

# John Wesley's "Calm Address": The Response of the Critics

by Donald H. Kirkham

Although John Wesley had ventured into political matters with his *Free Thoughts on the Present State of Public Affairs* (1770), a conservative defence of the King, ministers and parliament, and his *Thoughts upon Slavery* (1772), an appeal for the abolition of the slavery industry, these political pamphlets provoked only slight hostility.<sup>1</sup> His *A Calm Address to Our American Colonies* proved to be a vastly different experience.

Controversy over the British government's handling of American affairs had raged in the press for some time before the *Calm Address* appeared. Already sheaves of political tracts, including Samuel Johnson's *Taxation No Tyranny*, debating the ministry's policy, had been published.<sup>2</sup> In spite of the fact that the dispute over the colonies had reached fever pitch, prior to Wesley's entering the fray, the *Calm Address* caused an immediate furor. Indignant partisans of the American cause issued hostile attacks upon Wesley and his political views. Wesley was, of course, no stranger to pamphlet attack during his long career as an evangelist, author and publisher, but no single publication he issued created such an intense storm or was attacked with more severity. From October to December 1775, an avalanche of criticism almost buried the aging Methodist leader. Unfavorable reviews, comments, and letters appeared in the *London Magazine*, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, *Lloyd's Evening Post*, *The Public Ledger*, *The London Chronicle*, *The Gazetteer*, *The Public Advertiser*, *The Morning Chronicle*, and the *Monthly Review*. Hostile attacks were not limited to those contained in periodicals. Of greater significance were the critical pamphlets. Although Samuel Johnson was apparently disappointed with the response to his *Taxation No Tyranny*, Wesley could never make the same claim about his abridgement of the tract under the title *A Calm Address*.<sup>3</sup> In the last three months of 1775 no less than fourteen tracts were directed at Wesley or his able

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1. Only two hostile responses to *Free Thoughts* appeared: [Joseph Towers], *A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley* (London: J. Towers), 1771; Juniolus, *Fallacy Detected* (N.p.: n.p.) 1775. *Thoughts upon Slavery* provoked only one attack, the anonymously published *Supplement to Mr. Wesley's Pamphlet entitled Thoughts Upon Slavery* (London: H. Reynall), 1774.

2. See monthly lists of publications in the *London Magazine*, the *Monthly Review*, the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Albert M. Lyles, "The Hostile Reactions to the American Views of Johnson and Wesley," *Journal of the Rutgers University Library*, XXIV (December, 1960) p. 3, lists a number of titles, randomly selected, indicating the range of opinion expressed in the publications.

3. William P. Courtney, *A Bibliography of Samuel Johnson*, rev. by David N. Smith (Oxford, 1915) pp. 125-127 lists ten replies to *Taxation No Tyranny*. *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, ed. G. B. Hill, rev. ed. by L. F. Powell (Oxford, 1934), II, p. 335 records, in April 1775, Johnson's dissatisfaction with the lack of response.

defender John Fletcher.<sup>4</sup> By 1776 the furor had largely subsided — only five antagonistic tracts appeared.<sup>5</sup> Wesley's support of the ministry against the colonists was not immediately forgotten, however. As late as 1779 Wesley's Calvinistic critics took pleasure in preventing the wounds of 1775 from healing by rubbing salt into them on occasion.<sup>6</sup>

Although most of the controversialists preferred anonymity, some delighted in pseudonyms such as "A Lover of Truth, and the British Constitution" and "A Friend of the People and their Liberties." Among the authors whose names we know are Augustus Toplady, an evangelical Anglican minister and theological foe of Wesley; James Murray, Dissenting Minister of High Bridge Chapel, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; Caleb Evans, Baptist minister in Bristol; John Towers (younger brother of the better-known controversialist Joseph Towers), an Independent preacher in London. It was to be expected that some of those who crossed swords with Wesley on the American question would be English nonconformist clergymen, since the Dissenters were in the main loyal Whigs fervent in their support of the ideals of liberty, the right of resistance to tyranny, the power of the people and freedom of expression. There was a history of good relations between them and their American Dissenting cousins. Throughout this period the English Dissenters were outspoken in their defence of the American cause. They believed in the colonists' case, and became strong critics of the ministry's stand.<sup>7</sup>

Wesley's earliest antagonist, Caleb Evans, was also his prime antagonist. His *Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley*, went through perhaps as many as five editions,<sup>8</sup> more than any other attack, and became the center of a continuing controversy, as did no other attack. As Dr. Baker has described in his companion article it was mainly as a result of the con-

4. J. T. [John Towers], *Elihu's Reply* (London: By the Author) 1775; Americus, *A Letter to Mr. John Wesley*, (Folio broadsheet, n.p.) n.d.; Hanoverian [Augustus Toplady], *An Old Fox Tarr'd and Feather'd* (London: J. French) 1775; *A Constitutional Answer to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Calm Address* (London: E. and C. Dilly) 1775; [James Murray], *A Grave Answer to Mr. Wesley's Calm Address* (I have not been able to locate this item, but it is noted in *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* (XII, p. 191); T. S., *A Cool Reply to a Calm Address* (London: By the Author) 1775; Americus [Caleb Evans], *A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley* (London: E. and C. Dilly) 1775; Caleb Evans, *A Reply to the Rev. Mr. Fletcher's Vindication* (Bristol: W. Pine) 1775; Juniolus, *Fallacy Detected* (N.P.: m.p.) 1775; W. Y., *A Serious Answer to Mr. Wesley's Calm Address* (Bristol: n.p.) 1775; *Resistance No Rebellion* (London: For N. Maud) 1775; W. D. *A Second Answer to Mr. John Wesley* (London: Wallis and Stonehouse) 1775; A Lover of Truth and the British Constitution, *A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley* (Manchester: n.p.) 1775; *Political Propositions* (N.p.: n.p.) [1775].

5. *Political Empiricism* (London: J. Johnson) 1776; Detester of Hypocrisy, *To That fanatical, political, physical, enthusiast, Patriot and Physician, the Reverend Mr. W. . . . y* (n.p.: n.p.) [1776]; A Friend to the People and their Liberties, *A Full and impartial Examination of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's address* (n.p.: n.p.) 1776; Caleb Evans, *Political Sophistry detected* (Bristol: W. Pine) 1776; *The Rev. Mr. Fletcher's Arguments*, 1776. (I have not seen this item. Dr. Frank Baker has noted it in his unpublished Methodist bibliography.)

6. See, particularly, Rowland Hill, *Imposture Detected*, 2nd ed. (London: T. Vallance) 1777, pp. 7, 33-34. The seven satirical poems of 1778-79 [*The Saints* (London: J. Bew), 1778; *Fanatical Conversion* (London: J. Bew), 1779; *The Love-Feast* (London: J. Bew), 1778; *Perfection* (London: J. Bew) 1778; *Sketcher for Tabernacle Frames* (London: J. Bew) 1778; *The Temple of Imposture* (London: J. Bew), 1778; *Voltaire's Ghost* (London: J. Bew) 1779] rehearsed all the old charges of 1775 with obvious relish.

7. See Russell E. Richey, "Counter-Insurgency", *Drew Gateway*, XLI (Winter, 1971), pp. 82-93.

8. Editions were published by E. and C. Dilly, London, and W. Pine, Bristol. Pine published the second edition. A "new edition" prefixed by Evan's "Observations on the Rev. Mr. Wesley's late reply" was published by E. and C. Dilly and J. Almon. A different new edition was also published. I have not seen this, but the Methodist Archives, London has a copy.

troversty with each other that Evans and Wesley perfected the successive editions of their respective pamphlets. In addition to Wesley's counter attack Evans's *Letter* drew John Fletcher, the Methodist leader's able lieutenant, into the battle. Evans and Fletcher traded shots in a series of pamphlets. To Fletcher's *Vindication*<sup>9</sup> of Wesley, Evans responded angrily with *A Reply*.<sup>10</sup> Fletcher's rejoinder, *American Patriotism*<sup>11</sup>, was in turn answered by Evans in *Political Sophistry*.<sup>12</sup> Lesser Methodist Sympathizers also join in the debate. An anonymous author came to Wesley's side with an eight-page *Defence*<sup>13</sup> *A Calm Address to Americanus* by "A Native of America",<sup>14</sup> Wesley appended to his December 16 revised edition of *Calm Address*. Finally, Thomas Olivers, one of Wesley's preachers, came to his leader's side with *A Full Defence*,<sup>15</sup> a response to the new edition of Evan's *Letter*.

It was Evans who raised most of the principal objections to the arguments espoused in the *Calm Address*. Although only two other pamphleteers acknowledged their indebtedness to Evans, others appear to have been familiar with his *Letter* and were content to reiterate the issues he had raised.<sup>16</sup>

Some of the critical replies were serious attempts at logical and historical refutation of Wesley's central arguments, but most directed the weapon of satire at his propositions and reasoning, impugning his motives for printing the tract. Usually the pamphlet's title set the tone for the attack. Tracts such as *A Serious Answer to Mr. Wesley's Calm Address, Political Propositions, A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley on his Calm Address* and *Fallacy Detected* were, by and large, free from personal invective, the critique being clearly focussed upon the arguments. *A Cool Reply to a Calm Address* and *A Full and Impartial Examination of... Wesley's Address* were, however, neither cool nor impartial, but full of vituperation and satire. The most elaborate satiric attacks on Wesley and his motives were made in Toplady's *An Old Fox Tarr'd and Feather'd*, and the pseudonymous Patrick Bull's *A Wolf in Sheep's Cloathing: or an Old Jesuit Unmasked*. Even pamphlets which were not primarily satiric — *A Constitutional Answer to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Calm Address* and

9. John Fletcher, *A Vindication of the Rev. Mr. Wesley's "Calm Address to our American Colonies": in some letters to Mr. Caleb Evans* (Dublin: Whitestone) 1776.

10. Caleb Evans, *A Reply to the Rev. Mr. Fletcher's Vindication of Mr. Wesley's Calm Address to our American Colonies* (Bristol: W. Pine) 1775.

11. John Fletcher, *American Patriotism* (Shrewsbury) 1776.

12. Caleb Evans, *Political Sophistry detected* (Bristol: W. Pine, 1776.)

13. *A Defence*, 2nd ed. (N.p.: n.p.) 1775.

14. *A Calm Address to Americanus by A Native of America* (London: R. Hawes) 1775.

15. Thomas Olivers, *A Full Defence of the Rev. John Wesley, in answer to the several personal reflections cast on that gentleman by the Rev. Caleb Evans in his Observations on Mr. Wesley's later reply prefixed to his Calm Address* (London: n.p.) 1776 [1775].

16. Cf. W. D., *A [S]econd Answer to Mr. John Wesley. Being a Supplement to the Letter of Americanus*. The author contended that Evans had "completely" answered Wesley. Nevertheless in twenty-two pages he rehearsed the same charges that Evans had made. The author of *Political Empiricism* in several places borrowed heavily from Evans.

Caleb Evans's *A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley* — descended to invective and ridicule when discussing Wesley's person and purpose. Calumny, name-calling, and scurrilous innuendo (bordering on libel), abounded. Wesley was denounced as a wolf in sheep's clothing, a madman, a chaplain in ordinary to the furies, a cunning fox, a Jesuit in disguise and a Jacobite traitor.<sup>17</sup>

Out of the mass of specific vilifications five general accusations may be discerned: Wesley had plagiarized Johnson's tract, he was a turncoat, his motivation was suspect, his purpose was doubtful, his dabbling in politics was unwelcome.

Wesley's failure to acknowledge his indebtedness to Johnson in his first edition of *A Calm Address* left him open to easy criticism. The discovery of plagiarism had been noted with scorn by Wesley's earliest pamphlet opponent Caleb Evans.<sup>18</sup> Practically every succeeding critic joined Evans in a chorus of disapproval of Wesley's passing off whole sections of Johnson as his own. Various terms were used to describe the close relationship between the two tracts. Wesley had "borrowed" from Johnson, he was guilty of "literary theft," he was a "dealer in stolen wares," he had "pirated" Johnson's tract.<sup>19</sup>

The most elaborate attack on Wesley's plagiarism came in Toplady's *An Old Fox Tarr'd and Feather'd*, which had appeared by November 1775. Half the tract is devoted to setting out passages from Johnson and Wesley side by side in order to demonstrate that Johnson's pamphlet was "the very *Hole of the Pit*, from which Mr. Wesley has dug and fetch'd up his own."<sup>20</sup> The pseudonymous Patrick Bull in his imaginative satire accounted for the similarities between the two tracts by creating the fiction that both had been written by the ghost of Father Petre, the Jesuit confessor of James II.<sup>21</sup>

If there were those opponents who were convinced that Wesley, in extracting *Taxation No Tyranny*, had ruined its grandiloquent style,<sup>22</sup> there were others who correctly perceived that what Wesley had done in simplifying the language of the original, and shortening the tract, was to provide it with a wider reading public, thus increasing its influence. Indeed, the author of *Political Empiricism* believed that Johnson's tract, had Wesley not "undertook to lop off its luxuriant branches... and to condense its diffuse and flowing periods," would have been destined to

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17. See Patrick Bull, *A Wolf in Sheep's Cloathing*, pp. 6, 11. [Toplady], *An Old Fox Tarr'd and Feather'd*, title page, where Wesley is depicted as a grinning fox in clerical gown and bands. [Towers], *Elihu's Reply*, p. 19. *Political Propositions*, pp. 28-29.

18. [Evans], *Letter*, p. 2.

19. [Toplady], *Old Fox*, p. 31. *Political Empiricism*, p. 4. Hill, *Imposture Detected*, p. 7. *Resistance No Rebellion*, p. 2. *A Constitutional Answer*, p. 3.

20. [Toplady], *Old Fox*, pp. 2, 8-19.

21. Bull, *Wolf in Sheep's Cloathing*, pp. 8-9.

22. "To the Reverend Mr. W- . . . .," *London Magazine* (December, 1775). Hill, *Imposture Detected*, p. 7. *Sketches for Tabernacle Frames*, p. 20.

oblivion. By editing it Wesley had brought it within "the reach of the *weaker brethren*."<sup>23</sup> Such opponents attacked Wesley for his uncritical dissemination of Johnson's arguments, swallowing, as Toplady complained, "the Pamphlet by Wholesale, Errors and all."<sup>24</sup>

Opponents believed that the plagiarist was without principles. Toplady depicted Wesley musing to himself after purchasing a copy of Johnson's tract: "What a Man *buys* and *pays* for, is certainly *his own*. Therefore, this Tract is no longer it's *Author's* but mine. Consequently I shall do no Evil, if I gut the Substance of it, and republish it under my own name."<sup>25</sup> Another author satirically praised Wesley's wisdom in not acknowledging Johnson, thereby being able not only to accept what commendation the *Address* received, but also to shift the blame, if criticism eventuated, by the quick announcement that it was really the doctor's work.<sup>26</sup>

The consistency of Wesley's political principles also came under heavy fire. Again it was Caleb Evans who first noted Wesley's sudden and dramatic change of attitude toward the American colonists by lifting out passages from Wesley's 1770 tract *Free Thoughts* and comparing them with the sentiments expressed in the *Calm Address*.<sup>27</sup> Evans went on to point out that Wesley had not only recommended to several of his followers Parker's *Argument* but had on a number of occasions spoken in favor of the colonists, urging Bristol Methodists to vote, in the parliamentary elections of 1774, for candidates who favored conciliation with the colonies. Unable to reconcile Wesley's new views with his former actions, Evans concluded that the Methodist leader had feigned his earlier support of the colonies in an attempt to infiltrate the ranks of those who dissented from the ministry's position.<sup>28</sup>

Wesley's alleged political inconsistency became a repeated target. Toplady flung the epithet "turn-coat" at Wesley, implying that he had, by changing sides, betrayed a noble cause. The Anglican evangelical expressed no surprise at Wesley's shift in loyalties, for the Methodist leader was, after all, he suggested, a weathercock, easily moved by changing winds.<sup>29</sup> The author of *Political Empiricism* was likewise not surprised by Wesley's altered political stance. If the Methodist leader believed in instantaneous religious conversion, why not sudden political conversion?<sup>30</sup> Patrick Bull satirically suggested that Wesley was not capable of inconsistency as charged by his detractors: "The contradiction is too glaring . . . ; so inconsistent in his principles, that we may in a few days,

23. *Political Empiricism*, pp. 7, 13. Bull, *Wolf in Sheep's Cloathing*, pp. 8-9.

24. [Toplady], *Old Fox*, p. 15.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

26. *Political Empiricism*, p. 8.

27. [Evans], *Letter*, p. 2.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

29. [Toplady], *Old Fox*, pp. 2, 21.

30. *Political Empiricism*, p. 9.

expect from him a vindication of the Americans and a satire upon the administration.<sup>31</sup> The charge of political instability continued to plague Wesley. The author of *Methodism and Popery Dissected* wrote in 1779 that Wesley "never stuck close to one (political) opinion forty hours."<sup>32</sup>

In attempting to understand Wesley's political reorientation in the *Calm Address*, most opponents sought motives which would provide an easy explanation for the change. Almost all disputants implied that Wesley did not really believe the arguments he espoused, but printed them for reasons of personal gain. Perhaps one of the strangest reasons suggested was that Wesley feared the expulsion of Methodists from America if the colonies won independence. The only way to ensure that his societies would continue across the Atlantic was to support the ministry in its efforts to crush the colonists.<sup>33</sup> Another author contended that, by serving the Government as a political pamphleteer, Wesley was attempting to atone for past seditious statements.<sup>34</sup>

Two base motives were attributed by numerous critics — financial gain and episcopal aspiration. The writer of *Political Empiricism* suggested that Wesley was out for a quick penny. Wesley deliberately set the price for his tract at two pence so that it might have a large sale among his multitudinous followers. The same author went on to imply that Wesley was on the Government's pay roll, arrangements for which had been made by the Earl of Dartmouth, friend of the Countess of Huntingdon, and patron of the evangelical clergy.<sup>35</sup> If some writers hinted broadly that there had been a financial arrangement between Wesley and the ministry, others stated it as a fact. Toplady and the author of *A Constitutional Answer* labelled Wesley a "court sycophant."<sup>36</sup> The author of *Resistance No Rebellion* contended that Wesley, having "bartered a fair reputation and a good conscience for a bribe," was one of a "number of mercenary writers" employed by the ministry.<sup>37</sup> The accusation that Wesley's political wavering in the 1770's had been "Check'd by the Canker of a *Courtly Bribe*" in 1775.<sup>38</sup>

The second major motive attributed to Wesley by his opponents was his alleged insatiable desire for elevation to the episcopate. Augustus Toplady was the first to stigmatize Wesley as an unprincipled preferment seeker, hoping to "slip into an English Cathedral or (at least) be appointed to the first American Bishoprick."<sup>39</sup> The author of *A Full and Impartial*

31. Bull, *Wolf in Sheep's Cloathing*, p. 10.

32. *Methodism and Popery Dissected*, p. 58. See also *Sketches for Tabernacle Frames*, p. 14.

33. *Political Empiricism*, p. 25.

34. Rowland Hill, *Imposture Detected*, pp. 33-34.

35. *Political Empiricism*, pp. 20, 31. Cf. Americus, "A Letter to Mr. John Wesley," *Gentleman's Magazine* (December, 1775), p. 564.

36. [Toplady], *Old Fox*, p. 5. *A Constitutional Answer*, p. 22.

37. *Resistance No Rebellion*, p. 3.

38. *Sketches for Tabernacle Frames*, p. 14.

39. [Toplady], *Old Fox*, pp. 3-5.

*Examination* believed that Wesley had his eye on a particular episcopal see in America — Boston.<sup>40</sup> Another author thought that a Canadian diocese might be more appropriate, since Methodism was a “species of Popery” and parliament had passed (in 1774) the Quebec Act, permitting a measure of freedom to the Roman Catholic Church in Canada.<sup>41</sup> Patrick Bull agreed that Canada had been chosen by Wesley, but satirically suggested that instead of a mitre Wesley deserved a night-cap, “which in justice ought to be drawn over his eyes.”<sup>42</sup>

Wesley's adversaries, claiming that his intention was to stir up the English public against the colonies, delighted in a play on the title of his tract. By contrast with the title, they pointed out, the contents of the *Address* were far from being calm. It was impossible, said Americus, for an inveterate enthusiast to be calm about anything.<sup>43</sup> John Towers depicted Wesley, “olive branch in mouth, stir[ring] up the People of England to shed the blood of their brethren.”<sup>44</sup> Instead of attempting to reconcile differences between the ministry and the Americans, Wesley had become, said another, an “incendiary” inflaming the populace.<sup>45</sup> Others were certain that the *Calm Address* was among the most inflammatory political tracts ever composed.<sup>46</sup> The author of *Political Empiricism* conceded that Wesley's aim might have been reconciliation, but the *Calm Address* was ill suited to achieving this end. If Wesley had wanted to quench a fire, he ought to have poured water on the flames rather than oil.<sup>47</sup> Satiric criticism of the pamphlet's title haunted Wesley. The author of the satiric poems of 1778-79 played upon the title in three of his seven satires.<sup>48</sup>

A number of critics joined in censuring Wesley for turning politician. Caleb Evans, reminding Wesley of his earlier statements in his 1770 *Free Thoughts*: “I am no politician: Politics lie quite out of my Province,” posed the question: “How comes Mr. John Wesley, who was then no Politician, to commence one now?”<sup>49</sup> Toplady, with characteristic virulence, likened Wesley to “a low and puny TADPOLE in Divinity, which proudly seeks to dis-embowl *an high and mighty WHALE* in Politics.”<sup>50</sup> Another author suggested that Wesley was too old to suddenly become embroiled in politics.<sup>51</sup> Others expressed disappointment in the Methodist leader for not sticking to his religious duties, where he had done

40. *Full and Impartial Examination*, pp. 29-30.

41. T. S., *A Cool Reply*, pp. 4-5.

42. Bull, *Wolf in Sheep's Cloathing*, pp. 22-23.

43. Americus “Letter to Mr. John Wesley” *Gentleman's Magazine* (December, 1775), p. 562.

44. [Towers], *Elihu's Reply*, p. 19.

45. *Full and Impartial Examination*, p. 29.

46. Bull, *Wolf in Sheep's Cloathing*, p. 11. *Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley*, p. 6.

47. *Political Empiricism*, p. 16.

48. Part of the title of *Perfection* read “calmly addressed to the greatest hypocrite in England.” In the text (p. 36) of the satire the author accused Wesley of a “massacre of Mankind with CALM ADDRESS”. Cf. *The Love-Feast*, p. 33; *Voltaire's Ghost*, p. 45.

49. [Evans], *Letter*, p. 2. *Wesley, Works*, XI, 14.

50. [Toplady], *Old Fox*, p. 3.

51. T. S., *Cool Reply*, p. 3.

some good.<sup>52</sup>

Wesley's dabbling in politics was not forgotten. The anonymous satirist suggested, in *Tyranny the Worst Taxation*, that Wesley's role in extracting Johnson's pamphlet was to provide religious sanction to the corrupt political theories of an eighteenth-century Machiavelli.<sup>53</sup> The author of *The Fanatic Saints* depicted Wesley: "Beating his Drum for Murd'ers to enlist."<sup>54</sup> In another of his poems he elaborated the theme that Wesley was a ruthless and merciless priestly politician akin to Samuel and Innocent III.<sup>55</sup> An anonymous poet of 1780, refusing to let the caricature fade, put Wesley at the head of a parade, beating a "martial drum" and whining "Church Militant!"<sup>56</sup>

Though most opponents chose to call names, accusing Wesley and his able defender John Fletcher of sophistry, rather than refute the arguments laid out in the *Calm Address*, there were some who did seek to refute its chief propositions.

Wesley's critics defended the colonists' cry, "No taxation without representation," as vigorously as he had opposed it. They rejected the comparison Wesley had drawn between the Americans and those Englishmen who did not have a vote. Evans pointed out that the majority of non-voters in England were women, minors, leaseholders, or poor. The Americans who sought representation, however, did not fit into these categories.<sup>57</sup> An author who signed his pamphlet "W.Y." contested Wesley's argument that those who left England to settle the colonies thereby had given up their right to representation. If they had lost their freehold in England, surely, he concluded, they had gained another in America.<sup>58</sup>

At stake, the critics believed, was a fundamental principle of English government — the right of people to grant their taxes. The ministry's policy of taxing the colonies without their consent, insisted the author of *A Full and Impartial Examination*, was antithetical to the British constitution:

The taking of a People's Money without their Consent is treating them, I think inconsistently with the Spirit of the *British Constitution*. If the Americans are to be deemed a Part of the British Subjects, they ought in all Reason to enjoy the Privileges of such: i.e. they ought to grant their own Money, and consent to their own Laws.<sup>59</sup>

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52. *Constitutional Answer*, p. 22. Lover of Truth, *Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley*, p. 15.

53. *Tyranny the Worst Taxation*, p. 22.

54. *Fanatic Saints*, p. 28.

55. *Temple of Imposture*, p. 32.

56. *A Sketch of the Times* (London: J. Bew) 1780, pp. 90-91.

57. Evans, *Political Sophistry*, p. 4. See also [Evans], *Letter*, pp. 12-13. Lover of Truth, *A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley*, p. 11.

58. W. Y., *A Serious Answer*, p. 11.

59. *Full and Impartial Examination*, p. 10. See also T. S., *Cool Reply*, p. 27.

Taxation without representation amounted to taxation without consent, and taxation without consent was tantamount to slavery.<sup>60</sup>

Having refused to accept Wesley's parallel between the colonists and unenfranchised Englishmen, the critics suggested an analogy they believed to be more appropriate. Were not the American colonies much like Ireland? If the Irish parliament had been allowed to raise its own taxes, why should not the colonial assemblies have the same right?<sup>61</sup>

From the question of the legality of the Government's policy, Wesley's opponents moved to a critique of the morality of the ministry's position. Four specific questions were raised: (1) If England had neglected the colonies for more than a century, giving them little or no assistance until the war against the French, did she now have the moral right to impose taxation upon them?<sup>62</sup> (2) Had not the colonies paid their fair share in the war against the French by raising money and troops?<sup>63</sup> (3) Was not taxation of the colonies unfair, when Britain's trade monopoly with America brought into England a large revenue, more than enough to pay for their share of their protection?<sup>64</sup> (4) Would American taxes be used for the defence of the colonies, or would they be squandered in England upon placemen and pensioners?<sup>65</sup>

To Johnson's arguments, Wesley had added his own explanation of the causes leading to the unrest in England and the colonies. Both at home and in America, Wesley contended, those who hated the monarchy had stirred up men in order to bring about the separation of the colonies from the mother country. With England's troops across the Atlantic absorbed in the crisis in the colonies, republican agitators at home, Wesley feared, might engineer a successful revolution, removing the monarchy.<sup>66</sup> This impugment of the patriotism and loyalty to the monarchy of those who supported the colonists' cause resulted in furor and was, no doubt, the reason for the large number of pamphlets attacking Wesley's tract. Critics hurriedly and heatedly denied that pro-American Englishmen were anti-monarchists. Wesley's accusation was labelled scandalous, and he was called upon to verify it and provide names.<sup>67</sup> Others ridiculed it:

"It is wonderful indeed, that a *few Men*, at a Distance of more than 2000 Miles, should have been capable of raising a general spirit of Discontent in so many

60. [Evans], *Letter*, pp. 3-4, 8. T. S., *Cool Reply to a Calm Address*, p. 27.

61. [Evans], *Letter*, pp. 15-16. W. Y., *Serious Answer*, p. 16. Lover of Truth, *Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley*, pp. 4-5.

62. *Constitutional Answer*, pp. 4, 16. [Evans], *Letter*, pp. 18-19. W. Y., *Serious Answer*, p. 17.

63. *Constitutional Answer*, p. 18. T. S., *Cool Reply*, pp. 28-29. Lover of Truth, *Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley*, p. 3.

64. [Evans], *Letter*, pp. 19-20. *Resistance No Rebellion*, pp. 28-29. Lover of Truth, *Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley*, pp. 9-10. *Full and Impartial Examination*, p. 10.

65. T. S., *Cool Reply*, pp. 10-12. *Full and Impartial Examination*, p. 71. Lover of Truth, *Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley*, pp. 9-10.

66. Wesley, *Works*, XI, 86-88.

67. Lover of Truth, *Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley*, p. 6., *Constitutional Answer*, pp. 19-20. W. D., *A Second Answer*, p. 18.

Colonies — That they should have armed an hundred thousand Men on the other Side of the Atlantic, and have stirred up many thousands at *Home*, even to madness — That they should be using them as their Tools, to change the whole System of Government, and that not one of their deluded followers, either in *America* or *England*, should have been able to penetrate their grand Design! . . . I would by all Means advise this wonder-working Gentleman, to add a few Embellishments to his Story, and send it as a curious Manuscript to the VATICAN: It will cut a glorious figure amongst the numerous Legends already laid up in that precious Treasury." 68

Supporters of the American colonists, the critics insisted, were the true patriots and lovers of the monarchy. Those like Wesley and Johnson who argued against the American cause were the real enemies to the English constitution, for they supported arbitrary rule. Such men were Jesuits and Jacobites; they were friends to the Pope and the Stuart Pretender, and thus adversaries of the Hanoverians.<sup>69</sup> Wesley, then, was hailed by his critics as the defender of tyranny and the arch foe of the principles of the Glorious Revolution. His *Calm Address* was caricatured as a feeble attempt to revive the Stuart doctrines of the divine right of kings, and nonresistance to the sovereign's arbitrary power. "W. Y." summed up the charge:

Our Author's ill-tim'd Zeal against a Commonwealth may be easily and justly accounted for. He is a warm Friend to absolute and hereditary Monarchy, and a bitter Enemy to our present happy Form of Government by Law established.... (He supports) making the King of England, as arbitrary as any Prince in Europe; and giving him that illegal and unlimited Power, which was claimed by the unhappy House of Stuarts.<sup>70</sup>

Patrick Bull suggested that the *Calm Address* was a seditious treatise, written "in favor of the Pretender's title to prove that the present family has no right to the crown." A loyal subject, such as Wesley, could not have written it. The author, Bull alleged satirically, must have been the ghost of Father Edward Petre, James II's spiritual advisor. Only he could have advanced such a diabolical doctrine that "our lives, liberties, and property are all dependent on the Sovereign's will."<sup>71</sup>

Nor did the *Calm Address* stand alone. In the six years of the Revolution, Wesley published no less than seven other royalist pam-

68. *Full and Impartial Examination*, p. 27. Cf. Bull, *Wolf in Sheep's Clothing*, pp. 23-24.

69. T. S., *Cool Reply*, p. 30. *Resistance No Rebellion*, pp. 32-33.

70. W. Y., *Serious Answer*, p. 18. Cf. *Political Propositions*, pp. 23-29. *Lover of Truth, Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley*, p. 7. *Resistance No Rebellion*, pp. 8, 12.

71. Bull, *Wolf in Sheep's Clothing*, pp. 18, 5.

phlets.<sup>72</sup> Unfavorable response to these, however, was slight.<sup>73</sup> None evoked the hostility which the *Calm Address* did.

There can be no doubt that the *Calm Address* was one of the most significant pamphlets in the controversy which surrounded the government's conduct of American affairs. Coming as it did in the middle of an already heated debate it did much to fan the fires. Its effectiveness in setting forth the government's arguments in a clear and concise form which could be easily assimilated by the reader led to its wide distribution in cheap editions, thus popularizing the ministry's position throughout the length and breadth of the land. Such a powerful pamphlet so extensively circulated could not go unchecked. Opponents of the government made every attempt in print to discredit Wesley and weaken his arguments.

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72. *A Sermon Preached at St. Matthew's Bethnal-Green, on Sunday, November 12, 1775, for the Benefit of the Widows and Orphans of the Soldiers Who lately Fell Near Boston* (1775). *Some Observations on Liberty* [1776]. *A Seasonable Address to the More Serious Part of the Inhabitants of Great Britain, Respecting the Unhappy Contest Between Us and Our American Brethren* (1776). *A Calm Address to the Inhabitants of England* (1777). *A Serious Address to the People of England with Regard to the State of the Nation* (1778). *An Account of the Conduct of the War in the Middle Colonies* (1780). *Reflections on the Rise and Progress of the American Rebellion* (1780).

73. There were hostile responses to only two. Wesley's *Some Observations on Liberty* (a reply to Dr. Richard Price's *Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty*) was attacked by A Gentleman of Northumberland, *A Complete Answer to Mr. Wesley's Observations* (Newcastle: T. Robson) [1776]. To Wesley's *Calm Address to the Inhabitants of England* there were three rejoinders: W. J. [W. Jordan], *W. J. Against J. W.* (N. p.: By the Author) 1777; James Murray, *The finishing Stroke to Mr. Wesley's Calm Address to the People of England* (Newcastle: T. Robson) 1778; and Capel Loffit, *Observations on Mr. Wesley's Second Calm Address* (London: n.p.) 1777.