power to free from impressment John Nelson, one of Wesley's favorite preachers.³ She went through nobility's chain-of-command, arriving finally in the presence of the Duke of Marlborough,

²Ibid., I, p. 110.
³Ibid., I, p. 256 et seqq. Vide Thomas Jackson, The Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley, M.A., 2 Vols. (London, 1841), I, p. 335. Jackson states that Nelson's release was secured through the influence of Lady Huntingdon, but that the Methodists had to buy a soldier to take his place.
who held the rank of a brigadier-general. Nelson was freed by
the express order of this brigadier-general. On another
occasion, she secured the release of the Rev. William Thompson,
who was impressed into the Navy at the request of a local
Anglican clergyman. Lady Huntingdon was so incensed at this
injustice that she would have had this clergyman himself
imprisoned, had not Thompson pleaded for him. Thompson was
released, and after Wesley's death, was selected as the first
president of the Methodist Conference. In 1746 Lady Huntingdon
again acted as the "Umbrella of the Revival" when she addressed
a letter to Lord Cateret complaining of the lack of justice and
protection given to the Methodists by local magistrates. Lord
Cateret placed this complaint before King George II, and received
an order to inform all magistrates that every person, regardless
of his religious observances, was to be protected by the law of
the land. This order has been overlooked in many accounts of
Methodism's struggle to establish its place. On another
occasion the King, presumably George III, was out riding in his
carriage when he noticed a noisy rabble congregated in front of
a meeting house. He stopped the carriage and asked what the
reason was for this disturbance. Someone assured the King
that it was nothing to be alarmed at, since the townspeople were

1Ibid., II, p.184 et seq.
2Ibid., I, p.67 et seq.
only annoying Methodists, The King replied in a loud voice, "The Methodists are a quiet, good kind of people, and will disturb nobody; and if I can learn that any persons in my employment disturb them, they shall be immediately dismissed."¹

If the Methodists owed much to Lady Huntingdon's social prominence and influence at court, they also were indebted to her for her good sense. Charles Wesley was entangled in Moravian snares, and in a letter to John Wesley on the 24th of October, 1741, she revealed that she considered herself as the one who rescued Charles. She stated (her incomplete sentence): "No less than his (Charles) declaring open war with them (the Moravians). He seemed under some difficulty about it at first, till he had free liberty given him to use my name, as the instrument in God's hand that had delivered him from them."² One wonders whether Charles would have been the poet laureate of Methodism had not Selina helped to save him from stillness. She was less successful however in rescuing Cennick from Moravianism.³

One of her most significant achievements was her early defence of lay preaching to Wesley and her insistence that its potential be acknowledged. Myles 1740 list of the "First Race

¹Ibid., II, p.284.
²Ibid., I, p.41. To John Wesley, October 24, 1741.
³Ibid., I, p.200.
of Methodist Preachers" contains the name of one David Taylor, an upper servant of Lord Huntingdon. Undoubtedly Lady Huntingdon must have loaned David Taylor to Wesley, which reveals that Selina must have been an early advocate of lay preaching. John Cennick and Thomas Humphreys have prior claim to being the first lay preachers, in Wesley's system of appointing "sons of the Gospel" who were always under his direct supervision. Before 1740 came to a close, Wesley had appointed twenty other assistants and by 1744 there were forty such preachers ranging the kingdom.

Lady Huntingdon with telling effect wielded her influence with and against the bishops and archbishops of the day. Through her remonstrance, George Whitefield was finally ordained by Bishop Benson. The Bishops of the day did not favor ordaining men tainted by the odor of Methodism and Lady Huntingdon wrote many letters to secure ordination for some of her preacher prodigies. Among those who were indebted to her in this connection were Thomas Williams, Martin Madam and Moses Brown.

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1Vulliamy, op. cit., p.107.


3Seymour, op. cit., I, p.196.

4Ibid., II, p.149; I, p.166 et seqq. Among the Unpublished Cheshunt MSS Letters, there is one written in 1770 by Thomas Davenport of Derby to Lady Huntingdon requesting her help in obtaining "regular ordination" for his son. Cheshunt MSS Letter 688. Also there is a letter from Adam Stumphouse requesting her Ladyship "to give me a character for ordination". Cheshunt MSS Letter 666.
She aided many of the awakened clergymen to obtain prominent livings in the Established Church, among them William Romaine.\(^1\)

She was on cordial terms with Dr. Potter, the Archbishop of Canterbury. When he died on the 10th of October, 1747, he was still clutching a letter he had just finished writing to Lady Huntingdon. She did much to relieve Dr. Potter of some of his misapprehensions about the Methodists,\(^2\) and this accounts in part for the lack of systematic opposition met by Methodism from the Anglican clergy.

As previously noted, the middle and lower classes are always more susceptible to any religious revival. Never were the obstacles more formidable against reaching the upper social strata than in the eighteenth century. The nobility could own their chaplains and, as with their mess-johns, could treat them as servants. Most of the clergymen were not of the nobility and thus were looked on as inferiors. The Countess of Huntingdon perceived this lack of genuine Christianity on the part of the nobility, and her greatest sphere of influence, largely overlooked today, was that of incarnating the doctrines of Methodism and reducing the hostility of the upper classes.

\(^{1}\)Ibid., I, p. 361. Vide MSS Letter 591, National Library of Wales, from Lady Huntingdon to the Bishop of Bristol, unsuccessfully recommending Mr. Brown for the living of Clevedon. The Bishop replied on the back page of her original letter, rejecting Brown because of "Brown's difference of sentiments". December 6, 1764.

\(^{2}\)Ibid., I, p. 447.
It was a task which only an insider could accomplish, and she suffered ridicule and at times social ostracism. Indeed, as Dr. Elliott-Binns points out

She certainly had made great sacrifices in worldly things for the sake of her faith; more, it may be said, than any other who was associated with the early days of the revival, for she exposed herself to the contempt and ridicule of her equals, and that is sometimes harder to bear than actual persecution.¹

Furthermore, by means of letters Lady Huntingdon attempted to convert many of her acquaintances. She was not so successful with this medium as she was when she employed Whitefield to preach in her drawing-rooms. She was on intimate terms with Lords Bolingbroke and Chesterfield, but they gave her little reason to hope for their conversion. However, under the preaching of Whitefield in her drawing-room, Lord Chesterfield's wife and his two sisters were converted as were many other ladies of the day including Ladies Anne Frankland, Banff, Dartmouth, Fanny Shirley, Lisburne and Hopetoun. Perhaps the most notable and influential drawing-room convert was Lord Dartmouth. By means of her chapels in the resort towns, Lady Huntingdon also influenced the Scottish nobility and Lady Glenorchy acknowledged her indebtedness to her in most fulsome terms.²

¹Elliott-Binns, op. cit., p.142.
²Seymour, op. cit., I, p.471 et seq.
In December, 1767, upon the occasion of the death of the Earl of Buchan, who resided at Bath, a unique way of evangelizing was hit upon by Lady Huntingdon and Whitefield. On the Sunday following the Earl's death, Whitefield reports that he preached in Lady Huntingdon's chapel at Bath which "was more than crowded; near three hundred tickets signed by the present Earl, were given out to the nobility and gentry to be admitted". The Earl's body was kept at the chapel for a week for "public service and preaching twice a day". Whitefield's preaching created extraordinary interest and excitement, and in a letter he described the scene thus: "..... All surviving relations still feel the influence: they sit round the corpse, attended by their domestics and supporters, twice a day. Two sermons every day - life and power attend the word: .....". Whitefield finally accompanied the Earl's body to Bristol where he preached three times over it before it was shipped to Scotland. Seymour states that in Bristol "The word was attended with great power, and thousands went away, being unable to get in". We are not told that the good Earl of Buchan ever was buried. Requiescat in pace.

In 1759 the prospects of an aristocratic conversion seemed

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1Ibid., II, p.16.
2Ibid., II, p.17.
3Idem.
promising. Prince Edward, afterward Duke of York, formed a party to attend the Magdalene Chapel, where Dr. Dodd was then preaching. A special armchair was prepared for him, and Lady Huntingdon, Lord and Lady Dartmouth, Lady Fanny Shirley, and others sat nearby. The Prince, in reply to someone who commented that the sermon they had heard sounded like one of the Methodist sermons, said,

Your Lordship must be fastidious indeed. I thought the discourse excellent; .... a sentiment in which my Lady Huntingdon, I am most happy to say, most cordially coincides with me. Her Ladyship, I suspect, is much better versed in theology than either of us.¹

George III also entertained a high regard for Lady Huntingdon. Perhaps the most famous incident in her life took place when she had an interview with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Cornwallis, asking him to eliminate the scandalous route he and his wife had been giving in the Episcopal Palace. Mrs. Cornwallis was outraged at this meddling by Lady Huntingdon, and she began publicly to ridicule the Countess for her unsolicited interference. Someone should have warned Mrs. Cornwallis against this, especially when it involved a matter of religion, for immediately Lady Huntingdon applied for and received a private audience with the King. For this famous interview, she was accompanied to the Palace at Kew by the Duchess of Ancaster and Lord Dartmouth. The King

¹Ibid., I, p.401.
listened attentively while she registered her complaint and then said,

The Archbishop's behaviour has been slightly hinted to me already; but now that I have a certainty of his proceedings, and most ungracious conduct towards your Ladyship, after your trouble in remonstrating with him, I shall interpose my authority, and see what that will do towards reforming such indecent practices. ¹

The King and Queen were evidently intrigued by Lady Huntingdon for they kept her an hour in conversation on various topics.

The King acknowledged that

I have been told so many odd stories of your Ladyship that I am free to confess I felt a great degree of curiosity to see if you were at all like other women; and I am happy in having an opportunity of assuring your Ladyship of the very good opinion I have of you, and how very highly I estimate your character, your zeal, and abilities, which cannot be consecrated to a more noble purpose ..... I remember seeing your Ladyship when I was young. You then frequented the court circle; and I cannot forget that you was (sic) a favourite with my revered father, the Prince of Wales.²

The King related many interesting anecdotes centering around the work of Lady Huntingdon and spoke highly of some of her preachers. "The bishops are very jealous of such men"³, the King said, which was something Wesley and Lady Huntingdon had known for a long time. He went on to relate an incident wherein a bishop had complained about some of Lady Huntingdon's

¹Ibid., II, p. 282.
²Ibid., II, p. 282 et seq.
³Ibid., II, p. 282.
students and preachers, and the disturbances they created in the various dioceses. "Make bishops of them - make bishops of them"\textsuperscript{1}, replied the King. "That might be done", answered the bishop; "but please your Majesty, we cannot make a bishop of Lady Huntingdon".\textsuperscript{2} The Queen then retorted, "As for her Ladyship, you cannot make a bishop of her, 'tis true; it would be a lucky circumstance if you could, for she puts you all to shame".\textsuperscript{3} To this judgment, the Bishop attempted some feeble reply which evidently rankled the King, for he reported to Lady Huntingdon that he answered, "I wish there was a Lady Huntingdon in every diocese in the kingdom".\textsuperscript{4} The bishop was never again seen at court; such was the inherent hazard of being a bishop at the same time Lady Huntingdon was stalking her prey up and down the kingdom.

The consequence of this famous interview soon "appeared in a letter which probably remains an unparalleled piece of correspondence between a King and an Archbishop, at any rate in modern times: ..."\textsuperscript{5}

My good Lord Prelate, - I could not delay giving you the notification of the grief and concern with which my breast was affected, at receiving authentic information that routs have made their way into your palace. At the same time, I must signify to you my sentiments on this subject, which

\textsuperscript{1}Idem.
\textsuperscript{2}Idem.
\textsuperscript{3}Idem.
\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., II, p.282 et seq. These words were carved in a tablet of stone just under the pulpit of her famous Bath Chapel, and can still be seen.
hold these levities and vain dissipations as utterly inexpedient, if not unlawful, to pass in a residence for many centuries devoted to divine studies, religious retirement, and the extensive exercise of charity and benevolence; I add, in a place where so many of your predecessors have led their lives in such sanctity as has thrown lustre on the pure religion they professed and adorned.

From the dissatisfaction with which you must perceive I behold these improprieties, not to speak in harsher terms, and on still more pious principles, I trust you will suppress them immediately; so that I may not have occasion to show any further marks of my displeasure, or to interpose in a different manner. May God take your Grace into his almighty protection! I remain, my Lord Primate, your gracious friend,

G.R. 1

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1Seymour, op. cit., II, p.283. A search by the present writer of the manuscripts in the British Museum and the Lambeth Palace Library failed to uncover this document. The Lambeth Palace Librarian doubts the authenticity of this letter. However, the letter which so highly unfavorable could easily have been destroyed. W. C. Sydney in England and the English in the Eighteenth Century, II, p.337, Bready, op. cit., p.48, Stoughton, op. cit., p.148, and Aldred W. Rowden in The Primates of the Four Georges, p.331, all quote the letter as being authentic. Certainly such an episode is in keeping with Cornwallis' character, for he is revealed as a crass, self-seeking clergyman in his letters to the Prime Minister, Lord Newcastle. Vide Newcastle Papers, Addl. MSS., British Museum 32896, f.122; 32990, f.411; 32976, f.456. A clergyman by the name of Mr. Cole repeats the charge against the Archbishop and his wife of holding routs on a Sunday, quoting the London Evening Post. Vide Aldred W. Rowden, The Primates of the Four Georges, (London, 1916), p.331 et seq. This writer believes that this letter is authentic for it is true to the intrinsic natures of the three principals involved, and it is widely documented by many historians. Certainly the narrative was widely circulated and quoted by the year 1844 when Seymour's book was published. The earliest reference documenting this affair I have found is in a book published in 1821. It gives this letter in full, but does not mention Lady Huntingdon's role in the writing of this letter. It is the penultimate in its title, as well as in this reference. Robert Huish, Esq., Memoirs of George The Third: The Public and Private Life of His Late Excellent and Most Gracious Majesty George The Third, Embracing Its Most Memorable Incidents, As They Were Displayed in the Important Relation of SON, HUSBAN (sic), FATHER, FRIEND, and SOVEREIGN, with a variety of Secret Anecdotes of His Majesty, the Royal Family, and Other Distinguished Characters, connected with the British Court: The Whole Collected from the most Authentic Sources, and Tending to Illustrate The Causes, Progress, and Effects, of the Principal Political Events of His Glorious Reign, (London, 1821), p.349.
It was no insignificant patron who could cause such a letter to be written by the King to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

It does not denigrate Wesley's courage or his achievements however to state that Methodism would never have gained official acceptance had not Lady Huntingdon protected it during its earliest stages. Certainly the impact of its doctrines could not have penetrated into the very fibre of the nation without this Umbrella of the Revival.
Chapter Four

CONFLICTING PERSONALITIES
INTRODUCTION

Christendom has never known what to do with more than one pope. For forty years in the late fourteenth century this state of affairs existed, with each pope hurling anathemas at the other, and in the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century there was experienced a similar dilemma, which Berridge of Everton, in a letter to Rowland Hill, expressed well:

The late contest at Bristol seems to turn upon this hinge, whether it shall be Pope John or Pope Joan. My dear friend, keep out of all controversy, and wage no war but with the devil. ¹

These two leaders had many common bonds; both were Anglicans, who spent their lives in promoting the cause of the Evangelical Revival and for many years they successfully labored together in this common cause. From Howell Harris' Diaries we know that as early as the summer of 1739 Lady Huntingdon was attending the Fetter Lane Society and establishing herself as one of the first supporters of Methodism. As our subsequent more detailed examination of their collaboration will reveal (Chapter Five), the mutual influence which the Countess and Wesley

held over one another was strong and of great consequence. These two worked together in their common mission even after Wesley and Whitefield had "agreed to disagree". Prior to the late 1740's, when Lady Huntingdon became affiliated with George Whitefield's Tabernacle, Wesley was swayed by her suggestions, and she, in turn, looked to him as her spiritual adviser. Even after this date, their relationship remained cordial until the final breach occurred in 1770. This intimate association existed to an even greater extent with the Charles Wesley family, and Lady Huntingdon went so far as to risk the danger of contracting smallpox in order to nurse Charles' wife, Sally, through this infectious disease. The Countess owed much to Charles Wesley, as her letter to him in 1743 expressed:

"My friend if you have any love for me this I know that if you have one grain of charity for me it must be because you excell all others in this grace and that because you will not know how worthless a worm she is who knows herself more oblig'd to you than to any creature living."

Many reasons why Lady Huntingdon and John Wesley were involved in the 1770 Controversy have been given, but unfortunately most writers assume that theirs was a sudden schism, based almost solely on her defense of the decrees and her opposition to the 1770 Minutes of Wesley's Conference. But this explanation leaves many significant questions unanswered. For example, why did Lady

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1 Unpublished Methodist Book Room MSS Letter 13 (her italics).
Huntingdon in 1741 embrace Wesley’s doctrine of Christian perfection? Jackson corroborated her early adherence to this doctrine: (Lady Huntingdon) “entertained all of his (Wesley’s) theological views, even those relating to the question of Christian perfection.” Secondly, why did the Countess not challenge Charles Wesley about his Arminian views? For Charles, through the medium of his hymns, spread Arminian doctrines far more rapidly than did John through his preaching. In the third place, if Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, were such a convinced Calvinist, why did she print, as late as 1780 a hymn book for use in her chapels containing the following lines:

Rich grace, free grace, most sweetly calls
Directly come who will,
Just as you are; for Christ receives
Poor helpless sinners still.

Furthermore, how can we account for the inclusion in this edition of at least thirty-two hymns written by Charles Wesley, a staunch Arminian. Fourthly, why did Lady Huntingdon insist that John Wesley’s Christian Library be part of her library at Trevecca College? Finally, if she were so firm a Calvinist, why did the Countess appoint John Fletcher as the first President of Trevecca, and lure Joseph Benson from Kingswood to be Headmaster.

1Seymour, op. cit., I, p.42.
3A Select Collection of Hymns to be universally sung in all the Countess of Huntingdon’s Chapels, collected by her Ladyship, (London, 1780), Hymn CCLXXX (my italics).
of her College, when both were widely-recognized upholders of Arminian doctrines?

A. THE PERSONAL DETERMINANT

Explanations for this dispute, other than hyper-Calvinism must be found. There were two major reasons for this theological impasse that finally exploded into the violent controversy of the 1770's. It was, first of all, a personality clash; and secondly, it was a disagreement over the Wesleyan doctrine of Perfection. This first aspect perhaps could have been avoided had Wesley made allowance for the deference to which the Countess had been accustomed since her childhood, and paid her the homage which, within the eighteenth century framework, her position demanded. Monseigneur Knox makes the following trenchant observation: "Lady Huntingdon would have been an Arminian instead of a Calvinist had Wesley been so ready with pious civilities, not to call them servilities, as George Whitefield."¹

Lady Huntingdon's creed did not include the hyper-Calvinism of her period until after she had received the famous 1770 letter from Wesley, in which he reviewed for her benefit her past sins and present errors. This letter which has never been found ranks in importance among the top ten letters ever penned by

¹R. A. Knox's Enthusiasm, op. cit., p.442.
Wesley and was, in fact, to draw Lady Huntingdon into the storm center of that controversy which was to divide Methodism finally and irrevocably. Wesley, in writing to Mary Bishop in May 1771 indicated that he realized it was his letter, not his 1770 Minutes, which was responsible for this violent rupture.

My dear Sister, - Perhaps we may see a new accomplishment of Solomon's words, 'He that reproveth a man shall afterward find more favour than he who flattereth with his tongue'. But, be that as it may, I have done my duty; I could no otherwise have delivered my own soul. And no offence at all would have been given thereby had not pride stifled both religion and generosity. But the letter is now out of date; it is mentioned no more: there is a more plausible occasion found - namely those eight terrible propositions which conclude the Minutes of our Conference.1

In this lengthy communication to her Ladyship, Wesley unceremoniously confronted her with all of her faults and this was a source of bitter resentment to her for she had no intention of enrolling in any correspondence course on self-improvement, especially if John Wesley were to be tutor. This must have been an exceedingly tactless epistle, for when her Ladyship showed it to him in Wales, Howell Harris termed it a "very bitter letter".2 Lady Huntingdon carried it around with her for several months, during which time it was read by many people in Bath. As Wesley indicated when writing to Mary Bishop


in November, 1770, he had painful memories of other incidents when his personal correspondence was shown indiscriminately.\textsuperscript{1}

Notwithstanding this, in deference to Lady Huntingdon and the Evangelical cause, Wesley had never been as plain spoken with her as he was with others. He was forever pulling up his own soul by its roots to see how it was growing, and because of a rather extravagant sense of spiritual responsibility, he expected others to allow him to do the same with their souls. He wrote to Benson in November, 1770, alluding to this letter he had written to her Ladyship:

Dear Joseph, -- For several years I had been deeply convinced that I had not done my duty with regard to that valuable woman; that I had not told her what I was thoroughly assured no one else would dare to do, and what I knew she would bear from no other person, but possibly might bear from me. But, being unwilling to give her pain, I put it off from time to time. At length I did not dare to delay any longer, lest death should call one of us hence. So I at once delivered my own soul, by telling her all that was in my heart. It was my business, my proper business, so to do, as none else either could or would do it. Neither did I take at all too much upon me; I know the office of a Christian minister. If she is not profited, it is her own fault, not mine. I have done my duty. I do not know there is one charge in that letter which was either unjust, unimportant, or aggravated, any more than that against the doggerel hymns which are equally an insult upon poetry and common sense.\textsuperscript{2}

One can well imagine the telling sermon which Wesley preached on paper to the Countess, and which struck at her Achilles heel.

\footnote{\textsuperscript{1}Wesley's \textit{Letters, op. cit.}, V, p. 210.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 211.}
In an attempt to justify his writing thus, Wesley revealed that he was still rather uncertain whether or not it was the right thing to do. On many occasions there had been personal differences between these two, but it was only now he sought to enumerate them and it was this which exploded a friendship and terminated an alliance that had withstood the vicissitudes of over thirty years. To them, we now direct our study.

First of all, both of these evangelical figures were strong-willed and destined to be in command. But, in Wesley's societies there was no room for two leaders for he alone had to be the sole authority. From time to time he did make token attempts to delegate more responsibility to his brother, even to the extent of offering him equal status. Charles, however, could remember how John assumed control of the Holy Club at Oxford, enlarging and strengthening it; and recognized it was his elder brother who possessed the genius for organization and leadership. While Lady Huntingdon could not compare with Wesley in her power of leadership, nonetheless she possessed a personal trait which made others, with the exception of John Wesley, defer to her judgment in matters of religion. In 1743 Lady Huntingdon, in almost illegible handwriting, mentioned to his brother Charles this matter of difficult inter-personal relationships with Wesley:

I have had a Letter still opossing (sic) in a great degree this poor women, I am not carefull (sic) about it he will receive no farther trouth (sic)
upon it from me but this I shall constantly affirm. I can never Bow down to No Man (i.e. John Wesley) in an evident untruth let him think it what he will.

Tyerman observed:

Accustomed to assume great responsibilities and to be deferred to in matters of great importance, she necessarily cultivated self-reliance to such an extent as sometimes made her seem obstinate, haughty and dogmatical.²

Some of Wesley's enemies accused him of the same personality flaws, and he defended himself by saying that his enemies have talked largely of my dogmaticalness, love of power, errors, and irregularities. My dogmaticalness is neither more nor less than a 'custom of coming to the point at once', and telling my mind flat and plain without any preface or ceremony.³

Also contributing to the difficulty was Wesley's uneasiness with fashionable Methodists and the nobility. He conceived his mission to be to the poor and to the middle class, not to the aristocratic people who inhabited Lady Huntingdon's world. Indeed, he found it difficult to speak of this realm of society without some remark revealing his irritation. For instance, in a letter to Lord Dartmouth in 1764, he states:

I can truly say, I neither fear nor desire anything from your Lordship. To speak a rough truth, I do not desire any intercourse with any persons of

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² Tyerman's Wesley, op. cit., II, p. 22.
³ Wesley's Letters, op. cit., IV, p. 215. To Henry Venn, June 22, 1763.
quality in England. I mean for my own sake. They do me no good; and I fear I can do none to them.  

Wesley went out of his way to shun the patronage of the nobility and let them know that he did not require their support. He resented the time expended in polite society, almost deeming it wasted:

Wed. 7. (September, 1748) - Being not able with tolerable decency to excuse myself any longer, I went to Chelsea and spent two or three hours as in the times that are past. I hoped one journey would serve. But I was too hasty in reckoning. L(ady) H(untingdon) pressed me to come again on Friday, so that I could not handsomely decline it ....  

Fri. 9. - I took up my cross once more and came to Chelsea a little after eleven. After some conversation L(ady) H(untingdon) desired me to preach. Part of the congregation was Lord H(untingdon) ..... Lady Bath, Lady Townshend, and Baron Zulendahl, the Danish Ambassador's brother. I spoke exceeding plain from those words 'Thou are not far from the kingdom of God'. Yet I cannot find that one of the audience was offended. What is this which God is working in earth? ..... 

He preached "the old, coarse gospel", and opposition to his preaching "only confirmed me in the Judgment I had formed for many years, I am too rough a Preacher for tender Ears". In 1766 Wesley warned John Fletcher against "all prudent, all delicate,

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1Ibid., IV, p.260. To Lord Dartmouth, July 26, 1764.
3Idem, September 9, 1748.
all fashionable, all half-hearted Methodists!". ¹ When Fletcher frankly wrote Wesley in 1768 that he found his religious conversation growing stale, Wesley answered that

The conversing with these (the hearers of Madam, Romaine and Whitefield), I have rarely found to be profitable to my soul ..... you have for some time conversed a good deal with the genteel Methodists. Now, it matters not a straw what doctrine they hear, whether they frequent the Lock or West Street. They (almost all) salt that has lost its savour, if ever they had any. They are thoroughly conformed to the maxims, the spirit, the fashions of the world.²

A further source of discontent with John Wesley was Lady Huntingdon's influence over Charles. She had helped to rescue him from the Moravian errors, and was on intimate terms with both him and his wife. The Countess never closed her pulpits to Charles, though she did so to his brother. Perhaps Charles found in Lady Huntingdon an emotional warmth which was lacking in his relationship with John. In 1752 John warned Charles that some of the lay preachers were affirming that he believed in the doctrine of perseverance and even predestination.³ These reports were very likely occasioned by his intimate friendship with Lady Huntingdon during the period she nursed Sally through her illness. John Wesley's greatest outburst of irritation, however,

¹Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, p. 3. To John Fletcher, London, February 28, 1766.
²Ibid., V, p. 83 et seq. To John Fletcher, March 20, 1768.
³Ibid., III, p. 95 et seq. To Charles Wesley, August 8, 1752.
against the Countess and her influence over Charles occurred in two letters which he wrote to his friend, Ebenezer Blackwell, in April, 1755. He had proposed a reconciliation between his wife, Molly, and Charles; but Charles who had apparently talked over this matter of his brother's marital mistake with Lady Huntingdon gave no direct reply to this proposal, but left his answer with the Countess. This incensed Wesley, who thought she was interfering in personal matters which were none of her business, and so he wrote to Blackwell that he would not let Lady Huntingdon, who did not like his wife, be arbiter in this dispute. There are also indications that Whitefield, whom Wesley considered his "son in the gospel" was greatly influenced and dominated by the good Countess.

Undoubtedly some personal quality, completely overlooked by her biographer, surrounded Lady Huntingdon and it was this which made her a rallying point of those who opposed Wesley. But another less admirable quality possessed by her made matters trying for John Wesley. It is this undesirable characteristic that we see in her letters when, time and again, she refers to her chapels, her preachers, and her College. There is more than a suggestion that she believed herself to be solely responsible for the financing of her cause, and consequently to

\[1\text{Wesley's Letters, op. cit., III, p.125, 127. To C. Blackwell, April 9, 1755.}\]
have the undeniable right to be in command and to make the
decisions.\footnote{Seymour, \textit{op. cit.}, II, p. 469.} On her churches she often placed a tablet crediting
herself as the donor.\footnote{Ibid., p. 115.} At Cheshunt College, Cambridge, it is
interesting to note that the lovely clock in the parlor still
bears a brass plate with this inscription: "\textit{THIS CLOCK IS THE}
\textit{PROPERTY OF THE CHURCH AT THE VINEYARDS, BATH, GIVEN BY THE}
\textit{COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON FOR THE USE OF THE MINISTERS FOR THE}
\textit{TIME BEING.}\"

That the Countess was methodical in placing such inscriptions on
even the least of her gifts is made evident in her Dictionary,
now in the Cheshunt College Library. On the title page in her
own crabbed handwriting are these words:

\begin{quote}
This Dictionary belongs to Lady Huntingdon
therefore let none steal it
from the study.
A Practice to frequent among
the students but knavery is
inconsistent with ye Character of
Gospel Minister.
\end{quote}

As her Ladyship's power increased, this facet of her personality
was brought more and more into view, and in a letter to Joseph
Benson in December, 1769, less than a year before he was to write

\cite{Seymour, \textit{op. cit.}, II, p. 469.}
\cite{Ibid., p. 115.} During a visit to her famous Bath Chapel, I
noted monograms on the pedestals supporting the three eagles in the
Chapel. When I examined the pedestal supporting the pulpit eagle,
I noted an 'S' and an 'H' but could not find an 'I' for the 'IHS'.
However, Lady Huntingdon had put her own monogram 'S.H.' on the
pedestal, the monogram 'T.H.' (for her husband) on the pedestal on
the right, and the monogram 'W.S.' (for Washington Shirley, her
father) on the pedestal supporting the eagle to the left of the
pulpit. \textit{Vide the Bath Monthly Letter, Nov., 1957, Article by}
A. M. Miller on the "History of the Trinity Presbyterian Church,
Vineyards, Bath".
that memorable letter to the Countess Wesley gave vent to his feelings. He wrote that he was exasperated with Lady Huntingdon's practice of saying "me" and "my", particularly when speaking of her students, school, and masters.  

She was not the most diplomatic soul in eighteenth century England, and Wesley knew this all too well. For example, in June 1767, after the death of Grimshaw, the Haworth clergyman, who was a staunch Anglican supporter of the Methodist cause, Lady Huntingdon applied for permission to use the Haworth Church. Both Wesley and Whitefield had frequently preached in this church, and this had caused the good Lady to make the grossly tactical mistake of requesting the use of "Mr. Whitefield's pulpit". Although the permission for which she was applying to the resident clergyman was in connection with a preaching mission, her request was naturally refused, but one wonders whether she was ever aware of her mistake.

Lady Huntingdon, accustomed to deference in all matters, found no such attitude in John Wesley. As Overton rightly remarks:

It was hardly to be expected that a scion of the Wellesleys and the Annesleys could regard himself as an inferior being even to a member of the noble house of Shirley; and John Wesley felt it to be

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1Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, p.166. To Joseph Benson, December 26, 1769.
2Seymour, op. cit., I, p.290.
part of his mission to counterbalance some of the painful adulation by which Lady Huntingdon was being rather spoilt by some of her humble followers.¹

As early as 1744, as is evident in his letter to Mrs. Hutton, Wesley was uncomfortable at his brother's insistence on deferring to her Ladyship:

In every congregation in England which I remember to have observed there was undeniably a faulty respect of persons. In our chapel (West Street Chapel) there is a place kept for Lady Huntingdon till the Creed; if she does not come before then, anyone takes it that is next, as also when she is out of town. I doubt whether this respect to her be not too great; but I yield in this point to my brother's judgment.²

In this same letter Wesley also indicates his feeling about the renting of pews, and the saving of the best pews for the wealthy, a policy which was later to become accepted procedure in certain of Lady Huntingdon's chapels.

We have no 5s. or 2s. 6d. places at the Foundery, nor ever had, nor ever will. If anyone asks me for a place in the gallery (we make no distinction but between men and women) he has it; I refuse none. And some hundreds have places there who pay nothing at all. First come also is first served, at every time of preaching. And the poorest have frequently the best places, because they come first.³

Furthermore, Wesley would never have considered building a "Nicodemus Corner" in one of his chapels, such as Lady Huntingdon

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¹Overton, op. cit., p.189.
²Wesley's Letters, op. cit., II, p.24 et seq. To Mrs. Hutton, August 22, 1744.
³Idem.
had at Bath. This was a small ante-room to the right of the pulpit, having a narrow slot through which one could hear and see without being seen.  

This room was set aside for the bishops who wished to hear the Methodists preach, without scandalizing their position by appearing in the congregation.

That there was a lack of emotional warmth between Wesley and the Countess, and that there was always a strained quality to their relationship can be observed by a seemingly insignificant omission on the part of Wesley. In Chapter Three there was a detailed examination of the "eighteenth century Mother in Israel" which was the rightful title of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon. It is curious, however, that Wesley never applied this designation to her, although such widely divergent persons as Fletcher, Whitefield, Doddridge, and Venn did use it to describe Lady Huntingdon's position within the Revival. Wesley used this term "Mother in Israel" on at least four occasions to refer to other godly women whom he knew. In November, 1748, he spoke of "Sarah Peters, a lover of souls, a mother in Israel"; in January, 1774, he spoke of Bilhah Aspermall as "that venerable mother in Israel"; in February, 1783, he spoke of Sarah Clay, who was for "many years a mother in Israel";

1Her chapel, now Trinity Presbyterian Church, still retains this ante-room which, it was interesting to note on a May, 1958, visit, presently houses the electrical system.

2Seymour, op. cit., I, p. 477.
and in a 1774 letter to Hannah Ball he referred to Ann Bolton as "a mother in Israel". It was after their deaths, however, that in three of these instances Wesley applied this name to them. One wonders whether even the death of Lady Huntingdon would have led him to join the other Evangelicals in giving her this title.

There was another source of irritation between Wesley and the Countess of Huntingdon. Wesley had grave doubts about the possibility of her College at Trevecca succeeding, and about the soundness of her judgment in forming its policy. In a letter to Charles in May, 1768, he said "But if the tutor fails, what will become of our college at Trevecca? Did you ever see anything more queer than their plan of institution? Pray who penned it, man or woman?" This was obviously a disparaging reference to Lady Huntingdon. Wesley, who could have given an invaluable lead in the establishment of this college, was not consulted by her Ladyship. He was completely ignored and, instead, Charles Wesley, Townshend, Fletcher, and above all Howell Harris, became the spiritual architects of Trevecca. After the rupture in 1770, which resulted in Benson's dismissal, and Fletcher's resignation from Trevecca,

1Wesley's Journal, op. cit., III, p.381; VI, p.9; VI, p.390; and Wesley's Letters, op. cit., VI, p.93. To Hannah Ball, June 19, 1774.

the attacks on Wesley increased in number and violence. Vulliamy termed Trevecca "Lady Huntingdon's Calvinistic incubator, which was hatching out so many twittering chicks". 1 Wesley's Journal gives evidence of the hostility of the Trevecca students toward him and his societies. From Dover, in December 1772, Wesley writes "The raw, pert young men that lately came hither (vulgarly though very improperly, called students), though they have left no stone unturned, have not been able to tear away one single member from our society". 2 In September, 1776, when he complained to Lady Huntingdon about this constant sharpshooting to which he was subjected by her students, she replied in a letter dated "Sepr. 8th, 1776, College ..."

I praise the Lord our young men are better employed and may assure you better taught also & what you choose (sic) to say or think of their having me for Their directress (in railing as on this occasion) I have no objection to while I remain so well satisfied myself of it's unjustness upon the subject ...... Dr. Sir your old & faithful friend S.H. "3

In attempting to pour oil on troubled waters, Wesley answered this letter on 15th September, 1776, thanking her for her attention, and requesting that "If your Ladyship will be so good as to give them (Trevecca students) a caution on that head, I know it will not be in vain ..... "4 These young students,

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1Vulliamy, op. cit., p.323.


3Unpublished Cheshunt MSS Letter to John Wesley from Countess of Huntingdon (in display case at Cheshunt College Library, Cambridge).

4Proceedings of Wesley Historical Society, XXVII, p.4.
however, continued to aggravate Wesley with their attacks, and he notes his annoyance in November, 1776, at Norwich; in August, 1778, at St. Ives; in July, 1779, at Grimsby; in June, 1780, at Belton; and in March, 1781, at Newcastle-under-Lyme.\footnote{Wesley's Journal, op. cit., VI, p.131, Thurs. Nov. 1, 1776; VI, p.208, Fri. August 28, 1778; VI, pp.241-2, Sat. July 3, 1779; VI, p.287, Sat. June 24, 1780; and VI, p.309, Mon. March 26, 1781.}

Wesley was also irritated at the Countess for luring Benson from his Kingswood School to Trevecca. He warned Benson not to attempt to entice young men from Kingswood as well.\footnote{Wesley's Journal, op. cit., VI, p.208, Fri. August 28, 1778; VI, pp.241-2, Sat. July 3, 1779; VI, p.287, Sat. June 24, 1780; and VI, p.309, Mon. March 26, 1781.}

We have mentioned some of Lady Huntingdon's characteristics and actions that irritated Wesley. He, himself, was not entirely free of certain traits of personality liable to cause estrangement. Howell Harris, the peacemaker of early Methodism, complained of Wesley's bluntness and his monopoly of the name Methodist. Mr. Harris was at the 1748 Conference in London, and recorded that Wesley "has demandd (sic) everywhere over ye Preachers to send him an acct of their Behavr & whethr God is wtb then .....".\footnote{Howell Harris' Diary, unpublished, Friday, June 3, 1748.}

He also objected to Wesley's inquisitorial questions, saying that some would ask "Who made him Arch BP over us .....".\footnote{Howell Harris' Diary, unpublished, Friday, June 3, 1748.} Furthermore, he objected to Wesley setting himself up as the sole judge of the Methodist preachers, and to his refusal to grant Whitefield co-equal power among all Methodist societies, whether Wesleyan,
Welsh, or Whitfieldian (later to become Lady Huntingdon's). 1

Finally, it was the blunt, cruel letter which Wesley wrote to the Countess that ignited the controversy. This is not to say that without it there would have been no difference of opinion between the hyper-Calvinists and John Wesley, but any controversy that did arise would have been somewhat muffled and certainly all parties of the Evangelical Awakening would not have been involved. There are several indications that Wesley realized the sending of this letter was a tactical error and that perhaps it would have been better left unwritten. As previously mentioned, Howell Harris termed it "A very bitter letter", a strong phrase for him to use about anything written by Wesley. Walter Shirley expressed to Lady Huntingdon the following impression:

Though I had before a too well-grounded conviction of Mr. Wesley's Pride and Self-sufficiency I never could have conceived he would have carried it to so immoderate a Pitch as has appear'd in the last letter he wrote your Ladyship. 2

Lady Huntingdon was deeply wounded by it as one can see in her severance of all ties with Wesley and his followers. Evidence of her hurt can also be seen in correspondence which Wesley addressed to Lady Maxwell in 1788, eighteen years after he wrote this contentious letter.

1Ibid., April 29, 1749.

2Unpublished Cheshunt MSS Letter 1512, Walter Shirley to Countess of Huntingdon, Bath, October 19, 1770.
For many years a great person professed and I believe had a great regard for me. I therefore believed it my duty to speak with all freedom, which I did in a long letter. But she was so displeased that she said to a friend, 'I hate Mr. Wesley above all the creatures upon the earth'.

These, then, were the personal reasons for the dispute and they actually outweighed the purely theological factors. There was definitely a theological aspect to the origin of the controversy, however, and to an examination of it we now direct our attention.

B. THE THEOLOGICAL DETERMINANT

In the first part of this chapter, five reasons were given as to why even as late as the 1770's and 1780's Lady Huntingdon was not a strict Calvinist. Her theology was a mixture, and she never attempted to systematize it. She did not uphold the decrees, and in eighteenth century hyper-Calvinism this was tantamount to rejecting all that Calvin ever wrote. In a letter to Charles Wesley, her Ladyship warned him against two extremist groups: "The predestinerians (sic) & still ones (in London) you will find no farther trouth (sic) from it. No longer consider them as any thing, our Lord will take care of your Cause if you will let him .....".

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1Wesley's Letters, op. cit., VIII, p.95. To Lady Maxwell, September 30, 1788 (my italics).

2Unpublished Methodist Book Room MSS Letter 94 (Countess of Huntingdon volume), to Charles Wesley, n.d. (from internal evidence we can ascertain that this letter was probably written in early 1740's).
Howell Harris, who recorded part of his conversation with the Countess in 1766, stated that Whitefield "shut her out of Totenham Crt Rd. & holds Presistentiation". It is well to remember that at this time Harris was Lady Huntingdon's spiritual father. Wesley was too busy and too reserved to help her formulate a theology, but Harris spent many hours counselling with her Ladyship, and in one of their consultations summed up his own theology to her: "I showed how I am betw Calvin & free will - & so not agreeing wth Wh -- (Whitefield) or We -- (Wesley) & I opened hav had their Light". In an attempt to pin the hyper-Calvinistic label on Lady Huntingdon many have been misled and even Wesley was guilty of equating her preachers' theology with her own beliefs. They had seen her gathering all shades of Calvinism under her wing when she took over Whitefield's Societies in 1749, and had noted her joining forces with the extremist faction against Wesley in 1770, and from such observations alone had formulated their opinion.

The one doctrine of Wesley's which caused Lady Huntingdon to stumble was Perfection. As early as June 1747 Howell Harris recorded her attitude toward this doctrine: "she was ag' sinless perfect & ye w' Instantaneous gift of Sanctification as Bro Wesley told .....". This was probably one major reason why the

1 Howell Harris' Diary, unpublished, Tuesday, January 8, 1765.
2 Ibid., Monday, January 19, 1767.
3 Ibid., Tuesday, June 9, 1747.
Countess left the Foundery and went over to the Tabernacle. After Wesley increased his promulgation of Perfectionism in the late 1750's Lady Huntingdon became increasingly alienated. She never fully understood this involved doctrine which Wesley failed to take adequate time to explain to her, although he himself admitted in December, 1744, that perhaps "I have an exceeding complex idea of sanctification or (of) a sanctified man". From that time on, however, whenever Wesley was not trumpeting the tune of Christian Perfection to the Countess, he appears to have been humming it loudly enough for her to hear.

During the early part of Lady Huntingdon's alliance with Wesley she wrote: "I have desired him (Charles) to enclose to them yours on Christian perfection. The doctrine therein contained, I hope to live and die by; it is absolutely the most complete thing I know". Seymour thought that her Ladyship began "growing in grace" after her conversion experience, but her letters reveal a clinging to that first spiritual enlightenment and a somewhat negative element in her later faith. She stated, for example: "I find the world more and more a burden to me"; she debased herself to others; she indicated a desire to give up her work; and she wished to change places with a dying man.

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2 Seymour, op. cit., I, p.42.
3 Ibid., I, p.16.
these representative statements of Lady Huntingdon's view of her spiritual state, she reveals the great gulf fixed between what she considered to be her own attainment in the Christian life, and the Wesleyan concept of Perfection. Perhaps an extract from her Ladyship's writings, published posthumously, gives a clearer idea of wherein she so fundamentally differed from Wesley:

It is remarkable that our tender and most compassionate Lord, is even in haste to answer all young converts, lest they should faint; but the farther he carries our souls into the divine life the slower he appears in hearing, in order to find out (or rather for us to find out) whether we are following him for the good cheer, or truly (sic) him in the regeneration; he rarely gives his elder children so many sweet things, as his little ones; he wants them to learn the obedience of faith, by the things they suffer, and also makes them know he abides faithful.

This morbid view of the Christian life is diametrically opposed to Wesley's goal for every Methodist — Christian Perfection. He explained to Charles:

By perfection I mean the humble, gentle, patient love of God and man ruling all the tempers, words, and actions, the whole heart and the whole life. I do not include a possibility of no falling from it, either in part or in whole. Therefore I retract several expressions in our hymns which partly express, partly imply, such an impossibility. And I do not contend for the term 'sinless', though I do not object against it. As to the manner, I believe this perfection is always wrought in the soul by faith, by a simple act of faith; consequently in an instant .... As to the time, I believe this instant

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1 John Cottingham, A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of the Right Honble, the Late Countess Dowager of Huntingdon & Thoughts Upon the Answer of Prayer written by Her Ladyship, (London, 1791), p.28 (my italics).
generally is the instant of death, the moment before the soul leaves the body. But I believe it may be ten, twenty, or forty years before death. I believe it is usually many years after justification, but that it may be within five years or five months after it. I know no conclusive argument to the contrary. Do you?

There is evidence that Lady Huntingdon believed that Wesley claimed the state of absolute perfection himself, because shortly before her death she was astonished to read an account of Wesley's last illness, in which he acknowledged a life-long utter dependence upon the sacrifice of Christ. So widespread was this misconception that in March 1767, in answer to one of his critics, Wesley had to write a letter to the Editor of Lloyd's Evening Post:

...... Upon this Rusticulus, or Dr. Dodd, says: 'A Methodist, according to Mr. Wesley, is one who is perfect, and sinneth not in thought, word or deed'. Sir, have me excused. This is not 'according to Mr. Wesley'. I have told all the world I am not perfect; and yet you allow me to be a Methodist. I tell you flat I have not attained the character I draw. Will you pin it upon me in spite of my teeth?

Not only the Countess of Huntingdon, but many others were misled by Wesley's appeal to his "living arguments", the men and women who claimed perfection. There were many who professed to have achieved this high goal who, even while professing to be perfected

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1Wesley's Letters, op. cit., IV, p.187. Charles Wesley, Sept., 1762. Wesley did not use the term "sinless perfection". Whitefield pinned this label on him in a letter of June 2, 1766, when he wrote: "That monstrous doctrine of sinless perfection for a while turns some of its deluded votaries into temporary monsters". Whitefield's Works, III, p.337. "Sinless perfection was used by some Methodist preachers, causing misinterpretation and dissension among some evangelical supporters, e.g. Grimshaw, who called it 'a grating term - even to those who are desirous to be truly holy in heart and life'." Wesley's Journal, op. cit., IV, p.469.

2Jackson's Charles Wesley, II, p.295 et seq.

3Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, pp.43-4. Letter to Editor of Lloyd's Evening Post, March 5, 1767.
in love, by their actions brought shame and disgrace to this doctrine. Wesley never spoke of the degree of perfection, but always of the "perfection of motive".

Wesley never taught that absolute perfection could be attained in this human life. Man was not infallible even in his highest spiritual state and his perfection was still limited to include the defects of life on earth. In 1762 he wrote:

..... The proposition which I will hold is this: 'a person may be cleansed from all sinful tempers, and yet need the atoning blood'. For what? For 'negligences and ignorances'; for both words and actions (as well as omissions) which are in a sense transgressions of the perfect law. And I believe no one is clear of these till he lays down this corruptible body.1

But the Wesleyan doctrine allowed that man could fulfil the law of love by having all his words, actions and thoughts rooted and grounded in love. Wesley guarded against the rejection of the need for Christ by the perfected by asserting that all Christians must live daily "on the basis of forgiveness".2 Thus, even the fully sanctified remain totally dependent in a moment by moment communion with Christ. As Wesley explained:

The holiest of men still need Christ as their Prophet, as the 'light of the world'. For he does not give them light, but from moment to moment: The instant he withdraws, all is darkness. They still need Christ as their King; for God does not give them a stock of holiness ..... Even perfect holiness is acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ.3

Wesley distinguishes carefully between Adamic Perfection (Adam's state before the Fall), and Christian Perfection (which can be attained by Post-Adamic man). Furthermore, he held to a dual view of perfection stating that one could achieve such a state, but that the perfection achieved was always relative. Thus, he asserted in a letter written in April 1763:

Thus much is certain: they that love God with all their heart and all men as themselves are scripturally perfect. And surely such there are; otherwise the promise of God would be a mere mockery of human weakness. Hold fast this. But then remember, on the other hand, you have this treasure in an earthen vessel; you dwell in a poor, shattered house of clay, which presses down the immortal spirit. Hence all your thoughts, words, and actions are so imperfect, so far from coming up to the standard (that law of love which, but for the corruptible body, your soul would answer in all instances), that you may well say till you go to Him you love: Every moment, Lord, I need The merit of Thy death.

This is Wesley's subtle distinction between the fully sanctified man's relative perfection (involving the intent or motive of man rooted in love); and man's absolute perfection (not achievable in this life, since man will always have certain inescapable defects making him continually dependent upon the merits of Christ). The fully sanctified "need Christ as their Priest, their Atonement, their Advocate with the Father; not only as the continuance of their every blessing depends on his death and intercession, but on account of their coming short of the law of love". There is

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1 Lindström, op. cit., Vide p.145 et seqq.
2 Wesley's Letters, op. cit., IV, p.208. To Miss March, April 7, 1763.
no indication that Lady Huntingdon was able to follow the subtleties of Wesley's doctrine of perfection, and her advocate, J. B. Figgis, rightly stated that the "Countess of Huntingdon misunderstood the doctrine of Christian holiness of Wesley"\textsuperscript{1}, and it consequently became a prominent factor in their estrangement.

It was a lack of proper communication then which drove the two leaders into opposing camps. The horizon became so obscured by these long-standing personal and theological battles that it was difficult to distinguish the one side from the other. These two, however, by strength of will and unrelenting nature, were destined to become the respective centers of the two parties of the Revival. To a study of the development of this conflict we now turn our attention.

\textsuperscript{1}Figgis, op. cit., p.103.
Chapter Five

PURITANS IN VANITY FAIR: METHODISM 1738–49
INTRODUCTION

Take of the herbs of hypocrisy, and the Roots of spiritual pride, of each 2 handfuls, 2 ounces of ambition, vain-glory and impudence, of each a sufficient quantity; boil them over the fire of sedition, until you perceive the ingredient to swim on the top, then add to them, six ounces of the sugar of deceit, and 1 quart of dissembling tears, put them into the bottle of envy, and stop it up with the cork of malice. When these ingredients are subsided, then make them into pills, warm at five in the morning and seven in the evening, take with them the tongue of slander, and go into the society-house to hear nonsense and stupidity, and by way of exercise, fall into pretended fits, then go home, cant, sing hymns, say prayers till you are heard all round the neighbourhood; this will produce such an effect, that your chief study will be to cheat all you have dealings with, play the whore under the cloak of sanctity, revile the Church, rail against the ministers of government, and when opportunity suits, cut the throats of all your opposers. These ingredients, if they are well prepared, are an infallible receipt, and without which you cannot be a TRUE METHODIST.

The above ingredients, with proper instructions how to use them, may be had at the Warehouse, near Tottenham Court and Moorfield, and for the convenience of Country Trade, the Society have opened new Warehouses, at almost every Market Town in the Kingdom — Price one Penny. 1

Such was the notoriety of allying oneself to the Methodist cause in the eighteenth century. But perhaps the greatest scandal of all was for the nobility to patronise such a seemingly lunatic group, and any one of them who ventured to do so was subject to much ridicule.

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1Broadsheet in British Museum, London, "Picture of A Methodist Preacher and Crowds".
THE EARLY ALLIANCE

Against this background Lady Huntingdon's social treason stands out clearly, for by affiliating with Methodism she betrayed in the eyes of her peers both her class, her lineage, and her country's religion. She not only attended Methodist meetings, but actually became one of the centers of the group, spending her energy and fortune in spreading the tenets of "enthusiasm".

Lady Huntingdon's experience of assurance, along with other pertinent facts and events of her life, has been related in Chapter Three. It is not possible to ascertain the precise day of this event for we do know, from an account of John Wesley's to Zinzendorf, that in November, 1737, Ingham was "preaching with all boldness in the county of York ..... awakening many souls". Lady Margaret Hastings, sister-in-law to the Countess, was "awakened" under the preaching of Ingham and she told Lady Huntingdon about her experience of assurance. Some time later during a serious illness her Ladyship remembered her sister-in-law's words, and instantly rejoiced in the knowledge of the forgiveness of her own sins. It has been customary to assign

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1Wesley's Letters, op. cit., I, p.277 et seq. To Count Zinzendorf, November 26, 1737.

2Unpublished Cheahunt M33 Letter 555. This letter gives an account of the experience referred to above, but, like Seymour, gives no clue as to the exact date.
a later date (1740 or 1741) for Lady Huntingdon's "awakening". However, in a letter to John Wesley, written on September 14, 1766, she pinpoints this important date as occurring in 1739.

In reference to this shattering experience, she wrote:

I shall turn coward and disgrace you all, when I have any worser ground to stand upon; and I am sure my prayer will be answered, which has been made these seven and twenty years, that whenever his eye (which is as a flame of fire) sees any other end or purpose of my heart, he will remove my poor wretched being from this earth.

After her spiritual heart-warming, Lady Huntingdon must have been eager to contact other people who had had a similar spiritual awakening. The lack of certain records makes it impossible to establish exactly the time of her joining an evangelical society, and although her name does not appear on the list of members of the Fetter Lane Society, she probably attended meetings there at the suggestion of Benjamin Ingham, who himself was an active member.

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1 Seymour, op. cit., I, p.476 and New, op. cit., p.191. To John Wesley, September 14, 1766. A copy of the MSS Letter is in Bristol and confirms Seymour's correct copying of these dates.

2 Vide the Journal of the Calvinistic Methodist Historical Society, VIII, p.84. "The Itinerary of Howell Harris, Trevecka, compiled from his Diary and Letters". The Rev. W. H. Jones, Editor. (Cardiff, 1923). In this account, Mr. Jones put the following sentence in brackets opposite the date of May 16, 1739: '(During this stay in London, H.H. first met Lady Huntingdon at the Fetter Lane Society.)' It is impossible to determine the source of his information, although it is doubtful that it came from either the Trevecke Letters or the untranscribed portions of Howell Harris' Diaries. Mr. Cockshutt, the present custodian of the original Fetter Lane Records, reported that Lady Huntingdon's name never appeared on a Fetter Lane membership roll. However, he stated that she could have attended meetings regularly without ever joining the Society. Thus, at present it cannot be proved that she ever attended a Fetter Lane meeting, although certain evidence strongly supports this view.
It was as early as 1736, however, that Lady Huntingdon first heard of George Whitefield from her eldest sister-in-law, the generous Lady Betty Hastings of Ledstone Hall. During this year Lady Betty helped to support several poor students at Oxford, among whom was George Whitefield. His first popularity, and simultaneously the first clerical opposition to him, arose between the middle of 1736, when he first preached in London, and the end of 1737, when he left London on his first journey to the New World. After the publication by friends during his absence of the *Journal* of his voyages from London via Gibraltar to Savannah, antagonism to Whitefield was intensified. His rather extravagant religious language alienated many of his former allies and added to the clerical opposition already existing. When he returned to London on the 8th of December, 1738, he was a marked man. It is possible that Lady Huntingdon was among those present at Fetter Lane for his homecoming from America. We do know that between the 8th of December, 1738, and January 14, 1739, Lady Huntingdon, who had apparently been impressed with this preacher from the beginning, contacted Bishop Benson (Lord Huntingdon's former tutor) and brought pressure to bear on him to ordain Whitefield without delay, as priest in the Church of England. Shortly after performing this service, the Bishop wrote to Lord Huntingdon, giving an account of the ordination and

expressing the hope that this would "give some satisfaction to my Lady, and that she will not have occasion to find fault with your Lordship's old tutor". The inference was that she had found fault with the good Bishop for allowing clerical opposition to cause his indecision in the matter.

Howell Harris now came to the front and center of the stage. Although he had previously received a letter of encouragement from Whitefield, he first met him in March, 1739, at Cardiff, when he stopped off on his way to London. On Monday, June 18, Harris met John Wesley in Bristol. It is interesting to note that from April 26th until June 2nd Howell Harris was in London and attended Fetter Lane services, and yet he and Wesley never met. After their meeting Wesley recorded that Harris had told him he "had been much dissuaded from either hearing or seeing me by many who said all manner of evil of me". Harris clarifies for us what these evil reports about Wesley were:

because he did not hold the Perseverance of the Saints, & the doctrine of Election, etc. And (yet when I met him he) so excellently and clearly held forth free Justification by faith, without the works of the Law - ...

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1Seymour, op. cit., I, p. 196. To Lord Theophilus Huntingdon, n.d.

2A Brief Account of the Life of Howell Harris, Esq.; Extracted From Papers written by Himself, to which is added a concise Collection of his Letters from the year 1738, to 1772, (Trevocks, MDCCXCI), p. 26.

(that) my prejudice against him fell away — and I was convinced that he was a faithful minister of Jesus Christ.¹

It is well to remember that the Countess of Huntingdon may also have heard all of the reports circulating at that time, in which Wesley was falsely accused of departing from the true, holy catholic faith.

The 1739 visit of Howell Harris to London was at a critical time both internally and externally for English Methodism. Charles Wesley had incurred the enmity of the Moravians by protesting against prophecies, visions, and dreams, and he and Whitefield had spoken out against the practice of lay preaching. Then in June, John Shaw, the Moravian "self-ordained priest", as Charles called him, openly renounced the Church of England and advocated that laymen could and should administer the Sacraments. Charles noted that Shaw and Wolf, another Moravian layman, were expelled and "their names ..... (were) erased out of the society-book, because they disowned themselves members of the Church of England".² Although the Fetter Lane Society possessed a Moravian constitution, the membership of this society was for the most part Anglican until the 21st of July, 1740, when Wesley, accompanied by his followers, withdrew to the Foundery. Both Wesley and Whitefield looked upon the Fetter Lane Society as an

¹Harris, Brief Account, op. cit., p. 39.
arm of the established Church, for Whitefield, in his Journal wrote on 20th May, 1739: "Went with our brethren of the Fetter Lane society to St. Paul's and received the holy sacrament, as testimony that we adhered to the Church of England." After this expulsion noted by Charles, Wesley foresaw future difficulties, and on November 11, 1739, occupied the Foundery. On the 16th of July, 1740, John Wesley was excluded from the pulpit by the Moravians, although they allowed him to remain a member of the Society. On the 18th of July, at a meeting in the Foundery a plan was devised as to "how to proceed with regard to our poor brethren of Fetter Lane". Two days later on a Sunday evening at the conclusion of the lovefeast of the Fetter Lane Society, Wesley arose to read a paper listing therein some of the members had erred and ending:

"... I have borne with you long, hoping you would turn. But as I find you more and more confirmed in the error of your ways, nothing now remains but that I should give you up to God. You that are of the same judgment, follow me." I then, without saying anything more, withdrew, as did eighteen or nineteen of the society.

Some writers maintain that Lady Huntingdon, in vigorous disagreement

1 Idem. Thus, Lady Huntingdon, as an Anglican in good standing, could have attended the Fetter Lane meetings without breaking with the Established Church.


with many of the Moravian ideas, particularly the doctrine of stillness, had become a rallying point for opposition to this group, and was present at the preliminary meeting when the decision to withdraw was reached. She could also have been present at the denouement on the following Sunday evening. On Wednesday of the next week Wesley recorded in his Journal:

Our little company met at The Foundery, instead of Fetter Lane. About twenty-five of our brethren God hath given us already, all of whom think and speak the same thing; seven-or-eight-and-forty likewise of the fifty women that were in band desired to cast in their lot with us. We do know that the Countess of Huntingdon cast her lot with John Wesley, and faithfully attended his society meetings for the ensuing five and a half years. We also know that Lady Huntingdon was in touch with Wesley in 1740, for she (1) not only loaned one of the Huntingdon servants to Wesley, but (2) she placed the beginning date of her friendship with Wesley as 1740. In a MSS letter to Joseph Benson she mentioned the loss of Wesley's friendship and stated: "..... Self love indulges under the loss of one of the best friends I had ever experienced thro thirty years knowledge of Christian friendship .....".

1John Thickens, Howell Harris Yn Llundain (Based on Diaries of Howell Harris and translated from the Welsh for this writer by Miss K. Monica Davies), (Argraffdy'r Methodiatsid Calfinaid: Caernaveron 1938), p.86. Previously Seymour's garbled account was the only authority for Lady Huntingdon's presence at this historic conference but this book confirms details of the Foundery Council when Lady Huntingdon, Susanne and John Wesley were present.


Meanwhile, on February 17th, 1739, Whitefield began open-air preaching to the colliers of Kingswood, and attracted not merely a few hundred but thousands to his services. He entreated Wesley to come to Bristol and relieve him, but Wesley, not sure of the correctness of this departure from existing ecclesiastical polity, made his decision to go only after recourse to the drawing of lots. Once Wesley did so and had preached to about three thousand in the open air, he began the work of organizing the converts into Societies, and secured ground in the Horse Fair in Bristol for the first Methodist center.

Sometime in 1740 David Taylor, an upper servant (either the butler or coachman) of Lord Huntingdon's, became one of Wesley's assistants and is listed in Myles 1740 list of the "First Race of Methodist Preachers". Lady Huntingdon was undoubtedly the one who loaned Taylor to Wesley, and this act is doubly significant in that it reveals (1) the ties already existing between the Countess and the Wesleys in 1740; and (2) the fact that Lady Huntingdon was one of the earliest advocates of lay-preaching. Once the alliance was made then between Wesley and the Countess, their cooperative efforts began to bear fruit.

Although the Methodist leaders had informally agreed to have no part in controversy for the sake of their greater Cause, the Calvinistic disputes continued to plague Methodism during 1740 and 1741. We shall not give detailed study to them, however, as this phase of evangelical history is outside the scope of this
thesis, and Lady Huntingdon being closely affiliated with Wesley at this time, was not involved in the Calvinistic attacks.

It will serve us well to note in passing, however, that Howell Harris was involved in this early conflict, and opposed the Wesleys and many of their theological concepts.

(Wesley's doctrine is) hellish popish Hereticall. I must declare against it & all that hold it; but I never saw so much of the Devil in it as I now (do). ¹

This is quite relevant as Lady Huntingdon was indebted to Howell Harris for many of her later plans and ideas, and his influence upon her thinking is reflected in them, and also in the fact that in the 1770's she described John Wesley in almost identical terms. The breach widened and when Whitefield returned to England from America in March, 1741, a separation took place. Wesley related the situation:

Here was the first breach which warm men persuaded Mr. Whitefield to make merely for a difference of opinion. Those who believed universal redemption had no desire to separate; but those who held particular redemption would not hear of any accommodation; being determined to have no fellowship with men that were 'in dangerous errors'. So there were now two sorts of Methodists: those for particular, and those for general redemption.²

It was in June of 1741 that George Whitefield preached his first sermon in the Moorfields Tabernacle, erected as the rival to

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² Wesley's Works, op. cit., VIII, p.335.
John Wesley was plagued with other problems as well, one being Charles' leaning too far toward Moravian stillness, which necessitated firm counsel from his brother. \(^1\) In October of the same year, Lady Huntingdon wrote John about Charles' being entangled with Moravian errors and seemingly regarded herself as his deliverer:

> Since you left us, the still ones are not without their attacks. I fear much more for him than for myself ..... They have by one of their agents reviled me very much, but I have taken no sort of notice ..... I comfort myself very much that you will approve a step, with respect to them, your brother and I have taken. No less than his declaring open war with them. He seemed under some difficulty about it at first, till he had free liberty given him to use my name, as the instrument in God's hand that had delivered him from them. \(^2\)

It was in this same letter that Lady Huntingdon asserted to Wesley:

> I have desired him to enclose to them yours on Christian Perfection. The doctrine therein contained I hope to live and die by; it is absolutely the most complete thing I know ..... \(^3\)

And yet years later this very doctrine became the theological determinant of her quarrel with and final separation from Wesley.

The Countess looked upon the Wesley brothers as her closest friends and spiritual kinsmen as we see in one of many letters

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\(^1\) Vide Wesley's Letters, op. cit., I, p.353. Charles Wesley, April 21, 1741. C.W. endorsed this letter from his brother "when I inclined to the Germans". Idem.

\(^2\) Seymour, op. cit., I, p.41. To John Wesley, October 24, 1741.

\(^3\) Ibid., I, p.42.
written to them at this period:

When you receive his Journal, you will rejoice much when you come to Thursday, October 15. I think you must have felt our happiness; it was more than I can express. We set out a week ago for Donnington. I will not allow you to call me a still branch. I spoke so strongly against boasting, I can desire nothing at present, but that my name be cast out from among men, and that you and your brother might think on me as you do on no one else. I am sure God will reward you ten thousand times for your labour and love to my soul; I am sure of your prayers. You are continually borne upon my heart to God, as well as the flock over whom the Holy Ghost has made you overseer.

You shall hear from me as soon as I get to Donnington, and have heard how your little flock goes on in that neighbourhood.¹

That she was considered an intimate friend and even spiritual counsellor is further apparent in a letter to Charles, giving her opinion on the advisability of the Wesley brothers belonging to a band in order to retain their religious ardor:

I think I agree with him (John) clearly that one set over each of you as checks to keep your souls warmth will be much better than (a) band for you and him. These may be chang'd with so much more ease than a band can & yet of still greater use .....²

It is strange that Wesley made no mention of Lady Huntingdon and her early espousal of the Methodist cause. Although she probably attended the Fetter Lane Society at the same time as he did, no mention of her name is made by him until April 15, 1741, when he wrote in his Diary: "9 at Lady Huntingdon's, with Lady Huntingdon

¹Idem.

conversed, tea 12 Rom. V..... 1.30 conversed with her; 2.30 dinner, conversed with her and him (i.e. Lord Huntingdon)." On June 1, 1741, Wesley noted that he was at Enfield Chase (i.e. Lady Huntingdon's residence) for tea\(^1\), and six days later he again visited her there and spent the night.\(^2\) The next morning he set out for Leicestershire and on June 10th, David Taylor (a convert of one of the Holy Club members, Benjamin Ingham) accompanied him to the midlands on Wesley's first tour, who made it at the express wish of her Ladyship.\(^3\) Taylor was under her command, and his instruction from her was to form societies and place them under Wesley's care; however, Taylor was soon converted to Moravian stillness.

Following his return to London, Wesley went on June 28, 1741, to Lady Huntingdon's after his full Sunday's work. He arrived there at 10 p.m., read a sermon and continued in discussion until 2 a.m. He had tea at 3.30 a.m. and rode back to the Foundery

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\(^1\)Wesley's Journal, op. cit., II, p.460, Diary entry, June 1, 1741.

\(^2\)Ibid., II, p.461, Diary entry, June 7, 1741.

\(^3\)Lady Huntingdon was responsible for drawing Wesley into a wider area of service, and it was this insistence from her that later led him to venture from his Bristol-London circuit into an unlimited parish. Vide Wesley's Letter to Mayor of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, July 12, 1743: "When I was first pressed by the Countess of Huntingdon to go and preach to the colliers in or near Newcastle ..." Wesley's Letters, op. cit., I, p.14. On the last Sunday in May, 1742, Wesley preached his first sermon in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and thus started his work in the apex of that triangle which was to circumscribe the major portion of his activity for the next half-century, a triangle of which the points were London, Bristol, Newcastle-upon-Tyne". Lee, op. cit., p.81.
in time to preach at 5.30 a.m. We are not given the title of the discourse which was examined in detail, but Wesley, in his Journal and Diary infers that it was probably the one he intended to use at St. Mary's, Oxford, on July 25th. Lady Huntingdon evidently felt that this proposed sermon, "How is the Faithful City Become a Harlot" (Isaiah 1:21), was too severe, and no doubt this was the reason for their lengthy discussion at such an hour, for we must remember that only a matter of utmost importance would have caused Wesley to break his long-established practice of retiring early. This sermon was then discarded and instead Wesley preached at St. Mary's "The Almost Christian", based on the text he had used for the afternoon message in Charles Square on that Sunday, June 28th. Such was the power of the Countess of Huntingdon upon him at this time. But a doubt lurks at the back of one's mind as to whether or not Wesley was really convinced he had done right in heeding her advice to soften the Gospel for Oxford, since in 1744 his last sermon there revealed the stern, prophetic preaching he had originally intended three years before.

The year 1742 stands as the high point in the personal relationship of John Wesley and Lady Huntingdon, and he submitted a manuscript extract of his Journal to her, to which she responded

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with her opinion on January 9, 1742:

I think there is not one thing in the Journal that ought to be omitted. The manner in which you speak of yourself cannot be mended, supposing you have done justice to the grace you have received. We never forget to recommend you, and all your undertakings, at the throne of grace, and as long as you follow the Lord Jesus in simplicity and godly sincerity, I hope to be the happy friend that shall live and die by you, if the Lord permit, and may you be his peculiar charge now, henceforth, and for ever. 1

On 15 March she wrote:

Surely my friend has a mind to exercise his gift of humility in an extraordinary manner, when he could once ask my opinion upon his Journal. That it will both delight and comfort me, I have no doubt; 2

Wesley's high esteem for the Countess was revealed in this act and was reciprocated for she held him and his opinion in great regard, looking to him as her spiritual guide. In an undated letter to Charles she discloses to some degree the powerful influence he and his brother had over her thinking:

I hope you are too just to think my thoughts on all these (religious matters) things are not submitted to you & your brother (but this I Do affirm my whole soul says what he says is true according to all of evidence of things not seen) ...... 3

Wesley's next recorded visit to the Countess was on May 22, 1742, at Donnington Park, when he stopped at her request to see her daughter's governess, Miss Cowper, who was dying of tuberculosis.

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1Seymour, op. cit., I, p. 46. To John Wesley, January 9, 1742.
2Ibid., I, p. 51. To John Wesley, March 15, 1742.
From his trip north, during which he had preached his first sermon at Newcastle-upon-Tyne and his famous sermon on his father's tombstone, he also returned on June 18th by way of Donnington Park. At this stage of their relationship Lady and Lord Huntington held the following regard for Wesley:

At this period Mr. Wesley's visits to Donnington Park were very frequent; Lady Huntington having a very sincere esteem for him, and they were much united in sentiments of a theological nature. Easy and affable in his demeanour, he accommodated himself to every society, and showed how happily the most finished courtesy may be blended with the most perfect piety. In his conversation, we might be at a loss which to admire most, his fine classical taste, his extensive knowledge of men and things, or his overflowing goodness of heart. While the grave and serious were charmed with his wisdom, his sportive sallies of innocent mirth delighted even the young and thoughtless; and both saw, in his uninterrupted cheerfulness, the excellency of true religion. 

Meanwhile, after the separation of George Whitefield from the Wesleys, Howell Harris began the first of what was to be many attempts to reconcile the two groups. During the autumn of 1741 and late summer of 1742 he intervened in an attempt to heal this rupture harmful to Methodism. An impartial account by an unknown minister indicates the seriousness of the situation:

This morning I Seriously consider'd The Present State of the Methodist Church & do Plainly See that Satan has got much grownd Divide & Conquer is ye Word Surely the Leaders of this people Cause ( ) to Err - When Mn Whitefield & Mr. Wesley were United in the Glorious gospell Cause All the Attempts to great & Learn'd men were Inefuctal to stop the Progress of the gospell ..... The one for Precedency

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1Seymour, op. cit., I, p.58.
& the Other for Superiority contend ..... & thus began the Cause of Present Dismal Consequences ..... The Laicks (sic) Profess themselves Umpires & commence Ipsdixit Puzle (sic) and Stumble Ignorant & Weak People with Curt Phrases hard words & nice Distinctions Subverting Unstable Souls Surely matter of grief and Lamentation.1

After his 1742 attempts at peacemaking, Harris, a moderate Calvinist who sided with Whitefield, said:

I found on talking together deliberately, calmly, and lovingly, that the doctrinal difference between them (Wesley and Whitefield) was not so great as it seemed to be, and that they entirely agreed in the essential point of building the soul wholly on Christ, and giving God in Christ all the glory of our salvation. But the time of uniting is not yet come.2

One of his dreams was to unite the Calvinistic and Wesleyan branches of Methodism and the Moravians, and a meeting of the spokesmen for these three groups was arranged by him in London for May, 1742. This attempt failed, however, for while Wesley came from Newcastle for the meeting, Whitefield, though in London, refused to come, as did the Moravians.

On January 5, 1743, at Waterford, South Wales, George Whitefield was elected Moderator of the Welsh Methodists, later to be termed the Calvinistic Methodists. This leader, often accused of lack of organizing ability, here proved otherwise, for he welded these Methodists into a cohesive force.

It is at this point that we note the first known difference

1Unpublished National Library of Wales MSS Diary 3265, n.d.
of opinion between John Wesley and the Countess, who wrote to Charles in 1743:

You only desire to be fellow-helper with them in God's Heritage, I saw your B(rother) in agreeing to this. . . . I have had a letter still opposing (sic) in a great degree this poor woman. I am not carefull (sic) about it he will receive no farther truth (sic) upon it from me but this I shall Constantly affirm. I can never bow down to No man in an evident untruth let him think it what he will. 1

This note of discord led her to seek additional outlets for her enthusiastic support of Methodism, and in October of this same year, she wrote to Howell Harris apparently pleading for God to "Use me - use me". Harris replied on the 31st of October, 1743:

I doubt not but zeal for his HonF & thirst for ye happiness of poor immortal Sprihe that chain'd in misery makes you continually cry "Lord use me - use me - o wt HonF is it for worms - 2

This letter is significant not only because it revealed Lady Huntingdon's eagerness to do more in the Cause, but also because it marked the beginning of the friendship between these two prominent evangelicals. Harris, in a May, 1744, letter to her disclosed the value other Methodist leaders placed upon her contribution:

May He still animate your seraphic soul with zeal and divine wisdom as He has done hitherto, that you may be the happy means of bringing the savour of his knowledge to Court among the great ones. 3

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2 Unpublished Treveck MSS Letter 1024 to Countess of Huntington.
John Bennett was introduced by this devout woman to Wesley as a convert of her servant, David Taylor. In 1743 he became one of his itinerants, and was one of four lay preachers invited by him to his first Conference which opened at the Foundery on June 25, 1744. Doctrinal and practical matters were discussed at this gathering and sanctification was defined in definite Wesleyan terms. Had Lady Huntingdon entertained ideas about Sanctification dissimilar to these she would undoubtedly have expressed them, and most certainly would not have opened her London residence to the Methodists for the first time. Seymour indicates that the importance of this open support was accentuated because it took place during Lord Huntingdon's lifetime. Thus, by 1744 the Earl and Lady Huntingdon had come to some agreement about her active participation in the Methodist cause. On this historic occasion in her home, Wesley preached from the text, "What hath God wrought?". As our examination in Chapter Two disclosed, the rules for the preachers of Methodism were also adopted at this Conference.

Lady Huntingdon had complained to Wesley about the lack of "good moral poems". In response to this, during that same summer, he published three volumes entitled A Collection of Moral and Sacred Poems from the Most Celebrated English Authors. They were

1Seymour, op. cit., I, p. 62 et seq.
prefaced with these words:

I inscribe these poems to you, not only because you was (sic) the occasion of their thus appearing in the world, but also because it may be an inducement to many to read them (nearer to Wesley's real reason). Your name, indeed, cannot excuse a bad poem; but it may recommend good ones to those who would not otherwise consider whether they were good or bad. And I am persuaded they will not be unacceptable to you, were it only on this account - that many of them describe what a person of quality ought, and what I trust you desire, to be. 1

It was during this same month of August, 1744, that Wesley, in answer to Mrs. Hutton's letter, showed how uneasy was his acquiescence to the deference shown Lady Huntingdon in saving for her a seat in the West Street Chapel until after the Creed. 2

1745 was a year of unrest for England. Charles Edward Stuart left Brittany for Scotland, rallying adherents to his cause under the motto "Tandem triumphans". For the Methodists the year brought upheaval also, through the unjust and villainous charge of fornication made against Charles Wesley, which led the Countess, in an attempt to clear him, to act as a liaison between him and Dr. Gibson, the Bishop of London. 3 In a letter written in February to Dr. Gibson, Charles vindicated himself from this false accusation. 4

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2Ibid., II, p. 24. To Mrs. Hutton, August, 1744. Vide Chapter II of this thesis.
4Wesley's Letters, op. cit., II, p. 28. Charles Wesley to Dr. Gibson, Bishop of London, February 8, 1745.
During this year the Earl and Countess of Huntingdon, with their two children Selina and Henry, had their portrait painted by P. Soldi. From this portrayal, which now hangs in the Cheshunt College parlor, the serenity which at that time pervaded the countenance of her Ladyship, and her small delicate chin are clearly noted. Within a year certain critical events, foremost of which were the death of her husband in October, 1746, and her severance of Foundery ties and subsequent affiliation with the Tabernacle, resulted in her assuming an even more authoritative nature. Interestingly, later portraits of her plainly indicate that her chin became more hardened and firmly set, an indication of an unmalleable disposition, which at a later date was to prove a source of difficulty for Wesley.

In December, 1745, Cennick left the Tabernacle, announcing that he was joining the Moravians. Whitefield was then in America and no one was left in charge after this desertion. On August 30, 1746, Howell Harris wrote Whitefield that Cennick had told him: "..... If I (H.H.) wd not take it ye Doors wd be shut. I had freedom to venture to be as Clay in ye Lords Hands to do wt I cd to keep ye Place open till you shd come ....." It is significant that Lady Huntingdon joined the Tabernacle group only when Howell Harris shouldered the responsibility of leadership, and this again reveals his influence upon her.

What were the reasons for the Countess of Huntingdon leaving the Foundery and joining the congregation at the Tabernacle?

Howell Harris reported that:

the Lord stood by Bro. Charles Wesley to clear up his character from ye Aspersions cast upon Him which I suppose yo (sic) heard of - it came to Mr. Broughtons ears & he took 2 affidavits of ye matter & it was laid before the Bishops, & it was thought he w'd have been excommunicated but now all is ov(er as) far as I can hear - my Lady H(untingdon) was then somewhat staggerd & I don't know did she receive the sacrament with them1 ever since - However I believe she grows in her soul

Although she may have believed momentarily in Charles Wesley's guilt, Lady Huntingdon's later actions and close friendship with him and his family indicate that there must have been other reasons for her joining Whitefield's branch of Methodism.

In June, 1746, after the death of Selina, her second daughter, she wrote to John Wesley:

I feel the flame still burning within me - the ardent longing to save sinners from the error of their ways. O, how does the zeal of others reprove me! O, that my poor cold heart could catch a spark from others, and be as a flame of fire in the Redeemer's service! Some few instances of success, which God, in the riches of his mercy, has lately favoured me with, have greatly comforted me during my season of affliction; and I have felt the presence of God in my soul in a very remarkable manner, particularly when I have prayed for the advancement of his kingdom amongst men in the world. This revives me, and if God prolongs my poor unprofitable life, I trust it will ever be engaged in one continued series of zealous, active services for him, and the good of precious immortal souls.2

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1Roberts, op. cit., p.179, Letter to George Whitefield, Obr. 8, 1745, Trovecka Letter 1372.

2Seymour, op. cit., I, p.74. Countess of Huntingdon to John Wesley, June 18, 1746.
This letter was an extension of the one she had written in 1743 to Howell Harris in which she cried out "Lord, use me, use me". Wesley, however, had no place for a Countess in his work. Obviously, she could not have equal authority with him, and he had not yet initiated the practice of women preaching, and at this point was even opposed to their speaking in church. But, Lady Huntingdon longed to be fully engaged in the work of the Revival, the death of Lord Huntingdon making her more eager than ever to expend her energies and time. She was only thirty-nine and possessed a fortune she was willing to invest in the dissemination of the doctrines she so ardently believed. Wesley was blind to the possibility of a Countess fitting into his scheme, for he was preaching to the poor and middle classes, and more than once his remarks about the uselessness of addressing the "great vulgar" have been noted. So Lady Huntingdon, probably reluctantly, left the Wesleys and went to work in the opposing camp. All of this then is evidence against those who assert that she became a Calvinist at Fetter Lane, and from that time supported Whitefield's doctrines and opposed those of Wesley. Rather, it was at the Tabernacle from the autumn of 1746 on that she must have heard many discussions of the heresies of Wesley and his followers. Although never understanding it, she had previously approved of his doctrine of perfection. All this was now to change. In June,

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1Weley quoted with approbation Paul's enjoinder for women to remain silent in the church "and if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home" (I Cor. XIV, 34-5). Also a part of his philosophy in 1748 was I Tim. 2:11-12, "For I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man..." Vide Wesley's Letters, op. cit., II, p. 119, Thomas Whitehead (?), February 10, 1748.
1747, Howell Harris recorded in his Diary the first mention of her reversal of opinion: "She was agt sinless perfect and ye wd Instantaneous gift of Sanctification as Bro Wesley told." Thus began her opposition, which gained momentum with the passing of years. At this point it is of significance to examine the relationship of belief to personal experience. Wesley believed in "perfect love", although he never claimed to have been made perfect in love himself. He could hold a doctrine grounded in Scripture (as he believed) even when his own experience did not match that of many Methodists. The Countess could not do this. One has to ask whether the Countess was opposed to this doctrine simply because her own "assurance" was not strong.

Harris, who in Whitefield's absence was acting Moderator for the Calvinistic Methodists and leader of the Tabernacle group, became her chief counsellor after she left the Wesleys. As late as April, 1747, she continued to seek her place in the Revival. A letter to her under this date reveals that even her old ties with the Church of England failed her, and apparently the Archbishop neglected her spiritual welfare. Although she still

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1 Trevecka MSS Howell Harris Diary, unpublished, June, 1747.

2 In an unpublished anonymous letter to Lady Huntingdon dated April 20, 1747, the following observations were made about the lack of concern shown for her Ladyship by the Church of England leaders: "& if His Grace of Canterbury was Sent of God, and knew Experimentally that the archbishop was a faithfull (sic) ambassadour of Jesus Christ tis certain his Grace wanted in some of those Chelsea vissits (sic) make Enquiry after the State of yr. Lady's most precious & Immortal Soul •••• Vide Trevecka Letter 1643, unpublished April 20, 1747, National Library of Wales.
wanted desperately to be useful in the work, she confided to Howell Harris that she was going to retire and he repeatedly counselled with her against such a decision. Had it not been for him, the Countess might possibly have withdrawn from the Evangelical scene. This situation placed Lady Huntingdon in a quandary and even caused her to lean toward the Quakers, as is indicated by the following letter from Howell Harris to George Whitefield:

The Countess of H----r is at Bath & her Chaplin (sic) yr old Friend Mr Hutches Ile ask'd Very Affectionately after you but I fear they are warpg towds Quarkerm (Quakerism) & Mr Law ..... 1

1748 was a momentous year for the Tabernacle Methodists. First of all, in May, Lady Huntingdon accompanied by several members of her family left Bath on her first tour in the name of Methodism. She was joined at Bristol by the four most renowned preachers of Wales, and together they travelled for fifteen days, scattering "the seed of divine truth". 2 Secondly, after an absence of four long years, Whitefield returned to England reaching London on July 5th. In the early part of June Wesley had finished his Conference. Howell Harris had been present and alarmed by the authoritarian spirit Wesley displayed there, he wrote the

1 Unpublished Trevecka Ms Letter 1745, Howell Harris to George Whitefield, December 1747. In Howell Harris' unpublished Diary for April 9, 1747, he wrote "She (Lady Huntingdon) consulted me about which was it best to live retincl and give up all or fill her Place & I ad ye latt'r I thought was right whilst she felt she was enabld to be faithfull & felt ye L'd with her end was determind to stay in ye Church." Unpublished Trevecka Ms Diary of Howell Harris, London, Thursday, April 9, 1747.

following report:

London, Friday, June 3. I find he (Mr. Wesley) has demanded everywhere over ye Preachers to send him an acct of their Behav'r & wheth'r God is wth them - he did read heads to me of an address to ye Clergy where he shew'd ye natural acquir'd & gracious gifts that all Clergymn shd have & I object'd that it shd be softer as tis so strong a Pill & not writt authoritative lest they object & cry who made him ArchBp over us & not writt percursorily because ye Prophets Apostles & many Eminent men that have been employ'd in ye Church have not had many of these Qualifications.

Undoubtedly, Wesley's Conference was described time and again to Whitefield, not only by the more impartial and peace-loving Harris, but by others who were determined to attack Wesley and widen the chasm between him and Whitefield.

In London during the summer of 1748, Howell Harris took Whitefield to meet his good friend Lady Huntingdon, who nine years previously had most probably heard him preach at the Fetter Lane Society. Before the autumn of that same year she had made the highly significant decision to appoint him as one of her chaplains. Whitefield, almost servile in his attitude toward her, saw the Countess as a great instrument of the gospel; and paid her the obeisance which her position demanded. Wesley, on the other hand, displayed a far different attitude. When Whitefield, who

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1Unpublished Trevecka MSS Howell Harris Diary, June 3, 1748.

had been preaching to the nobility in her drawing room at Chelsea left for Scotland on September 3rd, her Ladyship, who was now beginning to find her place in the work, pleaded with Wesley to come and preach in her home while Whitefield was away. Wesley's Journal entry is perhaps the most revealing statement of his attitude toward her at this time:

**Wed. 7.** - Being not able with tolerable decency to excuse myself any longer, I went to Chelsea and spent two or three hours as in the times that are past. I hoped one journey would serve. But I was too hasty in reckoning. L(ady) H(untingdon) pressed me to come again on Friday, so that I could not handsomely decline it. Our pew at the chapel in the evening was so full I could hardly stir. Col. Hilliard, Lord Townshend, and many others were there, who came with Lady Bath, Lady Townshend and Lady Charlotte Edwin. I scarce ever spake stronger in my life than I did tonight from those words in the Second Lesson, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?' &c. Perhaps even the rich may be witnesses of these things.

**Fri. 9.** - I took up my cross once more, and came to Chelsea a little after eleven. After some conversation L(ady) H(untingdon) desired me to preach. Part of the congregation was Lord Huntingdon (just come from Oxford), Lady Bath, Lady Townshend, and Baron Zulendahl, the Danish Ambassador's brother. I spoke exceeding plain from those words, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God'. Yet I cannot find that any one of the audience was offended. What is this which God is working in earth? Before I went I had an opportunity of talking alone with L(ady) H(untingdon). I trust I delivered my own soul. And she received it well, the tears standing in her eyes. But at the same time there was a consequence I was not aware of. She begged (me) to come once more. 'If but for one hour; for half an hour'. Not knowing what God might have to do, I told her I would endeavour to come on Sunday evening, though my time would be but short.1

Wesley was never the best judge of women's emotions and his

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1Wesley's Journal, on. cit., VIII, p.156 et seq. September 7 and 9, 1748, (my italics).
statement that "she received it well" may be questioned, for one wonders if, after this frank oration resulting in tears, she were not more bewildered than enlightened. To a lady who was unused to such bluntness this was perhaps too direct a manner of speaking and it is no wonder that the Countess now joined Whitefield, in whom she found an emotional warmth which was lacking in her relationship with Wesley. Nevertheless, she still continued to invite Wesley to preach in her London mansion, but usually when Whitefield was away speaking elsewhere.¹

Attacks against the Methodists continued throughout the year, and in April the Bath Journal printed some slanderous charges of adultery, fornication, and the practice of polygamy, which Wesley vigorously denied. In this same month in the Huntingdon residence in London, with Howell Harris, George Whitefield, and Lady Huntingdon present, the preparations for a summit conference with the Wesleys began. Harris wrote:

> it was moved w⁷ to be done abt Union with Mr. Wesley I gave my Mind how considn his Tempttn to Pride from his human learnng & being at the Head of a Party &c. ..... he is to be considered as in great Danr & to be pityd. (I proposed submitting to Wesley) 1. if he cd bear one Equal - to take Mr. Whitefd on an equal footwth himself & to have ye same liberty & freedm in preaching among their Societies as his own. 2. if he did not look on himself as sole judge of ye Qualificatn of Preachers or cd he bear others to sit wth him in that respect because we think we have manv such Not that one (is) not qualifd .... & my lady spake her mind agt private Societies.²

¹Vide Ibid., II, p. 390, January 1749.
²Unpublished Trevecka MSS Howell Harris Diary, Lambeth, April 29, 1749.
This proposed meeting between Charles and John Wesley, George Whitefield and Howell Harris took place on August 2, 1749, at the New Room in the Horse Fair. The outcome of the conference, as revealed in the following document dated 2 August, 1749, was an attempt to unite the Methodists in spirit, if not in actuality:

In order to come as near each other as possible, with regard to these Points where we do not think alike,

1. Not to preach controversially either for or against Absolute Election, Irresistible Grace, or Final Perseverance;
2. To avoid in Preaching ye use of any such terms as naturally tend to revive ye Controversy.
3. To confine ourselves to ye very language of scripture as far as possible.
4. To use each other's Expressions, mixed with our own, as far as we can honestly.
5. Continually to maintain, That man's whole salvation is of God, & his whole Damnation of himself.

With regard to Perfection it was agreed

1. Not to preach controversially either for or against it.
2. To drop the Expressions, Sinless and the Inbeing of Sin.
3. To exhort all to press on to Perfection in ye Holy Law of Love, by universal Inwd & Outwd Conformity to ye Life and Death of Xt.

The evaluation given the Conference by Charles Wesley is disclosed by the words "Vain Agreement" written on his copy, and by his Journal entry: "Our conference this week with Whitefield and Mr. Harris came to nought;". Howell Harris in his account of

2Idem.
this Conference stated that he had requested that one name (i.e. John Wesley's) should not be placed above the others: "I mentioned my fears lest he shd affect to be Head to a Party &c - Mr. Whitefield mentioned his objections to his Monapalisig (sic) ye name of Methodists to himself only." On the Friday following, he wrote that the main outcome of this meeting was an agreement "That Ye Discipline in Wales is in my Hands & so in England in his hands." Returning to the land of his fathers he gave reports on the conference with Wesley as follows:

October 28, 1749. Erred ..... I opened of our meetings with Mr. Wesley, & how we did not differ much about Perfection only about ye nature of it, & about falling from grace and Perseverance, only differing about ye point where to fix it, & about Universal Redemption, we believing Christ died for all, but only applied to ye Church, wrote Journal. 

Never the cohesive force that John Wesley was, Whitefield lost many of his converts through loose organization and his inability to remain where he had sown long enough to weed and reap. In his desire to bring evangelical Christianity to the British nobility, he sometimes succumbed to the temptation of relishing this more comfortable type of ministry above that carrying less prestige. In this regard Howell Harris recorded a conversation he had with Whitefield in December, 1749: "how I think he sins

1 Unpublished Trevecka MSS Howell Harris Diary, Wednesday, August 2, 1749.
2 Ibid., Friday, August 4, 1749.
in not going to ye little places to preach Lambeth, Deptford, & Bridewell as Mr. Wesley does". 1 In November, 1749, Whitefield described his mission to Mr. Lunell in Ireland:

.... I believe my particular province is to go about and preach the gospel to all. My being obliged to keep up a large correspondence in America, and the necessity I am under of going thither myself, entirely prevent my taking care of any Societies ..... I profess to be of a catholic spirit; I am a debtor to all. I have no party to be the head of, and I will have none; but, as much as in me lies, will strengthen the hands of all of every denomination, who preach Jesus Christ in sincerity.2

In a belated attempt to remedy his loss of converts, he wrote to Lady Huntingdon in the winter of 1749, giving her the following annunciation:

A leader is wanting. This honour hath been put upon your Ladyship by the great Head of the Church; an honour conferred on few, but an earnest of one to be put on your Ladyship before men and angels, when time shall be no more. That you may every day add to the splendour of your future crown, be always abounding in the work of the Lord, is the fervent prayer of &c. ...3

Never quite sure of her election, and never more in doubt than at this moment she requested of the Tabernacle congregation public prayers for her in this decision. Whitefield read a portion of her letter to his congregation at the Tabernacle and then wrote back informing her that "thousands heartily joined in singing the

1 Unpublished Trevecka MSS Diary, op. cit., Wednesday, Dec. 20, 1749.
2 Tyerman, Whitefield, op. cit., II, p. 239, Letter to Mr. Lunell, November 22, 1749 (my italics).
3 Seymour, op. cit., I, p. 117.
following verses for her Ladyship:

Gladly we join to pray for those
Who, rich with worldly honours, shine,
Who dare to own a Saviour's cause,
And in that hated cause to join:
Yes, we would praise thee, that a few
Love thee, though rich and noble too.

Uphold this star in thy right hand -
Crown her endeavours with success;
Among the great ones may she stand,
A witness of thy righteousness,
Till many nobles join thy train,
And triumph in the Lamb that's slain.

Christian hymnody's blush of shame is lessened by virtue of the fact that this poet remains anonymous. Lady Huntingdon accepted this "honour" however and was destined to be an outstanding figure in the Revival.

Early in 1750 spirits were high in evangelical circles, for there were indications that the 1749 summit conference might bring the parties of Methodism into a more harmonious working alliance. Whitefield still held reservations about Wesley, however, for on January 12, 1750, he wrote Lady Huntingdon:

I find a love of power sometimes intoxicates even God's own dear children, and makes them to mistake passion for zeal, and an overbearing spirit for an authority given them from above. For my own part, I find it much easier to obey than govern, and that it is much safer to be trodden under foot, than to have it in one's power to serve others so .... Thanks be to the Lord of all Lords for taking any pains with hell-deserving me ....

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1 Seymour, op. cit., I, p.117.
2 Idem.
In an attempt to implement the joint agreement of 1749, Whitefield wrote Wesley that he was available to assist him in any way possible. On January 19, Wesley replied by inviting him to preach at the West Street Chapel, and he himself read the prayers. On the following Sunday the roles were reversed; on Monday morning Wesley read the prayers and Howell Harris preached; and the following Sunday he again read the prayers when Whitefield preached. This was the beginning of several occasions when, largely due to Lady Huntingdon's influence, Wesley and Whitefield cooperated in sharing services. She commented on this event:

Thanks be to God for the love and unanimity which have been displayed on this happy occasion. May the God of peace and harmony unite us all in a bond of affection!..... (May) all those who take knowledge of us ..... say - 'See how these Christians love one another!'

An earthquake on the 8th of February, and a second more severe one a month later created much religious fervor in London. In the meantime, a soldier, who was later sent to Bedlam, prophesied that on April 4th, another earthquake would destroy half of the city. Women purchased "Earthquake gowns" for that night, and the Methodist chapels were crowded with people who, unable to leave London, sought refuge there. Whitefield, like Wesley, ever ready to utilize contemporary situations for the propagation of the gospel, preached at midnight in Hyde Park on the Last Judgment but the prophecy remained unfulfilled.

1Seymour, op. cit., I, p.119.
In May, 1750, Wesley wrote to Edward Perronet about the failure of "his sons in the gospel" to support him. John Bennet, although reappointed at the 1750 Conference, was one of these to leave Wesley, but not before he had complained to Whitefield and several others about Wesley's strict discipline and doctrines, particularly that of Christian perfection. Wesley was also troubled by the severe criticism of Bishop Lavington of Exeter, who had anonymously attacked him and Whitefield in a scurrilous pamphlet, "The First Part - The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared", to which Wesley issued a reply entitled, "A Letter to the Author of 'The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared'". In November, he wrote a lengthy letter to George James Stonehouse, former vicar of Islington, who had sold his living and joined the Moravians, and in it he listed in logical fashion the places wherein this group erred.

Lady Huntingdon, increasingly active in the work at this time, was described in October, 1750, by Whitefield to Countess Delitz as follows:

Good Lady Huntingdon goes on acting the part of a mother in Israel more and more. For a day or two, she has had five clergymen under her roof, which makes her ladyship look like a good archbishop with his chaplains around him. Her house in indeed a Bethel. To us in the ministry, it

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1Wesley's *Journal*, op. cit., IV, p.15.

looks like a college. We have the sacrament every morning, heavenly consolation all day, and preaching at night. This is to live at court indeed. Your Ladyship, and the other elect are never forgotten by us.¹

Lady Huntingdon had to lessen her efforts for a brief period, however, and December, 1750, found her critically ill and not expected to recover. In January, 1751, Whitefield rode to her home in Ashby, fearing he would not find her alive, and discovered upon arrival that her sister-in-law, Lady Frances, had died. On the 30th of that month, he wrote describing the atmosphere within the Huntingdon household: "..... Almost all the family have been sick ..... It is a house of mourning; that is better than a house of feasting .....".²

Wesley also was confronted with difficulties, among which were the disturbance of his Wednesbury society by the predestinarians, minor annoyances such as the mayor of Tiverton threatening to banish Methodism, difficulties at Kingswood School, Antinomianism which spread like wildfire through the Moravians, and the immoral actions of James Wheatley. Wheatley was guilty of adultery and was expelled by John and Charles after a confrontation in which he attempted to implicate his fellow Methodist preachers on identical charges. This was the first expulsion within Methodism, and


²Ibid., II, p. 269. Letter to Lady Mary Hamilton, June 30, 1751.
after Wheatley left the Wesleys he went to Norwich and built a large tabernacle, where in time he brought more disgrace and scandal to the evangelical cause. Lady Huntingdon, who knew Wheatley had been dismissed by the Wesleys, nevertheless contributed a large sum toward the erection of his new Tabernacle in Norwich. This incident of immorality made Wesley determined to be more strict in the supervision of his "sons in the gospel" and Charles was given the responsibility of examining the preachers for purity of life and doctrine. This duty led Charles to rethink his own attitude to the uneducated preachers among them, and while seriously ill at Leeds on 4th August, 1751, he wrote to the Countess of Huntingdon stating that all of these men should return to their trades and forget about being gentlemen. The letter very significant in that it reveals matters which Charles must have often talked over with her, closed:

The second reason which I have for insisting on the labourers keeping themselves (which I cannot mention to my brother lest it should be a reason with him against it) is, namely, (that) it will break his power, their not depending on him for bread, and reduce his authority within due bounds, as well as guard against that rashness and credulity of his, which has kept me in continual awe and bondage for many years. Therefore I shall insist on their working as the one point, the single condition, of my acting in concert with him. Because without this I can neither trust them nor him. If he refuses I will give both preachers and society to his sole management, for this ruin shall not be under my hands. If he complies, I hope to take up my cross and bear it more cheerfully than ever I have done heretofore.1

Ever the confidante of Charles, Lady Huntingdon read these unfair charges and wisely remained silent, but somehow the indiscreet letter came into John Wesley's possession, and brought forth just and spirited rebuke for his brother.  

In 1752 reports were abroad that Charles because of his intimate association with Lady Huntingdon had become a Calvinist. These accusations were strengthened by Charles' frequent preaching and administering of the Sacraments in her house, and also by her changing her residence to Clifton in order to be nearer Charles and his family. Wesley was alarmed over these charges against his brother, and advised him to write his beliefs for all to read.

In 1751 Wesley had published his "Serious Thoughts upon the perseverance of the Saints" and in 1752 his "Predestination calmly Considered", both of which were attempts to reveal Calvinistic fallacies. These two publications tended to revive distrust and suspicion within Methodism. Whitefield, therefore, was of little help to Charles when the latter came to consult with him about a means of eradicating his brother's distrust of him and his association with the Countess, for his reply was:

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3Vide New, op. cit., p. 112.

I cannot help thinking that he (John Wesley) is jealous of me and my proceedings; but, I thank God, I am quite easy about it .... As I wrote to good Lady Huntingdon, so I write to you .... I have seen an end of all perfection, and expect it only in Him, in whom I am sure to find it, the ever-loving, ever-lovely Jesus.

On this same day, Whitefield also wrote to Lady Huntingdon:

I shall observe your ladyship's hints about Mr. Wesley. I believe our visits will not be very frequent .... It is good for me that I have been supplanted, despised, censured, malign'd, and separated from my nearest, dearest friends.2

The breach was widening between the Whitefield-Huntingdon faction and John Wesley.

1753 did not prove to be a year of reconciliation, and when Wesley's conference met on May 22nd, it was agreed that no predestination could preach in a society from that time on, and "that a loving and respectful letter should be written to Mr. Whitefield, desiring him to advise his preachers not to reflect (as they had done continually, and that both with great bitterness and rudeness) either upon the doctrines, discipline, or person of Mr. Wesley among his own Societies;" and to abstain from preaching against Wesley's "doctrines, rules, or preachers; and not to declare war anew as he (Whitefield) had done by a needless digression in his late sermon".3 Wesley wrote this letter to


3Wesley's Letters, op. cit., III, p.100. Letter to George Whitefield, May (23), 1755.
Whitefield on May 28 from Birstall "in order to a still firmer union between us", and said that his preachers:

had been troubled at the manner wherein your preachers (so I call those who preach at the Tabernacle) had very frequently spoken of my brother and me, partly in the most scoffing and contemptuous manner, relating an hundred shocking stories (such as that of Mary Popplestone and Eliz. Story) as unquestionable facts, and propagating them with diligence and with an air of triumph wherever they came.¹

Across his copy of the letter Wesley wrote "He denies all", but Whitefield was stung by these valid accusations and contemplated answering them by printing a public reply. Lady Huntingdon wrote Charles:

Mr. Whitefield writes me word he had not time to copy the letter he intended to print. I am glad of it. As I hate every thing that does not make for Peace & I never saw any thing wrote obstinately that I did not disprove. Charity is the most excellent way private conferences clear up more in an hour than a paper would for some years ...... I do think it is best for us all to keep clear of any thing that may be follow'd with a scrape of any kind.²

John had further discord with Charles and on October 20 wrote to him about his unwillingness to work in harmony. He questioned Charles' choice of advisers, giving vent to his irritation:

At present you are so far from this (asking John's advice about where to visit) that I do not even know when and where you intend to go; so far are you from following any advice of mine - nay, even from asking it.

And yet I may say without vanity that I am a better judge of this matter than either Lady Huntingdon, Sally, Jones, or any other — nay, than your own heart, that is will. 1

Here again the precedence Charles placed upon Lady Huntingdon's opinion over that of his elder brother gave John Wesley fresh cause for resentment; for true enough he was the best judge of where key Methodists were most needed at particular times, and the continual ignoring of the fact by Charles planted seeds of future antagonism.

The winter of 1753 brought illness and death to the Wesley family. First, John became seriously ill in November and retired to the Blackwell home at Lewisham, where he composed his famous epitaph. His not preaching for four months testified to the severity of his illness. Charles accompanied John to his favorite place of retirement, and in London learned that his wife Sally was critically ill with smallpox. His son, John Wesley, contracted this disease also, and died. Lady Huntingdon nursed Sally through her illness, and manuscript letters in the Methodist Book Room Archives from her to Charles dated December 3rd, 6th, 10th, 26th, and two on the 31st, contain her reports to him of his wife's condition. That Charles Wesley was deeply indebted to her for risking her own health in order to nurse his wife through such a critical illness is evident in his Journal

entry recording his gratitude and appreciation.¹

In April, 1755, Wesley revealed his irritation at Lady Huntingdon's meddling in his family affairs. He desperately longed for a reconciliation between his wife, Molly, and his brother Charles. He wrote to his good friend Ebenezer Blackwell about this situation:

Being fully persuaded that my brother would gladly embrace any overture of peace, I told him almost as soon as we met what my wife had agreed to. He answered not a word ....... Just as I was going out of town the next morning He sent to me to call at his house. But I could not then; and before I came back he was set out for London only leaving a note that he had left his answer with Lady Huntingdon. It may be so; but I saw her twice afterward, and she said nothing of it to me (Wesley was too proud to ask?). Neither am I (any more than my wife), willing to refer the matter to her arbitration.²

Twenty days later Wesley again wrote Blackwell about Charles' inconsiderate behavior in this matter, which still remained unresolved:

I do not at all know what his (Charles') judgment is or what are his intentions. I can only conjecture that his design is never to speak to her at all. And I suppose this is Lady Huntington's advice, because he referred me to her for an answer. But I cannot submit to her arbitration. I do not think she is a competent judge. You love both the Contending parties; but I am afraid she does not.³

This is the first inkling we have that the Countess of Huntingdon

²Wesley's Letters, op. cit., III, p.125 et seq. To Ebenezer Blackwell, April 9, 1755 (my italics).
³Ibid., III, p.127. To Ebenezer Blackwell, April 29, 1755.
among a host of others, disliked Molly Vazeille Wesley, and that Wesley thought she had influenced his brother Charles against his wife. Wesley was also perturbed over her influence on Charles in other than family matters as well. After the Leeds Conference, Charles had returned by Donnington Park to stay with her, and he was also planning to go to Clifton in July to meet the Countess. He was extremely agitated at this time, fearing that Wesley was contemplating the severance of all ties with the established Church. John, believing that Lady Huntingdon was partly responsible for Charles’ unreasonable attitude, wrote to him on June 28, 1755, revealing an accurate perception of the primary issue, which Charles and his cohorts overlooked.

I only fear the preacher’s or the people’s leaving not the Church but the love of God and inward or outward holiness. To this I press them forward continually. I dare not in conscience spend my time and strength on externals. If (as my lady says) all outward establishments are Babel, so is the Establishment. Let it stand for me. I neither set it up nor pull it down. But let you and I build up the City of God.¹

At the Conference in Leeds in 1755 the point of the relationship of Methodism to the Church of England was debated and there was general agreement that the question was not whether it was lawful to separate from the Established Church or not, but whether it was expedient at that time. Although the question of expediency was answered in the negative, the ire of Charles Wesley,

¹Wesley’s Letters, op. cit., III, p.132. To Charles Wesley, June 28, 1755.
Lady Huntingdon, Whitefield, Grimshaw of Haworth, Baddiley of Hayfield, Walker of Truro and others was aroused at even the consideration of such a drastic step. Even at the risk of having to leave the Church, Wesley was unwilling to give up his lay preachers, his right to form and supervise societies, and his right to pray extemporaneously and to preach in the open air. Whitefield wrote to Lady Huntingdon in September 1755: "I have written to Mr. Wesley, and have done all I could to prevent (this separation from the Established Church). O this self-love, this self-will! It is the devil of devils!"1 This was not the first or last instance where Wesley's sincerity of motive was impugned by Whitefield, Lady Huntingdon, and even Charles.

Whitefield was invited to preach at the re-opening of the Norwich Tabernacle through the friendship of the Countess with Colonel and Mrs. Gallatin who were leaders there. Wesley interpreted this move to mean that Whitefield was preaching in opposition to his society, already established in Norwich. Whitefield attempted to vindicate himself from this insinuation, but after the opening under him, the Rev. William Cudworth, one of the few men whom Wesley disliked, was placed in charge; and Wheatley, despite all the scandals he had brought to the Norwich people, was allowed to assist. Wesley later occupied this

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2Ibid., II, p.347. Letter to John Wesley, August 9, 1755. Vide also Seymour, op. cit., II, p.336 et seq.
building from 1758 to the spring of 1766, but when he ultimately abandoned it, Lady Huntingdon purchased it for nine hundred pounds, and after that a congregational polity prevailed there.\(^1\)

In 1755, James Hervey, one of Wesley's Holy Club friends, published *Theron and Aspasio: or A Series of Dialogues and Letters upon the most important and interesting subjects*. This book, which presented the "Way of Salvation", was highly controversial, for "While some hailed it as a masterly treatment of the doctrine of Justification, others regarded it as an inadequate representation of New Testament teaching. Among the latter was John Wesley, (who) ..... strongly disapproved its extreme Calvinism."\(^2\)

Hervey, before publishing this book, sent it to Lady Huntingdon for her criticism and also offered to dedicate it to her, but, wisely, for the sake of peace, she declined. She wrote, however, to Hervey highly praising his *Meditation Among the Tombs* and suggesting that he write other books, and when she first met him in 1750 was immediately attracted to him. Theirs was an intimate, though brief, friendship, ending with his death in 1758.

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\(^1\)Seymour, *op. cit.*, II, p.344. Also vide Wesley's *Letters, op. cit.*, IV, p.277, to Charles Wesley, December 7, 1764.

\(^2\)*W. H. S. Proceedings, op. cit.*, Vol.XX, p.112, "Wesley - Hervey - Sandeman" by J. T. Hornaby. Wesley objected to Hervey's doctrine of the elect, and wrote, "But what becomes of all other people? They must inevitably perish for ever. The die was cast or ever they were in-being. The doctrine to pass them by has Consigned their unborn souls to hell, and damned them from their mother's womb. I could sooner be a Turk, a Deist, yes even an Atheist, than I could believe this. It is less absurd to deny the Very being of God than to make Him an Almighty tyrant." Wesley's *Letters, op. cit.*, III, p.387. To James Hervey, October 15, 1756.
At the writer's request before its publication, Wesley also read *Theron and Aspasio* and suggested many changes, of which Hervey disapproved and which he did not incorporate in the book. In October, 1756, in answer to some of his friend's arguments for Predestination, Wesley wrote Hervey one of his lengthy epistles, which he published in 1758 in a two-shilling pamphlet entitled, "A Preservative against Unsettled Notions in Religion". Lady Huntingdon was not involved in the Hervey-Wesley controversy, but her sympathies were with Hervey. After she declined the dedication of the book, the author offered it to Lady Frances Shirley.

Lady Huntingdon was interested in spreading evangelical doctrines within the Established Church. In January of 1756, she, for the second time, "invited to her house a number of the neighbouring evangelical clergy, to consult upon the best means to be adopted to secure a wider circulation of divine truth throughout the kingdom, and especially in their respective cures".

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2 Lady Huntingdon received a moving account of Hervey's death, which occurred on Christmas Day, 1758, from his curate, A. Maddock, written on January 5, 1759. National Library of Wales *Unpublished MSS Letter 2244*.

3 *Seymour, op. cit.*, I, p. 190. Also, *vide* Tyerman's *Weley, op. cit.*, II, p. 194 et seq.

She was interested in some plan whereby she could (1) increase the number of evangelical clergy in the Church of England, and (2) open additional places of worship as a means of spreading these doctrines. In May, 1756, the foundation stone was laid of Tottenham Court Chapel, later termed "Whitefield's Soul Trap". Whitefield planned to place it under her protection, but on June 4th he wrote:

.....We have consulted the Commons about putting it under your Ladyship's protection. This is the answer: 'No nobleman can license a chapel, ..... a chapel cannot be built and used as such, without the consent of the parson of the parish, and when it is done with his consent, no minister can preach therein, without license of the Bishop of the Diocese'. There seems then to be but one way to license it as our other houses are; and thanks be to Jesus for that liberty, which we have.1

"When we are past middle age, do we not find a kind of stiffness and inflexibility stealing upon the mind as well as on the body?", Wesley asked the Rev. James Clark in September, 1756. Wesley suspected this might be true of himself as he grappled with certain issues, such as Charles' complaint about the minimum of one hundred pounds a year he had been guaranteed. Wesley felt that this sum, if not too much, was certainly sufficient, while Molly thought that Charles should not be paid anything for his "idleness". In the Methodist Book Room,

1Ibid., p.126. Letter to Countess of Huntingdon, June 4, 1756.

manuscript letters from Lady Huntingdon in 1756 reveal that Charles took this financial problem to her for advice, and that she wrote back, siding with him in the matter and insisting he receive his just due from John. 1 Surely, the elder Wesley must have known her sentiments sooner or later, for Charles was not adept at concealing from his brother the source of his advice. Lady Huntingdon's influence over Charles was revealed again and again, and as Wesley became increasingly aware of this fact, the tension intensified.

In the meantime Lady Huntingdon was busy with her own work, spending her energy and money in opening her London home for services twice weekly. Romaine, Venn, and Maden usually preached, for at this time Whitefield was in Bristol from which he wrote: "... I rejoice in the increase of your Ladyship's spiritual routes. I can guess at the consolation such uncommon scenes must afford to your Ladyship's new-born soul." 2 She gave liberally to many causes but never channelled her gifts through Wesley; and in reply to an unknown correspondent who attacked him for a lack of charity in a specific instance, he answered:

'Because we did not help a friend in distress.' We did help him as far as we were able. 'But we might have made his case known to Mr. G_____, Lady Huntingdon, &c.' So we did, more than once; but we could not pull money from them whether they would or no. 3

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1 Unpublished Methodist Book Room MSS Letters, Countess of Huntingdon Volume.
At the Bristol Conference in August, 1758, the Doctrine of Perfection was discussed, and Wesley answered explicit questions about the perversions of this belief that were being circulated. This marked the initiation of Wesley's intense drive to establish this doctrine as one of utmost significance to the Methodists.

In April of this year, Wesley wrote a lengthy letter to Elizabeth Hardy of Bristol, who misunderstood Christian Perfection much to Wesley's annoyance, for this doctrine was almost self-evident to him. He redefined perfection for her:

"By 'perfection' I mean 'perfect love', or the loving God with all our heart, so as to rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in everything to give thanks. I am convinced every believer may attain this; yet I do not say he is in a state of damnation or under the curse of God till he does attain. No, he is in a state of grace and in favour with God as long as he believes."

In Dublin, where Wesley was staying when he wrote the above letter, he also revealed that he had not changed his attitude toward the "great vulgar".

Fri. 21. - I dined at Lady ___'s. We need great grace to converse with great people. From which, therefore (unless in some rare instances), I am glad to be excused .... Of these two hours I can give no good account."

1758 was a year of intense marital unhappiness and discord for Wesley, the immediate cause of which was an injudicious letter to his housekeeper, Sarah Ryan, which his wife, Molly, discovered

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1Wesley's Letters, Ibid., IV, p.10 et seqq. To Elizabeth Hardy, April 5, 1758.

during a search of his clothing. This friction, however, reached back into the first year of their marriage, as a letter from Wesley to his wife disclosed:

You accused me of unkindness, cruelty, and what not. And why so? Because I insist on choosing my own company! because I insist upon conversing, by speaking or writing, with those whom I (not you) judge proper! For more than seven years this has been a bone of contention between you and me. And it is so still ..... Then 'you will show my private letters to all the world'. If you do, I must assert my right still. All this will not extort it from me; nor anything else which you can do.1

In the same month he addressed his first letter to Augustus Montague Toplady, a young convert of James Morris, one of Wesley's "sons in the Gospel". Wesley asked him, "Have you had yet any thoughts as to your future life? In what way you might most glorify God?"2 Toplady gave his answer by seeking ordination, but later became the one who vilified and maligned Wesley in the Calvinistic Controversy.

Wesley began the year of 1759 in London, but "received a pressing letter from Bristol"3, probably from Lady Huntingdon who was spending the winter in that area, and set out for there the first day of the new year. On January 4th, Lady Huntingdon accompanied Wesley to Bath, where he preached to the nobility she had gathered at her house. This year marked an era of national

1Wesley's Letters, op. cit., IV, p. 49. To his wife, December 23, 1758.

2Ibid., p. 48. To Augustus Montague Toplady, December, 1758.

panic, for the French were threatening to invade Britain. Lady Huntingdon felt "a particular call in Providence' to wrestle mightily with God in behalf of our nation, and for the important work of intercession prayer-meetings were established at her house". Charles Wesley wrote eight hymns to be used in these prayer-meetings. Friday the 16th of February was designated as a Public Fast, and Lady Huntingdon returned to London and attended the morning services at the Tabernacle at which Whitefield preached, and in the evening went to hear Wesley preach in the Foundery. On the 23rd of February Whitefield, Maxfield, Venn, and Charles Wesley conducted the prayer meeting in her London home, and on the 23rd, John Wesley, assisted by Romaine and Maden, "conducted the service at her Ladyship's house, when a deep sense of the Divine presence seemed to penetrate every soul in attendance".

On the 27th of February, Wesley recorded in his Journal:

I walked with my brother and Mr. Maxfield to L(ady) H(untingdon)'s. After breakfast came in Mr. Whitefield, Maden, Romaine, Jones, Downing, and Venn, with some persons of quality, and a few others. Mr. Whitefield, I found, was to have administered the sacrament; but he insisted upon my doing it. After which, at the request of L(ady) H(untingdon), I preached on I Cor. xiii. 13. Oh what are the greatest men to the great God? As the small dust of the balance.

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1Seymour, op. cit., I, p.396.
2Idem.
3Wesley's Journal, op. cit., IV, p.300. February 27, 1759.
The next evening the usual prayer-meeting was held at her Ladyship's house, when Mr. Wesley, Mr. Venn, and Mr. Madan engaged in the solemn service, which was closed by a short exhortation from Mr. Whitefield.

Ten days after these special services on behalf of the welfare of the nation, Wesley wrote to Lady Huntingdon:

The agreeable hour which I spent with your Ladyship the last week recalled to my mind the former times, and gave me much matter of thankfulness to the Giver of every good gift. I have found great satisfaction in conversing with those instruments whom God has lately raised up. But still, there is I know not what in them whom we have known from the beginning and who have borne the burden (sic) and heat of the day, which we do not find in those who have risen up since, though they are upright of heart. Perhaps, too, those who have lately come into the harvest are led to think and speak more largely of justification and the other first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and it may be proper for them to do so. We want to sink deeper and rise higher in the knowledge of God our Saviour. We want all helps for walking closely with Him whom we have received, that we may the more speedily come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

The above exhortation "to sink deeper and rise higher in the knowledge of God our Saviour", was but another instance of Wesley firmly pressing Lady Huntingdon on to Christian Perfection.

The close of this decade found the Queen of Methodism doing her own share of pressuring, for the entrance of many newcomers into the Evangelical ministry, e.g. Berridge, Venn, Romaine, and Maden, furnished her with new subjects and fresh zeal.

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1 Seymour, *op. cit.*, I, p. 396.

2 *Wesley's Letters, op. cit.*, IV, p. 57 et seq. To Countess of Huntingdon, March 10, 1769.
Chapter Six

SCORPION LETTERS
By 1760 the most active and influential Methodist in Britain was John Wesley. Charles had ceased to travel for various reasons, chief among which were those of family, health, and a "widening gulf between himself and many of the preachers".² Howell Harris, whose services were dispensed with by his fellow labourers in Wales after the Calvinistic Methodist Rupture of 1751, had retired to found his communal family at Trevecka. Although this decade before his death was marked by illness and semi-invalidism making him old before his time, Whitefield made two journeys to the New World, and both of these factors contributed to his being less prominent on the British Methodist scene. Ever active in extending the gospel to the great vulgar, Lady Huntingdon was busy with her private chapel extension scheme. The major burden of the revival, therefore, rested upon John Wesley's shoulders, and he could not rely for extensive help on any of the original Big Five.

Scores of references in his Letters and Journal indicate that he was desperately concerned that Christian Perfection be the aim of all Methodists. The London Conference of 1759 had considered this doctrine at great length, and it was soon after this in his fourth volume of sermons that Wesley published "Thoughts on Christian Perfection".² On Monday, November 2,

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¹Baker, Charles Wesley, op. cit., p.104.
1761, at his five o'clock morning service he began preaching a series of sermons on Christian Perfection which probably were the precursors of his later publication in 1762 of Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection. He tried to curb the loose language about entire sanctification used by several of his adherents. Some had even asserted that when they were entirely sanctified they were perfect like the angels, no longer tempted nor fallible, and thus not in need of prayer or forgiveness. To counteract this, Wesley wrote his famous sermon in 1763 "On Sin in Believers", which closed with these words:

Let us, therefore, hold fast the sound doctrine ... that, although we are renewed, cleansed, purified, sanctified, the moment we truly believe in Christ, yet we are not then renewed, cleansed, purified altogether, but the flesh, the evil nature, still remains (though subdued), and wars against the Spirit. So much the more let us use all diligence in 'fighting the good fight of faith'. So much the more earnestly let us 'watch and pray' against the enemy within ..... 2

In an effort to clear any misunderstanding which might have arisen over some of his or Charles' earlier expressions, Wesley clarified that even after sanctification, the heart might let pride, anger, desire re-enter: "therefore I have long thought some expressions in the Hymns are abundantly too strong, as I cannot perceive any state mentioned in Scripture from which we may not, in a measure at least fall."3

1Wesley's Journal, op. cit., IV, p.479, November 2, 1761.


3Wesley's Letters, op. cit., IV, p.167. To Elizabeth Hardy, December 26, 1761. Also vide Ibid., p.187. To Charles Wesley (September, 1762).
Wesley was alert to the possibility of trouble being created by some of his preachers who were over-eager to defend him. Wesley wrote Samuel Furley in September, 1761:

I hope we have effectually provided against that evil disease the scribendi cacoethes in our preachers, as we have agreed that none shall publish anything for the time to come till he has first submitted it to the judgment of his brethren met in Conference.¹

The Countess of Huntingdon had no such control over her preachers, and when under attack by one of them Wesley's assistants must often have chafed under his stern rule. At this time Wesley also attempted to bring all of the evangelicals into a common alliance, and wrote the Earl of Dartmouth's Chaplain and the Rev. James Rouquet, Master at Kingswood for three years, about this possibility.² He also wrote to his old friend Ebenezer Blackwell about his dilemma when his preachers competed against the evangelical parish ministers.³

Many of the Churches had shut their doors to Lady Huntingdon's preachers, even though Whitefield, Venn, Romaine, Madan and several others were episcopally ordained. Consequently, she was busily engaged at this period in preparations for the opening of her first chapel which she had erected adjoining her residence in

¹Ibid., p.163. To Samuel Furley, September 8, 1761.
²Ibid., p.145 et seq. To the Earl of Dartmouth's Chaplain, 1761; and Ibid., p.142. To the Rev. James Rouquet, March 30, 1761.
Brighton and paid for largely through the sale of some of her jewels. Although in her chapels she used the Church of England liturgy, she was still regarded as a schismatic, but, like Wesley, it was actions rather than her motives, which produced the schism. She was also vigorously engaged in persuading the nobility, among whom were such distinguished men as Charles Fox, William Pitt, Lord Halifax, Lord Holderness, the Secretary of State, and Lords Chesterfield and Bolingbroke, to hear her favorite chaplain, Whitefield. In 1761 Lady Huntingdon procured a second place of worship by renting a former Shirley mansion at Cathall, converting the large hall into a chapel, and utilizing the rest of the mansion for her preachers and guests.

Just prior to this, the infamous crime of Earl Ferrers, cousin of Lady Huntingdon, culminating in his trial and subsequent execution, brought extreme embarrassment to other leaders of the Revival, as well as to her ladyship. Charles Wesley, who had been present at the trial, which was conducted by the earl's peers in Westminster Hall, revealed in a letter to his wife in June, 1760, that he was ill "suffering apparently as were many in his circle of London friends, from the reaction after the trial and execution (of Earl Ferrers) ....." and gave "a pathetic account of the efforts he made to console Lady Huntingdon, and the earl's sister, Miss Shirley, and his brother, Walter Shirley, rector of Loughrea."1

Wesley's *Journal* entry for the last day of 1762 is telling:
"I now stood and looked back on the past year; a year of uncommon trials and uncommon blessings ..... I have had more care and trouble in six months than in several years preceding. What the end will be, I know not; but it is enough that God knoweth."\(^1\)
One of these "uncommon trials" ended early in 1763 when Thomas Maxfield, a trusted leader of one of Wesley's select bands in London, separated from him.\(^2\) Another trial was the wild prophecies of George Bell, a Methodist layman and former Life Guards corporal, who predicted the end of the world on February 28th, 1763. Wesley was attacked in the *London Chronicle* for Bell's extravagances, but he disavowed them in a letter to the Editor:

Sir, - I take this opportunity of informing all whom it may concern - 1. That Mr. Bell is not a member of our society; 2. That I do not believe either the end of the world, or any signal calamity, will be on the 28th instant; and 3. That not one in fifty, perhaps not one in five hundred, of the people called Methodists, believe any more than I do, either this or any other of his prophecies. - I am your humble servant. John Wesley.\(^3\)

At this time Wesley was not only attacked by outsiders, but also by the evangelicals who above all others should have understood his predicament. He wrote Lady Huntingdon that even his friends were deserting him, and that he was being accused of countenancing the delusions of the fanatical Bell:

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My Lady, - For a considerable time I have had it much upon my mind to write a few lines to your Ladyship; although I cannot learn that your Ladyship has ever inquired whether I was living or dead. By the mercy of God I am still alive, and following the work to which He has called me; although without any help, even in the most trying times, from those I might have expected it from. Their voice seemed to be rather, 'Down with him, down with him, even to the ground'. I mean (for I use no ceremony or circumlocution) Mr. Madan, Mr. Fawcett, Mr. Berridge, and (I am sorry to say it) Mr. Whitefield. Only Mr. Romaine has shown a truly sympathizing spirit and acted the part of a brother .... As to the prophecies of those poor, wild men, George Bell and half a dozen more, I am not a jot more accountable for them than Mr. Whitefield is; having never countenanced them in any degree, but opposed them from the moment I heard them. Neither have these extravagances any foundation in any doctrine which I teach. The loving God with all our heart, soul, and strength, and the loving all men as Christ loved us, is and ever was, for these thirty years, the sum of what I deliver, as pure religion and undefiled. However, if I am bereaved of my children I am bereaved! The will of the Lord be done!

Lady Huntingdon sent this letter to her chaplain, William Romaine, along with a reprimand for the sympathy shown by him to Wesley, and he returned it with the following vindication:

Enclosed is poor Mr. John's letter. The contents of it, as far as I am concerned, surprised me: for no one has spoken more freely of what is now passing among his people than myself ..... A perfection out of Christ, call it grace, and say it is grace from him, yet with me it is all rank pride and damnable sin. Oh! Madam, we should be careful of his glory, and not give it to another, least of all to ourselves. Depend upon it, men cannot be laid too low, nor Christ set too high ..... I pity Mr. John from my heart. His societies are in great confusion; and the point which brought them into all the wilderness of rent and madness is still insisted on as much as ever. I fear the end of this delusion ..... perfection is still the cry ..... May their eyes be opened before it is too late!

1Ibid., p. 206. To the Countess of Huntingdon, March 20, 1763.

2Seymour, op. cit., I, p. 330. To the Countess of Huntingdon, March 26, 1763.
This report is valuable because it was written by one of Lady Huntingdon's most esteemed chaplains and it came to be adopted as her own viewpoint of the clashes within Wesley's London societies at this time. Certainly the fanaticism and wild dreams and prophecies of Bell and Maxfield hurt the societies, and destroyed the faith of many. Wesley had to combat the evil reports which spread from London all over the kingdom about Thomas Maxfield and the damage he caused to Methodism. John wrote Charles from Haddington, Scotland: "The frightful stories wrote from London had made all our preachers in the North afraid even to mutter about perfection; and, of course, the people on all sides were grown good Calvinists in that point." 1 After this episode, Wesley began reorganizing his London societies, this time being more careful to guard against private interpretations and actions. Wesley believed that many societies had "sustained great loss for want of hearing the doctrine of Christian Perfection clearly and strongly enforced. I see, wherever this is not done, the believers grow dead and cold. Nor can this be prevented but by keeping up in them an hourly expectation of being perfected in love". 2 This viewpoint was often expressed by Wesley. Another illustration of it is found in a reference to the Bristol Society which he noted was fifty less than the year before. "One reason is, Christian Perfection has been little insisted on, and wherever

1 Wesley's Letters, op. cit., IV, p. 245. To Charles Wesley, May 25, 1764.

While controversy raged in England, good news came from Wales, where a fresh Revival, upon which John Wesley had indirect influence, broke out in 1763. In 1751, after the Welsh Rupture, Howell Harris had retired, deeply wounded that his counsel was no longer wanted in Wales. In March, 1756, Wesley had made a special trip by Trevecca, and had "greatly helped Howell Harris to forget his injured feelings over the Rupture of 1751 and to be his old self again". As a result, Harris later came out of retirement to join Daniel Rowland once again in working together. Thus in 1763 Harris could write: "I have travelled 3000 miles this year". Wesley greeted his old friend and welcomed him back to his place in the Revival, but Harris complained that Whitefield would not invite him to preach as Wesley had done.

Lady Huntingdon, with Venn, Romaine, Madan, and Whitefield, attended the Wesleyan Conference in Leeds in August, 1762. After this conference she visited the Benjamin Inghams, where she met Titus Knight, a former collier who was converted under Wesley's famous preacher, John Nelson. Talking at length with Knight about

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1 Ibid., V, p. 149, October 30, 1765.
2 C. H. H. Journal, op. cit., XII, p. 8, "The Itinerary of Howell Harris".
3 Ibid., p. 21.
4 Idem., March 8, 1763.
the errors of Wesley's perfectionism, she persuaded him to leave the Wesleys and join forces with Whitefield. When Knight refused episcopal ordination, Lady Huntingdon, at the request of Grimshaw, contributed liberally toward building his own meeting-house at Halifax. Lady Huntingdon regarded herself also as the deliverer of Thomas Maxfield from this snare of Wesleyan perfectionism. Maxfield left with one hundred and six of Wesley's "choicest friends". Eleven years after this painful severance, Wesley had a private conversation with his former associate in whom he had placed so much trust. Maxfield told him that he had printed a pamphlet against Wesley in 1767 entitled "A Vindication of the Rev. Mr. Maxfield's Conduct, in not continuing with the Rev. Mr. John Wesley" "owing to the pressing instances of Mr. Whitefield and Lady Huntingdon. I cannot tell how to believe it; but if it was, they might have been better employed." 1764 was marked by a scorpion letter from Wesley to Lady Huntingdon. She had alienated him from several of his friends, and although she often cried, "Peace, Peace"; she prepared for war. Wesley, whose maxim "let us be open and downright both in

1Seymour, op. cit., I, p. 233 et seq. Also vide, Wesley's Journal, op. cit., V, p. 475, July 6, 1772 and Note.
2Seymour, op. cit., I, p. 322.
4Ibid., V, p. 497 et seq., February 4, 1773.
public and private. That will succeed best," wrote Lady Huntingdon:

My Lady - Shall I tell your Ladyship just what is in my mind, without any disguise or reserve? I believe it will be best so to do. And I think your Ladyship can bear it.

'When Lady H. (says my Brother) invites me to Brighthempston, will you bear me company?' I answer'd, 'Yes': Being under no apprehension of his claiming my promise suddenly. And indeed I was perfectly indifferent about it, being in no want of employment. It was therefore little concern to me, that Mr. Whitefield, Waden, Romane, Berridge, Haweis were sent for over & over, & as much notice taken of my Brother & me as of a couple of postillions. It only confirmed me in the judgement I had formed for many years, I am too rough a preacher for tender ears. 'No, that is not it; but you preach perfection.' What! Without why or wherefore? Among the unawaken'd? Among babes in Christ? No. To these I say not a word about it. I have two or three grains of common-sense. If I do not know how to suit my discourse to my audience at these years, I ought never to preach more.

But I am grieved for your ladyship. This is no mark of Catholic spirit, but of great narrowness of spirit. I do not say this, because I have any desire to preach at Brighthelmston. I cou'd not now, if your ladyship desired it. For I am engaged every week, till I go to Bristol, in my way either to Ireland or Scotland. But this I wish even even (his double word) your perfection the establishment of your soul in love! I am, my lady, your ladyship's affectionate and obedient servant, John Wesley.

Shortly after receiving this letter from Wesley, Lady Huntingdon wrote her spiritual advisor, Howell Harris:

I have had respect to what you say about a heart-union among the several members. I hope to have few of them here tomorrow morning on the subject. Mr. Wesley seems more

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1 Letter in Cheshunt College Library Display Case from John Wesley to the Countess of Huntingdon, January 8, 1764. This letter was published in the W. H. S. Proceedings, Vol. XXVII, p. 3, "Two Wesley Letters to the Countess of Huntingdon" by F. F. Brotherton. Wesley is thought to have committed an error in the construction of any sentence, but in the W. S. copy of this letter he wrote "even even" revealing his frame of mind at this time.
heartily on that point than ever I have known him, and before he goes I hope to obtain a commission from him to declare his willingness for a general union.\(^1\)

Harris, always eager to go to any lengths to achieve union, replied: "Ye hopes you gave me of our Savrs using Ye Ladyship ...... to forwd union among His Labours revived my heart ...... all that love Him shd love one another & be as He and His Father is one."\(^2\) Wesley, following through with this idea of union, entered in his Journal on April 19, 1764, the following words: "I wrote a letter today, which after some time I sent to 40 or 50 clergymen, with the little preface annexed."\(^3\) In this letter, Wesley asked for a union of all the Church of England ministers, as well as other clergymen who could agree on "I. Original Sin, II. Justification by Faith, III. Holiness of Heart and life, provided their life be answerable to their doctrine".\(^4\) He explained:

'But what union would you desire among these? Not an union in opinions: they might agree or disagree touching absolute decrees on the one hand and perfection on the other. Not an union in expressions: these may still speak of the imputed righteousness and those of the merits of Christ. Not an union with regard to outward order: some may still remain quite regular, some quite irregular, and some partly regular and partlt irregular.\(^5\)

\(^1\)Edward Morgan, Life of Howell Harris, p.236. To Howell Harris (March, 1764).

\(^2\)Unpublished Trevecca MSS Letter 2582. To Lady Huntingdon.

\(^3\)Wesley's Journal, op. cit., V, p.60, April 19, 1764.

\(^4\)Wesley's Letters, op. cit., IV, p.237 et seq. To various clergymen, April 19, 1764.

\(^5\)Idem.
Wesley wanted a union in love between the evangelicals, thereby doing away with all controversies, backbiting, and disputes of every kind. The tragedy was that only three were courteous enough to reply, and this must have deeply wounded Wesley, who himself always attended to the answering of all his numerous correspondents. He revealed his deep disappointment in a characteristic manner when he read a paper at the Conference in Leeds several years later: "Out of 50 or 60 to whom I wrote, only 3 vouchsafed me an answer. So I give this up. I can do no more. They are a rope of sand; and such they will continue."  

Prior to its distribution, a copy of this letter pleading for union was sent to Lord Dartmouth and then on to Lady Huntingdon, after Wesley had added the following personal challenge to her at its close: "Who knows but it may please God to make your Ladyship an instrument in this glorious work in effecting an union among the labourers in His vineyard? That he may direct and bless you in all your steps in the prayer of, My Lady, your Ladyship's affectionate and obedient servant."  

She responded eagerly to the proposed union conference, and subsequently received from Wesley the communication below:

I am much obliged to your Ladyship for your encouraging answer, which plainly speaks an heart devoted to God and longing for the furtherance of His kingdom..... (Mr. Hart proposed to me) a free debate concerning our several

1Ibid., IV, p.236.
2Ibid., IV, p.239 et seq. To Countess of Huntingdon, April 20, 1764.
opinions. Now this, I fear, we are not yet able to bear: I fear it might occasion some sharpness of expression, if not of spirit too, which might tear open the wounds before they are fully closed. I am far from being assured that I could bear it myself, and perhaps others might be as weak as me. To me, therefore, it still seems most expedient to avoid disputings of every kind— at least, for a season, till we have tasted each other's spirits and confirmed our love to each other. I own freely I am sick of disputing; I am weary to bear it. My whole soul cries out 'Peace! Peace!'— at least, with the children of God, that we may all unite our strength to carry on the war against the 'rulers of the darkness of this world'. Still, I ask but one thing; I can require no more, — 'Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thine? If it be, give me thy hand, let us take sweet counsel together and strengthen each other in the Lord.'

If it should be (God forbid) that I should find none to join with me therein, I will (by God's help) comply with it myself. None can hinder this. And I think my brother will be like-minded—yes, and all who act in connexion with us. ¹

Wesley suggested that a conference be arranged in Bristol on the 9th of August following his Annual Conference, and requested that "if your Ladyship could then be near, it might be of excellent service in confirming any kind and friendly disposition which our Lord might plant in the hearts of His servants."²

Wesley's Annual Conference, which preceded the union Conference met on the 6th of August. John Pawson gives a description of the attempt by some of the Anglican evangelicals to force Wesley to withdraw his preachers from "awakened" parishes:

Twelve of these gentlemen attended our Conference in Bristol, in order to prevail with Mr. Wesley to withdraw the preachers from every parish where there was an awakened minister; and Mr. Charles Wesley honestly told us that if

¹Ibid., IV, p. 244. To Countess of Huntington, May 16, 1764.
²Ibid.
he was a settled minister in any particular place we should not preach there. To whom Mr. Hampson replied, 'I would preach there, and never ask your leave, and should have as good a right to do so as you would have.' Mr. Charles Wesley's answer was in a strain of High Church eloquence indeed! But I leave it. His prediction was never accomplished, nor can be. However, these gentlemen failed in their attempt that time; Mr. Wesley would not give up his Societies to them.

Wesley, however, declined to relinquish his Society members to a scattered and disorganized group of clergymen within the Established Church. Even Charles, who sided with the twelve against his brother and his lay preachers, could not deter Wesley from his persistent struggle. Since neither party was willing to make a concession on the major issue, the impasse continued.

In 1764 there was published a surreptitious edition of "Eleven Letters from the late Rev. Mr. Hervey to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley; containing an Answer to that Gentleman's Remarks on 'Theron and Aspasio'." This marked the beginning of a dispute which was to continue and merge into the wider divergences of 1770. These same eleven letters were republished in Edinburgh a year later in 1765 by Hervey's brother. Wesley answered this publication with his preface to "A Treatise on Justification, extracted from Mr. John Goodwin". Throughout that year, the controversy continued and Walter Sellon bitterly attacked the person of Hervey in "An Answer to 'Aspasio Vindicated, in Eleven

Letters': said to be wrote by the late Rev. Mr. James Hervey. In 1764, however, Wesley had published "A Short History of Methodism", in which he stated his catholic principles. "They (Methodists) tenderly love many that are Calvinists, though they do not love their opinions. Yes, they love the antinomians themselves; but it is with a love of compassion only." These publications were to prepare the way for some of the bitterness which engulfed Methodism in the 1770's.

Most of the histories of Methodism assume that Lady Huntingdon established Trevecka College because of the 1768 expulsion of the six students from St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford. However, in a letter to Howell Harris on January 15, 1765, she mentioned to him the College she intended to found. She picked this site at Trevecka because of its proximity to Howell Harris' Trevecka Family, and in all probability he was the originator of the idea. Her Ladyship's reason for founding such an institution was to provide young men of evangelical fervor with a place in which to train for the ministry. After they had

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1Wesley's Works, op. cit., XI, p. 280. Wesley further illustrated his catholicity in his reply to Hervey's accusation terming him "half a Papist": "Oh, but Mr. Hervey says you are half a Papist. What if he had proved it too? What if he had proved I was a whole Papist! (though he might as easily have proved me a Mahometan). Is not a Papist a child of God? Is Thomas a' Kempe, Mr. De Renty, Gregory Lopez gone to hell? Believe it who can. Yet still of such (though Papists) the same is my brother and sister and mother." Wesley's Letters, op. cit., IV, pp. 292-93. To John Newton, April 9, 1765.

2E.g., Vulliamy, op. cit., p. 312.

3Hughes, Life of Harris, op. cit., p. 412.

4Ibid., p. 416.
finished their theological study, if they so desired, they could then become Dissenters or be presented by her for orders in the Established Church. In either case, she could utilize the services of these men, as her chapels were steadily increasing in number. While she was so engaged, Wesley was attempting to deal with six of his "Sons of the gospel" who had paid five guineas for ordination to a Greek Bishop who was visiting London. Three evangelical clergymen, Maden, Romaine, and Shirley, demanded of Wesley that these six preachers be expelled. In the interest of peace, Wesley was eager to comply and at a Conference held at the Foundery on January 7, 1765, agreed to the request. After a month, these six asked Wesley to readmit them as local preachers, and he replied:

Mr. Maden, Mr. Romaine, and the good-natured Mr. Shirley are almost out of patience with me for not disowning you on the house-top. In this situation of things it would be utter madness in me to do anything which they would call contumacy. I am every way bound to my good behaviour, and obliged to move with all possible circumspection. Were I to allow your preaching now, I should be in a hotter fire than ever. That you will preach again by-and-by I doubt not; but it is certain the time is not come yet.

Wesley did finally readmit these men, but not without a great outcry from Lady Huntingdon's chaplains. This explains the reference in Howell Harris' unpublished *Diary* written on October 1st.

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1The Countess of Huntingdon opened another of her chapels on August 13, 1765, in Lewes.

while he was visiting Lady Huntingdon at Bath:

..... I find L—y H---n stumbles att J. We--- for his Perfecta & guile & tak^2 bad men preachers &c. ..... I saw she was weak and wd indeed go att me if she saw me as I am & is so weak that I know not how to tell her that she may bear it & is partial & blind to W^2 Ital) tho' he shut her out of Tottenham Crt Rd & holds Predestinat^n & I ad I saw him (Wesley) a great man ..... but that I was (?) Bro^r & cant bow to any authority of his ..... She mentiond how all ye Morav^nS are (?) pd & she fair to all ..... & I then sd they are her servxs which I could not be & declard I have had no Maintenance from my first settg out till now.1

Just prior to Harris' visit to Lady Huntingdon at Bath, Wesley preached in Bath, but not in Lady Huntingdon's chapel. 2  Howell Harris dealt faithfully with Lady Huntingdon, for during this same visit, he recorded that:

Last night I had a Combat with L—_ H___ aft hr havg felt all Ye Churches in my Heart alike ..... then I spoke to her that before she dyd I opd she wd confess all our Savrs People & ministrs & Call them all to her Chapel - Wesley's, Moravns &c then she was angry & ad she wd never lye att ye Brethren's feet nor receive J.We:_. I sd she had red'd him last year & he was ye same now as then & that we should overcome evil wth good & that I spake out of Love that her partiality might not appear in receiv^g one despised Itiner^t & not another that I had invited them all to my House. She sd she wd have ye BPS on her and wd act consist &c. I sd wt are all those Newer Chappells &c before God if we acted out of Love & Condescens^n to ye blind World it was well but if we were (?) slavish fear of BPS &c we were wrong ..... & that if I shd not have my Liberty to speak but be on ye foot^s of serv^t or a depend^t I cd not be there. that I was ye L^s Servt & her fellow

1Unpublished Trevecks M33 Howell Harris' Diary, October 1, 1765, transcribed by Miss K. Monica Davies.

2Vide Chapter Two, p.49 of this thesis and Wesley's Journal, op. cit., V, p.148 et seq., September 26, 1765. During this time Lady Huntingdon's pulpits were closed to John Wesley and were not opened to him again until the summer of 1766.
servt that I spoke from a tender conscience that I saw her Heart not right tow'rd ye Brethren & J. We that she stumbled att then from self & what she saw Ye door & her way strait forw'd I ad I hoped she did not see herself infallible ..... she being tird we shook hands & parted.

Five days later, at a council meeting in her home in Bath, at which both Lady Huntingdon and George Whitefield were present, Howell Harris vainly attempted to convince them "on the advisability of union with the Moravians and Wesleyans". The next day he again attempted to be Lady Huntingdon's conscience for he "had on his heart things to tell Lady Huntingdon", which were that "she is not spirit (spiritual) to see or discern spirit but lives outw'd & in fear, and respects persons ..... does not love reproofs & to be told of faults".

It is significant that while Wesley could be indicted for sometimes being overcritical of Lady Huntingdon, Harris, who could not be so accused, observed in her the identical negative characteristics. She was a curious mixture of inconsistencies. Not faced with the overwhelming demand for preachers with which Wesley had to cope, she opposed at first his practice of using lay preachers, fearing that he would leave the Established Church. And yet, she herself departed from all ecclesiastical order by

1Unpublished Trevecca MSS Howell Harris' Diary, Bath, October 2, 1765.

2C.M.H.S. Journal, XII, p.31, op. cit., "The Itinerary of Howell Harris".

3Unpublished Trevecca MSS Howell Harris' Diary, Bath, October 9, 1765.
opening private chapels and appointing her chaplains to conduct services regularly in them. Later, however, she too was to welcome lay preachers, although never employing as many of them as Wesley did.

The Countess wanted a union among the evangelicals and yet was unwilling to permit Wesley to hold the doctrine of perfection. Harris, knowing her personal trait of not wanting to be reproved, contradicted, or to be told of her faults, was right in accusing her of thinking herself infallible. He was correct also in diagnosing the root of Lady Huntingdon's religious problems - i.e. "lives outwd & in fear and respects Persons".\(^1\) Wesley, who was ever ready with a prescription for physical and spiritual ills, prescribed his doctrine of Christian Perfection for her spiritual illness.

Even though Harris was a long-term non-paying guest in Lady Huntingdon's home in Bath, this did not prevent him from entering into spirited arguments with her and recording his impressions in his private *Diary*. In the Bath Chapel, Harris observed the troubles Lady Huntingdon was having at this time with her own flock: "I find Satan is come here to divide & Prejudice one agt ye other - L_y H__n turned Mrs. L__ten out of her Post in Ye Chappel - envy & self is come - each seeing themselves wronged ..... I sat up with L_y H__n to near 1--

\(^1\) *Unpublished Trevecks M33 Howell Harris Diary*, Bath, October 4, 1765.
she complaining -- mixture of self & grace."¹

The Hervey dispute continued unabated through 1765. Hervey's defence of "imputed righteousness" had been well publicized, and Dr. Erskine of the old Greyfriar's Church in Edinburgh had rekindled the controversy by republishing the "Eleven Letters from the late Mr. Hervey to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley", prefaced by a caustic indictment of Wesley's "heresies". Wesley replied to this preface, stating that he believed the Thirty-First Article of the Church of England, and therefore was completely orthodox. He suggested to Dr. Erskine that they fight their common enemy rather than fight each other.²

At this time the Rev. Samson Occum, an Indian preacher from America, arrived in England to raise money for an Indian Charity School. Lady Huntingdon and George Whitefield sponsored his visits. "She frequently entertained him at her residence, introduced him to many of the pious nobility in England and Scotland, and generously contributed to the object of his visit."³ Indeed, this Indian preacher was so successful in England that the school was greatly enlarged, and was moved to Hanover, New Hampshire; it was later renamed Dartford College and granted a charter by George III.

¹Ibid., Bath, December 13, 1765.
²Wesley's letters, op. cit., IV, p. 294 et seq. To Dr. Erskine, April 24, 1765.
³New, op. cit., p. 203.
In June, 1766, Wesley wrote to Charles, asking that they work together more closely, and meet more frequently. Wesley revealed the great difference between him and Charles, indeed the difference between himself and all the other evangelicals: "Go on in what God has peculiarly called you to. Press the instantaneous blessings; than I shall have more time for my peculiar calling, enforcing the gradual work." Wesley also urged Charles to come to the conference in Leeds and help him with "a thorough reform of the preachers." The Annual Conference of this year discussed the three burning issues confronting Methodism: the separation of the Methodists from the Established Church, Wesley's power over the societies and preachers, and this "thorough reform of the preachers". To the first question, "Are we not Dissenters?" the answer was given "We are irregular: .... I advise therefore all the Methodists in England and Ireland, who have been brought up in the Church, constantly to attend the service of the Church, at least every Lord's day." Wesley addressed himself next to the problems created by his power over the Methodists, and reviewed the history of how he had acquired it.

"But this is arbitrary power: this is no less than making yourself a pope." If by arbitrary power you mean a power which I exercise singly, without any colleagues therein, this is certainly true; but I see no hurt in

1 Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, p.16. To Charles Wesley, June 27, 1766.

2 Idem.

3 Tyerman's Wesley, op. cit., II, p.575 et seq.
it .... Therefore, all talk of this kind is highly injurious to me, who bear this burden merely for your sakes. And it is exceedingly mischievous to the people, tending to confound their understandings, and to fill their hearts with evil surmisings, and unkind tempers towards me: to whom they really owe more, for exercising this very power, than for all my preaching put together. Because, preaching twice or thrice a day is no burden to me at all; but the care of all the preachers, and all the people, is a burden indeed.¹

At this conference Wesley dealt plainly with his preachers laying on them the blame for a lack of growth, both spiritually and numerically. He censured some of them for idling their time away by reading too much to the neglect of other aspects of their work. It is certain that only a grave state of affairs could have led Wesley, who held so firmly to the academic discipline, to issue the following advice: "Gaining knowledge is a good thing; but saving souls is a better ..... If you can do but one, either follow your studies, or instruct the ignorant, let your studies alone. I would throw by all the libraries in the world, rather than be guilty of the perdition of one soul."²

Not holding as rigid a doctrine of Christian Perfection as did his elder brother, Charles was accused by him of being inconsistent in his viewpoints:

How apt are you to take the colour of your company. When you and I (talked) together, you seemed at least to be of the same mind with me, and now you are all off the hooks again! Unless you only talk because you are in an humour

¹Ibid., II, p.579.
²Ibid., II, p.581.
of contradiction; and if so, I may as well blow against
the wind as talk with you .... Of that perfection which
you preach, you do not even think you see any witness
at all. Why, then you must have far more courage than
me, or you could not persist in preaching it. I wonder
you do not in this article fall in plumb with Mr. Whitefield.
For do not you ask as well as he ask, 'Where are the perfect
ones?' I verily believe there are none upon earth, none
dwelling in the body. I cordially assent to his opinion
that there is no such perfection here as you describe. I
never met with an instance of it; and I doubt I never
shall. Therefore I still think to set perfection so high
is effectually to renounce it.1

After the 1766 Leeds Conference, Wesley returned to London for
another union conference, and in a significant entry in his
Journal records this sudden decision:

It was at the earnest request of (Lady Huntington?)
whose heart God has turned again without any expectation of
mine, that I came hither so suddenly: and if no other
good result from it but our firm union with Mr. Whitefield,
it is an abundant recompense for my labour. My brother
and I conferred with him every day; and, let the
honourable men do what they please, we resolved, by the
grace of God, to go on, hand in hand, through honour and
dishonour.2

All the branches of Methodism were present at the London Conference.
John and Charles Wesley represented Arminian Methodism; Howell
Harris represented Welsh Methodism, and George Whitefield
represented Lady Huntington's Connexion of Methodism.3 The
importance of this meeting became more significant, for it united
once again Howell Harris and George Whitefield. They had been
separated ever since the 1751 Welsh Rupture when Whitefield

1Wesley's letters, op. cit., V, p.19 at secq. To Charles
Wesley, July 9, 1766.

2Wesley's Journal, op. cit., V, p.182, August 20, 1766.

ungenerously supported Daniel Rowlands against his old friend Howell Harris. Charles Wesley added his impressions of the meeting in a letter to his wife, Sally:

"Last night my brother came. This morning we spent two blessed hours with G. Whitefield. The threefold cord, we trust, will never more be broken. On Tuesday next my brother is to preach in Lady Huntingdon's chapel at Bath. That and all her chapels (not to say, as I might herself also) are now put into the hands of us three."

It should be noted that although Howell Harris and Welsh Methodism were Calvinistic, disagreements, disputes, and disunion usually involved only Lady Huntingdon's Connexion and Wesley's Societies. Certainly John Wesley was more concerned about reaching a working agreement with the English Calvinistic Methodists than with the Welsh. It was probably at this time that Wesley conceded the use of his rooms to Lady Huntingdon and her preachers. In 1769, however, he found it necessary to counteract the tendency of the Countess to speak of the rooms as hers, for he wrote Miss Bishop: "I never had one thought of resigning up our room to any person on earth. What I wrote Lady Huntingdon was 'I am willing your preachers should have as full and free use of it as our own'. I could not go any farther than this; I have no right to do so." Although she did not release complete control of her buildings to the Wesleys, this meeting provided the basis for agreement, brief though it was to be. On August 25th,

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2Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, p.154. To Mary Bishop, November 5, 1769.
Charles again wrote to his wife, giving her the latest post-conference details:

Lant Friday I dined with my brother at George's chapel (the Tabernacle). Heartly Mr. Adams (of Rodborough) was there, and to complete our band, Howell Harris. It was indeed a feast of love. My brother and George (Whitefield) prayed; we all sang a hymn in the chapel.

At six I heard my brother at Spitalfields, instead of preaching myself, which would do less good than my appearing with him. On Saturday we dined all three at Silas Tolld's whom we made quite happy thereby. Sunday, I breakfasted with gracious Miss Hardy. I heard my brother preach, morning and afternoon. The Chapel (West Street) was never fuller. We both prayed at the table for George Whitefield and all the labourers.

Shortly after this Wesley offered to supply Lady Huntingdon's Chapel in Bath, while he was in Bristol. He wrote in his Journal for Monday, August 25th:

..... reached Bath on Tuesday, in the afternoon. Many were not a little surprised in the evening at seeing me in the Countess of (Huntingdon)'s chapel. The congregation was not only large, but serious, and I fully delivered my own soul. So I am in no concern whether I preach there again or no. I have no choice concerning it.

On September 14th, she wrote Wesley, giving her decision about his preaching in her chapel and adding her blessing on the London agreement:

I am most highly obliged by your kind offer of serving the chapel at Bath, during your stay at Bristol; I mean on Sundays. It is the most important time, being the height of the latter season, when the great of the

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1 Wesley's Journal, op. cit., V, p.182, Note.
world are only in the reach of the sound of the gospel from that quarter. The mornings are their time; the evenings, the inhabitants chiefly. I do trust that this union which is commenced will be for the furtherance of our faith and mutual love to each other. It is for the interest of the best of causes, that we should all be found, first, faithful to the Lord, and then to each other. I find something wanting, and that is a meeting now and then agreed upon, that you, your brother, Mr. Whitefield, and I, should at times be glad regularly to communicate our observations upon the general state of the work. Light might follow, and would be a kind of guide to me, as I am connected with many.

Universal and constant usefulness to all, is the important lesson..... How can I be most so, that is the one object of my poor heart. Therefore to have all the light that is possible, to see my way in this matter, is my prayer day and night; ..... I am honoured by every degree of contempt, while my heart has its faithful testimony before Him who can search it to the bottom, and knows that his glory and the good of souls is my one object upon earth. I shall turn coward and disgrace you all, when I have any worse ground to stand upon; ..... }

Implementing the decisions and agreements reached in London at the union conference between Howell Harris, the Wesley brothers and George Whitefield, John Wesley was invited to preach in the Plymouth Tabernacle. In the evening of September 2nd, Wesley preached in "Mr. Whitefield's room at the Dock; but, large as it is, it would not contain the congregation". On the first Sunday in October, Wesley again preached in Lady Huntingdon's Bath Chapel at 11 o'clock, having administered the Sacrament there at a service three hours earlier. On the Thursday following

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1New, op. cit., p.190 et seq., to John Wesley, September 14, 1766.
2Wealcy's Journal, op. cit., V, p.184, September 2, 1766.
3Ibid., V, p.188, October 5, 1766.
Wesley had a long conversation with Dr. William Barnard, the Bishop of Londonderry, one of the most prominent and influential friends of Lady Huntingdon, who was very friendly to Methodism and who had ordained Thomas Maxfield on Wesley's recommendation. That evening Wesley wrote: "I preached again at my Lady's chapel to another numerous congregation."\(^2\)

Howell Harris' enthusiasm for a firm union between the three branches of Methodism received new impetus after the 1766 union conference. In his Diary for the new year he entered:

> East Grinstead Jan. 3 Sat. - I insistg on havg ye old original spirit that began ye work (wn L____ H____ wd have J.W.G. Wh____ a myself together as she intended now.\(^3\)

Invited to Brighton by Lady Huntingdon he stayed with her during the months of January and February. During this period he frequently counselled with her about the college she was establishing at Trevecca. He rented a building from him.\(^4\) Workmen from his "family", which included sixty-six trades, were busily employed all winter in preparations for the opening of Trevecca\(^5\), and in the first part of February Howell Harris

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2. Wesley's Journal, op. cit., V, p.188, October 9, 1766.
3. Unpublished Trevecka MSS Howell Harris' Diary, East Grinstead, Jan. 3.
5. Calvinistic Methodist Historical Society Journal, op. cit., XII, p.34, Supplement, 1927. Howell Harris was very glad that she followed his advice to found a College at Lower Trevecca, and he directed all his energies toward repairing the old building which dated from 1576. Harris, A Brief Account, op. cit., p.95. During a visit in May, 1968, the writer noted the date 1615 on one of the buildings now used as a barn. The present tenants of her college building lack an apparent appreciation for the spirit and heritage which it represents.
recommended John Fletcher as President of the College.

In this same year, Wesley in a letter to Charles pleaded for a common statement on the doctrine of Perfection, and added the following note: "Saturday morning. The delay of sending this gives me occasion to add a few words. I have heard nothing of the lovefeast; but if I had I could not go." Evidently Wesley was excluded from the lovefeast organized by Lady Huntingdon, although his brother Charles had been invited. On the 20th of March he was again ignored by her Ladyship when she re-opened her greatly enlarged and improved Chapel at Brighton and Madan preached in the morning and Whitefield in the evening.

Joseph Townsend, one of Lady Huntingdon's preachers, was sent on a mission to Scotland in 1767 and stayed two months in Edinburgh. He later revisited Edinburgh and preached in turn with the Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Wesleyan Methodists in Lady Glenorchy's St. Mary's Chapel. Townsend was to damage Wesley's work in Scotland, particularly in Edinburgh. Wesley excoriated Townsend for deliberately preaching in the neighbourhood and at the same hour as that of his society meetings, thereby reducing Wesley's congregations, and for raising the keenly controversial issue of Calvinism in an attempt to undermine Methodist work there. He ended his letter:

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1Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, p.41. To Charles Wesley, February 12, 1767.

2Vide Ibid., V, p.57 et seq. To Joseph Townsend, August 1-3, 1767.
"For many years I have been labouring for peace, though I have had little thanks for my pains ..... May God enable you, that stand up in my stead, to labour more successfully."

Seymour stated Townsend's commission thus: "These proceedings, under the patronage of Lady Huntingdon and Lady Glenorchy, and the efforts of the clergy of Edinburgh against Arminianism, raised up hosts against Mr. Wesley on his return to Scotland."

In London on Ash Wednesday, Wesley dined: "at a friend's with Mr. Whitefield (who was) still breathing nothing but love". On the evening of March 8th, he left London, and reached Bath on Tuesday afternoon for a conference with the Bishop of Londonderry. Later on that afternoon:

my brother read prayers and I preached at Lady H(untingdon)'s Chapel. I know not when I have seen a more serious or more deeply attentive congregation. Is it possible? Can the gospel have place where Satan's throne is?

Howell Harris representing Welsh Methodism and George Whitefield representing Lady Huntingdon's Connection, were present at the 24th Conference of Wesleyan Methodism, and "Love and harmony reigned from the beginning to the end; but we have all need of more love and holiness; and, in order thereto, of crying continually, 'Lord, increase our faith!'" In October, Wesley,

1Ibid., V, p.59 et seq. To Joseph Townsend, August 1-3, 1767.
2Seymour, op. cit., I, p.411.
4Ibid., V, p.196, Sunday, March 8 and Tuesday, March 10, 1767.
5Ibid., V, p.227, August 18-20, 1767.
still acting in unison with the other two branches of Methodism, allowed "all of Mr. Whitefield's society that pleased to be present at the lovefeast that followed (Weal's sermon in Bristol). I hope we shall 'not know war any more' unless with the world, the flesh, and the devil." Wesley, however, was to know war not only with these two parties within Methodism. Events which were transpiring were to bring him into a wider and more violent conflict than ever he had known before. In a shilling pamphlet "A Dialogue between the Rev. Mr. John Wesley and a member of the Church of England, concerning Predestination", a zealous Calvinist violently attacked Wesley. This was a prelude to the storm ahead.

1768 opened and closed with two of the evangelical clergymen writing to Wesley, saying that they had seen too little of him, and asking that disputes be ended. One, Berridge of Everton, wrote in January: "..... I trust we agree in essentials; and, therefore, should leave each other at rest with his circumstances. I am weary of all disputes, ....." The other, George Whitefield, in a letter dated 28th December, 1768: "Pray have you or I committed the unpardonable sin, because we differ in particular cases, and act according to our consciences? I imagine the

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1Ibid., V, p.235, Sunday, October 11, 1767.
3Ibid., III, p.2. To John Wesley, January 1, 1768.
common salvation is not promoted by keeping at such a distance. Enemies rejoice. Halfway friends especially are pleased."

On January 4th, 1768, Wesley wrote Lady Huntingdon ostensibly to thank her for her part in his appointment as a domestic Chaplain to the Countess Dowager of Buchan, but after disposing of this matter in two sentences, he went on to his most frequent theme, viz., her need for going on to Perfection. He warned her that many of the newer group who speak of salvation by faith run

full into Mr. Sandeman's notion that faith is merely an assent to the Bible, and not only undervaluing but even ridiculing the whole experience of the children of God. But so much the more do I rejoice that your Ladyship is still preserved from that spreading contagion, and also enabled plainly and openly to avow the plain, old, simple, unfashionable gospel. 2

In words pleasing to a lady of Calvinistic sentiments Wesley closed: "(I am) sorry that your health is not yet re-established. Yet certainly health we shall have if health be best ....." 3

March was to prove an embarrassing month for some of the Methodists. John Kippton, a fell-monger, had acquired through inheritance and purchase the advowson of All Saints, Aldwincle, and attempted to sell it to Hawcis, a chaplain of Lady Huntington's, in order to pay off his rather staggering debts. Hawcis, refusing to have any part in this dealing in simony, was

1Ibid., III, p.1. To John Wesley, December 28, 1766.
3Idem.
given this benefice by Kimpton with no strings attached, in order to keep the Bishop from presenting the living to another. Later, Kimpton, in a really serious financial plight, attempted to make Haweis buy the advowson for £1100 or resign, and when this offer was refused, began spreading false reports that Haweis had made such a promise to resign when so requested. Kimpton's real reason for wanting Haweis to resign, however, was that some clergyman had promised to purchase this advowson from him for the full price. In 1767 Kimpton was sent to King's Bench Prison until he paid his creditors, and Lady Huntingdon attempted to relieve Kimpton's family and to ameliorate the widespread scandal which was being brought on evangelicalism.

After consulting George Whitefield, John Thornton, and others, but without discussing the matter with either Haweis or Madan (who had introduced Kimpton to Haweis), she decided to purchase the advowson herself. She sincerely believed that this was the best means of redeeming the Evangelical cause from reproach, and of restoring Haweis and Madan to public esteem. On 1 March, 1768, Lady Huntingdon sent Whitefield a draft for £1000 to pass on to Thornton, and commissioned him, Whitefield, West, and Brewer to purchase the perpetual advowson of Aldwine, thus relieving Kimpton and his family of their distresses. Madan replied that although the Countess had acted with the best intentions, the effect would undoubtedly be to injure his character and Haweis' most seriously. The payment of £1000 would be regarded as hush-money. He therefore begged Lady Huntingdon, on behalf of Haweis and himself, to make it quite clear to all that her action was taken without their knowledge, consent, or approval.\footnote{Arthur Skevington Wood, \textit{Thomas Haweis, 1734-1820}, (London, 1957), p.136 \textit{et seq.}}

This was only another instance of Lady Huntingdon's hasty and ill-conceived actions, and it brought even more disgrace to Haweis. The result was that he and Madan were bitterly attacked in the
Gentleman's Magazine and other periodicals of the day. This same month brought further ignominy to the Evangelical cause. St. Edmund Hall, Oxford, under its principal, George Dixon, acquired the reputation of being tinctured with "enthusiasm". Vice-Principal John Higson was entirely unsympathetic to this movement within St. Edmund's Hall, and when six young students in his class refused to accept his interpretation of the Thirty-Nine Articles, complained to the Principal "That there were several Enthusiasts in ..... (St. Edmund Hall) who talked of regeneration, inspiration, and drawing nigh unto God". The Principal disallowed his complaint, but Higson went higher, appealing to the Vice-Chancellor of the University, and this resulted in charges being lodged against these six men on February 29, 1768. On March 11, after a mockery of a trial they were expelled on the charges of preaching and praying extempore; of being low-types - i.e. a former weaver, a barber, a draper; and of being maintained at the University by persons who were suspected of enthusiasm - i.e. Lady Huntingdon. In spite of their Principal's defence of them as individuals, and of their doctrines as being orthodox with regard to the Thirty-Nine Articles, they were expelled from the University. Lady Huntingdon, following the example of her sister-in-law who had helped George Whitefield through Oxford, was undoubtedly one of their financial...

1Anonymous (Richard Hill), PIETAS OXONIENSIS: or a Full and Impartial Account of the Expulsion of Six Students from St. Edmund Hall, Oxford, (London, 1768), pp.2 and 3.
supporters.

This expulsion resulted in bringing to the fore the burning question of Calvinism, which apart from a few frays, such as the publication of Hervey's Thoron and Aspasio and his Letters, and Dr. Erskine's attack against Wesley, had wisely been laid to rest after the 1739-40 Calvinistic controversy. Richard Hill, who graduated at Oxford in 1754, published a tract of eighty-five pages in 1768 entitled Pietas Oxoniensis, in which he not only defended the students, but also their Calvinistic doctrines, and especially that of predestination. Whitefield joined Hill with "A Letter to the Reverend Dr. Durell, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford; occasioned by a late Expulsion of Six Students from St. Edmund Hall, Oxford", dated April 12, 1768. This was his last publication. He made short work of the charge that these students "were of trades before they entered the University" by reminding Dr. Durell that "God took (David) away from the sheepfolds"; and "David's Lord, and David's King had for his reputed father a Carpenter, and in all probability ..... worked at the trade of a Carpenter Himself", while He "chose poor Fishermen to be his Apostles".¹ Dr. Nowell the principal of St. Mary's and the public orator of the University, was one of the judges of these six men and in September, 1766, answered Hill's charges, asserting that the Calvinistic doctrines which these students espoused were contrary

¹George Whitefield, A Letter to the Reverend Dr. Durell Vice Chancellor of the University of Oxford, occasioned by a Late Expulsion of Six Students from St. Edmund Hall, the second edition, (London, 1768), p. 4.
to the teaching of the Church of England; his publication was entitled "An Answer To A Pamphlet Entitled 'Pictas Oxoniensis, or a Full and Impartial Account of the Expulsion of Six Students from St. Edmund-Hall, Oxford' in A Letter To The Author". This controversy spilled over into the year of 1769, when an anonymous answer entitled "Goliath Slain ......" was published by Hill in reply to Dr. Nowell's "Answer". Charges and counter-charges began to fill the air, and Hill answered Dr. Nowell in "A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Nowell: ......". Augustus Montagu Toplady joined in the controversy with "The Church of England Vindicated from The Charge of Arminianism: and the case of Arminian Subscription particularly considered, in a Letter to the Rev. Dr. Nowell, ......" and later in the year published "The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination Stated and Asserted. With a Preliminary Discourse on the Divine Attributes. Translated in great measure from the Latin of Jerom Zanchius: ......", which was directed mainly against the doctrine of Arminianism, embodied in his former spiritual father, John Wesley. The Gospel Magazine joined the Calvinists in their attack of Wesley and his doctrines by printing two letters: "Observations on Mr. J. Wesley's View of 'The Scripture Doctrines of Predestination, Election, and Reprobation'". This pamphlet Wesley had first published in 1741 and later included in A Preservative against Unsettled Notions in Religion. These publications brought the question of Calvinism to the fore within all parties, churches, and societies, and no
one was able to adopt the *via media*. Common aims and ideals were forgotten, and in this eighteenth century witch hunt for orthodoxy the only question of importance came to be "which view do you hold?".

Lady Huntingdon, Whitefield, and Richard Hill, all "wrote letters of complaint"\(^1\) against these proceedings at Oxford, but John Wesley remained strangely silent, probably because these students belonged to the Calvinistic rather than to the Arminian school of "enthusiasm". A letter from this former Oxford don defending these students' right to attend his old university regardless of religious opinions would have been of the utmost significance. By expelling these men for their religious deviations, Wesley's University was in reality attacking the evangelical cause but the same charges could have been brought against all of the Holy Club members much earlier. Wesley, however, took the position that he was not involved in any way in this matter because none of these students were affiliated with his societies. In the eighteenth century, though, it was necessary for the Calvinists and Arminians to establish together a common line of defence against the many enemies of evangelicalism, and Wesley's decision that he was not involved in this matter left him vulnerable to Lady Huntingdon's attack that he was selfishly preoccupied with the furtherance of his own program to the neglect of the larger cause. After all, she had more than once used her

\(^{1}\)Wesley's *Journal, op. cit.*, V, p. 293. *Vide* Note.
influence at court to secure the release of Methodists from impressment and to obtain justice for all the Methodists. She was justified in asserting that Wesley could at least do likewise when the opportunity was presented to him. One of her friends wrote her about this affair at Oxford, indicating that in this issue the Methodists were not completely in union:

I have met with no one clergy or layman, who does not condemn the late proceedings at Oxford in the expulsion of the Gentlemen that went under the Name of Methodists. But the many essays in the daily papers that have been for some time published against the Methodists, to incense the civil powers against them, and these proceedings at Edmund-ball, shew the temper of the hierarchy of the present times, and how much farther they would go, if the civil power did not restrain them .... Therefore I only wish that some of the Methodists would cease from their hard speeches and intolerance towards some of their Christian brethren, who do not exactly agree with them in all points and unite their joint endeavours against prevailing vice and tyranny.

In his Journal entry for November 19, 1766, Wesley's comment on this act of expulsion is far from revealing indignation:

I read Dr. Nowell's answer to Mr. Hill, concerning the expulsion of the students at Oxford. He has said all that could be said for that stretch of power, that instance of sumnum jus, and he says quite enough to clear the Church of England from the charge of Predestination - a doctrine which he proves to be utterly inconsistent with the Common Prayer, the Communion Service, the Office of Baptism, the Articles, the homilies, and the other writings of those that compiled them.

This affair spurred on Lady Huntingdon to prepare her college at Trevecca for immediate service, and it was opened on her

1Unpublished Cheshunt MSS Letter 303. Theophilus Lindsey of Catterick to Countess of Huntingdon, Tunbridge Wells, April 29, 1768.

2Wesley's Journal, op. cit., V, p. 293, November 19, 1768.
birthday, August 24, 1768. On this occasion Whitefield preached to a large congregation which sang for the first time the famous hymn "Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah", written especially for this service by William Williams of Pantycelyn.

John Fletcher of Madely was appointed the first President (Lady Huntingdon used the American rather than the English term), and served without pay. "He took the office on the understanding that when students had finished their course they should be free to enter the service of any denomination, .... From Trevecca, as from a mission center, students were sent all over Britain and to places abroad, and they entered the ministry of the Church of England and of the Dissenting churches. The denominational issue did not arise, for they represented a school of thought that was to be found (and opposed) in all the churches." ¹

In the meantime, during March, Wesley wrote Fletcher, advising him to avoid conversing with Madan, Romaine, and even Whitefield. In this letter he listed his objections to them; their tendency toward Antinomianism, which he dreaded above all "isms", their amorous way of praying to Christ, etc. He also warned Fletcher against conversing too much with the genteel Methodists (a reference undoubtedly to Lady Huntingdon and her circle), who were opposed to his doctrine of perfection. He

listed for Fletcher further differences which at this time separated him from the Calvinists:

..... may not you select persons clear both of Calvinism and antinomianism, not fond of that luscious way of talking, but standing in awe of Him they love – persons athirst for full redemption, and every moment expecting if not already enjoying it? Though, it is true, these will be poor and mean; seldom possessed of either riches or learning ..... As to the Conference at Worcester on lay-preaching, do not you observe almost all the lay-preachers (1) are connected with me? (2) Are maintainers of universal redemption? Hinc illae lacrymæ! These gentlemen do not love me, and do love particular redemption. If these laymen were connected with them, or if they were Calvinists, all would be well. 1

Wesley was still plagued by two perennial problems among his own societies, however, and, in May 1768 he wrote to Charles about Trevecca's peculiar plan of institution:

I am at my wits' end with regard to two things – the Church and Christian Perfection. Unless both you and I stand in the gap in good earnest, the Methodists will drop them both. (This former point of dropping the Church was sure to draw High-Church Charles into action.) Talking will not avail. We must do, or be borne away. 2

One of the two main issues troubling Wesley from without was that of Predestination, and this he dealt with that same month of May in a letter to the Rev. Mr. Plenderlieth vindicating himself from some of Dr. Erskine's unjust attacks which asserted that he believed in sinless perfection:

I did attack Predestination eight-and-twenty years ago; and I do not believe now any predestination which

1Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, p. 84 et seq. To John Fletcher, March 20, 1768.

2Ibid., V, p. 88. To Charles Wesley, May 14, 1768.
implies irrespective reprobation. But I do not believe it is necessarily subversive to all religion. I think hot disputes are much more so; therefore I never willingly dispute with any one about it.¹

The second of these troublesome issues initiating from outside his societies was Antinomianism, and Wesley summed up his major fear for true Christianity when he stated: "I dread every approach to Antinomianism. I have seen the fruit of it over the three kingdoms."² In addition to these internal and external sources of dispute and worry there was some £7,000 worth of debts on society buildings³, and this accumulation of problems forced Wesley to maintain so rapid a pace throughout the entire year that, as much as he enjoyed music, he wrote to Charles on December 17, "I have no time for Handel or Ayison now".⁴

Meanwhile, Howell Harris was shouldering some of the burden of Trevecks. In a report to Lady Huntingdon he revealed difficulties with some of the students there:

¹Ibid., V, p.89 et seq. To Rev. Mr. Plenderlieth, May 23, 1768. This policy of Wesley's to avoid deliberately evoking controversy is further illustrated by his letter to John Newton, May 14, 1765, "..... I have printed near 50 sermons and only one of these opposes (holding Particular Election and Final Perseverance) at all. I preach about 800 sermons in a year; and, taking one year with another, for twenty years past I have not preached eight sermons in a year upon the subject ......." Wesley's Letters, op. cit., IV, pp.297-300.

²Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, p.89 et seq. To Rev. Mr. Plenderlieth, May 23, 1768.

³Ibid., V, p.113 et seq. To Thomas Rankin, December 1, 1768.

⁴Ibid., V, p.117 et seq. To Charles Wesley, December 17, 1768.
its no Smale (sic) Joy to me that I can assure (sic) you there seems a good Spirit among ye young men - Our Savr has much blessed ye Labours of Mr. Fletcher among them there come some Sweet gales (?) of ye Holy Spirit on Sevl of them Lately which I suppose all have gladly told you & I hope it will continue - all bitter Debates ended in much Love and Simplicity & I hope a Spirit of Seriousness ...... 1

Fletcher enlightened Walter Sellon about the nature of these bitter disputes which carried over into the next year: "There are some disputes in Lady Huntingdon's College; but when the power of God comes they drop them. The Calvinists are three to one. Your book I have sent them as a hard nut for them to crack." 2

If not actually jealous of Trevecca, it is evident that Wesley was always unconvinced of the educational soundness of its plan of institution, and in the first month of the New Year, he wrote Joseph Benson: "If I cannot get proper masters for the languages, I shall let the school (Kingswood) drop at the Conference. I will have another kind of school than that at Trevecca or none at all." 3

During this month Lady Huntingdon arrived in London with many plans for propagating the gospel. Her home in Portland Row was opened to Whitefield, Romaine, the Wesleys, and other

1 Unpublished Trevecca MS3 Letter 2656, Howell Harris to Countess of Huntingdon, November 2, 1768.


evangelical ministers, as was her Chapel at Bath. In his Journal for March 5, 1769, Wesley entered that Charles "read prayers, and I preached, in the Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel. The congregation was very large and very attentive. Let us despair of nothing."¹ These labours were tiring for Lady Huntingdon. Writing from Tunbridge Wells to Howell Harris, she complained "My eyes Continue bad ..... abundant love to my very Dear family at the College ..... Pray pray for me for tired I am .....".² On July 23, she opened her new chapel at Tunbridge Wells. Whitefield was the most prominent preacher, and he attracted such a large congregation that the service was held in the open. Although he preached again that evening and the next morning, when he was not available, three other of her preachers were at hand to supply.

The Wesleyan Conference met on August 1st, 1769, at Leeds, and the two major questions discussed were (1) help for America, and (2) the continuation of Methodism after the death of Wesley. Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor volunteered to go to New York, and a collection was taken for the debt on the New York preaching house and for the two men's passage. In the discussion of the continuation of Methodism after his death,

²Unpublished Trevecka MSS Letter 2667. To Howell Harris, June 25, 1769.
Wesley stated:

You act in concert with each other, and by united counsels. And now is the time to consider what can be done in order to continue this union. Indeed, as long as I live, there will be no great difficulty. I am, under God, a centre of union to all our Travelling, as well as local preachers. They all know me and my communication. They all love me for my work's sake; and, therefore, were it only out of regard to me, they will continue connected with each other ...

This was not an egotistical reference to his power, but a realistic view of existing circumstances and a genuine concern for the future of Methodism. This matter was to be considered during the following year and a copy of these Minutes relating to it were sent to each itinerant preacher.

Shortly after the Conference, Wesley rode to Trevecca for the first anniversary of Lady Huntingdon's College. He arrived for the last two days of the week-long celebration, and on Wednesday evening, August 23rd, preached in her college chapel which he described as "extremely neat, or rather, elegant, as is the dining-room, the school, and all the house. About nine Howell Harris desired me to give a short exhortation to his family. I did so; and then went back to my Lady's, and laid me down in peace." The next morning, assisted by Walter Shirley, he administered the Lord's Supper to the clergymen, students, and nobility who were there for the occasion. Fletcher

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preached at 10 o'clock in the courtyard, after which William Williams of Pantycelyn preached in Welsh until almost two p.m. All the clergymen were week-long guests of her Ladyship at the college, but on this memorable day of anniversary, she provided meat and bread in the fields for the multitude who were present. At three, Wesley began to preach, and after him, Fletcher preached again. At five p.m. the congregation was dismissed, and after seven a love feast was held for those remaining at the college. Following the Anniversary celebration, services continued even though Wesley was off for Bristol. Lady Huntingdon herself gave the following account:

From this time we had public preaching every day at four o'clock, whilst Mr. Shirley and Mr. Fletcher remained. Copious showers of divine blessing have been felt on every side. Truly God is good to Israel. Continue thy goodness, and in much greater abundance. O that I may be more and more useful to the souls of my fellow-creatures! I want to be every moment, all life, all zeal, all activity for God, and ever on the stretch for closer communion with Him. My soul pants to live more to him, and to be more holy in heart and life, that all my nature may show forth the glories of the Lamb.2

After spending several days at Berwick (near Shrewsbury) with the Thomas Powys family, Lady Huntingdon followed Wesley to Bristol on 12th September. He conducted her on an inspection tour of his school, and she then visited her society there. The next day she invited a large number of evangelical clergymen to

1Ibid., V, p. 334 et seq. August 24, 1769.
2Seymour, op. cit., II, p. 98 et seq.
breakfast "to converse on the best means of increasing the revival of true religion .... and after their deliberations, the Rev. Mr. Hart administered the sacrament, and John Wesley preached on the words, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ'."

In this same month, Lady Huntingdon on charges of impropriety rashly dismissed from his post as College Tutor Mr. Williams, a convert under the ministry of Howell Harris, and along with him, Hannah Bowen, her Trevecka housekeeper and a former matron of women and children for the Trevecka Family. This greatly displeased Harris, who felt that the accusations against these two were unfounded, and in June, 1770, Williams was "invited to preach to the Family at Trevecca".

In the autumn of 1769, Benson wrote to Wesley asking his advice on the matter of going to Trevecka to teach for Lady Huntingdon. Wesley was piqued at Benson's thought of joining forces with the Countess, and Benson in turn wrote frankly what he, along with several other close friends, thought was a chink in Wesley's armor:

But so it is, and so it always has been: you have had the misfortune to mistake your friends and enemies. Whoever has made it a point (in order to gain your favour) to contradict you in nothing, but professed implicitly to follow your direction and abide by your decision, especially if they added thereto the warmest expressions of regard for

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1 New, op. cit, p. 244 et seq.

you and told you a tale of their being saved from sin and perfected in love, they never failed to gain your favour in an high degree, and, what is worse, have often used it to a bad purpose, by filling your ear with insinuations against others. And such have generally gained credit with you .... On the other hand, Whoever, from a conviction that all men are fallible and that implicit obedience is due to God alone, could not in conscience acquiesce in your bare ipse dixit, but have believed it their duty to call in question some things you have advanced, and perhaps made bold to take notice to yourself of what appeared to them amiss; - if, added to this, their modesty would not permit them to tell you how sincerely they loved you or how much they were devoted to God, - such persons have in general stood low in your esteem, and had the misfortune and discouragement to find you set light by their services and put a misconstruction on their whole conduct; and yet they were all the while your most faithful and affectionate friends, who would tell to your face what they would not even intimate behind your back, and would notice to yourself weaknesses and mistakes (et humanum est errare) which they would by all means conceal from the world.

In this same letter, Benson quoted Wesley's "If you will, go, you must go", and asked:

Is this all the answer I must have, when, after stating the case and showing you the necessity, I asked your advice in an affair of such importance? These are all the thanks I must receive for putting myself to so many inconveniences to serve you? After exhausting my spirits from morning to night in a school where you are sensible I should have had an assistant, especially for these twelve months last, to the prejudice of my spiritual proficiency, to say nothing (for they are not worth mentioning) of temporal inconveniences? And why should I not take you at your word? No, I have too much love for the children, too much regard for their parents, and (whether you will believe it or not) too much sense of my duty to God and respect for yourself, to leave things in such confusion.2

Wesley often had been accused of being too credulous, and of being

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2 \textit{Idem.}
easily flattered by certain people who wanted to gain his favour. Here, however, Benson explicitly enumerates some of Wesley's character traits which many other close admirers, including J. Oliver, Jo. Hilton, Mrs. Ryan, and Mrs. Crosby, also verified as the negative aspects of one who otherwise was so dedicated and capable. In answering Benson's charges on December 3, 1769, Wesley attempted to reassure him that he did not dislike anyone for plain speaking, and that Kingswood was only an instrument for doing good, not for advancing Wesley's name. He asked Benson: "For what is the school (Kingswood) to me? It has been and may be of use to many. But it is no more to me than to you or Lady Huntingdon."  

In November Wesley revealed that all was not well in his relationship with Lady Huntingdon, despite the many resolutions which had been passed and the union conferences convened. To one of his favorite correspondents in Bath, who sent him regular reports on the religious scene in this resort city, he wrote:

My DEAR SISTER, - It is exceedingly strange. I should really wonder (if I could wonder at any weakness of human nature) that so good a woman as Lady Huntingdon

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1Ibid., V, p.164. To Joseph Benson, December 3, 1769.
2Vide Ibid., IV, p.233, Mrs. Ryan, March 25, 1764.
3Vide Ibid., V, p.25 et seq., Mrs. Crosby, September 12, 1766.
and one who particularly piques herself on her catholic spirit, should be guilty of such narrowness of spirit. Let it teach us a better lesson! Let us not vary in thought or word from the old Methodist principles, 'Whosoever doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother'.

Lady Huntingdon had gone back to her anti-perfection cry again, and it was stronger than ever. Venn at this time was preaching with great success in her Bath Chapel. In an unpublished MSS letter to her ladyship at Bath, A. E. Goode, a woman correspondent from Mount Ephraim, wrote:

Mr. J'Anson (? ) is in expectation of Mr. John Wesley's being with him next week ... (illegible) ... Shd he come over here I shall be at a loss how to act without Yr instructions as I dont know if he is upon such terms with Yr Ladyship as wd make it proper to ask him to Preach here so shall take no Notice without Yr orders. 2

Thus, Lady Huntingdon's momentary sentiments toward John Wesley were reflected by her instruction to the societies in her Connexion at this time.

In a letter to Benson in the last week of the year Wesley indicated his irritation with certain of the Countess' personal characteristics:

Trevecca is much more to Lady Huntingdon than Kingswood is to me. It mixes with everything. It is my college, my masters, my students. I do not speak so of this school. It is not mine, but the Lord's. I look for no more honour than money from it. 3

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Wesley, perhaps with a malicious twinkle in his eye, added:

But I assure you you must not even mutter before her anything of deliverance from all sin. Error errorum, as Count Zinzendorf says; 'heresy of heresies'. 'I will suffer no one in my society that even thinks of perfection.' However, I trust you shall not only think of but enjoy it. I am glad you defer your journey. — I am, dear Joseph, Your affectionate brother.¹

This decade produced Scorpion Letters enough and to spare, as Berridge called Lady Huntington's letter to him in 1767 insisting that he forsake Kewten for the easier life at Bath. Perhaps it would be in order to close with one of a more gracious type written by Howell Harris to Lady Huntington in a vain attempt to stem the tide of an almost inevitable controversy which was to engulf the evangelical movement in the 1770's.

Honourable Lady,— It has cost me a severe humbling before I could rejoice in the success and happiness of all without distinction; and to be able to take all these just as they are to my heart, as our Saviour takes me, is the fruit of conquest in my spirit. O my dear lady, all His people are our people, and all His work in the hands of all must be ours as being His. He is lovely in all His plans, even amidst all our selfish schemes that mix therewith ...... We must be ever thus poor and humble towards each other, ever loving and forgiving a great deal, as He dealeth with us, being ever glad to find a little of Him among all parties amidst all the rubbish of self ...... But the self and partiality I see in us all, that surmounts at times even this acknowledged love, give me pain and prove how little we all know in reality and to purpose ...... I see we are in danger of becoming narrow-minded in consequence of seeing how partial others are ...... I heard an excellent sermon on Sunday from Mr. Romaine. I discoursed twice in Mr. Wesley's chapel, and once at Captain Wilson's.²

¹ Idem.

² Hughes, Harris, op. cit., p.424 et seq. Hughes asserts that the internal evidence of this letter indicates its date to be about the end of 1709.
Chapter Seven

THE OLIVE BRANCH WITHERS
Throughout the previous chapters we have shown that over the course of thirty years the fire of dissension was being laid but it was the fateful year of 1770 when the igniting spark touched off the devastating flame of controversy and personal animosity which was finally to destroy the unity of Methodism. At the beginning of the year free exchange between the two major camps indicated that an alliance, although already weakened by personality and doctrinal clashes, still existed. On the ninth of January, the new Headmaster, Joseph Benson, arrived at Trevecca from Kingswood, to assume his duties. John Fletcher came from Madeley to meet him. As soon as he had placed College affairs in the hands of this long-esteem friend of his who shared his Arminian viewpoint, he left for Switzerland. Benson, highly impressed with his new post, wrote Wesley a glowing account of Trevecca, and received a reply dated January 27:

"... All is well. We have no need to 'dispute about a dead horse'. If the school at Trevecca is the best that ever was since the world began, I am glad of it, and wish it may be better still. But do not run away with any of my young men from Kingswood; that I should blame you for..."

1Calvinistic Methodist Historical Society Journal, op. cit., XII, 1927, p. 43, "The Itinerary of Howell Harris".

2Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, p. 178. To Joseph Benson, Jan. 27, 1770. That the hiring of Benson by Lady Huntingdon created further tension between Wesley and the Countess is evident in the following letter from her to her new headmaster: "I am exceedingly happy to find you have so accommodated Matters with Mr. Wesley that I am able to receive you so much sooner into the College than at one time I had reason to hope for. One thing has made me sorry that (I find) Mr. Wesley Charges me (I thank God unjustly) that I asked (illegible) to attract you to the College this practice I am so wholly unacquainted with during my life that it is to be numbered (I trust) among those false Charges we must expect our portion for the Lord sake ..." Unpublished W.H.S. MSS Letter, Countess of Huntingdon Volume, to Joseph Benson, March 19, 1770 (?).
Already on the Evangelical scene there were disputes emerging which were the aftermath of the 1768 expulsions from Oxford, and the subsequent charges and counter charges of publications relating to Calvinism. All of these, however, only served as the prelude to the Calvinistic storm of 1770. Another letter, also written on January 27 by Wesley, revealed that he was having difficulty with Lady Huntington's greatly admired Chaplain and relative, Walter Shirley, who was then a guest preacher at the New room, Bristol: "You should give Mr. Shirley an hint not to contradict me when he preaches in my house". ¹

Seymour and Hew give extensive accounts of Wesley's accompanying Lady Huntington in January of that year on her first visit to meet Vincent Perronet, the vicer of Shoreham, to whom Charles Wesley gave the title of "Archbishop of Methodism". ² Wesley remained at Shoreham for a few days while her Ladyship went on to her chapel at Tunbridge Wells. Early in the month of February, however, she returned to her London home in Portland Row, and invited Wesley to administer the Sacrament there. "On the 6th (of February), Wesley administered the sacrament at her house for the last time. A coolness had existed between them for some time, which was rapidly increasing, and finally terminated

¹Ibid., V, p.179. To John Whitehead, January 27, 1770. Shirley apparently was refuting the doctrine of perfection and advancing the arguments for Calvinism even while a guest in the pulpit of the New Room.

²Seymour, op. cit.; I, p.387. Vide also Hew, op. cit., p.843. Wesley's Journal gives no account of this visit although an undesignated journey is noted.
in a total separation." One of the immediate reasons for this "coolness" was that Lady Huntingdon had invited Maxfield to preach at this service, and he had taken this opportunity to deliver a scathing attack upon Wesley's doctrine of perfection—a painful reminder to Wesley of Maxfield's complete change of theological opinion and of her Ladyship's influence upon and domination of his former friend. The next week, however, Wesley returned to a service held in the Huntingdon Portland Row residence, and after the sacrament and sermon he gave the closing prayer and benediction.2

Another intimate friend of the Countess, Lady Glenorchy of Edinburgh, was receiving instructions at this time regarding Wesleyan heresies. In her Diary for March 8th she wrote:

This evening I read some of Mr. W____'s sermons on Matt. v. I think he carries the doctrine of perfection too far, and I wish he had laid the foundation, even Jesus Christ, before he began to build. He showed me, however, that I cannot make myself a Christian, and sent me to my knees to beseech the Lord to teach me, and to preserve me from being deceived.3

In May, Wesley visited Scotland. He arrived in Edinburgh on the 11th, and on the 12th, Lady Glenorchy invited him to her home where he conversed at length with her minister friend, Dr. Webster.

1 New, op. cit., p. 249.
2 Idem. and Seymour, op. cit., I, p. 387 et seq.
The following is her account of this meeting:

They agreed on all doctrines on which they spoke, except those of God's decrees, predestination, and the saints' perseverance, which Mr. Wesley does not hold. After Mr. Wesley was gone, Dr. Webster told me in a fair and candid manner wherein he disapproved of Mr. Wesley's sentiments. I must (according to the light I now have, and always have had, ever since the Lord was pleased to awaken me) agree with Dr. Webster. Nevertheless I hope Mr. Wesley is a child of God. He has been an instrument in his hands of saving souls; as such I honour him, and will countenance his preachers. I have heard him preach thrice; and should have been better pleased had he preached more of Christ, and less of himself.  

Wesley was discouraged with the state of his society in Edinburgh and gave the following explanation for the drop in membership to only fifty: "Such is the fruit of a single Preacher's staying a whole year in one place! together with the labours of good Mr. Townsend."2 Townsend, it must be remembered, was sent to Scotland by Lady Huntingdon on a mission against Arminianism, and Wesley saw only too many evidences of his success.

In the early part of 1770, Wesley, attempting to avoid controversy, wrote a small pamphlet entitled "The Question, What Is An Arminian? Answered. By a Lover of Free Grace", and concluded it by asking all preachers to cease using in a derogatory sense either publicly or privately the labels "Calvinist" or "Arminian", for this was to engage in the unChristian and uncharitable practice of name-calling. In the

1Jones, Glenorchy, op. cit., p.156.

2Wesley's Journal, op. cit., V, p.316, Saturday, May 12, 1770.
early part of the year, he also issued another even more important tract which was an abridgment of Toplady's "The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination Stated and Asserted". Wesley retained the original title and signed it "By the Reverend Mr. Ag____
T____", but he stripped Toplady's doctrines of excess words, and presented some of the implications of the hyper-Calvinism they implied. He closed with these words:

The sum of all to this. One in twenty (suppose) of mankind is elected; nineteen in twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved do what they will; the reprobate shall be damned do what they can. "Reader, believe this or be damned. Witness my hand, A____
T_____."

This publication was certain to result in repercussions and Toplady's reprisal was issued in March, 1770, in a thirty-page tract: "A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley; relative to his pretended Abridgment of Zanchius on Predestination". Wesley commented on this slanderous and abusive language in a letter to George Merryweather in June, 1770:

"My dear Brother, - Mr. Augustus Toplady I know well. But I do not fight with chimney-sweepers. He is too dirty a writer for me to meddle with. I should only foul my fingers. I read his title-page, and troubled myself no farther. I leave him to Mr. Sellon. He cannot be in better hands."

The increased circulation of some of the doctrines which Wesley felt to be the bane of vital religion, led him to rethink

2Ibid., V, p.192. To George Merryweather, June 24, 1770.
his theological position in order to help his own preachers see more clearly the foundations of the faith they proclaimed. In his twenty-seventh Conference which began in London on the 7th of August, 1770, Wesley dealt mainly with the problem of Antinomian Calvinism; and in his characteristic question and answer fashion proceeded to face the issue squarely: "We said, in 1744, 'We have leaned too much toward Calvinism'. Wherein?"

In a quite different response this first sentence was now enough to make Lady Huntingdon declare war against Wesley, although it must be remembered that she had heard this exact warning at the first Methodist Conference in London in 1744, when she initially opened her home to the Methodists. In answer to his rhetorical question, John Wesley proceeded to list wherein his preachers had drifted too much toward Calvinism, and while this pronouncement may appear harmless and legitimate to today's reader, at the time of issue, it was sufficient to touch off the raging conflagration:

1. With regard to man's faithfulness. Our Lord himself taught us to use the expression; therefore we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert, upon his authority, that if a man is not 'faithful in the unrighteous mammon, God will not give him the true riches.

2. With regard to working for life, which our Lord expressly commands us to do. 'Labour ....', literally 'work' for the meat that endureth to everlasting life. And, in fact, every believer, till he comes to glory, works for so (well) as from life.

3. We have received it as a maxim, that 'a man is to do nothing in order to justification'. Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favour with God should 'cease from evil, and learn to do well'. Whoever repents, should 'do works meet for repentance'. And if this is not
in order to find favour, what does he do them for?
Once more review the whole affair:
(1) Who of us is now accepted of God? He that now
believes in Christ with a loving, obedient heart.
(2) But who among those that never heard of Christ?
He that according to the light he has feared God and
worketh righteousness.
(3) Is this the same with 'he that is sincere'? Nearly, if not quite.
(4) Is not this salvation by works? Not by the merit
of works, but by works as a condition.
(5) What have we then been disputing about for these
thirty years? I am afraid about words. Namely, in some
of the foregoing instances.
(6) As to merit itself, of which we have been so dreadfully
afraid; we are rewarded according to our works, yes,
because of our works. How does this differ from 'for
the sake of our works'? And how differs this from
secundum merita operum? which is no more than as our
works deserve. Can you split this hair? I doubt I
cannot.
(7) The grand objection to one of the preceding propositions
is drawn from matter of fact. God does in fact justify
those who, by their own confession, neither 'feared God'
nor 'wrought righteousness'. Is this an exception to the
genreal rule? It is a doubt whether God makes any
exception at all. But how are we sure that the person
in question never did fear God and work righteousness?
His own thinking so is not proof. For we know how all
that are convinced of sin undervalue themselves in every
respect.
(8) Does not talking, without proper caution, of a
justified or sanctified state tend to mislead men;
almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done
in one moment? Whereas we are every moment pleasing or
displeasing to God, according to our works; according to
the whole of our present inward tempers and outward
behaviour.1

In these propositions, Wesley avoided expanding time and effort on
one of his major objections to hyper-Calvinism; namely, that the
logical result of the doctrine took away all necessity for
evangelism. Instead, he concerned himself with the danger of its

1 Wesley's Works, op. cit., VIII, p. 387 et seq. "Large Minutes".
adherents' tendency towards Antinomianism. Just as he attempted to guard his concept of Christian Perfection against perversion, so he thought the Calvinistic Methodists should guard their doctrine of election, for many of their number, convinced that their eternal election made it impossible for them to ever fall from a state of grace, became blindly insensitive to the moral implications and responsibilities of the gospel. Some suspected that any attempt to grow in grace toward a holier life led to the doctrine of works which, in turn, repudiated Reformation theology; and some, basing their actions on the doctrine of election, committed notorious sins, even while maintaining that they were eternally saved, and that nothing could wrest them from the hand of God.

It is a just observation of the sharp-sighted Tyerman that the real issue between Wesley and the (extreme, not the moderate) Calvinists, was not the doctrine of predestination but that of the atonement. The idea that a believer could bank on the active righteousness of Christ and so continuing indifferently in sin, could commute (sic) with God—many drew this devastating conclusion to Christian morality, though Calvinist teachers always scorned it—was subversive of Wesley's doctrine of holiness, i.e., the experiential view of the atonement. Wesley as shepherd of souls and disciplinarian set himself therefore resolutely to uproot this antinomian teaching. His unexampled tolerance stopped short at any teaching which left men self-satisfied, content in wrong-doing, failed to inspire and spur them on to pursue Christian perfection, lamed or diminished the moral energy of saving faith. He really thought the blessing of salvation consisted in freedom from sin, an earnest pressing on and real progress in Christlikeness, not in any divine complacency with our unrighteousness. If God punishes, it is to make us better. If he forgives, it is to make us better. Holiness is the sole and final cause of atonement.

Wesley had objected to the doctrine not on the basis of theological

incorrectness, but because of the consequences resulting when it was incorporated into the lives of the Calvinistic Methodists.

He wrote to John Newton in May, 1765, summarizing his objection:

I think of Justification just as I have done any time these seven-and-twenty years, and just as Mr. Calvin does. In this respect I do not differ from him an hair's breadth.

'This', you say, 'has no prevalence in these parts; otherwise I should think it my duty to oppose it with my whole strength - not as an opinion, but as a dangerous mistake, which appears to be subversive of the very foundations of Christian experience, and which has, in fact, given occasion to the most grievous offences.'

Just as my brother and I reasoned thirty years ago. 'We think it our duty to oppose Predestination with our whole strength - not as an opinion, but as a dangerous mistake, which appears to be subversive to the very foundations of Christian experience, and which has, in fact, given occasion to the most grievous offences.'

That it has given occasion to such offences I know; I can name time, place, and persons. But still another fact arrests me in the face. Mr. Hewes and Mr. Newton hold this, and yet I believe these have real Christian experience .... Yes, many hold it at whose feet I desire to be found in the day of the Lord Jesus. 1

As Dr. Elliot-Binns rightly observes:

It was never suggested that the leaders of the Calvinistic Methodists and the Evangelicals, who mostly agreed with them, had a lower standard of holiness of life, yet their teaching, in the case of unstable hearers, might lead to dangerous consequences. Newton once admitted that even the saintly Romaine had made many Antinomians. 2

These propositions of Wesley's were given to his preachers for their deliberation in his own private conference, but soon they were appropriated by some Calvinists as evidence of his apostasy. We cannot ascertain the precise date when Lady

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1 Wesley's Letters, op. cit., IV, p. 298 et seq. To John Newton, May 14, 1765.

2 Elliott-Binns, op. cit., p. 199 et seq.
Huntingdon first saw the Minutes, but it must have been within a week after Wesley's Conference closed on the 10th of August; and Bogue and Bennett's "History of Dissenters" states that she burned a copy of them which she received from Walter Shirley.\(^1\)

Accompanied by him and by the Rev. Henry Venn, her ladyship arrived in Brislington (near Bristol) on the 18th of August on her way to attend the second Anniversary Service of the opening of Trevecca. Lady Huntington, in an act of impetuous generosity, had invited all of the clergymen who were present the previous year at her College's first anniversary to attend the second year's celebration also:

Wesley was then staying in Bristol, with the expectation of accompanying her Ladyship into Wales, to attend the approaching anniversary of her college, as he had been invited the preceding year. The Countess, however, had come to the determination of excluding him from her pulpits as long as he adhered to the resolutions passed at the late Conference; and accordingly wrote to him to that effect. Wesley returned no answer to the communication, but the next day left Bristol for Cornwall, and never again preached in the chapels of Lady Huntington.\(^2\)

On August 21st, the party set out from Brislington for Trevecca.

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1. David Bogue and James Bennett, *History of Dissenters from the Revolution in 1688 to the Year 1808*, (London, 1810), Vol. IV, p. 235. Fletcher wrote Benson on March 22, 1771, describing the effect these Minutes had upon the Countess: "My Lady went over them, and lost some nights sleep on the occasion. At last she told me she must burn against them, and that whosoever did not really (sic) disavow them should quit the College ...." Unpublished Letter to J. Benson, March 22, 1771, John Fletcher's Volume.

2. *op. cit.*, p. 253 et seq. Vide also Ternnan's *Fletcher*, *op. cit.*, p. 191. "Wesley's Journal entries give no account of this, and his Diary unfortunately was lost for many of these most significant years."
Berridge, Fletcher, William Williams, Daniel Rowland, Howell Harris, Peter Williams, and many others had already gathered, and at six o'clock on the Anniversary morning, a prayer meeting was held to invoke the blessing of the Almighty on the College, after which Fletcher administered the Sacrament. At ten o'clock in the morning, Walter Shirley preached in the courtyard to the thousands who had assembled there, and William Williams followed with a sermon in Welsh. At two, as in the previous year, Lady Huntington furnished food for this vast concourse of people, and at three o'clock John Berridge was the preacher. After him, in his turn, Daniel Rowland gave an address in Welsh.

On the 25th the Countess and her party left Trevecca for a visit to the Powys family in Herwich (near Shrewsbury) and there on Sunday both Berridge and Venn preached. She then returned to Bristol, and was joined by Charles Wesley who accompanied her to Bath where on several occasions he occupied the pulpit of her chapel.

James Glesebrook, a former collier and convert of Fletcher who had attended Trevecca, gave Lady Huntington the following report showing the increasing tension between the two camps of English Methodism, and requesting that she continue to supply preachers to her society at Bridgewater:

...... Tho' Mr. Wesley's people have not been here for a year past (what their design was in it can't say) yet they have sent to offer their service lately. They

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1Wey, *op. cit.*, p.255.
are playing about within 3 or 4 miles and I expect were we to go out of the way now the tie is broken the(y) would come in.

At this time Lady Huntingdon was strongly denouncing John Wesley and his doctrines, and she was outspoken in her condemnation of his errors. Some of his friends attempted to reasonstrate with her, but to little avail. But for the fact that there was in the making an event which finally and irrevocably was to divide the two leaders despite all attempts at reconciliation, Lady Huntingdon's animosity toward Wesley could have been changed through the good offices of Benson, Fletcher and Howell Harris. Joseph Benson did speak freely to the Countess in defence of Wesley, and John acknowledged this when writing to Benson from Bristol on October 5th:

I am glad you had the courage to speak your mind on so critical an occasion. At all hazards do so still, only with all possible tenderness and respect. She is much devoted to God and has a thousand amiable qualities. There is no great fear that I should be prejudiced against one whom I have intimately known for these thirty years .... But what you say is exactly the state of the case. They are 'jealous of their authority'. Truly there is no cause .... I fear and shun, not desire, authority of any kind. Only when God lays that burden upon me, I bear it for His and the people's sake.2

In this same letter Wesley went to the core of what he considered to be Lady Huntingdon's objections to him:

1Unpublished Cheshunt MS: Letter 733, to Countess of Huntingdon, September 19, 1770.

2Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, p. 308 et seq. To Joseph Benson, October 5, 1770.
I am constrained to believe (what I would not for a long time) these are not the objections of judgement, but of passion; they do not spring from the head, but the heart. Whatever I say, it will be all one. They will find fault because I say it. There is implicit envy at my power (so called) and a jealousy rising therefrom. Hence prejudice in a thousand forms; hence objections springing up like mushrooms. And, while those causes remain, they will spring up, whatever I can do or say.1

During the autumn of 1770, prompted by the Countess' hasty and rude withdrawal of her year-old invitation to the Anniversary Services at Trevecca, Wesley no doubt reviewed the course of their relationship and his present attitude toward her. One of his major ways of leading people into a deeper and fuller Christian experience, a task he always assumed he was episcopally ordained to do, was to confront them with their blind spots or sins as observed by his keen spiritual eye. He had never done this with Lady Huntingdon, possibly because he sensed that she was a person who could not take constructive criticism. However, her actions led Wesley to resolve on a course which was to rupture the now-so-fragile alliance between them. He undertook to write her a lengthy letter, listing her shortcomings, and suggesting that she correct them and in their light review her whole life. Unfortunately, no copy of this important letter has been discovered, and the present writer, after having searched through the Methodist Archives in London and Bristol, the Cheshunt MSS letters in Cambridge, and the Trevecca Manuscripts in Aberystwyth, was unable to locate any trace of it. Finally in an effort to find references to it from contemporaries of Lady Huntingdon

1Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, p.204. To Joseph Benson, October 5, 1770.
who might have seen it, an entry was unearthed at Aberystwyth
in the unpublished *Diary* of Howell Harris and this indicated that
her Ladyship had showed this "very bitter" letter to him. In
this most significant manuscript, Harris recorded the contents
of Wesley's letter:

Friday, October 12, New Style: I also saw a Letter to
L____ H____ from J. We_____ very bitter charge her with
self and having fall'n to Pride &c from ye Ld condemning
(sic) her hymn book &c because she had not asked him to
open her chappell & for her _____ (practice?) in calling her
chappells & studts &c mine & despise her helpers.

Lady Huntington, regarding this communication as written by an
every, showed it to many people as primary evidence of Wesley's
animosity and jealousy. Walter Shirley gave his opinion of it
when he wrote her on October 19, 1770:

Though I had before a too well-grounded conviction of
Mr. Wesley's Pride & Self-sufficiency I never could have
conceived he would have carried it to so immoderate a
Pith as has appear'd in the last letter he wrote your
Ladyship. Whether I shall be deem'd one of your Flatterers
or no, I cannot but yield (sic) my Poor Testimony in
approbation of every single particular in Your Ladyship's
Conduct ...... I observed to (our Society in Bath) that the
Doctrines (torn Mss) your Ladyship's Plan were a golden
Mediocrity, avoiding legality on the one hand & illegality
or Antinomianism on the other. I observed to them the
pernicious effects of the Doctrine of Perfection (admitting
that it was an Error); viz that it must necessarily lead
Seekers into a Miserable bondage & the professors of it
into enthusiasm & Spiritual Pride .... (I told them) :) (was)
determined to oppose Perfection with my utmost Might .....3

1*Unpublished* Trevecka Mss Howell Harris Diary 262, Trevecca,
Friday, October 12, 1770. N.S. Translated by Miss E. Monica Davies.


3*published* Chesbunt Mss Letter 1512, to Countess of
Huntington from Walter Shirley, October 19, 1770.
Wesley, cognizant of the fact that it was his letter, not his Minutes, which caused the real and final breach between him and Lady Huntingdon¹, justified its writing to Joseph Benson by stating that he knew his office as a Christian minister, and that there was not "one charge in that letter which was either unjust, unimportant, or aggravated, any more than that against the doggerel hymns which are equally an insult upon poetry and common sense".² But Stevens' trenchant comment remains valid: "If it were ever needed, it was now unseasonable, and could hardly fail to be unfavorably interpreted. It only exasperated the doctrinal offence."³ Notwithstanding the ill-timing and disastrous consequences of the letter, Wesley twenty-eight days later again stated his sincerity of motive in a postscript which he added at the close of another letter to Joseph Benson:

This morning I have calmly and coolly read over my letter to Lady Huntington. I still believe every line of it is true. And I am assured I spoke the truth in love. It is great pity any who wish her well should skin over the wounds which are there searched. As long as she resents that office of true esteem her grace can be but small.⁴


²Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, p.211. To Joseph Benson, November 30, 1770. Vide also Chapter IV, p.123 of this thesis.


Meanwhile, George Whitefield, who had previously specified that John Wesley was to preach his official funeral sermon in England, died at Newbury Port, Massachusetts. Wesley retired to Lewisham on Monday, 12th November, to write this sermon\(^1\), which on the following Sunday (the 18th) he preached both in the morning at Tottenham Court Road Chapel, and at four o'clock (the service was scheduled for 5.30 p.m. but the chapel was filled at 3 p.m.) at the Tabernacle. In this sermon he recapitulated the doctrines which Whitefield had proclaimed so unwearingly: namely, the New Birth and Justification by faith\(^2\); and he closed with a plea for ending the bickering and backbiting which was plaguing Methodism at that time. Tragically, Lady Huntingdon did not see fit to come to London for Wesley's eulogy upon her oldest Chaplain, but instead, petulantly arranged for her own services, and appointed Venn to preach Whitefield's funeral service at Bath on the same day as Wesley was preaching in London. In a postscript to his December 4th letter to Lady Huntingdon, J. Harmer of Harston portrayed to her the ecumenical atmosphere created by Wesley at that funeral service:

P.S. Dear Mr. Whitefield's Death is an awful Event to yo Church of Xt. & yet from what I saw & heard in London I have reason to believe it will effect ye good in uniting the Hearts of God's People & preventing their falling out by the way (whch of late has been much to be lamented) whch humanly speaking only can be

\(^1\)Wesley's *Journal*, op. cit., V, p. 396, Saturday, November 10, 1772.

\(^2\)Byrman's *Whitefield*, op. cit., II, p. 619 et seq.
stroke could have affected. Who wd. have expected to have seen John Wesley in ye Tabernacle Pulpit? & had you seen(n) ye listning (sic) multitudes you wd. have thought all Prejudices were entirely forgotten.1

One has the impression that had personal prejudices allowed the Countess to be present at this memorial service for her Chaplain, she perhaps would have responded to Wesley's passionate plea for unity, and thereby have made possible a reconciliation. Unfortunately, however, her Ladyship chose to do otherwise; and this overt display of her hostility, even to the point of disregarding Whitefield's publicly expressed request, firmly established the pattern of bitterness and alienation which followed.

Whitefield bequeathed £100 and all of his Orphan House's furniture, buildings, lands, and slaves "to that elect lady, that mother in Israel, that mirror of true and undefiled religion, the Right Honourable Selina, Countess-Dowager of Huntington"2; and "..... a mourning ring to my honoured and dear friends and disinterested fellow-labourers, the Rev. Messrs. John and Charles Wesley, in token of my indissoluble union with them, in heart and Christian affection, notwithstanding our difference in judgment about some particular points of doctrine". As though he were emphasizing the catholic sentiments proclaimed by Wesley's funeral


2Lyman's Whitefield, C.S. cit., II, p. 608 et seq.
oration, Whitefield had written in his will: "Grace be with all of them, of whatever denomination, that love our Lord Jesus, our common Lord, in sincerity." Rowland Hill, in a letter to Lady Huntingdon shortly after Whitefield's death, lamented: "I wish it may not prove a stroke in anger to the church but a Whitefield, on an age is as much as I fear we are to expect." He also reported:

I in general preach among Mr. Wesley's Societies who mostly receive me with ye utmost affection. Many of the preachers are equally kind others chiefly thro' envy at the largeness of the Congregation oppose with vehemence but as the people in general insist upon my preaching they oppose in vain.

As late as November 26, 1770, Lady Huntingdon was still convinced of Joseph Benson's orthodoxy and great usefulness to the College at Brevecca, and begged him to return as soon as possible. Two days later she wrote Charles Wesley about her difficulties with his elder brother:

I thank you for your kind consideration of me ..... (illegible) ..... I hope it will be no matter of dispute between you & your brother on my account. O! no I have cast my care on him that I know careth for me & he shall not fail to lead ariight thro' the fire & the water, to be wholly the Lords has I trust been my object & this I cannot fail while the patron of grace remains in the saviours Compassionate heart for such a poor vile sinner -

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1 Ibid., II, p. 609.
3 Ibid.
this your brother cannot take from me because it is the only good part which I have I hope for that reason I have to bless the Lord for all 'You shall tread upon Serpents & scorpions &c & they shall not hurt you . . . .'

1771 was a trying year of dispute for Methodism. To add to his encumbrances, John Wesley's wife left him "For what cause I know not to this day, ____ set out for Newcastle, purposing 'never to return'. Non eam reliqui: non dimisi: non revocabo." 2

Lady Huntingdon, now frantically engaged in safeguarding the true and orthodox faith, became highly displeased with Benson for defending Wesley's 'minutes', and when her cousin, Walter Shirley, examined some of Benson's writings, particularly that on the "Baptism of the Holy Ghost" written at Trerice, he reported to her that he found them filled with "heresy". As Tyerman explains, "Benson was unexceptionable as a classical master; but, in her ladyship's opinion, he was a heretic in theological dogmas,

1 Unpublished Methodist Archives MS Letter 79, to Charles Wesley, November 26, 1770. With regard to the reaction of Charles Wesley to his brother's admonishment of the Countess, Seymour has made the following comment: "The reader may be curious to know how Mr. Charles Wesley regarded the present conduct of his brother John to Lady Huntington. We have before us three letters of his (C.W.'s, to one of which the above was Lady Huntington's rejoinder), all dated from Bristol, and between the October and December of this year (1770). The substance is, that John had not shown him the letter, that he doubted whether he could read it in the right temper, that he looked on it as one of Lady Huntington's trials, and that he, although preferring peace to all things, would not fail to speak to his brother roundly on the subject of that letter; and he asks her ladyship if anything can be said in its defense to permit him to say it to her." Seymour, op. cit., 7, p.347.

2 Wesley's Journal, op. cit., V, p.399 et seq., Wednesday, January 23, 1771.
because he did not believe the doctrine of absolute predestination, and therefore on the 2nd of January, he was summarily dismissed. Fifteen days later, Lady Huntington presented him with a letter of recommendation consisting of only a single sentence. Trevecca College was now in a state of turmoil, and the students began a witch hunt all their own, even bringing charges on December 4th, 1770, against the moderate Calvinist, Howell Harris. John Fletcher, five days after Benson's dismissal, wrote Lady Huntington:

Mr. Benson made a very just defence when he said, he held with me the possibility of salvation for all men; that mercy is offered for all; and yet may be received or rejected. If this be what your ladyship calls Mr. Wesley's opinion, free-will, and Arminianism, and if 'every Arminian must quit the College', I am actually discharged also; for, in my present view of things, I must hold that sentiment, if I believe that the Bible is true, and that God is love.

For my part, I am no party-man. In the Lord, I am your servant, and that of your every student; but I cannot give up the honour of being connected with my old friends, who, notwithstanding their failings, are entitled to my respect, gratitude, and assistance, could I occasionally give them any. Mr. Wesley shall always be welcome to my pulpit, and I shall gledly bear my testimony in his, as well as in Mr. Whitefield's. But if your ladyship forbid your students to preach for the one, and offer them to preach for the other at every (turn) and if a master is discarded for believing that Christ died for all; then prejudice reigns, charity is cruelly wounded, and party spirit shouts, prevails and triumphs.

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1 Tyrerman's Fletcher, op. cit., p.175.
2 G. J. S. Journal, op. cit., XII, p.45, "The Itinerary of Howell Harris".
3 Tyrerman's Fletcher, op. cit., p.175 et seq. To Countess of Huntington, January 7, 1771.
Two days later, Fletcher wrote to Benson:

I am determined to stand or fall with the liberty of the College. As I entered it a free place (the one condition upon which Fletcher accepted the Presidency was that it would be open to all, regardless of affiliation or belief) I must quit it at the moment it is a harbour for party spirit.1

Following his discharge from Trevecca, Benson went to the home of his old friend, Walter Churchey, near Brecon, and while there wrote Wesley a full account of how Lady Huntingdon had dispensed with his services. Wesley replied from London on January 7, 1771:

Dear Joseph, — I am surprised at nothing. When persons are governed by passion rather than reason, we can expect little good. I cannot see that there was anything blameworthy in your behaviour. I suppose you have given Mr. Fletcher a plain account of what has passed; although he will hardly be able to set things right.2

The above letter was followed two weeks later by another in which Wesley related to Benson other difficulties which were developing:

Dear Joseph, — It was of their own mere motion that the students, when I was in Wales, desired me to come and spend a little time with them. I had no thought or desire so to do, having work enough upon my hands. When

1Ibid., p.176. To Joseph Benson, January 9, 1771.
2Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, p.217. To Joseph Benson, January 7, 1771. That Lady Huntingdon at this time was governed by passion rather than reason is evident from a letter which Fletcher wrote Benson: "I ask'd my Lady why she brought Mr. Wesley into the affair saying she 'abhorred him worse than any creature in the creation, repeating it again and again'. These say I are the words of Mr. Benson in his letter to me, which I can hardly believe your Ladyship could speak, and yet how to think him whom you call'd 'the fairest mind in the world' a gross liar. I hardly know." Unpublished. I.e. MS Letter from "Fletcher's Volume". To Jos. Benson, Jan. 10, 1771.
Mr. Ireland asked me why I did not go thither in August, I answered, 'Because my Lady had written to me to the contrary.' But I do not remember that I showed him her letter: I believe I did not.\footnote{Wesley's Letters, \textit{op. cit.}, V, p. 217 et seq. To Joseph Benson, January 21, 1771.} 

Fletcher joined Benson at the home of Walter Churchey; and the three of them discussed with Lady Huntingdon her unreasonable opposition to Wesley and his Minutes. In a letter to Walter Churchey, on 21st of February, 1771, Wesley acknowledged their valiant but vain attempt to pour oil on troubled waters.\footnote{Ibid., V, p. 223. To Walter Churchey, February 21, 1771.}

Having determined to exclude all Arminians from her college in Wales, the Countess of Huntingdon now joined in battle against this doctrine in other parts of the kingdom. On January 10th, she received a letter from Lady Glenorchy in Edinburgh, thanking her for "Your Ladyship's account of what occurred at Mr. Wesley's last conference ..... May the Lord God of Israel be with you, and enable you to make a firm stand in defence of a free grace Gospel"\footnote{Seymour, \textit{op. cit.}, II, p. 110 et seq.} and indicating that she would no longer allow Wesley's preachers to use her chapel. Her Journal entry for June 28th, written at Plymouth, gives her reasons for doing so:

\begin{quote}
Teymouth, June 28 (1771) — Before I left Edinburgh, I dismissed Mr. Wesley's preachers from my chapel, as, from some writings of Mr. Wesley which fell into my hands, and from the sentiments of some of his preachers of late officiating there, I found they held doctrines that appear to be erroneous. \textit{First}, they deny the doctrines of
\end{quote}
imputed righteousness, election, and the saints' perseverance, which I think are clearly revealed in Scripture. Secondly, I found that none of our gospel ministers would preach in the chapel, if they continued to have the use of the pulpit; so that, by receiving them, I should exclude those who were sound in the faith, and thereby frustrate the end I had in view in opening the chapel, which was to have all who preached pure evangelical doctrine to preach there, of any sect or denomination whatsoever. Thirdly, I found by experience that my own soul had been hurt, and kept from establishment in the faith, by hearing some of the preachers, and I judged that others might be hurt by them also.¹

In the January issue of the Gospel Magazine, Wesley was violently attacked by its editor for his sermon on the occasion of Whitefield's death. He charged that Whitefield's two major doctrines were not the New Birth and Justification, but rather the doctrines of Absolute Predestination and the Eternal Covenant. Since Romaine refused to print a letter from him in defence of this sermon, Wesley wrote the Editor of "Lloyd's Evening Post", vindicating his statements by citing chapel and verse in which Whitefield maintained these as his main doctrines. Wesley closed his letter: "But this I must ever, that the excluding all from salvation who do not believe the Horrible "sect is a most shocking insult on all mankind, on common sense, and on common humanity. - I am, &c." ²

In February one of Lady Huntingdon's flock, Thomas Davis wrote to her that he hoped Fletcher would continue as President.

¹Jones, Glencrigh, op. cit., p. 279. June, 1771.
²Wesley's Letters, op. cit., v, p. 378. To the editor of "Lloyd's Evening Post".
of Trevocc, and asserted that when Fletcher heard the full
details of Benson's dismissal "from beginning to end from your
Ladyship and the students, I hope Matters will be so clear'd up
to him as to make him satisfy'd with what your Ladyship has
done, & leave no room for Surmises .....".¹ He added a
significant note at the bottom of the letter:

I have endeavor'd to procure the Minutes of Mr. Wesley's
last Conference but fail'd. The Preacher (undoubtedly
one of Wesley's lay preachers) told the person whom I
desired to ask for them that they concern'd nobody but
Mr. Wesley's Preachers.²

This was precisely the case, and had her Ladyship accepted the
fact she would have saved the Methodist cause from much needless
suffering.

On the 15th of March, Fletcher wrote Wesley an account of
his resignation as President of the College, and told how Shirley,
in attacking him and his doctrines, had misled the students into
rejecting them by attaching the blanket label of Perfection to
them. He added:

In the meantime, an extract of your last Minutes was sent
to my lady, who wept much over it, through an honest fear
that you had fairly and fully given up the grand point of
the Methodists, free justification ...... The heresy appeared
horrible, worth being publicly opposed, and such as a true
believer ought to be ready to burn against. I tried to
soften matters, but in vain. The students were commanded
to write their sentiments upon your doctrine of salvation
by works, working for life, the merit of works, etc.; and
whoever did not fully disavow it, was to quit the College.
I wrote among the rest, and showed the absurdity of inferring

¹Unpublished Cheshunt MSS Letter 716 to Countess of Huntingdon,
February 9, 1771.

²Ibid. (from Coventry) (my italics).
from these Minutes that you had renounced the Protestant doctrine and the atonement. I defended your sentiments, by explaining them as I have heard you do, and only blamed the unguarded and not sufficiently explicit manner in which they were worded.\footnote{Tyerman's \textit{Fletcher, op. cit.}, p.177 et seq., March 18, 1771. To John Wesley.}

Fletcher related to Wesley that he advised Lady Huntingdon to choose a moderate Calvinist for his position, and he recommended Rowland Hill:

\begin{quote}
I strongly recommend them to set fire to the harvest of the Philistines, and to that of their fellow Israelites who cannot pronounce Shibboleth in their way. My lady seemed quite disposed for peace last Friday; and she will write to you to beg you will explain yourself upon the Minutes, that she and the College may see you are not an enemy to grace, and may be friends at a distance, instead of open adversaries.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p.178. To same.}
\end{quote}

Fletcher pleaded with Wesley to remain moderate in his actions and sermons, and to reassert the common theological bonds between these two groups. In the closing part of this lengthy letter, he added:

\begin{quote}
I look upon Lady Huntingdon as an eminent servant of God, an honest, gracious person, but not above the reach of prejudice; and where prejudice misleads her, her warm heart makes her go rather too fast. It is in your power greatly to break, if not altogether to remove, the prejudice she has conceived against you, and to become all things to her, that you may not cause her to stumble in the greatness of her zeal for the Lord. The best way to get the Calvinists to allow us something, is to grant them all we possibly can.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p.178 et seq. To same.}
\end{quote}

Four days later, Fletcher wrote an account of these happenings.
to Benson, which he thus concluded:

Last Friday I left them all in peace, the servant, but no more the president of the College. My lady behaved with great candour and condescension towards me in the affair. As for you, you are still out of her books, and are likely so to continue. Your last letters have only thrown oil on the fire. All was seen in the same light in which Mr. Wesley's letter appeared. You were accused of having alienated my heart from the College, but I have cleared you.¹

Fletcher sent Lady Huntingdon "An Account of John Fletcher's case, with the reasons that have induced him to resign the superintendency of the Countess of Huntington's College in Wales" in which he reviewed his early associations with John Wesley, his introduction by Charles Wesley to her Ladyship, and her appointment of him as one of her private Chaplains. He asserted that although he was not a party man of his own accord "my sentiments settled at last into the anti-Calvinist way, in which Mr. Wesley was rooted".² He objected to the Countess' contradiction of the principle upon which Trevecca was founded, by her ruling that every Arminian would have to leave her college. Furthermore, he attempted to define for her the Wesleyan doctrine of Christian Perfection:

with regard to perfection itself, I believe that when Mr. Wesley is altogether consistent upon that subject, he means absolutely nothing by it but the full cluster of Gospel blessings, which Lady Huntington so warmly presses the students to pursue; namely, Gospel faith,

²Ibid. "An Account of John Fletcher's case ......", n.d.
271.

the immediate revelation of Christ, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of adoption, the kingdom that cannot be moved, the element of forgiving love, deep and uninterrupted poverty of spirit, and, in a word, a standing upon Mount Sion enjoying its great and glorious privileges.¹

He continued his discerning account with a statement of the real basis for the entire controversy:

And I am fully persuaded that, in this respect, there is more misunderstanding between my lady and Mr. Wesley about words and modes of expression than about things and essential principles. All the difference between them seems to me to consist in this: my lady is more for looking to the misery and depth of the fall; Mr. Wesley more for considering the power and effects of the recovery. My lady speaks glorious things of free grace; and Mr. Wesley inculcates the glorious use we ought to make of it. Both appear to me to maintain one and the same truth, and to guard it; my lady against the Legalists, Mr. Wesley against the Antinomians. If, therefore, they do not understand one another, and fall out by the way, I shall think it is a great pity, and shall continue to be, at least in my heart, the loving servant of both; though both will possibly think me prejudiced for not seeing just as they do.²

This document also alluded to one of the few times when Lady Huntingdon falsely believed Wesley to have committed a dishonourable act:

I was also grieved that my lady should have received for truth so absurd an imagination as that of Mr. Wesley being willing to give £100 a year to a rigid Calvinist in bondage, who just read prayers with a Welsh accent, and that wise Benson made the foolish proposal to him, when Benson, to my certain knowledge, feared his head (the person who had spread this malicious rumor to Lady Huntingdon) was at times a little affected. And I began to fear lest my lady should, upon the most improbable assertions, receive unfavourable impressions against me, as she had done against her old friend Mr. Wesley...³

¹Ibid., p.182.
²Ibid., p.181 et seq.
³Ibid., p.183.
In a reference to her Ladyship's showing to Fletcher her letter asserting that "every one who held eternal justification must quit the College", he observed that this was:

..... as severe upon consistent Calvinists, as the like expression before upon consistent Arminians, as, I believe, every Predestinarian, who will not contradict himself must hold himself eternally justified in God's sight.¹

Fletcher was severely attacked by Trevecca students and wrote:

..... (When I) exhorted loiterers to leave the things that are behind, and press toward the mark for the prize of our high calling in Christ, they imagined I wanted to drive them to the brink of some horrible precipice, or into the jaws of some monster called Perfection, in which notion they were possibly confirmed not only by Mr. Shirley's positive assertions, but by frequent hints thrown out by her ladyship herself upon the danger of that imaginary bugbear.²

Describing the state of affairs at the College he wrote further:

Things appeared to me in this light, when the uneasiness of my lady occasioned by Mr. Wesley's Minutes showed itself. I admired her zeal for the grand truths of the Gospel. Appearances were for her, and I could not excuse Mr. Wesley's unguarded expressions, any more than my lady's great warmth against them; her ladyship having mentioned again and again that they were horrible and abominable, and that she must burn against them, and at last added, that, whosoever in the College did not fully and without any evasion disavow them should not stay in her College, etc.³

In this letter also, Fletcher respectfully recommended that her Ladyship consider the "young Whitefield, Mr. Rowland Hill" for the position from which he resigned.⁴

At this time, any thing which Wesley said or wrote was

¹Ibid.
²Ibid., p. 184 et seq.
³Ibid., p. 185.
⁴Ibid., p. 186.
misused as further reason for an attack upon him, and he observed to Miss Bishop that if Walter Shirley could find one other distinctive doctrine of his, that he would attack it as much as he attacked Christian Perfection. ¹ Three weeks later, on the 8th of March he again wrote Miss Bishop, this time about the impending visit of Lady Huntingdon to Bath: "You will have other trials when that well-meaning (though not always well-judging) woman comes to Bath. If she continues to show scraps of my letters, I shall be obliged to give you a copy of the whole.....".² In still a third letter to this good lady written two months later, he stated that his famous letter to the Countess was now out of date; it is mentioned no more; there is a more plausible occasion found – namely, those eight terrible propositions which conclude the Minutes of our Conference. At the instance of some who were sadly frightened thereby, I have revised them over and over; I have considered them in every point of view; and truly, the more I consider them, the more I like them, the more fully I am convinced, not only that they are true, agreeable both to Scripture and to sound experience, but that they contain truths of the deepest importance, and such as ought to be continually inculcated by those who would be pure from the blood of all men.³

On June 19th, Wesley, who by this time had probably received from Charles a copy of the Circular Letter, wrote Lady Huntingdon reasserting and defending the doctrines he had been compelled to

¹Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, p.222. To Mary Bishop, February 16, 1771.
²Ibid., V, p.227. To same, March 8, 1771.
³Ibid., V, p.251 et seq. To same, May 27, 1771.
preach for a period of over thirty years, and establishing clearly
that he had not altered his basic theological precepts from those
which she had known him to believe from the beginning:

But it is said, 'Oh, but you printed 10 lines in August
last which contradict all your other writings!' Be not
so sure of this. It is probably, at least, that I understand
my own meaning as well as you do; and that meaning I have
yet again declared in the sermon last referred to 'Whitefield's
funeral sermon'. By that interpret those 10 lines, and you
will understand them better; although I should think that
any one might see even without this help that the lines in
question do not refer to the condition of obtaining, but on
continuing in, the favour of God.¹

Wesley appealed to the pragmatic test of his gospel, and showed
her that new converts were being made and that "the gospel which I
now preach God does still confirm by new witnesses in every place,
perhaps never so much in this kingdom as within these last three
months ...... (And surely) God cannot bear witness to a lie."²

He concluded:

The Gospel, therefore, which He confirms must be true in
substance. There may be opinions maintained at the same
time which are not exactly true; and who can be secure
from these? Perhaps I thought myself so once: when I was
much younger than I am now, I thought myself almost
infallible; but I bless God I know myself better now.

To be short: such as I am, I love you well. You
have one of the first places in my esteem and affection.
And you once had some regard for me. But it cannot
continue if it depends upon my seeing with your eyes or
on my being in no mistake. What, if I was in as many
(errors) as Mr. Law himself? If you were, I should love
you still, provided your heart was still right with God.
My dear friend, you seem not to have well learned yet the
meaning of those words, which I desire to have continually
written on my heart, 'Whosoever doeth the will of My Father
which is in heaven, the same is My brother and sister and
mother'. I am, my dear Lady, Your affectionate servant.³

¹Ibid., V, p.259. To Countess of Huntingdon, June 19, 1771.
²Ibid.
³Ibid., V, p.259 at seq. To Countess of Huntingdon, June 19, 1771.
Lady Huntingdon and her friends, however, had taken a decisive step, for under her ladyship's auspices there had already been distributed a circular letter and this she included in a communication to Charles in which she greatly underestimated his loyalty to his elder brother:

Dear Sir. - Enclosed you have your brother's Minutes, sent with those resolutions taken in consequence of their appearing in the world, and that under the proper explanation of them, viz., 'Popery Unmasked'. They have long affected my mind with deep concern; and thinking that all ought to be deemed Papists who did not disown them, I readily complied with a proposal of an open disavowal of them. The friendship I have endeavoured to show you and him for so many years could never have been less, but for that confession your brother has made of his creed .... He is, like every other man, weak and insufficient, and does therefore demand a Christian temper of opposition, and his infirmities tenderly covered; but his principles set up another Gospel, and so exclude that of Jesus Christ .... (to) make us appear rebels to God our King, and the most wicked enemies of our country.

As you have no part in this matter, I find it difficult to blame your brother to you; while as an honest man I must pity and not less regard you, as you must suffer equal disgrace, and universal distrust, from the supposed union with him. I know you so well, and believe the Lord who brings light with truth will also show you, that no mean disguises, or a less interesting point, could thus influence me in that stand I make, and which appears to me of that consequence of the salvation of souls ....

P.S. The copy enclosed is the first that has been sent out by me to any one. I have done this in order that with the greatest openness your brother might be informed by you.1

Charles Wesley endorsed this ill-conceived correspondence with

1Jackson's Charles Wesley, op. cit., II, p.255 et seq. To Charles Wesley, June 8, 1771. Shirley recorded this act by Lady Huntingdon in his Narrative.
Lady Huntingdon's LAST UNANSWERED BY JOHN WESLEY'S BROTHER!

and as Jackson rightly estimated, Charles "resented the attempt to alienate him from the brother of his heart, to whom he had always yielded a just preference". From this time on, a decided coolness is discernible in the associations between the Countess and Charles Wesley.

What was the document which good lady enclosed for Charles to present to John? It was given in full in a letter of June 24th from Fletcher to Wesley:

Sir, - Whereas Mr. Wesley's Conference is to be held at Bristol, on Tuesday, the 6th of August next, it is proposed by Lady Huntingdon and many other Christian friends (real Protestants), to have a meeting at Bristol at the same time, of such principal persons, both clergy and laity, who disapprove of the underwritten 'Minutes'; and, as the same are thought injurious to the very fundamental principles of Christianity, it is further proposed that they go in a body to the said Conference, and insist upon a formal recantation of the said Minutes; and, in case of a refusal, that they sign and publish their protest against them. Your presence, Sir, on this occasion, is particularly requested; but, if it should not suit your convenience to be there, it is desired that you will transmit your sentiments on the subject to such persons as you think proper to produce them. It is submitted to you, whether it would not be right, in the opposition to be made to such a dreadful heresy, to recommend it to as many of your Christian friends, as well of the dissenters as of the Established Church, as you can prevail on to be there, the cause being of so public a nature.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant, - - - WALTER SHIRLEY.

P.S. - Your answer is desired, directed to the Countess of Huntingdon; or the Rev. Mr. Shirley; or John Lloyd, Esq., in Beth; or Mr. James Ireland, merchant, Bristol; or to Thomas Powis, Esq., at Berwick, near Shrewsbury; or to Richard Hill, Esq., at Hawkstone, near Whitchurch, Shropshire. Lodgings will be provided. Inquire at Mr. Ireland's Bristol.

1 Ibid., p. 257.
2 Tyerman's Fletcher, op. cit., p. 188 et seq. To John Wesley, June 24, 1771.
With the circular letter were sent copies of Wesley's Minutes, and a proposed document of protest, which was to be the basis for action by an outside group invading his Conference, and which stated:

...... as all under the name of Methodists may, and are, too generally supposed to hold principles essentially the same; we therefore desire to be considered as having no approbation of, or hand in, the establishment of such doctrines, either in whole or in part; nor answerable in any degree, towards God or man, for the bad consequences so justly feared from them ...... We mean to enter into no controversy on the subject; but, separated from party bigotry and all personal prejudice to Mr. Wesley, the Conference, or his friends, do, as Christians, Protestants, and members of the Church of England, hereby most solemnly protest against the doctrines contained in these minutes.1

Wesley2, the majority of other Methodists, and historians writing of this dispute, all assumed that although Walter Shirley's name was appended as the originator of this document, it was in fact the Countess of Huntingdon who was responsible for the wording and especially such sections of it as demanded a "formal recantation", and for calling the Minutes a "dreadful heresy". The unpublished Cheshunt M33 Letters reveal that this assumption is false, and that the unfortunate idea and even the caustic wording of the circular letter was due neither to Shirley nor to Lady Huntingdon. For Shirley, in a letter to Mr. Powis (or Powys) on January 2nd, 1772, stated that he acted only as a

1. Seymour, op. cit., II, p.239 et seq.

2. This assumption on the part of Wesley is seen in his letter to Christopher Hopper: "Lewisham, Feb 26, 1772. MY DEAR BROTHER, - When Mr. Shirley (or rather Lady H.) published that wonderful circular letter, it was little imagined that it would be the occasion of establishing those very doctrines which it was intended to destroy. So different were God's thoughts from men's thoughts." Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V.
Secretary at the Conference in Bath when this letter was drawn up, and "that Lady H____ & I were mere Accessories to Your Proposal". Thus it was Powys, a layman and former friend of Wesley's, who conceived this vicious circular letter which caused a division even in the ranks of those who names were listed in the Postscript. In this same letter, Shirley further stated to Mr. Powys:

I beg the favour of you: to take the first opportunity to show him (Richard Hill) this, which is occasioned by his late publication of the Conversation between Mr. Hill, Mr. Hadon, & Father Walsh. I cannot help thinking myself not well treated by a passage in that Pamphlet page 27 the words are as follows.

'I shall not enter into any Dispute with the Author of the circular Letter, concerning the propriety or impropriety of the printed paper dated Bath, & sign'd Walter Shirley.' Suffice it to say that I was not present when that paper was drawn up, nor did I know the contents of it till it was sent me after its publication.

Richard Hill wrote Walter Shirley two days later, reprimanding him for having his name included as a signatory to the circular letter:

This letter I frankly confess I thought highly improper fore (sic) some reasons wch. I mentioned to Lady H. when I did myself ye honour of writing to her & therefore must own that I did not think myself genteely used in having my name inserted in the manner it was.

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1 Unpublished Cheshunt MSS Letter 1448 to Mr. Powis, Jan. 2, 1772 (his italics). Shirley in his Narrative stated that "This Circular Letter was drawn up by me" and thus everyone assumed that he was the author. However, he was only the Secretary and it is in this light that his words must be regarded.

2 Idem.

3 Unpublished Cheshunt MSS 1448, to Walter Shirley, Jan. 4, 1772.
Shirley attached the blame for so doing to Mr. Powys, who at the second and final conference prior to the distribution of the letter added Hill's name by proxy, permission for which had been apparently granted by him at the first conference. Six days later, Hill clarified for Shirley his position at that initial conference held in Lady Huntingdon's residence at Bath:

The paragraph you allude to in ye conversation I think cannot possibly be construed in ye light you seem to apprehend. All it (sic) ideas it can convey to ye is 'that I disapprove Mr. Wesley's Minutes, & therefore was willing to acquiesce in anything wch might tend to oppose such doctrin; & that tho' I was not present when ye letter in question was indited, yet my friends who were then assembled, knowing my sentiments put me down in ye number of those to whom an answer might be sent. 1

Shirley, caught in the crossfire, answered Hill on January 18th:

but then surely it was most unhappily expressed for I was not the Only Person that was struck by it as bearing a Very Contemptuous Air, as well as intimating that I had wantonly & unwarranted made use of your Name .... Mr. Powis I presume did not understand you aright with regard to your Disapprobation of the ... (illegible - torn section of MS) ... for He himself even dictated to me where you were to be directed to & indeed we all understood you to be One of the Party, & that you intended to be with us at the Conference. 2

Wesley was not outwardly alarmed by the slanderous attack of the circular and the furore it created, but went on his way with his heavy schedule. He ignored the publication except for printing on July 10th, 1771, and privately circulating among his preachers "A Defence of the Minute" designed to help them prepare for the

1 Idem. Cheshunt M33 1448 is a series of letters.
2 Idem. To Richard Hill, January 18, 1772.
approaching Conference. He enclosed a copy of this Defence to Mary Bishop, adding:

For your own satisfaction I send you this; but I wish you would not show it before the Conference. If the Calvinists do not or will not understand me, I understand myself. And I do not contradict anything which I have written within these 30 years. You understand me right, and express more at large the very thing I mean......

Poor Mr. Shirley's triumph will be short. 2

To Lady Huntingdon's proposal of going in a body to make Wesley recant, very little response was given. However, she did receive two letters of encouragement; one was from the Rev. Charles Nesbit of Montrose, and later a second from the Rev. John Brown of Haddington. 4

On August 3rd, Wesley wrote Charles about this problem which was facing the next Conference, "As to Reprobation, seeing they have drawn the sword, I throw away the scabbard. I send you a specimen (a copy of Wesley's Defence of the Minute of Conference (1770) relating to Calvinism). Let fifteen hundred of them be printed as soon as you please." 5

1 It is interesting to note that just four days prior to this publication by Wesley he spent two days with Lady Huntingdon's daughter at Moira. Wesley's Journal, op. cit., V, p. 423, July 6, 1771.

2 Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, p. 269, to Mary Bishop, July 20, 1771.


Shortly after Fletcher had received his copy of the publication bearing Shirley's signature, he wrote Lady Huntingdon asserting that he would be compelled to defend Wesley's doctrines and character, if the proposed attack against Wesley were not abandoned. Lady Huntingdon, who by now had called Wesley "a papist unmasked, a heretic, an apostate," replied by reproving Fletcher for being attached "to man rather than to God," and in a martyr-complex tone remarked that all the world would be on Fletcher's side, while she would have to do battle alone. She stated that she would not object to his defence of Wesley, for she regarded everyone as her "fellow worms," and she would "stand up against any and all who would rob him (Jesus Christ) of honour, to arrogate any portion of salvation to themselves in right of their works." Such was her muddled thinking at this time.

Fletcher, however, began the preparation of his defence of Wesley's doctrines, and on July 29th finished his "First Check to Antinomianism." During Wesley's Conference, it was being set in type.

On August 5th, the evening before the Conference began, Lady Huntingdon and Walter Shirley began the disheartening task of

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1 Seymour, op. cit., II, p. 240.
2 Tyerman's *Fletcher, op. cit.*, p. 195.
4 Tyerman's *Fletcher, op. cit.*, p. 191.
looking over their army which had been assembled for the engagement with Wesleyan heresy, but it was more conspicuous for the ministers who were absent without leave than it was for those present and much to her Ladyship's surprise and dismay, the trustees of Whitfield's London chapels refused to associate with this ill-manoeuvred scheme.  

Berrie, Venn, Toplady, the Hills, Romaine, Madan, all prominent Calvinistic clergymen who had been closely allied with her, did not appear in Bristol for the encounter. In a letter to Mr. Thornton, written after the Conference, she complained that there failed to arrive many who had promised her their support, including those who had first made the proposal to her to go to Wesley's Conference. She now began to attempt a face-saving retreat, and wrote Wesley in an endeavour to remove his valid objection to the phrase in the circular letter "to come in a body and to insist on a recantation". Rather, it was she who finally recanted by writing, "As Christians ...... we wish to retract what a more deliberate Consideration might have prevented, as we would as little wish to defend even Truth presumptuously, as we would submit servilely to deny it". Shirley also wrote Wesley on this same evening, attempting to mitigate the circular's

1 Seymour, op. cit., II, p. 241.

2 Walter Shirley's "A Narrative of the Principal Circumstances Relative to the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Late Conference, Held in Bristol, August the 6th, 1771, at which the Rev. Mr. Shirley and Others his Friends were Present. With the Declaration Then Agreed to by Mr. Wesley, and Fifty-Three of the Preachers in Connexion with Him. In a Letter to a Friend", (The Third Edition, Bath, 1772). Letter to John Wesley, p. 8 et seq.
dictatorial tone and these two letters were delivered to Wesley on August 5th, the evening before his Conference opened.

It has been said that we had no right to intrude into your Conference. We did not pretend to any civil or juridicial Right, any more than Paul had to call Peter to Account; we did not mean to exercise any Authority over you, or to treat you as our inferior, but as our equal, and engaged with us in the common Cause of the Revival of Spiritual Religion .... However, it must be acknowledged upon the Whole, that the Circular Letter was too hastily drawn up and improperly expressed, and therefore, for the offensive Expressions in it, we desire we may be hereby understood to make every suitable Submission to you, Sir, and to the Gentlemen of the Conference. And I cannot but wish most earnestly that the Recantation of the Circular Letter may prevail as an Example for the Recantation of the Minutes.¹

Wesley did not answer either letter of apology, and on the morning of the Conference Shirley again wrote to him "requesting to know by what other way, more agreeable or convenient to the conference, the protesting party might be admitted to make objections to the minutes of the conference of August 1770."² Wesley, who would have been perfectly justified in excluding them from his private conference, sent a verbal reply to Shirley advising him that he and his associates would be admitted on Thursday, the third day of session. This was his way of kindly telling Shirley that he and his group were outsiders, and would be admitted only at a time convenient to him and his Conference. It must be remembered that the circular letter was widely distributed, not only to the

¹Ibid., p.10.
sixty clergymen who at that time were employed by Lady Huntingdon, but also to the other ministers and laymen in the three kingdoms who were friendly to the Evangelical cause. Wesley knew full well that the response to the letter was almost nil, for out of this vast group, only Shirley, Glascott and Owen (all ministers belonging to Lady Huntingdon's Connexion), three laymen from the local area, Messrs. Ireland, Winter and Lloyd, and two Trevecca students were all that could be mustered even though her Ladyship had promised to pay the expenses of anyone who would join this protest. In an attempt to remove Wesley's supposed objection to the protesting body, she indicated that she was not "leading the opposition..... (but was) abstaining from presenting herself at the conference, unless summoned".  

On Thursday morning, Wesley admitted these eight men to his Conference, and following his morning prayer, Shirley arose and asked if Wesley had read to the Conference the letters of apology from himself and Lady Huntingdon. Wesley answered that he had not, after which Shirley asked permission to read them. This was granted, and a discussion followed Shirley's reading of them in which Wesley

rose and addressed the Conference, remarking that for more than thirty years he had preached daily the doctrine which he was now accused of denying; no man in England had preached it more extensively, or written it more explicitly; the Minute did not deny it; and if that document were even

\[1Idem.\]
ambiguous, yet men of candour should interpret it by his well-known antecedents. He suspected personal hostility toward him, and deemed that this was the origin, however unconsciously, of the opposition to the Minute. Shirley warmly protested his good-will toward Wesley, and that he opposed only what he deemed the dangerous tendency of the Minute and entreated them, for the Lord's sake, that they would go so far as they could, with a good conscience, in giving the world satisfaction, by a suitable explanation. To this proposal Wesley and his brethren could not, of course, object. They could explain without denying their opinion.1

Shirley then produced his proposed document which Wesley read over, "made some (not very material) Alterations in it ....", and then, along with fifty-three of his preachers, signed. Notable signatures missing were Charles Wesley's, who may not have been present, Thomas Oliver's, and John Nelson's. The document read:

Whereas the doctrinal points in the Minutes of a Conference, held in London, August 7, 1770, have been understood to favour Justification by Works: now the Rev. John Wesley, and others assembled in Conference, do declare that we had no such meaning; and that we abhor the doctrine of Justification by Works as a most perilous and abominable doctrine; and as the said Minutes are not sufficiently guarded in the way they are expressed, we hereby solemnly declare, in the sight of God, that we have no trust or confidence but in the alone merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for Justification or Salvation either in life, death or the day of judgment; and though no one is a real Christian believer, (and consequently cannot be saved) who doth not good works, where there is time and opportunity, yet our works have no part in meriting or purchasing our salvation from first to last, either in whole or in part.2

After this document was signed by Wesley and his Preachers, Shirley was astonished by their request that since they had clarified the

1 Stevens, op. cit., I, p.415. Shirley's Narrative confirms Stevens' accounts.

2 Tyerman's Wesley, op. cit., III, p.100.
meaning of the Minute to the Calvinists' satisfaction, that he should "make some public Acknowledgement, that I had mistaken the Meaning of the Minutes". As Shirley hesitated at this unexpected request, one of Wesley's lay preachers rose and asked him pointedly whether he doubted John Wesley's honesty, to which he replied he did not, and then wrote out a certificate to the effect that he "was convinced he had mistaken the Meaning of the Doctrinal Points" in the Minutes of the preceding Conference. This attempted compromise only made matters worse, for Wesley appeared to have conceded that his Minute was ambiguous. Had he stood firm and not yielded to the desire to see an end of the controversy, the Calvinists possibly would have allowed him to let this Minute stand as the basis for his own doctrinal belief, even though they differed from it. But when Wesley and his preachers signed the document of clarification, it seemed an admission by the Wesleyans that the original wording was ambiguous and that Wesley had changed his mind.

Both parties assumed that the dispute was over, but there was yet to come a publication which was to blast away all hope of peace and all dreams of a cessation of hostilities. It was Fletcher's "First Check to Antinomianism or A Vindication of the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Last Minutes: Occasioned by a circular, printed letter, inviting principal persons, both clergy and laity, as well

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1Shirley's Narrative, op. cit., p.16.
2Ibid., p.17.
of the Dissenters as of the Established Church, who disapprove
of those Minutes, to oppose them in a body, as a dreadful heresy:
in Five Letters to the Hon. and Rev. Author of the circular letter", which had been completed on July 29th, 1771. It was the day
after the Conference was over that Shirley first heard about this
proposed publication, which was being set in type in Bristol while
the Conference debate was taking place.

On that same day, Friday, August the 9th, he asked Wesley to
suppress the publication, to which came the reply, "I will
consider it"; and the assurance meantime that he "had corrected
all the tart Expressions" in Fletcher's manuscript.1 Wesley
pondered this request, but must have ruled against it because the
plague of Antinomianism, which Fletcher was refuting, was still
rampant and a burning issue among many societies.2 Although it
is clearly evident from the document that Wesley had not recanted
the Minute, Lady Huntingdon and her friends considered his

1Ibid., p.16. Also vide Tyerman's Fletcher, op. cit., p.191.

2Shirley attacked Wesley for inserting the following advertisement in later copies of Fletcher's Checks: "The date of the preceding Letters shows that they were wrote before the late Conference being design'd to be publickly read at that Time, but not being sent soon enough to the Printer, they were not finished till the Conference was ended. It was then doubted, whether it would be needless to publish them. But it seem'd to be needful still, to remove the ill Impression which had been made by the Circular Letter, both in England, Scotland and Ireland; and secondly, to give some Check to the Antinomianism, which is still spreading throughout the three Kingdoms." p.2, Shirley's Narrative. However, Wesley was justified in printing an answer to their Letter, and also in attempting to combat the plague of Antinomianism among his Societies.
signature on the document of clarification to be such an indication. Meanwhile, Fletcher had received an urgent letter from Mr. Ireland, the wealthy Bristol merchant, requesting that his publication be withdrawn, and stating that he would pay the costs encountered, and this Fletcher agreed upon in the interests of peace, and because of Shirley's attitude at Wesley's Conference, though not from the idea that what he had stated in the "Check to Antinomianism" was wrong. Wesley, however, let his order stand to Thomas Oliver to print and distribute Fletcher's publication. Shirley, who had attempted in vain to have Fletcher's publication withdrawn, now accused Wesley of duplicity and wrote his own account (dated September 12, 1771) of the events surrounding the Conference, entitled "A Narrative of the Principal Circumstances Relative to the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Late Conference, Held in Bristol, August the 6th, 1771. At Which the Rev. Mr. Shirley, and others, his Friends, were present. With the Declaration then agreed to by Mr. Wesley, and Fifty-three of the Preachers in Connexion with him. In a Letter to a Friend".

In answer to the letter which he had received from Lady Huntington on August 5th, the evening before the Conference, and which had been read by Shirley to the Conference on the 8th, Wesley wrote her on the 14th of August from "near the Hay, Brecon". This letter is important in that it gives quotations of Lady Huntington's charges against him and his answer to these, and it reveals that Wesley considered Fletcher's publication to be of
MY DEAR LADY, - When I received the former letter from your Ladyship, I did not know how to answer; and I judged, not only that silence would be the best answer, but also that which your Ladyship would be best pleased. When I received your Ladyship's of the 2nd instant, I immediately saw that it required an answer; only I waited till the hurry of the Conference was over that I might do nothing rashly. I know your Ladyship would not 'servilely deny the truth'. I think neither would I; especially that great truth Justification by Faith, which Mr. Law indeed flatly denies (and yet Mr. Law was a child of God), but for which I have so often hazarded my life, and by the grace of God will do again. 'The principles established in the Minutes' I apprehend to be no way contrary to this, or to that faith, that consistent plan of doctrine which was once delivered to the saints. I believe whoever calmly considers Mr. Fletchet's Letters will be convinced of this..... 'The preservation of His honour appears so sacred' to me, and has done for above these 40 years, that I have counted, and do count, all things loss in comparison of it..... But till Mr. Fletchet's printed letters are answered, I must think everything spoke against those Minutes is totally destructive of His honour, and a palpable affront to Him both as our Prophet and Priest, but more especially as the King of His people. Those letters (which therefore could not be suppressed without betraying the honour of our Lord) largely prove that the Minutes lay no other foundation than that which is laid in Scripture, and which I have been laying and teaching others to lay, for between 30 and 40 years. Indeed, it would be amazing that God should at this day prosper my labours as much if not more than ever, by converting as well as convincing sinners, if I was establishing another foundation, repugnant to the whole plan of man's salvation under the new covenant of grace, as well as the clear meaning of our Established Church and all other Protestant Churches'. This is a charge indeed! But I plead Not Guilty. And till it is proved upon me, I must subscribe myself, my dear Lady, Your Ladyship's truly affectionate but much injured servant.

Wesley valued greatly Fletchet's initial publication, and indeed it was not unjustified. He wrote to Mary Bishop on September 1st,

1Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, p.274 et seq. To the Countess of Huntingdon, August 14, 1771.
1771:

...... Concessions made in the chapel at Both would not quench the flame kindled over the three kingdoms (about the 1770 Minutes). Mr. Fletcher’s Letters may do this in some measure; but the antidote cannot spread so fast as the poison.¹

One of Lady Huntingdon’s followers sent her an inflammatory account of London’s reception of Fletcher’s defence:

Mr. Wesley’s people for the most part triumph greatly on account of the late conference, and say that Mr. W. got the victory over all his enemies. They also spoke very disrespectful of your Ladyship, and say your Ladyship must shut up some of your Chapels very soon for nobody will preach for you because of opposing Mr. Wesley......²

Although she was no doubt enraged by the apparent defeat of her anti-Wesley crusade, we find no further retaliation from the Countess, and toward the end of the year Walter Shirley wrote that he was happy "the Lord hath graciously suggested to your Ladyship to sit still".³ Unfortunately, the same was not true of others, for during the following six years, as a result of the Minute Controversy, some forty-three publications were issued. However, as they did not directly involve Lady Huntingdon or John Wesley in personal disputes they fall outside the scope of this study.

¹Ibid., V, p.276. To Mary Bishop, September 1, 1771.
³Unpublished Cheshunt MSS Letter 1442. Walter Shirley to the Countess of Huntingdon, December 19, 1771. Lady Huntingdon had apparently decided after the Bristol Conference in August, 1771, to leave off controversy, for Shirley mentioned this in his Narrative, p.23.
During the six years of controversy, the chief defender of the Arminian cause was John Fletcher, assisted by Walter Selkon and Thomas Olivers, while the chief polemicists for Calvinism were Toplady, whom Wesley described in his worst term for anyone as "a coxcomb", Richard and Rowland Hill, Madan, Berridge, and Walter Shirley. Although Lady Huntingdon was not attacked personally or theologically, Wesley suffered abusive treatment, particularly from the Hills but even more from Augustus Montague Toplady. Progressively over thirty years' events had led to the breach of the alliance between Lady Huntingdon and John Wesley and the final severance of their relationship occurred in 1770. Attempts at reconciliation were fruitless at this point for there was one further publication which convinced Lady Huntingdon more than ever of Wesley's heresy. It was entitled: "A Conversation between Richard Hill, Esq., The Rev. Mr. Madan, and Father Walsh, Superior of a Convent of Benedictine Monks at Paris, held in the said Convent, July 13, 1771; in the presence of Thomas Powis, Esq., and others. Relative to some Doctrinal Minutes, advanced by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley and others, at a Conference held in London, August 7, 1770 .....", and it was anonymous, although Tyerman states that Richard Hill was the writer. Richard Hill presented the Superior with a copy of Wesley's Minutes and by asking what fault could be found with them, evoked the following dialogue:
Superior: They are too near Pelagianism.
Mr. Hill: The principles of the Roman Catholic Church are nearer the Church of England than those?
Superior: A great deal, Sir. Those of that paper are too near Pelagianism; the author is a Pelagian ....
Mr. Hill: Your doctrine is nearer that of the Protestants (then is Wesley's)?
Superior: O, Sir, a great deal; that is Pelagianism. 1

Fletcher's comment on this publication was:

Astonishing! that our opposers should think it worth their while to raise one recruit against us in the immense city of Paris, where fifty thousand might be raised against the Bible itself! 

Of more importance still is the reaction of Lady Huntingdon to the account, for, on reading it, she declared in a letter to Mr. Thornton after the 1771 Conference, "I find an old monk in France has declared these minutes to be the Pelagian heresy, and that the Church of Rome was nearer to the Church of England than the author of these minutes." 3 Some thought that she possibly financed this expedition to Paris to bring back Rome's verdict that Wesley was a heretic; however, the indications are that the trip was paid for by Thomas Powys (Powis) of Berwick, who fomented the excitement over the 1770 Minutes and who was responsible for the defamatory language used in the Circular Letter.

Shirley in a letter written in January, 1772, applied the

2 Tyerman's Fletcher, op. cit., p. 216.
pragmatic test to their opposition to Wesley:

Again, when I reflect how much the Lord has own'd & blest the work in your Ladyship's hands at The College, & in so very many Different Places have we the least reason to believe he was displeased with us for the Opposition we gave to tho Minutes? O no, surely he was with us in that Matter .......

Two weeks later Shirley again wrote her Ladyship:

Every thing Mr. Fletcher writes makes me more and more a Calvinist. 'O the bitterness of a legal Arminian Spirit. Mr. Hill's Answer (Richard Hill's "A Review of all the Doctrines Taught by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley ....") answering Fletcher's Second Check)(which I presume your Ladyship has seen) is serious, sensible, & Polite; but there are some very high strokes of Calvinism in it, which are (at least) too strong Meat for the Weak & I fear will generally (sic) disgust the outward Readers.

Lady Huntingdon was having a difficult time with many friends of long-standing, and even Howell Harris, a moderate Calvinist and certainly no friend to Wesleyan perfectionism, was declared persona non grata by her. In August, 1771, when she was at Trevecca for her College's Anniversary services, he, who had been the architect of the school did "not see eye to eye with her Ladyship over several matters at the College"; and shortly afterward, when Harris was ill and confined to his home, her Ladyship paid a brief visit to him, staying to hear him address the Family, but she "was still more or less opposed to his spirit, sermons, and

1 Unpublished Cheam Hunt MSS Letter 1441. Walter Shirley to the Countess of Huntingdon, January 9, 1771.

behaviour.¹ She punished him by refusing to let him speak to her students, although after a month, she relented.² Still, the warm ties of friendship, which had once existed, were no longer present, and James Glazebrook, one of her preachers at Ashby, in a reply to a letter from the Countess asserted: "I suppose few will be sorry for what your Ladyship has done in leaving his house ...."³ In this same letter, Glazebrook reported that Wesley, in a recent sermon at Ashby, had preached that the Law was above the Gospel. Less than two months later he wrote again to Lady Huntingdon, stating that he had seen Mr. Fletcher:

Poor Dr. Man, he is very desirous of being reconciled to your Ladyship, and asked me if I thought it possible that a reconciliation and take place. (He) told me that a few nights before he had dreamt that he was with your Ladyship, and that you were friends again ..... but I shall not ask him to preach in your Ladyship's Chapel, unless you propose it to me.⁴

Lady Huntingdon replied that she and Shirley had been maligned by Fletcher and that she desired no attempt be made toward such a reconciliation.

In May, on a visit to Scotland, Wesley wrote a significant entry into his Journal:

¹C.M.E.S. Journal, op. cit., XII, 1927, p.46.
²Idem.
³Unpublished Cheshunt MS3 Letter 685, March 26, 1772.
I preached at Ormistoup, ten miles south of Edinburgh. I dined at the Minister's, a sensible man, who heartily bid us God-speed. But he soon changed his mind; Lord Hopetoun informed him that he had received a letter from Lady Huntingdon, assuring him that we were 'dreadful heretics, to whom no countenance should be given'. It is a pity! Should not the children of God leave the devil to do his own work?

Wesley's term "the children of God" included Lady Huntingdon, although she never retracted her statements that Wesley was "A papist unmasked, a heretic, an apostate" and during the course of this same northern journey he was refused his "usual preaching room at Provost Dickson's in Haddington, because of her Circular Letter".

Toward the end of the summer, Wesley went to Trevecca to see Howell Harris, and there he recorded his colleague's impartial observations which are significant in that they justified Wesley's decision to publish Fletcher's Checks to Antinomianism:

Fri. 14 - About noon, at the request of my old friend Howell Harris, I preached at Trevecca on the Strait Gate, and we found our hearts knit together as at the beginning. He said, 'I have borne with those part ignorant young men, vulgarly called students (Lady Huntingdon's students) till I cannot in conscience bear it any longer. They preach bare-faced Reprobation, and so broad Antinomianism that I have been constrained to oppose them to the face, even in the public congregation. It is no wonder that they should preach

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1Wesley's Journal, op. cit., V, p. 460, May 12, 1772.
2Tyerman's Fletcher, op. cit., p. 195.
thus. What better can be expected from raw lads of little understanding, little learning, and no experience.1

Those same students were causing John Wesley many headaches, for they often came into communities as if the only bearers of the true gospel and as opposers to Wesleyan "heresies", upheld by his preachers. Rather than strengthen the Evangelical Movement by preaching in places where no societies existed, Lady Huntingdon often attempted to create a rival society in the same community. Mr. J. Cave, reporting to her in October, 1772, stated the need for an outstanding preacher for Brecon because "The Revd Mr. Westley (sic) always takes due care to send his most eminent (sic) Ministers to Brecon since the Division".2 He reminded her Ladyship that "The Text at opening ye Chaple (sic) was this (') The Glory of this letter House shall exceed the glory of the Former saith the Ld of Host and in ye Place will I give peace sd ye Ld of Host (')".3

In 1773 Wesley considered what would be the status of his societies after his death, and as a result wrote Fletcher on

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1Ibid., V, p.482. August 14, 1772. (My italics). That Antinomianism was rife among Lady Huntingdon's Connection is made evident by Zachary Macaulay, who wrote in 1796, about Sierra Leone: "To Lady Huntingdon's Methodists, as a body, may with great justice, be addressed the first verse of the third chapter of the Revelation. The lives of many of them are very disorderly, and rank antinomianism prevails among them," George W. E. Russell, A Short History of the Evangelical Movement, (London, 1915) p.4.

2Unpublished Cheshunt MS3 Letter 575, October 20, 1772.

3Ibid.
January 15th, asking him to assume the leadership of the Methodists as his successor. Very likely this was the advice of his trusted confidant Vincent Perronet, but the fact that Wesley was thinking of the future of Methodism revealed an important difference between him and the Countess. He recognized that he was mortal, while she gave little indication that this thought ever crossed her mind, although in her will she did provide for a loose organization of her Connection, but nothing of the care and thought which Wesley exhibited was put into the matter. At his Conference in London in August, 1773, in question 17, Wesley also dealt with this problem and the declaration of unity thereupon was signed by an additional nine preachers. It was to become effective after Wesley's death and had received many signatures when first brought before the Conference in 1769. It was only superseded by Wesley's controversial Deed of Declaration.

In 1773 Wesley also wrote his definitive sermon on Predestination. The summer of that year brought the second bereavement to the original Big Five of English Methodism in the death of the gentle and peace-loving Howell Harris. Lady Huntington, forgetting her differences with him, joined in tribute by supporting the funeral services, at which over twenty thousand people gathered to hear nine sermons, which were delivered

1Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, p.10 et seq. To John Fletcher, January 15, 1773.
from three platforms especially erected for this sad occasion. It would have pleased this old veteran to know that the Lord's Supper was administered to this so great a cloud of witnesses to his memory, for thirty-eight years before in the parish church at Talgarth just three miles away, this Sacrament had been used as God's instrument in awakening him to an evangelical response. Three clergymen, one after the other, were so emotionally distraught that they were unable to read Harris' burial service, and he was finally committed to his grave in a silence which was broken only by thousands of weeping friends.

During this same summer Lady Huntingdon's Orphan House in Georgia, which had been converted into an academy, burned down, and Wesley wrote her about this misfortune:

..... (I) have longed to tell your Ladyship either by word or writing what part I have in your sufferings. This lay the weightier upon me when I considered how few are now left below of those who many years ago rejoiced to see the undaunted fervour with which your Ladyship left the quiet pleasant shades to come abroad and espouse in open day the cause of a despised Saviour. What a blessing it is that His love and guardian care have preserved you from those early days in known and unknown dangers, and carried you through honour and dishonour, evil report and good report! O may you still (like that man that is gone before us into Abraham's bosom) stand like an iron pillar strong And steadfast as a wall of brass. 2

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1 New, op. cit., p. 291. Letter from the Countess of Huntingdon to William Romaine, July 29, 1773. In this letter Lady Huntingdon described the funeral service at which "Fifteen clergymen were present, six of whom blow the gospel trumpet with great power and freedom". Idem.

2 Wesley's Letters, op. cit., VI, p. 41 et seq. To the Countess of Huntingdon, September 16, 1773.
Wesley, almost as an afterthought, then asked her if it would not "be for the glory of God to adhere in part to the original design - to have some orphans there (a glorious charity) as well as an academy?". Knowing how she resented being told what she should do even from one fulfilling his "office of a Christian minister"², he carefully added words that were certain to please her:

I just take the liberty to mention this, and leave it to your Ladyship's mature consideration. Wishing your Ladyship a continual increase of faith and loving zeal, I remain my dear Lady, Your Ladyship's most affectionate servant.³

In 1774 Fletcher, attempting to placate the unreasonable attitude of Lady Huntingdon that all who disagreed with her were heretics, wrote "An Essay on Truth ......", presenting the via media between Pelagianism and Antinomianism, and dedicated it to her. In his dedication he decried her attacks upon him and asked:

How could a lady, so zealous for God's glory and the Redeemer's grace, commit the superintendency of a seminary of pious learning to a man that opposes the fundamental doctrine of Protestantism! How could she put her sheep under the care of such a wolf in sheep's clothing!

This conclusion, my lady, has grieved me for your sake; and, to remove the blot that it indirectly fixes upon you, as well as to balance my 'Scriptural Essay on the Rewardableness' of the works of faith, I publish, and humbly dedicate to your ladyship, this last piece of my 'Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism'. ⁴

¹Idem.
²Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, p.211. To Joseph Benson, November 30, 1770.
³Ibid., VI, p.41. To Countess of Huntingdon, September 16, 1773.
⁴Tyerman's Fletcher, op. cit., p.506, March 12, 1774.
Throughout the 1770's many young student-preachers in the Countess of Huntingdon's Connection were continually attacking Wesley and his preachers, and establishing rival societies which caused confusion among the Methodists. ¹ A letter from Wesley to Lady Huntingdon in the autumn of 1776 has been lost, but her defence of her students against his allegations there made of their destructiveness to his societies has been preserved. It is dated September 8, 1776, and reads:

Dr. Sir, I am sorry you should chuse (sic) to give credit to anything so absolutely false as even the supposition of meaning to oppose you in Cornwall (sic). (She then mentions to him that her students, who had been preaching in Plymouth, were invited to preach in the surrounding countryside - an invitation they accepted) ...... and as all cannot believe with either you or us from the remoteness of our principles to each other, so the liberty of chusing (sic) every honest & sensible man Justly claims me ....... And as there are yet thousands of Souls after all your labours sitting in darkness & the shadow of death. Let it be our mutual business to love one another & serve those severely (sic) who will be help'd by either. Instead of Quarreling with me ..... Many have been the interpositions made by me to prevent any attack unkind or severe upon you or upon any who serve with you in The Gospel believing many to be worthy & excellent ...... Nothing has been so continually enforced by me in Various Ways to the Students as to avoid all disputes or casting the smallest reflection upon you or any of your friends ...... I praise the Lord Our young men are better employed and may assure you better taught also & what you chuse (sic) to say or think of their having me for Their directress (in railing as on this occasion) I have no objection to while I remain so well satisfied myself of its unjustness upon the subject ...... Dr Sir your old & faithful friend S.H. ²


²Unpublished Cheshunt MSS Letter, in Cheshunt Library case, from Countess of Huntingdon to John Wesley, September 8, 1776.
The above letter is the last extant letter Lady Huntingdon ever wrote to John Wesley, while his answer a week later from Bristol is his last extant letter to her:

My Dear Lady, — I am so entirely satisfied with your Ladyship's favour of the Eighth instant, that I cannot refrain from sending a line by the very first opportunity, to return you my sincere thanks. Your Ladyship observes extremely well, that all human creatures have a right to think for themselves: And I have no right to blame another, for not being of the same Judgment with me. And I am persuaded, your Ladyship is not sensible, of the manner wherein many of the Students have treated me. But let that pass. If your Ladyship will be so good as to give them a caution on that head, I know it will not be in vain. Wishing your Ladyship the continuance & increase of every Blessing which our Lord has purchased for us, I remain My dear Lady Your Ladyship's obliged and Ever affectionate Servant.

Lady Huntingdon finally forgave Fletcher and there was a public reconciliation between them, but only after he was assured that no relationship of hers with some in her hyper-Calvinistic circle would be harmed by seeing him publicly. He wrote to Mr. Ireland on January 29, 1777: "Lady Huntingdon has written me a kind letter. This world to me is now become a world of love".

Charles Wesley, although still conferring and corresponding with Lady Huntingdon had never forgiven her for calling his brother a heretic, and for thinking that she could count on his

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1 W. H. S. Proceedings, Vol. XXVII, p.4. (Original MS Letter in Cheshunt Library) "2 Wesley Letters to the Countess of Huntingdon".

2 Tycman's Fletcher, op. cit., p.310, March 20, 1774, to Joseph Benson.

3 Ibid., p.387, to John Ireland, Jan. 29, 1777. John Thornton, reputed to have been the wealthiest merchant save one in all of Europe had along with John Ireland repeatedly attempted to bring about a reconciliation between Lady Huntingdon and both Fletcher and Wesley.
allying with her against John in the Minute Controversy. Their strained relationship was overlooked, however, during John Wesley's serious illness and expected death in the summer of 1775, for Lady Huntingdon wrote him:

The relentings of every Christian affection engage me to inquire after my old friend Your Brother, who I have heard this day (as not before) is so ill - Not being well myself the hearing of his danger has affected me very much as I find that Charity that never fails abides in my heart for him & do grieve to think his faithful labours are to Cease yet on Earth - how does an hour of Loving sorrow swallow up the Just differences our various Judgments make .... I have Loved him this five & thirty years & it is with pleasure I find he remains in my heart as a friend & a laborious & beloved servant of Jesus Christ. I will hope yet the Lord may spare him ..... May the Lord bless you & yours & cause the inseparable bond of his Spirit so to unite all our hearts to himself as to make us one in him & one with each other.1

Charles added the following note on her letter: "The work of all Three (John and Charles Wesley and Lady Huntingdon) is nearly finished. We shall be in our death not divided. Bristol July 2, 1775."2 Charles' prophecy was eventually fulfilled, although after Wesley's recovery from this illness, there was no reconciliation between the two leaders, and the armed neutrality continued.

It is to the honor of Lady Huntingdon that she never believed, or circulated, the slanders about John Wesley, particularly those which his wife Molly published abroad. In

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1 Methodist Book Room Archives M93 Letter 81. To Charles Wesley, June 28, 1775.
2 Idem.
a letter to his wife in October, 1778, Wesley asserted:

You purposely and deliberately published them (his supposed faults) to all those in particular whom you knew or believed to be prejudiced against me, to Moravians, Quakers, Anabaptists, Calvinists, Patriots (so-called), Mr. Hill, Mr. Toplady: designing hereby to put a sword into my enemies' hands. (By misusing false information given them by Molly V. Wesley, Toplady and Hill published to the world that Wesley was "a venal profligate" motivated "by Satanic Shamelessness and Satanic guilt").

Hereby (to set myself out of the question) you have hurt many of their souls exceedingly; so much, that if any of them perish, their blood will be upon your head. You have set many of them more than ever against all true religion. You have laid innumerable stumbling-blocks in the way, both of the wise and the unwise. You have served the cause, and increased the number of rebels, deists, atheists: and weakened the hands of those that love and fear God.

If you were to live a thousand years (twice told), you could not undo the mischief which you have done. And till you have done all you can towards it, I bid you Farewell!

Though Lady Huntingdon could not believe with her cohorts that Wesley was depraved, licentious, and unscrupulous, still she could not forgive his recital of her personal inconsistencies and his behaviour toward her during the Controversy. On November 17, 1783, Wesley entered in his Journal that he preached at Mount Ephraim near Tunbridge Wells where she had her permanent home, but he does not record that he met her, and had he done so he probably would have noted it at least in his Diary, which is available for this date.

Wesley's societies were never molested by the divisions and

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1 Wesley's Letters, op. cit., VIII, p.273 et seq. To Molly V. Wesley, October 2, 1778.

2 Wesley's Journal, op. cit., VI, p.461, November 17, 1783.
dissension which wracked those of Lady Huntingdon. Many of the unpublished Cheshunt MSS Letters reveal internal strife, such as that in her Dover Society whose minister, T. Cannon, wrote her that they "wanted none of your Ministers..... (and) could get (own) Ministers", and that they "had had enough of you"1; or a report by Samuel Jones from Bath of the schism in her chapel there with a request that she mend this breach if at all possible2; or again the report from A. Dixon at Trevecca of "The strife and Contention that is daily at College, obligeth me to petition your Ladyship to (come and set matters straight)"3; or the letter from S. Phillips, one of her teachers for the six students registered at the College, reporting trouble with Bartholemew, one of the students, who "seems very confident of his call to preach, whereas 'tis not at all clear to me. He is highly affronted when told that he is not an acceptable Preacher"; with finally Phillips' request to her, in this same letter, to be more careful about admitting students in the future especially "respecting their Characters, Abilities, Motives, &c."4 She also had much more difficulty than did Wesley with stationing her

1Unpublished Cheshunt MSS Letter 496, T. Cannon to Countess of Huntingdon, September 8, 1783.


4Unpublished Cheshunt MSS Letter 12, S. Phillips to Countess of Huntingdon, October 31, 1783.
preachers and their wives, many of whom objected to being assigned to certain places. She also had trouble with some of her preacher's doctrines, such as those of Thomas Jones, who "bordered too closely to the doctrine of perfection and sanctification". Her greatest trial during the 1780's, however, came when in the ecclesiastical courts she lost her lawsuit to retain complete control over her famous Spa Fields Chapel in north London, and it was further ruled that this decision applied to all her chapels. This action caused her to lose her status as the rallying point for the eighteenth century Evangelical clergy, for as a peeress she had hitherto assumed that her chapels were exempted from any ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and that she could appoint her own chaplains and spend the money collected with no interference from any local parish clergymen. She was forced to take refuge under the Toleration Act, and any clergyman who officiated in her chapels was required to take an oath of allegiance as a Dissenter. As a result of this secession many clergymen withdrew from her Connection among whom were Venn, Romain, Townsend, Jesse, and even Thomas Haweis for a period of eight years. Thus in the year of 1781, Lady Huntingdon's

1 Unpublished Cheshunt MSS Letter 706, May 1, 1773, re Jane Dean; Unpublished Cheshunt MSS Letter 769, April 30, 1783, from Edw. Porter of Lincoln; Unpublished Cheshunt MSS Letter 682, June 10, 1790, in which John Bradford expresses desire not to go to Norwich because his wife did not like it; and Unpublished Cheshunt MSS Letter 777, August 19, 1790, from J. Jenkins re this same problem.

2 Unpublished Cheshunt MSS Letters 225, August 9, 1790; 787, April, 1790; 788, July 5, 1790; et al.
Connection ceased functioning as a Society in the Church of England, and instead involuntarily became a sect. As Dr. Wood states "the licensing of Lady Huntingdon's chapels in 1781 and of Wesley's in 1787 as dissenting meeting-places are the operative dates" for the actual break with the Church of England. This act of secession was defined even more clearly when, on March 9th, 1783, at nine o'clock in the morning at Spa Fields Chapel, London, six young men from Trevecca College were ordained in services lasting seven hours. This was eighteen months before Wesley followed suit with his own ordination services.

In spite of the many friends who wished to see the Countess of Huntingdon and John Wesley reconciled, this was never fully accomplished. In 1784, Wesley revealed in a letter to Mary Bishop that his alienation from her Ladyship still existed:

"MY DEAR MISS BISHOP, - From the time I heard you were rejected by Lady Huntingdon, I have had a tender regard for you .....".

Neither was the relationship between this good Lady and Charles Wesley ever fully restored, for even at the time of his death in March (99), 1788, the letter which she had so hastily written in June (8), 1771, attempting to gain his support against his brother, John, still served as a hindrance to the resumption of

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their intimate friendship.

Finally in 1790, Lady Huntingdon managed to draw up a plan for the ongoing of her Connection. Dr. Wood points out that:

She had retained the sole power of appointing and removing ministers, and of selecting managers to superintend the secular affairs of her chapels. Now she was placed in a similar position to John Wesley when, in 1784, he constituted the Legal Hundred in order to perpetuate his work.¹

There were many objections to her scheme, including those of Lady Erskine and Haweis, who "had no love of schism for schism's sake, and at heart desired to see the Evangelical Revival functioning in and through the Established Church"² and therefore, it was dropped and her Connection in all probability suffered much from the lack of organization which this plan of hers could have offered. Her will, written January 11, 1790, appointed "Thomas Haweis and Janetta Payne, his wife, Lady Anne Agnes Erskine, and John Lloyd" as trustees of "all her Chapels, houses, and furniture therein, and all the residue of her estates and effects ..." Lady Anne Erskine, who knew most about the affairs of Lady Huntingdon's Connection, having served as her secretary, was appointed the superintendent of the chapels.

Wesley died at approximately ten o'clock on the morning of March 2nd, 1791, and Lady Huntingdon was left until her death that June, as the last survivor of the Big Five of early Methodism.

¹Woold, op. cit., p.172.
²Ibid., p.174 et seq.
After Wesley's death, a pamphlet was published containing the details of his last illness, and some of his last words. A copy of this pamphlet, bearing Elizabeth Ritchie's initials, came into the hands of the Countess who eagerly read it, after which:

She sent for Joseph Bradford, who for many years had been Mr. Wesley's travelling companion, and asked him if this account of Mr. Wesley was true; and whether he really died acknowledging his sole dependence upon the meritorious sacrifice of Christ, for acceptance and eternal life. He assured her Ladyship that the whole was strictly true; and that, from his own knowledge he could declare, whatever reports to the contrary had been circulated, the principles which Mr. Wesley recognised upon his death-bed had invariably been the subjects of his ministry. She listened with eager attention to this statement; confessed she had believed that he grievously departed from the truth; and then, bursting into tears, expressed her deep regret at the separation which had in consequence taken place between them. The spell, which ought never to have bound her spirit, was then broken. During his life time it does not appear that she was at all reconciled to him, but when he had yielded up his soul to God, and was placed beyond the reach of human censure, she acknowledged him, not as 'a dreadful heretic', but as 'a good Minister of Jesus Christ'.

Jackson, Charles Wesley, op. cit., II, p.295 et seq. Jackson states further that "The particulars of this interview Mr. Bradford related to the Rev. George Morley, by whom they were kindly communicated to the writer of this narrative". Idem.
Chapter Eight

THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL
"Both read the Bible day and night,
But thou read'st black where I read white."

- Blake

A Summary of the Controversy's Consequences
The late Lord Russell quoted Gladstone's dictum, "Some rivers spring from a group of pools", as the starting point for his explanation of the Evangelical Revival in the Eighteenth Century. He added that

The principal source of the Evangelical Movement is to be found in the life and work of John Wesley. The genius of that extraordinary man isolates him from any section or party: he stood and stands alone. But there were at least two other "pools" of spiritual influence which contributed to the "river" of the Evangelical Movement. There were the Calvinists, of whom Selina Countess of Huntingdon, and her chaplain, George Whitefield, were the leaders (and) who included in their number the Welsh Evangelist Howell Harris .... There were also the more devout adherents of the traditional theology, such as Bishop Thomas Wilson, Dr. Johnson, Bishop Lowth, Bishop Horne, Lord Dartmouth, Bishop Porteous, and Bishop Heber. .... Three streams came together to make the river of the Evangelical Movement, and for a while they flowed in the same channel. Later, the more turbulent waters found outlets for themselves, and flowed away in different directions. After their departure, the river assumed a distinctly marked character of its own, but it was long before the traces of its threefold source were wholly obliterated.  

We may accept Lord Russell's definition of the Evangelical Revival as three parties, with the Welsh Revival grouped under Lady Huntingdon's section, or we may instead follow what is perhaps a more accurate procedure, and divide the one Evangelical Revival into two parties or groups, (1) Evangelicalism which remained within the Church of England and (2) Methodism. Methodism would then be subdivided into the Calvinistic and Arminian wings; and the Calvinistic wing again subdivided, distinguishing even further:

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between the English Calvinists headed by Lady Huntingdon supported by her main Chaplain, Whitefield, and the Welsh Calvinists under the leadership of Howell Harris and Daniel Rowlands.

Lord Russell's figure of speech is valid, however, for once they had merged into the one river of the Revival, it is indeed difficult and well-nigh impossible completely to separate the several streams. Methodism was used as a term of reproach and as an eighteenth-century brand against all Evangelicals, whether within or without the Established Church; while all Methodists claimed the title of "Evangelical". It cannot be maintained that Anglican Evangelicalism was given birth by Methodism alone, for Samuel Walker of Truro, Thomas Adam of Lincolnshire, and George Thomson in St. Gennys, Cornwall, had no contact with Methodism.

In Chapter One, there was a discussion of the "real ulcer of the age (being its uncompromising individualism, and the inadequacy of existing social organizations to cope with those evils)." In the realm of the Evangelical Revival this also was all too true, and a roll call truly reveals this fact. John Wesley incorporated in his life and work the primary initiative of the Evangelical Movement, and personified the genius of its lofty aims. His portrait was selected by Russell from those of all other evangelical leaders to symbolize the primary figure of the Revival, and the frontispiece beneath it describes well Wesley's leadership.

\[superscript\text{1}^{1}\text{vide Chap. I, p. 6 of this thesis; Temperley, op. cit., p. 80.}\]
responsibility: "Never did any man, no, not St. Paul himself, possess so high a degree of power over so large a body of men, as was possessed by him." George Whitefield became another pole of influence and Selina, Countess of Huntington, who later took over from him, became the rallying point for the left wing of Methodism. Howell Harris and Daniel Rowlands stand out as the unifying personalities in Wales. All of these were strong, dedicated, and determined individuals, and held within themselves the key to the Revival and, at the same time, to the growth of an individualism which could prove disruptive to it. Throughout our study of the origin and development of the controversy between Wesley and Lady Huntington this fact is borne out as the divergence of opinions developed. As we have seen, while there was the theological determinant, it was primarily the inter-personal resentment and misunderstandings which led to the bitter dissension which was finally to establish so wide a gulf of theological disagreement that they were incapable of bridging it. The personal determinant shoved Lady Huntington into the hyper-Calvinistic camp and thus made a complete reconciliation between her and Wesley impossible. The sheer determinism of hyper-Calvinism could never be squared with Wesley's understanding of freedom. Wesley was much more of a "modern" man in this respect, for he saw the tension (I-Thou) between God and man much more clearly than any

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1 Russell, op. cit., p.1.
other eighteenth-century figure.

The first and most important consequence of this Controversy was a negative one, for it split the Methodists, the largest group within the Evangelical Revival, into two opposing camps—Calvinistic and Arminian. This was no small consequence, for both groups had much to offer each other and the tragedy was that after 1770 each went its separate way, striving toward identical aims and goals, but often employing opposing methods. Lady Huntingdon's purse and John Wesley's horse would have been even more effective had they been consistently joined in cooperative effort. In her Trevecca College adventure, she could have profited by his sound academic training and it would also have been well for Methodism had she followed his lead both in organizing her preachers into a cohesive body, and in establishing her chapels upon a sound financial footing, which did not rely solely on her for financial support. Furthermore, in compiling her hymn book, she could have been helped by his sound advice and thereby have avoided the printing of a motley collection of "doggerel hymns". 1 Wesley's strict adherence to certain theological disciplines could also have proved a source of real benefit to her Ladyship's development of a wholesome spiritual life. On the other hand, Wesley could have been helped by the Countess to overcome his personal prejudices toward the "great vulgar" and been brought to recognize that the

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1 Wesley's Letters, op. cit., V, p. 211. To Joseph Benson, November 30, 1770.
basic religious needs of this level of society were fundamentally those of the Kingswood or Newcastle colliers. He could have utilized the support of the Evangelical clergy, which remained grouped around Lady Huntingdon until her secession in 1781, as a strengthening factor within the Revival. Furthermore, through Wesley the Countess' financial contribution to the Movement could have been consolidated and used far more effectively had he recognized her sincerity of stewardship and been less fearful of becoming her puppet.

The unique element in the alliance of these two prominent figures of eighteenth century Christianity is the irresistible affinity they had for each other because of their dedication to the Gospel, even though simultaneously they were involved in bitter personal disputes. A genuine concern over the impotence of the Church and its indifference to the needs of their day was so shared by both Wesley and the Countess that they were unconsciously drawn to each other. The irony of their relationship merely illustrates that the unifying power of the Holy Spirit, when loosed within the lives of individuals cannot be completely thwarted, even by the strongest difference of viewpoints. The factor which really made their complete reconciliation improbable was their different starting points. Unfortunately the Countess of Huntington believed with rigid hyper-Calvinistic authoritarianism that she possessed the full and final truth, and this was bound to clash with Wesley's concept of freedom under the guidance of the
Holy Spirit.

From the "might-have-beens", we turn to other consequences - namely, the specific results of this dispute. First of all, it produced personal alienation between the two major leaders, which carried over into the ranks of their cohorts. Lady Huntingdon and John Wesley were never reconciled, and never worked in unison on any project after the 1770 division. The estrangement had a definite negative effect upon their personalities, for it tended to make her Ladyship more, rather than less, supersensitive to constructive suggestions and less inclined to brook any criticism of her personally or her program. The Controversy also embittered her toward those formerly her friends and co-workers, and although she was never the easiest person with whom to live, from then on she became more opinionated, whether right or wrong. Upon Wesley's personality, also, it had a negative effect, for it destroyed something of his magnificent spirit of "Think and let think", and made him less cautious in his sincere effort to avoid offending. His statement in a letter to Charles dated August 3, 1771, "Seeing they have drawn the sword, I throw away the scabbard" was more than a figure of speech, for 1770 marked a definite

1vide her quarrels with: (1) Rowland Hill in the 1780's (Chap. III of this thesis); (2) Howell Harris in 1772 (Chap. VII of this thesis and Unpublished Cheshunt MSS Letter 638, op. cit.); and (3) John Fletcher in 1772 (Chap. VII of this thesis and Unpublished Cheshunt MSS Letter 640, op. cit.).

turning point from his former unquestionable catholicity of spirit to a more defensive attitude. ¹ This is further evidenced in his Journal entry for November 8th, 1772:

Sun. 8. — (Since) Mr. Hill and his allies have cut off from this hope (of peace among Christian laborers), and proclaimed an inexpiable war, we see it is our calling to go straight forward, declaring to all mankind that Christ tasted death for all, to cleanse them from all sin. ²

It is impossible to gauge fully the extent of damage which a Controversy such as this has in its alienation of former devoted friends and loyal co-workers, but in this case the list of such is long. To begin with the more obvious, Lady Huntingdon was alienated from John Fletcher, the former President of her College; from Joseph Benson, her former Headmaster; from Howell Harris, her spiritual adviser and the architect of her beloved Trevecca; from Charles Wesley, a long esteemed friend with whom she had shared so many problems; from Walter Sellon, originally a baker and one-time master at Kingswood School, whom she had helped to obtain orders in the Established Church, but who took Wesley’s side during the Calvinistic dispute; and from Thomas Olivera, a convert under Whitefield’s preaching. The Countess was not the only one bereft of former friends, however, for John Wesley suffered more. Fletcher’s first Check to Antinomianism was the springboard to the other publications which followed in this

¹ Wesley’s Letters, op. cit., VI, p.60; VI, p.331.
² Wesley’s Journal, op. cit., V, p.488, November 8, 1772.
growing contention, and the most bitter and vindictive of all Wesley's opponents was the Rev. Augustus Montague Toplady, who had been converted under the preaching of one of Wesley's itinerants in Ireland. Martin Hadan, who had gone to Wesley's preaching service to mimic him but was converted instead under the text, "Prepare to meet thy God", sided in this dispute with the Calvinists against Wesley; John Berridge forsook both him and Fletcher and wrote for the Calvinists in opposition to them; and ties of friendship were sundered with Walter Shirley, Thomas Powys, and Lady Glenorchy of Edinburgh. All of these separations, recriminations, and alienations were widely publicized to the eighteenth century world, and were debated in the local periodicals of the day. Letters were sent over three kingdoms by the Calvinistic group, denouncing Wesley as a heretic, and were used as a basis for refusing him the opportunity of preaching in places where he had formerly been welcomed. Scotland became more suspicious of Wesleyan doctrines after Lady Huntingdon influenced Lady Glenorchy to close her Edinburgh Chapel to him and his preachers.¹ The minister of the parish church in Haddington, John Brown, also received such advice from Lady Huntingdon, and the provost of the town, who had formerly been very cordial to Wesley refused to allow him to preach in his home.² Lord

¹Seymour, op. cit., II, p. 110 et seq.
Hopetoun's attitude toward him was also changed through allowing prejudiced reports from her Ladyship to cancel in his mind the fact of Wesley's former effectiveness in Ormiston (Scotland). The Rev. John Nesbit of Montrose was also influenced against Wesley. On the other hand, Wesley warned Lady Maxwell of Edinburgh against Mr. DeCourcy who was planning to visit that city, writing that he had been an Arminian Methodist since childhood, "But when he came to Dublin, the Philistines were upon him and soon prevailed over him. Quickly he was convinced that 'there is no perfection', and that 'all things depend on absolute, unchangeable decrees'." His letter continued to caution that Mr. DeCourcy "may..... then do far more hurt than either Mr. Whitefield or Mr. Townsend did? ..... It does not appear that any great change has been wrought in our neighbours by Mr. Whitefield's death. He had fixed the prejudice so deep that even he himself was not able to remove it; ...". Just as the Whitefield-Wesley quarrel of 1740 was spread through the pages of the Weekly Miscellany and their disputes used to cast disparagement on the entire movement, so in the 1770's the Controversy was used as a means of discrediting the Evangelical tenets of Methodism as a whole. Wesley had to defend himself against the calumnies and false

1Ibid., V, p.460, May 12, 1772.
3Ibid., V, p.220. To same.
accusations published in the Gospel Magazine and in an attempt to vindicate himself from the misrepresentations being made by this partisan periodical, he resorted to the public papers such as Lloyds Evening Post. He eventually established his own publication The Arminian Magazine in order to present the Arminian Methodists' views and doctrines. All of this brought ridicule to the whole Evangelical Movement and hindered its witness.

There was much "sheep-stealing" from Wesley's flock, especially on the part of the Calvinistic group, and this also was a definite obstacle to the work of God through the Evangelical Movement.

The Committee of the Norwich Chapel gave their "progress report" to Lady Huntingdon in February, 1784:

P.S. Upwards of Fourty (sic) of Mr. Westly's (sic) people have Join'd (sic) Us they being convinced of the bondage of a Law Gospel And are brought with delight to embrace Jesus Christ as an Everlasting Sover (sic).1

Lady Huntingdon revealed in her letter of October, 1784, to the Reverend Mr. Gwin that she was on guard against any of her students being lured from her Connection:

The spread of the Gospel in our Connection is most wonderfull (sic) & many new & Very Promising Students are come & others offering & who I expect Each day Much Pains is taken to keep them from me by other Connections but alas (sic)! All in vain ..... 2

Some of Wesley's legitimate irritation at her student-preachers has

1Unpublished Chester MS Letter 1034, to Countess of Huntingdon, February 27, 1784.

2Unpublished National Library of Wales MS Letter 571, to the Revd. Mr. Gwin from the Countess of Huntingdon, October 8, 1784, from College.
already been discussed. Indeed, it seemed that they took special
delight in going among his societies and in creating disturbances
by condemning Wesleyan "heresies". As Dr. Elliott-Binns states:

Even apart from the intemperate and vindictive feelings
which it called forth, the Calvinist controversy was a
most unfortunate affair; for not only were energies
dissipated which might have been used for the furtherance
of the Gospel, but rivalries led to actual interference
with work already going on. Wesley's journals are full
of complaints of Calvinist efforts to draw away his
converts; efforts, which had, indeed, long antedated
the crisis of the conflict.¹

In Wednesbury where to be a Methodist was literally to risk one's
life and where adherents had suffered so much persecution in the
early days, Wesley noted in his Journal what happened when later
disputes were precipitated by Predestinarians who had crept into
a society:

What a work would have been done in all these parts, if
it had not been for doubtful disputations! if the
Predestinarians had not thrown back those who had begun
to run well, partly into the world, partly to the Baptists,
and partly into endless disputes concerning the secret
counsels of God!²

After the separation of the Calvinistic and Arminian
Methodists in 1770, matters deteriorated. Rival Calvinistic
Methodist Societies established and supported by Lady Huntingdon
clashed with Wesleyan Methodists at Dover; at Lynn; at Truro;
at Norwich; at Rye; at St. Ives; and at Canterbury.³ Perhaps an

¹Elliott-Binns, op. cit., p.204.
²Wesley's Journal, op. cit., II, p.519, April 1, 1751.
³Ibid., V, p.438, Dec. 4, 1771; VI, p.5, Nov. 1, 1773; VI, p.124,
Aug. 27, 1776; VI, p.131, Nov. 14, 1776; VI, p.217 et seq., Dec.1, 1778;
VI, p.208, Aug. 28, 1778; and V, p.490 et seq., Dec. 7, 1772. (over)
example from Congleton would give the tone of the proselyting methods employed even as late as March, 1782:

Coming to Congleton, I found the Calvinists were just breaking in, and striving to make havoc of the flock. Is this brotherly love? Is this doing as would be done to? No more than robbing on the highway. But if it is decreed, they cannot help it; so we cannot blame them.

The enmity between these two groups and the dichotomy it produced within Methodism was perpetuated by the closing of Trevecca's doors to Arminians, a profoundly significant step taken by Lady Huntingdon at a time when her prejudice reached its height. This important result of her conflict with Wesley lead directly to the withdrawal of Benson and Fletcher from the College.

The further major consequence for Wesleyan Methodism of the Controversy with Countess was that while it served to crystallize Arminian Methodist theology, Lady Huntingdon's Connection wandered in the wilderness for years before finally settling into the camps of Dissent. It will be remembered that earlier in the thesis Methodism was discussed as a fluid movement, for at first Methodists, whether Calvinists or Arminians, emphasized holiness, not notions. Howell Harris and John Wesley could attend each other's conferences and Associations,

".... (I) came to Lynn while the congregation was waiting for me. Here was once a prospect of doing much good; but it was almost vanished away. Calvinism, breaking in upon them, had torn the infant society in pieces ....". Ibid., VI, p.5. This entry is typical of those Wesley made at this period indicating the worrisome problem which the Calvinistic proselyting was presenting to him.

1Ibid., VI, p.345 et seq., March 28, 1782.
and yet remain leaders of their own peoples, and ..... individuals could serve both Wesleyan and Calvinistic Methodism without inconsistency.  

Then as time passed, the discussions and disagreements became more violent resulting in a rigid theological party-line, and although we may lament these divisions as we ponder them in retrospect, their consequences were not entirely negative. Fletcher's first Check to Antinomianism, for example, which came at the close of the personal clash between Lady Huntingdon and John Wesley and kindled the flames of the Calvinistic Controversy that was to follow, was a direct result of the Circular Letter framed by Thomas Powys and signed by Walter Shirley, Lady Huntingdon and others.  

The effect of Fletcher's writings, begun as a rebuttal to the hasty and ill-considered actions of the Countess and her friends, were influential in systematizing Arminian Methodist theology, and thereby certain doctrines essential to Wesleyan Methodism were affirmed and others which were considered detrimental to the true Christian faith, especially hyper-Calvinism were refuted.  

The effect of Mr. Fletcher's writings has been powerful, extensive, and lasting. Never since they appeared has the remark been called for in the Methodist Conference, 'We


2The full title of the work of John Fletcher was First Check to Antinomianism or A Vindication of the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Last Minutes: Occasioned By a circular, printed letter, inviting persons, both clergy and laity, as well as of the Dissenters as of the Established Church, who disapprove of the Minutes to oppose them in a body, as a dreadful heresy: in Five Letters to the Hon. and Rev. Author of the circular letter. Vide Chap. VII, p.286 of this thesis.
have leaned too much towards Calvinism'. Their influence upon the men who differ from him on the five points has also been most salutary, though few of them like to confess it. They have served to produce a more guarded and practical style of preaching and writing than formerly prevailed. Where are the Ministers now who would openly declare from the pulpit, that all the sins of the elect, past, present, and to come, are for ever cancelled? and that David was as much a child of God when committing adultery and murder, as when he was leading the devotions of the tabernacle? Yet these points, with others of a similar nature, were strenuously contended for in the controversy with Mr. Fletcher; and such was the Antinomianism which he attempted to 'check'.

During Wesley's day, it was felt that no one who, up to that point was undetermined in his opinions, could read Fletcher's Checks without becoming an Arminian. It was after his ordination as an Anglican clergyman that Thomas Coke, who was destined to become the New World's first Protestant Bishop, was awakened and later he began preaching the Arminian doctrines after:

...... a brother clergyman had put Fletcher's Works into his hands, and with Coke, as with thousands of others, they refuted the doctrine of limited salvation.2

London's enthusiastic reception was reported to Lady Huntingdon by one of her members who wrote:

(The Methodists) greatly extol Mr. Fletcher's letters and say there was scarce ever such a fine piece wrote ...... 3

Wesley substantiated this further when he wrote:

1Jackson's Charles Wesley, op. cit., II, p.292 et seq.
2Stevens, op. cit., I, p.534.
I nothing wonder at a serious clergyman who, being resolved to live and die in his opinion, when pressed to read them, replied, 'No, I will never read them, for if I did I should be of his mind'.

Fletcher's publications had given

..... a permanent character to the theology of Methodism; a resurrection to the faith which the Synod of Dort had proscribed; greater prominence to the doctrines of Arminius and Grotius than all their continental champions had secured for them; to spread evangelical Arminianism over England, over all the Protestant portion of the New World, and more or less around the whole world; to modify, to mollify, it may be rather said, the theological tone of evangelical Christendom, and probably of all coming time.

During the years that remained of the eighteenth century after the Controversy and throughout the nineteenth century, Fletcher's Checks were required reading for the Methodist preachers. They were circulated widely and laymen gathered to discuss the points therein upheld, as well as those refuted. As Stevens rightly estimated:

(Fletcher's writings) have been more influential in the denomination than Wesley's own controversial writings on the subject: for he was content to pursue his itinerant work, replying but briefly to the Hills, and leaving the contest to Fletcher.

At the August 1776 Conference in London, Wesley recommended that his preachers study Fletcher's and Sellon's writings on this controversy, and that they zealously preach "universal redemption".

1 Stevens, op. cit., I, p. 425.
2 Ibid., I, p. 416 et seq.
3 Ibid., I, p. 427.
These writings of Pletcher's, as already noted, were prompted by the Wesley-Huntingdon Controversy and became an initiating factor in the later Calvinistic Controversy. One of their further consequences was their destruction, for all intents and purposes, of eighteenth century hyper-Calvinism, and this was indeed no mean accomplishment, especially when one considers that Toplady was its leading exponent. He showed that the logical consequences of the "Doctrine of the Decrees" as held by this extremist group, was that Absolute Predestination opened wide the doors to Antinomianism. Bogue and Bennett who upheld the Classical Calvinistic doctrines gave the following report in 1810 of this controversy:

...... the combatants inflamed the spirit of party, and rendered the two bodies of Methodists more hostile to each other than any other differing sects. The Calvinists not only shocked their opponents by saying things as strong rather than as true as possible, against Arminians, but they actually went to lengths which some of them afterwards condemned as the perversion of Calvinism: though others unhappily (sic) gloried in these extravagances as the perfection of their Gospel; so that real Antinomianism became the pest of many churches, and the scarecrow of the Arminians.¹

This produced a reaction against hyper-Calvinism which resulted in many of its adherents changing to a more moderate Calvinism, and "gave birth to some softened modifications of Calvinism in the age that followed - an effect which has remained to this day".²

¹Bogue and Bennett, op. cit., IV, p. 239 et seq.
Stevens, writing a century later on the consequences of the *Checks* said:

No polemical works of a former age are so extensively circulated as these 'Checks'. They are read more to-day than they were during the excitement of the controversy. They control the opinions of the largest and most effective body of evangelical clergymen on the earth. They are staples in every Methodist publishing house. Every Methodist preacher is supposed to read them as an indispensable part of his theological studies, and they are found at all points of the globe whither Methodist preachers have borne the cross.¹

The Controversy between Lady Huntingdon and John Wesley served to crystallize Arminian Methodist theology and the Calvinistic Controversy which their conflict provoked, helped destroy hyper-Calvinism. However, Bogue and Bennett, who were contemporaries of both Lady Huntingdon and John Wesley document vividly for us the struggle between the classical and the hyper-Calvinists shortly after the Wesley-Huntingdon Controversy:

Antinomianism has made during the latter part of this period so much progress in many dissenting congregations, as to demand some attention .... The hyper-Calvinism which had long lurked as a cockatrice egg in the sand, during this period, broke out into the fiery flying serpent of Antinomianism .... Glorying in the name of Calvin, whose works they never read, or they would have branded him with the epithet of an Arminian, these zealots proclaimed the sovereignty of God, not in the spirit of Jesus or his apostles, with humble awful adoration but with the temper of fiends who wished to render it odious and repulsive .... (it was) as if the words (the elect) were intended to be parodied, and the elect taught to insult over others as reprobates, in whose damnation they delighted. Eternal justification and sanctification were made to supersede repentance for sin and pursuit of holiness; the very

¹Stevens, op. cit., I, p. 426 et seq.
word duty was abhorred; the Law of God vilified; and while the most ridiculously allegorical interpretations of Scripture were applauded as proofs of inspiration, all addresses to sinners were anathematized as rank arminianism. ¹

This was not its only influence for it was strongly felt upon the Church of England, and we now turn our attention to the Established Church to observe its consequences there. The separation of John Wesley and Lady Huntingdon openly revealed the long-time latent resistance of the Evangelical clergymen to place themselves under Wesley's authority, although they had been willing to cooperate with Lady Huntingdon's Connection so long as she remained within the Church of England. After her secession from the Church, however, these clergymen freed themselves from any entangling alliance with Methodism and commenced directing all of their energies into the Evangelical Movement within the Established Church. Dr. Elliott-Binns sees this as a positive result of Wesley's quarrel:

This was all to the good, for it freed them from influences which, though professing to be loyal to the Church were really alien to its ethos. The whole movement gained in balance, sobriety, and reverence by the withdrawal of these turbulent elements, and was, moreover, in a stronger position to appeal to those Churchmen who, though in sympathy with their teaching, or much of it, were loathe to identify themselves with anything which savoured of Methodism and its devices. ²

Thus the "irregular" clergy became regular once again, abandoning

¹Bogue and Bennett, op. cit., IV, p.392 et seq.
²Elliott-Binns, op. cit., p.446.
many Methodistic practices employed by Berridge, Grimshaw, and other early Evangelical clergymen, such as seeing the world as their parish, rather than letting their parish circumscribe their world. It must be remembered too that many of the later prominent Anglican evangelicals would never have frequented any of the unconsecrated meeting-house societies of the Methodists, and in a letter to the Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1801 Hannah More hastened to vindicate herself from any taint of Methodism:

As to connexion with conventicles of any kind, I never had any. Had I been irregular, should I not have gone sometimes, during my winter residence at Bath, to Lady Huntingdon's Chapel, a place of great occasional resort? Should I never have gone to some of Whitefield's or Wesley's Tabernacles in London where I spent a long spring for near thirty years consecutively? Should I not have strayed now and then into some Methodist meeting in the country? Yet not one of these things have I ever done.¹

Furthermore, not only did the Controversy between these two leaders of Methodism have bearing upon the Evangelical party within the Church of England, but it also left a firm imprint upon the Dissenters. During the early stages of the Revival Dissent had regarded Methodist "enthusiasm" with a deep distrust, for it ran counter to their way of thinking and to their experience of the gradual growth of the Christian life.²

They did not deny the possibility of sudden conversion; but they were unfamiliar with it. They found it hard to believe that a man might go into a Methodist meeting, a swearer and a drunkard, and be 'born again', and 'find

¹Russell, op. cit., p.45.
peace' and rejoice in the 'full assurance' of his salvation before the meeting broke up.

They were shocked by the violence of the movement, by its tumult, by its appeals to passion, by its defiance of the traditions of all Protestant churches. They were shocked by the illiteracy of many of the Revival preachers. ¹

The Dissenters looked with suspicion on Wesley and his Arminian preachers for they remembered well Archbishop Laud and his High Church colleagues who were also Arminians. But, during the reign of George III there was a rapid increase to their number on the part of Congregationalists, and this was partly attributable to the influx of the Presbyterians, who had become dissatisfied with their own denomination by its drift toward Arianism and later Unitarianism. The principal reason for this acceleration in growth, however, was the Evangelical Revival which brought renewed spiritual vigor to the Dissenters, and even more specifically the Wesley-Huntingdon Controversy which paved the way for many of her Connection to join their ranks after the death of the Countess. While Wesley organized his societies into a cohesive and highly systematized band so well prepared for its own perpetuation that the movement not only held together but grew after his death, Lady Huntingdon's Connection was inchoate and rather amorphous. As a result, her Connection was eventually absorbed by the Dissenters. The registration of her chapels as Dissenting meeting-houses was the first step; but by the end of the century, even the Prayerbook, the use of which she so long insisted upon in all of her chapels,

¹Idem.
had been replaced. Three modifications which were not necessarily good, made by the Revival upon Congregationalism, are listed by Dr. Dale:

1. The polity of the Congregational Churches was modified, for large numbers of people flooded into the meeting houses.

2. The Revival tended to suppress the Independent character, for large numbers came into its fellowship with no background or training in the Congregational "way of life".

3. There were alterations to the services, for the prayer meeting on a week-night was introduced, the practice of reading sermons disappeared, lay-preaching began to increase, new colleges were established to train ministers, etc.¹

Dr. Dale further highlights the even more significant theological consequence of Lady Huntingdon's flock joining the ranks of Congregationalism as an indirect result of her split with Wesleyan Methodism:

..... But the characteristic genius of the Revival was silently working against the Calvinist creed. The preachers who had caught its true spirit vehemently appealed to men to repent, and to trust for eternal salvation in the mercy of God revealed through Christ. They might hold fast to the creed that only the elect would really repent and appeal to the divine mercy; but they preached as if they thought that every man might repent and trust in Christ. They might be assured that, according to the eternal counsels of God, Christ died only for the elect; but they preached as if they thought that He died for every man in the Congregation. At home in their study, they might be unable to resist the proof that when the evangelist John wrote that 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son', he really meant that 'God so loved the Church that He gave His only begotten Son'; but in the pulpit they pleaded with men as if they believed that the text was true as it stood.

¹Dale, History, op. cit., p. 588 et seqq.
In time, the fervour of the preaching melted down the rigid lines of the theological system. Preachers unconsciously endeavoured to bring their theology into a closer harmony with their sermon. The doctrines of Election, and a limited Atonement, were mentioned very occasionally, or dropped altogether. They were not denied — they might be true — but they had no real relation to the life and works of the children of the Revival...

Dr. Dale goes further to note the weakening influence of Methodism upon Dissent:

The Evangelical Movement contributed to the extinction among Congregationalists, and I think among Baptists and Presbyterians, of the solicitude for an ideal Church organization which had so large a place in the original revolt of the Nonconformists. It demanded as the basis of fellowship a common religious life and common religious beliefs, but was satisfied with fellowship of an accidental and precarious kind. It cared nothing for the idea of the Church as the august Society of Saints. It was the ally of individualism.

Certainly Dr. Dale here touched on one of the most vulnerable aspects of Methodism, i.e. its tendency toward subjectivism, and whenever their influence was felt as a result of the Controversy, Methodists spread their pietistic concept of "ecclesia in ecclesiola".

In summary, let it be said that the consequences of the Controversy between John Wesley and the Countess of Huntington were as numerous as they had followers, and through personal and doctrinal dispute their influence survived bitter attacks to make their respective contributions felt on succeeding generations of Christendom. Horace Walpole, who derisively termed Lady Huntingdon "The Queen of the Methodists" and who reported that Wesley "acted very ugly enthusiasm" in a sermon he had heard him

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1 Dale, History, op. cit., p. 567.
2 Ibid.
reach at Bath\textsuperscript{1}, gleefully announced on June 23, 1791, that:

The patriarchess of the Methodists, Lady Huntingdon, is dead. Now she and Whitfield and Wesley are gone, the sect will probably decline: a second crop of apostles seldom acquire the influence of the founders.\textsuperscript{2}

Such was the unrealized hope of this cynical critic of the movement which he labelled "a tawdry religion".\textsuperscript{3} But in spite of official opposition and internal dissension and schism, Methodism was not only strong enough to survive from the nascent stage at which Wesley and Lady Huntingdon pledged themselves to its principles, but to mature and permeate the Church militant, reinvigorating it with its "enthusiasm" for holiness and its concern for those outside the Church, who in the eighteenth century as in the twentieth comprised the majority. Such was the common cause which bound them to each other even in their bitterest moments of estrangement.

As to the final consequence of this personal and theological Controversy we can only conjecture, and thus the words of John Berridge, proclaimed shortly before he himself died and after he had heard the report of Lady Huntingdon's death, would be the most appropriate epilogue:

"Ay!" he said, 'is she passed away? Then another pillar is gone to glory, Mr. Whitefield is gone, Mr. Wesley and his brother are gone, and I shall go soon.' The friend replied cheerfully: 'Yes, Sir, it is not probable you will long survive them; and although some little differences of opinion existed between you here, I have no doubt you will unite in perfect harmony in heaven.' 'Ay, ay!' said the old man with a placid smile, 'that we shall, to be sure; for the Lord washed our hearts here, and there He will wash our brains.'\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., VII, p. 50, to John Chute, October 10, 1766.
\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., XV, p. 6, to Mary Berry, June 23, 1791.
\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., VII, p. 52, to the Rev. William Cole, December 19, 1767.
\textsuperscript{4}Vulliamy, op. cit., p. 288.
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Nos. 1 to 8

10 to 94
96 to 104
106 to 153
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260 to 282
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966 to 969
973
975
977 to 1038
1137 to 1143

No. 1500 October, 1770 - Walter Shirley to Countess of Huntingdon.

1501 September, 1770 - " " " " " "
1502 August, 1770 - " " " " " "
1504 June 30, 1770 - " " " " " "
1505 July 7, 1770 - " " " " " "
1507 August 1, 1770 - " " " " " "
1508 July, 1770 - " " " " " "

1510 - 1770
1511 - 1771

No. 1512 to 1519

1520 - Walter Shirley to Countess of Huntingdon.

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Nos. 1550 to 1600 and also No. 2305.


No. 1 - October 24, 1741.
2 - February 24, 1742.
3 - February 19, 1742.
4 - April, 1742.
5 - January, 1743.

No. 6 - February, 1743.
7 - February, 1743.
8 - 1743.
9 - April, 1743.
10 - April, 1743.
No. 11 - (?)  
12 - June 4, 1743.  
13 - June 4, 1743.  
14 - June 4, 1743.  
15 - June 4, 1743.  
16 - June 4, 1743.  
17 - 1744.  
18 - October 26, 1751.  
19 - October, 1745.  
20 - February, 1752.  
21 - 1752.  
22 - September 10, 1753.  
23 - 1753.  
24 - October 7, 1753.  
25 - December 3, 1753.  
26 - December 6, 1753.  
27 - December 10, 1753.  
28 - December 28, 1753.  
29 - December 31, 1753.  
30 - December 31, 1753.  
31 - March 17, 1754.  
32 - June 7, 1754.  
33 - June 8, 1754.  
34 - September 1, 1754.  
35 - October 21, 1754.  
36 - October 30, 1754.  
37 - November 19, 1754.  
38 - December 17, 1754.  
39 - February 11, 1755.  
40 - May 4, 1755.  
41 - May, 1755.  
42 - July 10, 1755.  
43 - July 24, 1755.  
44 - August 4, 1755.  
45 - August 20, 1755.  
46 - August 27, 1755.  
47 - September 1, 1755.  
48 - September 22, 1755.  
49 - October, 1755.  
50 - October, 1755.  
51 - December 15, 1755.  
52 - December 23, 1755.  
53 - January 13, 1756.  
54 - April 17, 1756.  
55 - May 31, 1756.  

No. 56 - June 12, 1756.  
57 - June 29, 1756.  
58 - July 5, 1756.  
59 - July 27, 1756.  
60 - August, 1756.  
61 - August, 1756.  
62 - November 27, 1756.  
63 - June 30, 1757.  
64 - February 3, 1758.  
65 - August 7, 1758.  
66 - October 10, 1758.  
67 - December 9, 1758.  
68 - July 10, 1759.  
69 - July 11, 1759.  
70 - July 28, 1759.  
71 - September 1, 1759.  
72 - September 7, 1759.  
73 - May 12, 1763.  
74 - May 17, 1763.  
75 - June 9, 1764.  
76 - February 4, 1767.  
77 - November 7, 1768.  
78 - December 17, 1768.  
79 - November 28, 1770.  
80 - October 25, 1743.  
81 - June 28, 1775.  
82 - No date.  
83 - " "  
84 - " "  
85 - " "  
86 - " "  
87 - " "  
88 - " "  
89 - " "  
90 - " "  
91 - " "  
92 - " "  
93 - " "  
94 - " "  
95 - " "  
96 - " "  
97 - " "  
98 - " "  
99 - " "
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I. MSS No. 7005 - C

To Bishop of Bristol, December 1, 1764.
To Rev. Mr. Charles Wesley, Bristol, July 4, 1776.
To Lord Buchan, July 6, 1779.
To Rev. Mr. Greene, October 8, 1784.

II. Unpublished Trevecka MSS Letters, National Library of Wales

No. 260
   312
   399
   490
   501 - To George Whitefield.
   506
   507
   508
   532
   545
   613
   687
   790
   879
   1007 - 1014 - To George Whitefield.
   1022 - To Charles Wesley.
   1024
   1185
   1276
   1490 - To John Wesley.
   1614
   1643
   1657
   1782
   2028
   2042
   2121
   2196
   2244
   2256
   2269
   2283
   2579 - February 29, 1764.
   2582
   2586
   2606
   2608
   2609
No. 2616
2619 - To Countess of Huntingdon from Howell Harris, September 26, 1766 (printed 1652).

2624
2627
2635
2642
2645
2656
2658
2664
2679 Originals at National Library of Wales,
2680) Cf. App. 1892.
2693
2695
2696
2728
2831
2839
2841
2842
2843
2843a
2868
3227
3265
3481 - C
14005 - C

III. The Unpublished Diaries of Howell Harris (Transcribed by Miss K. Monica Davies, M.A.)

London, April 9, 1747.
London, June 9, 1747.
London, June 13, 1747.
London, June 3, 1748.
Bristol, August 10, 1764.
Bath, October 1, 1765.
Bath, October 1, 1765.
Bath, October 1, 1765.
Bath, October 2, 1765.
Bath, October 4, 1765.
Bath, December 13, 1765.
Treveckop October 12, New Style (Diary 262).


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I. Leighton Correspondence

No. 1 - Monday.
2 - August 23.
3 - September 5, 1760.
4 - September 16, 1760, to Mrs. Leighton.
5 - October 3, 1760.
6 - November 2, 1761.
7 - February 9, 1762.
8 - April 10, 1762, to Mrs. Leighton.
9 - May 11, 1762.
10 - November 8, 1763.
11 - November 10, 1763.
12 - November 23, 1763.
13 - November 29, 1763.
14 - No date.
15 - November 3, 1765.
16 - June 23, 1767.
17 - No date.
18 - February 4, 1768.
19 - March 11, 1768.
20 - June 27, 1768.
21 - July 19, 1768.
22 - August 1, 1768.
23 - August 5, 1768.
24 - September 13, 1768.
25 - December 19, 1768.
26 - April 16, 1769.
27 - March 16, 1769.

Nos. 28 to 37 - To Henry Venn at Huddersfield between July 9, 1763 and May 26, 1768.

Nos. 38 to 40 - To Mrs. E. Venn, July 9, 1763 to May 26, 1768.
41
42 - November 10, 1760.

Nos. 43 and 44 - From George Whitefield (?), April 23 and 24, 1761.
45 - April, 1763.
46 - November 19, 1768.
47 - October 29, 1769.
48
49 - September 15, 1764 to Mrs. Leighton.
50
51 - January 6, 1769.
52 - No date.
53 - A. Grinfield, October 28, 1769.
54 - N. Madan, March 4, 1769.
55
II. Countess of Huntingdon Correspondence

April 17, 1768, to George Whitefield.
January 31, 1742.
March 10, no date of year, to Joseph Benson.
August 4, 1742, to John Wesley.
November 27, February 1787, to Mr. Carpenter.
April 5, 1780, to Mr. Shirston.
August 3, 1786, to Mr. Carpenter.
November, 1784, " " "
August 3, 1772, to Mr. Thomas Jones.
No. xvii, February 10, 1787, to Mr. Carpenter.

III. Countess of Huntingdon - Benson Correspondence

October 11, 1769.
January 17, 1771.
March 19, 1770.
April 3, 1770.
April 12, 1770.
April 14, 1770.
April 22, 1770.
November 26, 1770.
January 17, 1771.
May 31, 1774, to Mr. English.
June 9, 1743, to Charles Wesley.
February 23, 1747, to Philip Doddridge.
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November 18, 1789, to Mr. Bull.

IV. Fletcher's Volume

January 7, 1771, to Joseph Benson.
January 10, 1771 (?) to Joseph Benson.
March 22, 1771, " " "
November 23, 1771, " " "
December 10, 1771, " " "

MSS Letters from Fletcher to Charles Perronet,

7th September, 1772.
March 20, 1774, to Joseph Benson.
May 2, 1775, to Joseph Benson from Fletcher.
July 12, 1775, " " " "
May 8, 1776, to " " " "
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July 20, 1781, J. Fletcher to Joseph Benson.
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