

I am, dear sir,  
Your affectionate brother and servant,  
John Wesley

On Wednesday and Thursday I spoke severally to the members of the society. I found (just as I expected) that the work of God here is exceeding shallow. Yet while so many flock to hear, one cannot doubt but God will cut some of them to the heart.

Sun. 19. Mr. S[ampson], one of the curates, preached an excellent sermon on 'Receiving the Holy Ghost' I afterwards accepted his invitation to dinner, and found a well-natured, sensible man, and one well acquainted with every branch of learning which we had occasion to touch upon. At seven I preached on 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.' And truly the people of this place will 'hear sound doctrine'. Wednesday 22 I exhorted the little society to avoid sloth, prodigality, and sluttishness, and on the contrary to be patterns of diligence, frugality, and cleanliness.

Thur. 23. Lighting on a volume of Mr. Seed's sermons, I was utterly surprised. Where did this man lie hid, that I never heard of him, all the time I was at Oxford? His language is pure in the highest degree, his apprehension clear, his judgment strong. And for true, manly wit, and exquisite turns of thought, I know not if this century has produced his equal.

Sat. 25. Both in the morning and evening I spoke as closely and sharply as I could. But yet I cannot find the way to wound the people. They are neither offended nor convinced.

Ever since I came hither I have been amazed at the honesty which runs through this city. None scruples to leave his house open all day, and the door only on the latch at night. Such a thing as *theft* is scarce heard of at Derry—no one has the least suspicion of it. No wonder therefore that the inhabitants never suspect themselves to be *sinner*s. O what pity that *honesty* should be a bar to salvation! Yet so it is, if a man puts it in the place of Christ.

Having a remarkable anecdote put into my hands, which some will probably be pleased to see, I may insert it here, as well as elsewhere. It is a conversation between my father's father (taken down in shorthand by himself) and the then Bishop of Bristol I may be excused if it appears more remarkable to me than it will do to an unconcerned person.

Bishop. What is your name?

Wesley. John Wesley.

B. There are many great matters charged upon you.

W. May it please your lordship, Mr. Horlock was at my house on Tuesday last, and acquainted me that it was your lordship's desire I should come to you; and on that account I am here to wait on you.

B. By whom were you ordained? Or are you ordained?

W. I am sent to preach the gospel.

B. By whom were you sent?

W. By a church of Jesus Christ.

B. What church is that?

W. The church of Christ at Melcomb.

B. That factious and heretical church!

W. May it please you, sir, I know no faction or heresy that church is guilty of.

B. No! Did not you preach such things as tend to faction and heresy?

W. I am not conscious to myself of any such preaching.

B. I am informed by sufficient men, gentlemen of honour of this county, viz., Sir Gerrard Napper, Mr. Freak, and Mr. Tregonnel, of your doings. What say you?

W. Those honoured gentlemen I have been with; who being by others misinformed proceeded with some heat against me.

B. There are oaths of several honest men, and shall we take your word for it that all is but misinformation?

W. There was no oath given or taken. Besides, if it be enough to accuse, who shall be innocent? I can appeal to the determination of the great Day of Judgment, that the large catalogue of matters laid to me are either things invented or mistaken.

B. Did not you ride with your sword in the time of The Committee of Safety, and engage with them?

W. Whatever imprudences in civil matters you may be informed I am guilty of, I shall crave leave to acquaint your lordship that his Majesty having pardoned them fully, I shall waive any other answer.

B. In what manner did the church you spake of send you to preach? At this rate everybody might preach.

W. Not everyone. Everybody has not preaching gifts and preaching graces. Besides, that is not all I have to offer to your lordship to justify my preaching.

B. If you preach it must be according to order, the order of the Church of England, upon ordination.

W. What does your lordship mean by ordination?

B. Do not you know what I mean?

W. If you mean that sending spoken of Rom. 10, I had it.

B. I mean that; what mission had you?

W. I had a mission from God and man.

B. You must have it according to law, and the order of the Church of England.

W. I am not satisfied in my spirit therein.

B. Not satisfied in your spirit! You have more new-coined phrases than ever were heard of! You mean your conscience, do you not?

W. 'Spirit' is no new phrase. We read of being sanctified in 'soul, body, and spirit'

B. By spirit there we are to understand the upper region of the *soul*.

W. Some think we are to take it for the *conscience*; but if your lordship like it not so, then I say, I am not satisfied in conscience, as touching the ordination you speak of.

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

W. I came not this day to dispute with your lordship; my own inability would forbid me so to do.

B. No, no; but give me your reason.

W. I am not called to office; and therefore cannot be ordained.

B. Why have you then preached all this while?

W. I was called to the *work* of the ministry; though not the *office*. There is, as we believe, *Vocatio ad opus et ad munus*. [A call to work, and a call to the office]

B. Why may you not have the office of the ministry?

W. May it please your lordship, because they are not a people who are fit subjects for me to exercise office work among them.

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

W. I have been informed by my cousin Pitfield and others concerning your lordship, that you have a disposition inclined against morosity. However, you may be prepossessed by some bitter enemies to my person; yet there are others who can and will give you another character of me. Mr. Glisson hath done it. And Sir Francis Tulford desired me to present his service to you, and being my hearer is ready to acquaint you concerning me.

B. I asked Sir Francis Tulford<sup>57</sup>(23479) whether the presentation to Whitchurch was his. Whose is it? He told me it was not his.

W. There was none presented to it these sixty years; Mr. Walton<sup>58</sup>(23480) lived there. At his departure the people desired me to preach to them, and when there was a way

of settlement appointed, I was by the trustees appointed, and by the triers approved.

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

W. All that they did I know not; but I was examined touching gifts and graces.

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

W. I shall submit to any trial you shall please to make. I shall present your lordship with a confession of my faith, or take what other way you please to insist on.

B. No, we are not come to that yet.

W. I shall desire those severals laid together which I look on as justifying my preaching.

1. I was devoted to the service from mine infancy.

2. I was educated in order thereto at school, and in the University of Oxford.

B. What age are you?

W. Twenty-five.

B. No, sure, you are not.

W. 3. As a son of the prophets, after I had taken my degrees, I preached in the country, being approved of by judicious able Christians, ministers, and others.

4. It pleased God to seal my labour with success, in the apparent conversion of many souls.

B. Yea, that is [as] it may be, to your way.

W. Yea, to the power of godliness, from ignorance and profaneness. If it please your lordship to lay down any evidences of godliness, agreeing with Scripture, and that are not found in those persons intended, I am content to be discharged the ministry. I will stand or fall on the issue thereof.

B. You talk of the power of godliness, such as you fancy.

W. Yea, to the reality of religion. Let us appeal to any common-place book for evidences of graces, and they are found in and upon them.

B. How many are there of them?

W. I number not the people.

B. Where are they?

W. Wherever I have been called to preach. At Radpole, Melcombe, Turnwood, Whitchurch, and at sea. I shall add another ingredient of my mission.

5. When the church saw the presence of God going along with me, they did, by fasting and prayer, in a day set apart for that end, seek an abundant

blessing on my endeavours.

B. A particular church?

W. Yes, my lord, I am not ashamed to own myself a member of one.

B. Why, you may mistake the apostles' intent. They went about to convert heathens. You have no warrant for your particular churches.

W. We have a plain, full, and sufficient rule for gospel worship in the New Testament, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the Epistles.

B. We have not.

W. The practice of the apostles is a standing rule in those cases which were not extraordinary.

B. Not their practice, but their precepts.

W. Both precepts and practice. Our duty is not delivered to us in Scripture only by precepts, but precedents, by promises, by threatenings mixed. We are to follow them as they followed Christ.

B. But the Apostle said, 'This speak I, not the Lord'—that is by revelation.

W. Some interpret that place, 'This speak I now by revelation from the Lord'—not the Lord in that text before instanced concerning divorces. May it please your lordship, we believe that *cultus non institutus est indebitus*. [Worship not enjoined, is not binding]

B. It is false.

W. The second commandment speaks the same: Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image.

B. That is, forms of your own invention.  
[Thou shalt not make to thyself]

W. Bishop Andrewes, taking notice of *non facies tibi*, satisfied me that we may not worship God but as commanded.

B. Well then, you will justify your preaching, will you, without ordination, according to law?

W. All these things, laid together, are satisfactory to me, for my procedure therein.

B. They are not enough.

W. There has been more written in proof of preaching of gifted persons, with such approbation, than has been answered yet by anyone.

B. Have you anything more to say to me, Mr. Wesley?

W. Nothing: your lordship sent for me.

B. I am glad to hear this from your mouth. You will stand to your principles, you say?

W. I intend it through the grace of God; and to be faithful to the King's Majesty, however you deal with me.

B. I will not meddle with you.

W. Farewell to you, sir.

B. Farewell, good Mr. Wesley.

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## Volume XXII, Journal and Diaries V (1765-1775)

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### Journal 14 - From May 27, 1765, to May 5, 1768

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Monday, May 27, 1765, I took my leave of Londonderry. Mr. Knox sent his servant to conduct me to Sligo, being now as affectionate as Mr. K[nox] of Sligo was the first time I was there. Keeping a steady pace, we rode fifteen miles, so called, in four hours and an half and came at noon to Ballybofey. Here we were shown into a room where lay a young man, brought near death by a vomiting of blood. Perhaps we were brought into *this* room, at this time, to save a poor man's life. As we were riding through the mountains in the afternoon we overtook one who was just come from Derry and had heard me preach all the time I was there, both in the evening and in the morning. I talked plainly both to her and her husband, and they expressed all possible thankfulness.

At five we reached Donegal, the county town. What a wonderful set of county towns are in this kingdom! Donegal and five more would not all together make up such a town as Islington. Some have twenty houses in them, Mayo three, and Leitrim, I think, not one. Is not this owing in part to the fickleness of the nation, who seldom like anything long, and so are continually seeking new habitations, as well as new fashions and new trifles of every kind?

Tue. 28. We breakfasted at Ballyshannon, I believe the largest and pleasantest town in the county. Beyond it, a good-natured man overtook me, with whom I talked largely and closely. He seemed much affected. If it continues, well; if not, I am clear of his blood.

About twelve we stopped at a little house. But a cloud of smoke soon drove us out of the first room into another where the landlord lay, with a grievously bruised and swelled leg. I directed him how to cure it, and thence took occasion to give him some farther advice. Several eagerly listened as well as himself. Perhaps some will remember it.

In the evening, I took my usual stand in the market-house at Sligo. But here how was the scene changed! I have seen nothing like this since my entrance into the kingdom. Such a total want of good sense, of good manners, yea, of common decency, was shown by not a few of the hearers! It is good to visit Sligo after Londonderry. Honour and dishonour balance each other. Have we done nothing here yet? Then it is high time to begin and try if something can be done now. In the two following days, I spoke as strongly as I could, and my labour was not in vain. The congregation increased very considerably and appeared to be of another spirit. They behaved better the second night than the first, and far better the third night than the second. Many of