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THE HOSTILE REACTION TO THE AMERICAN VIEWS OF JOHNSON AND WESLEY

BY ALBERT M. LYLES

DR. LYLES, a graduate of Union College, received his doctorate at Rutgers, where he specialized in eighteenth century literature. He is currently on the faculty of the English Department at the University of Tennessee.

DONALD J. GREENE has recently examined that most notorious of Samuel Johnson's political pamphlets, *Taxation No Tyranny*, and has found it to be "one of his best pieces of sustained ratiocination, comparable to that of the review of Soame Jenyns's *Origin of Evil*," and a carefully reasoned clarification of the theory of political sovereignty far in advance of its time.¹ It is, he believes, a pamphlet which because of its "fine satire," its "exuberant denunciation of the personalities and motives of . . . [its] opponents," did not receive the logical, reasoned replies which it deserved.² The contemporary literary reaction to it was unquestionably hostile, and although some few replies, like *The Pamphlet Intituled "Taxation No Tyranny" Candidly Considered, and Its Arguments and Pernicious Doctrines Exposed and Refuted*, attempted logical refutation, most used invective and vituperation more exuberantly than Johnson himself.³

¹ Donald J. Greene, *The Politics of Samuel Johnson* (New Haven, 1960), pp. 213, 217.

² Greene, pp. 212-213.

³ The criticism of Johnson's pamphlet is briefly considered in chapter six of the unpub. diss. (University of Florida, 1954) of Ira Lee Morgan, "Contemporary Criticism of the Works of Samuel Johnson," and in John Ker Spittal, ed., *Contemporary Criticisms of Dr. Samuel Johnson, His Works, and His Biographers* (London, 1923), which con-

Yet to measure the critical response to *Taxation No Tyranny*, one cannot consider it alone. In October, 1775, eight months after *Taxation No Tyranny* had appeared, John Wesley published *A Calm Address to Our American Colonies*, largely abridged from *Taxation No Tyranny* but without acknowledgment.⁴ By extracting the chief arguments and softening the irony of Johnson's pamphlet, Wesley helped to disseminate the Johnsonian ideas and ultimately to encourage public discussion of the issues.⁵ The defense of the relatively unpopular principle of taxation without direct representation and the rebuke to the clarion cry of liberty administered by Johnson and Wesley linked in the public mind two men who despite basically similar beliefs publicly symbolized religious orthodoxy and religious enthusiasm respectively. Their defense of the British government's position on the revolution in the American colonies evoked a common hostile reaction.

The pamphlets of Johnson and Wesley, because of the eminence of the two authors, were significant events in the controversy over the government's conduct of colonial affairs, but seen in the perspective of the extensive propagandizing on all sides, it is surprising that even three years after their appearance the two pamphlets were repeatedly singled out for attack. The explanation may lie partially, as I have suggested, in the eminence of the two authors, since the names of one or both would be familiar to almost everyone, but certainly also in the effectiveness of their presentation of the conservative position, which their opponents sought to demolish.⁶

siders only the criticism published in the *Monthly Review*. I have found only one attempt to examine specifically the satiric characterizations of Johnson: Robert C. Whitford's "Lexiphanes: Satire's View of Doctor Johnson," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, XIX (April, 1920), 141-156.

⁴ The exact relationship of the two pamphlets will be considered later.

⁵ The reviewer of a reply to Wesley's *Calm Address* in the December 1775 *Monthly Review* asserted that Wesley's pamphlet had "occasioned the very important points in dispute between Great Britain and her colonies to be discussed in a plain and intelligible manner, suitable to the understandings of common readers." *Monthly Review*, LIII (1775), 514. Luke Tyerman (*The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M. A.*, 6th ed. [London, 1890], III, 191) wrote that forty thousand copies of Wesley's pamphlet were printed in three weeks.

⁶ Capel Lofft, in *Observations on Mr. Wesley's Second Calm Address, and Incidentally on Other Writings upon the American Question* (London, 1777), explained that he had answered Wesley because Wesley's connection "with a person in a high post of ministerial confidence [Lord Dartmouth] gives something of a more authoritative cast to what is said by him on this occasion" (p. 4).

Examination of the government's policy on American affairs was frequent and public. Both the *London Magazine* and the *Monthly Review* devoted portions of their monthly lists of publications to the American controversy. The following titles, chosen almost at random, indicate some of the range of opinion expressed: *An Argument in Defence of the Exclusive Right Claimed by the Colonies to Tax Themselves; Some Candid Suggestions Towards Accommodation of Differences with America; A Friendly Address to All Reasonable Americans, on the Subject of Our Political Confusions; A Farther Examination of Our Present American Measures, and of the Reasons and the Principles on Which They Are Founded; The Respective Pleas and Arguments of the Mother Country, and of the Colonies, Distinctly Set Forth, and the Impossibility of a Compromise of Differences . . . Plainly Demonstrated; and American Patriotism Farther Confronted with Reason, Scripture, and the Constitution*. Although many of the authors preferred anonymity, the controversialists included, in addition to Johnson and Wesley, John Shebbeare, like Johnson a government pensioner (whose being awarded a pension, according to Boswell, provoked a newspaper to write "that the King had pensioned both a *He-bear* and a *She-bear*"); Josiah Tucker, Dean of Gloucester; John Fletcher, a Wesleyan Methodist, one of whose replies to attacks on the *Calm Address* was corrected for the press by Lord Dartmouth;⁷ Caleb Evans, a Baptist minister of Bristol; Richard Price, the moral philosopher and later Unitarian minister; James Murray, an independent minister of Newcastle-upon-Tyne; Samuel Estwick, assistant agent for Barbados; and Adam Ferguson, the Scottish philosopher and historian. In addition, Richard Brinsley Sheridan had begun notes for an answer to Johnson.⁸

From the flood of publications on the American question, *Taxation No Tyranny* and the *Calm Address* were repeatedly chosen as targets by indignant friends to the American cause. Boswell recorded that in April, 1775, Johnson believed that *Taxation No Tyranny* had not been attacked enough,⁹ but later he must have been satisfied. The replies attacked his and Wesley's pamphlets separately and together,

⁷ T. B. Shepherd, *Methodism and the Literature of the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1940), p. 234.

⁸ Thomas Moore, *Memoirs of the Life of the Rt. Hon. Richard Brinsley Sheridan* (New York, 1853), II, 101; Morgan, p. 240.

⁹ *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, ed. G. B. Hill, rev. ed. by L. F. Powell (Oxford, 1934), II, 335.

attempted logical refutation of their principles, but primarily ridiculed and damned both pamphlets and their authors. Courtney, the Johnson bibliographer, lists ten replies, including three satires, to Johnson's pamphlet.¹⁰ But this total is misleading, since it does not include reviews, which were often occasions for direct replies,¹¹ and anti-government pamphlets not primarily responses to Johnson. At least twenty-nine publications, exclusive of reviews, were aimed at either Johnson or Wesley, and many did not limit themselves to one target.¹² A telling action also was the reprinting of one of Johnson's early political pamphlets, *Marmor Norfolciense; or, an Essay on an Ancient Prophetic Inscription in Monkish Rhyme Lately Discovered near Lynn in Norfolk* (1739). Through the device of a prediction of a time of national unrest and turmoil strikingly parallel to the early eighteenth century, the pamphlet had ironically attacked the Hanoverian George II. The new edition of the pamphlet, which a reviewer in 1775 called "a bloody Jacobitical pamphlet, on the most avowed anti-revolutional principles," was dedicated to "Samuel Johnson, LL.D.," now the defender of George III.¹³

Because the opponents of Johnson and Wesley repeatedly alluded to the relationship of Wesley's *Calm Address to Taxation No Tyranny*, I shall summarize the development of Wesley's views on the American question and the circumstances of the appearance of the *Calm Address*.

As early as 1770 in *Free Thoughts on the Present State of Public Affairs* Wesley had asserted that "he did not defend the measures which had been taken with regard to America; and that he doubted whether any man could defend them either on the foot of law, equity, or prudence."¹⁴ And as late as 15 June 1775, he indicated clearly that his sympathies lay with the Americans. From Ireland he wrote the Earl of Dartmouth, Secretary of State for the Colonies: "All my prejudices are against the Americans. For I am an High Churchman,

¹⁰ William Prideaux Courtney, *A Bibliography of Samuel Johnson*, rev. by David Nichol Smith (Oxford, 1915), pp. 125-127.

¹¹ The review in the *London Magazine* (March, 1775), was particularly severe.

¹² In addition to those replies and attacks which I have examined, I have used for titles and reviews the *London Magazine*, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and the *Monthly Review*.

¹³ Spittal, p. 387. Greene suggests that Johnson, replying to criticism of his apparent change in attitude, might have explained "that George I and George II allowed the government of the country to be kept under the thumbs of the Whig plutocracy and George III did not" (p. 186).

¹⁴ George Otto Trevelyan, *The American Revolution*, new ed. (London, 1905), III, 266.

the son of an High Churchman, bred up from my childhood in the highest notions of passive obedience and non-resistance. And yet, in spite of all my rooted prejudice, I cannot avoid thinking . . . that an oppressed people asked for nothing more than their legal rights, and that in the most modest and inoffensive manner which the nature of the thing would allow."¹⁵ Although *Taxation No Tyranny* had appeared in March, Wesley had not yet seen it. Then in October, while Johnson was in France, Wesley published the *Calm Address*, which denied that the Americans had been deprived of any legal rights.

Wesley in a prefatory address to the second edition attributed the change in his views to having read *Taxation No Tyranny*: "as soon as I received more light myself, I judged it my duty to impart it to others."¹⁶ But as Umphrey Lee indicates, the cause of Wesley's change was not so simple. Basically a conservative who had inherited a tradition of loyalty to the crown, Wesley had sympathized with the Americans until they actually rebelled. Lee indicates that because of Wesley's presence in Ireland and his illness he probably read Johnson's pamphlet and the official report of the Battle of Lexington (19 April) at approximately the same time, in the last half of June.¹⁷ Thus, Wesley was affected not only by the rhetoric of Johnson's pamphlet but also by his own repugnance to disloyalty and rebellion.

The terms used to describe the relationship of Wesley's pamphlet to Johnson's are varied. Later historians have hesitated to label the founder of Methodism a plagiarist, but Wesley's eighteenth-century adversaries openly called his action plagiarism. Wesley, acknowledging his indebtedness in the prefatory address to the second edition, wrote: "I . . . extracted the chief arguments from that treatise, and added an application to those whom it most concerns."¹⁸ T. W. Herbert, in a study of Wesley's editing, cites his many minor changes and the addition of a long final section with no counterpart in *Taxation No Tyranny* as proof that the *Calm Address* was not simply an abridgment.¹⁹

¹⁵ *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A. M.*, ed. John Telford (London, 1931), VI, 156. Wesley sent an almost identical letter on the same day to Lord North.

¹⁶ *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley*, ed. John Emory, 3rd Amer. ed. (New York, 1856), VI, 293.

¹⁷ Umphrey Lee, *The Lord's Horseman* (Nashville, 1957), pp. 188-190.

¹⁸ Wesley, *Works*, VI, 293.

¹⁹ "John Wesley as Editor and Author," *Princeton Studies in English No. 17* (Princeton, 1940), p. 106. Johnson had defended abridging in *Considerations on the Case of Dr. T[rapp]'s Sermons Abridged by Mr. Cave* (1739).

Wesley clearly did more than extract the chief arguments from *Taxation No Tyranny*. He followed Johnson's text closely; indeed some passages he took almost verbatim. Yet there is no evidence that Wesley intentionally committed plagiarism. His use of *Taxation No Tyranny* differed from his customary practice in editing and abridging works to provide suitable reading material for his Methodists only in that the pamphlet was a recent publication. But unquestionably he did publish under his name, without acknowledgment and apparently without permission, his adaptation of Johnson's pamphlet.²⁰

Although it is true, as Dora Mae Clark has warned, that the pamphlets of the eighteenth century "are a rather uncertain mirror of public opinion, because like the pier glass they are untrustworthy, flattering or distorting the object which they reflect,"²¹ intellectually and literarily they are valuable. The distortion which they show may be what the hostile pamphlet writer saw in the original; more frequently it may be what he wished others to see. Even when we are sure that we do not have a random sampling of public opinion, the image which is created in the hostile pamphlets alone is a testimony to the effectiveness of the original. Here that hostile reaction unmistakably shows *Taxation No Tyranny* and the *Calm Address* as significant defenses of the government's position.

Some of the replies to Johnson and Wesley attempted to refute the arguments of both, but most used satire and ridicule to weaken these arguments and to cast doubts upon the motives of the men who had advanced them. Despite the name-calling the attack is clearly upon the arguments.

The tone of both pamphlets was deprecated. Johnson's *Taxation No Tyranny*, once one granted certain premises, moved to almost irrefutable conclusions, but the force of the arguments was aggravated by Johnson's irony. Wesley's *Calm Address* promised a moderation which the pamphlet did not possess. Although it did not have the devastating irony of *Taxation No Tyranny*, an irony which on other occasions Wesley could command, it was passionately exhortatory and through loose accusations implied that the breach between Eng-

²⁰ Herbert asserts that it is not known whether Johnson gave Wesley permission to use his pamphlet (p. 108). Early in 1776 Johnson wrote Wesley a letter of thanks for his support (*The Letters of Samuel Johnson*, ed. R. W. Chapman [Oxford, 1952], II, 101).

²¹ Dora Mae Clark, *British Opinion and the American Revolution* (New Haven, 1930), p. 4.

land and America was caused by enemies of monarchy. The replies angrily denounced the immoderate language of both pamphlets.

One anonymous pamphleteer asserted that Johnson's pamphlet breathed "nothing but the spirit of tyranny," and he dismissed its other faults: "the tumour of your style, . . . the insolence of your manners, your rawness in the great principles of the subject which you treat, and your universal inaccuracy, or unfairness in arguing, are inferior considerations, and faults that may be forgiven."²² The title of Wesley's pamphlet offered his opponents an easy way to dramatize its inflammatory language. Repeatedly the replies emphasized and exaggerated the contrast between Wesley's title and the contents of his pamphlet. Even the reviewers, whom one might expect to be slightly less acrimonious than his attackers, noted the absence of calmness. The *Monthly Review*, as it reviewed Wesley's *Calm Address to the Inhabitants of England*, sometimes confused with the earlier *Calm Address*, said of both works: "But much do we fear that his *Calm Addresses* are ill adapted for the desirable purposes of quieting our political tumults. The truth is, that the Author's calmness is only to be found in his *title-pages*; that he is far, very far from being a dispassionate writer; and that the Americans have great reason to complain of him as a *fomenter*, rather than a composer of national discord."²³ The reviewer in the *London Magazine* charged: "This *calm address* was printed to *inflame* the breasts of the English against their American brethren."²⁴

Wesley's opponents played as obviously upon the title. The author of one satire of Wesley, which was "*Calmly Addressed to the Greatest Hypocrite in England*," accused him of stirring up revenge and of massacring "Mankind with CALM ADDRESS."²⁵ "Americus," writing in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, implied a contrast between Wesley's religious enthusiasm and the alleged calmness of his address: "You are surely, Sir, too well acquainted with the nature and workings of human passion, to expect any good to arrive from a calm address to men (as you say the Americans are) under the dominion of enthusiasm. The experience of your whole life has been the in-

²² The passage from *An Answer to a Pamphlet, Intituled, "Taxation No Tyranny." Addressed to the Author, and to Persons in Power* (1775), is quoted in the *Monthly Review*, LII (May, 1775), 446, and reprinted in Spittal, pp. 365-6.

²³ *Monthly Review*, LVI (April, 1777), 309.

²⁴ *London Magazine*, XLIV (October, 1775), 483.

²⁵ *Perfection. A Poetical Epistle* (London, 1778), p. 36.

fluence of enthusiasm over the calm; but your success as a schismatic is a sufficient proof, that, once aroused, neither reason nor sober sense can controul it." Still another writer pointed to the acrimony which the pamphlet aroused.²⁶

Johnson's style obviously lent itself more easily to criticism and ridicule than Wesley's. A few critics singled out phrases from Johnson's work to examine scrupulously or applied phrases from *Taxation No Tyranny* to other statements of Johnson's. One reviewer seized upon Johnson's phrase "To be prejudiced is always to be weak" and referred the reader to Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands* to judge its lack of bias.²⁷ A reviewer of *Marmor Norfolciense*, the anti-Hanoverian pamphlet, attempted a parody of Johnson's style: "as he [Johnson] would say, *the man who has arrived to such a degree of moral turpitude, as to militate against the best interests of mankind, must be indurated to conviction, and obtunded to remorse.*"²⁸ John Hall Stevenson, clearly intending to show both the absurdity of Johnson's position and the convolutions of his style, wrote that the author of *Taxation No Tyranny* had demonstrated "that the constituent has no power, but what his delegate chuses [*sic*] to allow him; that the constituent does not appoint his delegate; on the contrary, the delegate chuses his constituent: that those that are not his constituents, shall be his constituents virtually; and those that are his constituents, shall not be his constituents virtuously: that those great powers in the delegate, are not acquired by any peculiar act of virtue of his own, but by virtue of his own peculiar act, and in virtue thereof, the colonies are virtually represented."²⁹ Although these passages ostensibly ridicule Johnson's style, under the parody of style is an attack on the man and the principles he affirms.

Wesley's stylistic achievement, as his opponents characterized it, was the simplifying of Johnsonese in order to spread its poison. One satirist attributed to Wesley an awareness of the disproportion "between the poverty and meagreness of . . . [his] own creeping style,

²⁶ *Gentleman's Magazine*, XLV (December, 1775), 562; *Political Empiricism: A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley* (London, 1776), p. 16.

²⁷ *Gentleman's Magazine* (March, 1775), page numbered 335 but should be 135.

²⁸ *Monthly Review* (October, 1775), p. 360.

²⁹ *An Essay upon the King's Friends, with an Account of Some Discoveries Made in Italy, and Found in a Virgil, Concerning the Times* (London, 1776), p. 5.

and the elevated, sonorous language, the *sesquipedalia verba* of that *Boanerges* in the cause of administration, the venerable POMPOSO."³⁰ (The author ostentatiously acknowledged Charles Churchill's originating the term *Pomposo*.) "An Englishman," writing in the *London Magazine*, addressed Wesley:

At thy command the giant periods fall
From J——'s stilts, down on the ground to crawl.³¹

The *Calm Address* is:

America bely'd, and J-hns-n minc'd;
Sam's pompous Arguments cut out in Shreds,
To gain the *Mob, that Beast with many Heads*.³²

It is an abstract of *Taxation No Tyranny*, "divested of all that bombast of eloquence, to adapt it to the understanding of common readers, that the poison might spread universally."³³

Those opponents who had treated Wesley primarily as simplifier and disseminator of Johnson's ideas gleefully aimed many barrages at Wesley for his unacknowledged use of *Taxation No Tyranny*. And the relationship of the two pamphlets was discovered immediately. The reviewer in the *London Magazine* in October spoke scornfully of its arguments being "taken verbatim from pensioner Johnson's 'Taxation no tyranny' without the least acknowledgement."³⁴ He openly labelled Wesley a plagiarist. In the months that followed, the opposition pamphlets bristled with references to borrowing and to plagiarism. Capel Lofft, replying to Wesley's second *Calm Address*, spoke of Wesley's having had his eyes opened but suggested: "I think he forgot to refer the public to that marvellous court oculist who had done this cure."³⁵ The pseudonymous Patrick Bull, creating the fiction that the ghost of a Jesuit had written both pamphlets, told Dr. Johnson that the attribution to Wesley of the views of the *Calm Address* was unjust: "I told him [Johnson] that I was certain he [Wesley] had no just title to the arguments contained in the *Calm Address*, notwithstanding all that his enemies had said. The

³⁰ *Political Empiricism*, p. 13.

³¹ "To the Reverend Mr. W.——," *London Magazine* (December, 1775).

³² *Sketches for Tabernacle-Frames. A Poem* (London, 1778), p. 20.

³³ Patrick Bull, *A Wolf in Sheep's Cloathing: or, an Old Jesuit Unmasked* (Dublin printed, London reprinted [1775]), pp. 8-9.

³⁴ *London Magazine* (October, 1775), p. 537.

³⁵ Lofft, p. 26.

Doctor . . . agreed entirely with me in sentiment; adding, at the same time, that he knew the Spirit who was the *real* author of them as well as he knew *himself*, and that the same spirit had lately published a famous pamphlet, entitled *Taxation no Tyranny*."³⁶ One author applied a passage from *Taxation No Tyranny* to Johnson and Wesley and apologized: "but they are so exactly a-propos (in their present accommodated sense) so expressive of my own idea, that I could not withstand the temptation of *borrowing* them; an action in which I thought myself abundantly countenanced by the honest sanction of Mr. Wesley's example."³⁷ Other authors less subtle termed Wesley a pirate and "a well-known, *calm, fanatic Plagiary* of Dr J——s-n's '*Taxation no Tyranny*.'"³⁸

Perhaps implying that even Johnson and Wesley could not honestly believe the arguments which they advanced, almost all their opponents sought motives which would explain the publication of *Taxation No Tyranny* and the *Calm Address*.³⁹ For Johnson they found a ready explanation in his pension, which they asserted had transformed him into a political hack. Although some alleged that Wesley desired a pension, most depicted him as a court sycophant who sought a bishopric from his friend Lord Dartmouth. The author of *Political Empiricism* noted ironically that it is extraordinary "that the proud *Pensioner* and the *apostate Priest*, are the most substantial pillars of the Prerogative, the most zealous friends of government, the most *original* and *disinterested* writers in support of its measures this day in the kingdom."⁴⁰ "An Englishman" accounted for Johnson's pamphlet:

The sum of J——'s argument is clear,
J—— is paid some hundred pounds a year.⁴¹

Another satirist used Johnson as an illustration of the government's purchasing of devotion to its cause: "*Such Treas'ry Floods* what

³⁶ Bull, pp. 8-9.

³⁷ *Political Empiricism*, p. 19.

³⁸ *Voltaire's Ghost to the Apostle of the Sinless Foundery: a Familiar Epistle from the Shades* (London, 1779), p. 44; *Tyranny the Worst Taxation; a Poetical Epistle to the Right Honourable Lord N—, Ostensible Prime M——r* (London, 1778), p. 22.

³⁹ Few of the replies suggested that either Johnson or Wesley wrote from personal conviction. One exception was the review of *Taxation No Tyranny* in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (March, 1775), p. 134, which said that Johnson had written his pamphlet from the heart.

⁴⁰ P. 22.

⁴¹ *London Magazine* (December, 1775).

Virtue can resist!” Johnson, pensioned by the government and given a doctor’s degree at the instigation of Lord North, has become “the celebrated *Ministerial Advocate*,” as a government hireling.⁴²

Although Johnson was belabored as a pensioner, in general he had been consistent in the avowal of his principles. The same could not be said for Wesley. The sudden and dramatic change in his views, publicized particularly through a series of pamphlets by Caleb Evans, gave his opponents an opportunity to account for this change. The author of *Political Empiricism* suggested that the profane might attribute Wesley’s sudden political conversion to his corruption “by the mammon of unrighteousness, which is the idol of the children of this world.” But he ironically hinted at a parallel between Wesley’s change and the Methodist belief in instantaneous religious conversion: “You read *Dr. Johnson’s* unanswerable pamphlet; and *magna est veritas!*—such is the irresistible force of truth, that your whole soul was enlightened in a moment: darkness and error fled before the face of reason and argument. All this is, undoubtedly very natural and supposeable—that a man of your age and experience, I will not say, inflexibility and steadiness of temper, should be so instantaneously wrought upon by the fastidious conceits of a pensioned hireling.”⁴³ Though he suggested that Wesley had been disappointed in his hope for an American bishopric but had “found it convenient to oblige a certain *pious* Lord in Administration, whom it was impossible to refuse,” he later passionately asked: “Do you aspire to stand conspicuous on the ignoble list of infamy and venality—amongst those *slaves of state*, the *pensioned* Jacobites and Tories . . . ?”⁴⁴ The most stinging rebuke to Wesley was the often reprinted one of “Americus,” who wrote: “You have one eye on a pension, and the other upon heaven; one hand stretched out to the K—g, and the other raised up to God. I pray that the first may reward you, and the last may forgive you.”⁴⁵

But the most frequent accusation was that Wesley had asked the

⁴² *Tyranny the Worst Taxation*, pp. 10, sig. B, 18. The author of *A Cool Reply to a Calm Address, Lately Published by Mr. John Wesley* (2nd ed. [London, 1775], p. 5) asserted that the ministry which patronized corrupt men because it could not get incorrupt ones would take “especial notice of Mr. John Wesley, who boldly stands forth in the defence of their cause with the specious epithets of learned, good, pious, &c.”

⁴³ Pp. 8-9.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 31.

⁴⁵ *Gentleman’s Magazine* (December, 1775), p. 562.

price of a bishopric for throwing the weight of his enormous influence behind the government's position. Augustus Toplady, the author of "Rock of Ages," stigmatized Wesley as the covetous priest Vulposo, who plundered Johnson's pamphlet in the hope of getting a bishopric.⁴⁶ Patrick Bull, continuing his fiction that the real author of both Johnson's and Wesley's pamphlets was a Jesuit ghost, ironically urged Wesley's preferment: "It has been said, that Mr. Wesley has solicited to be made bishop of Quebec, that he may convert the papists from their errors, which preferment he undoubtedly deserves; whereas whoever dares to maintain the *jacobitical doctrines* contained in the *Calm Address*, instead of *lawn sleeves* should be presented with a *hempen neckcloth*, and, instead of a mitre, his head should be adorned with a white night-cap which in justice ought to be drawn over his eyes."⁴⁷ The author of *A Cool Reply to a Calm Address* wondered whether the administration would not reward Wesley with a bishopric but advised him "to sit in sackcloth, and pour dust upon thy head, and earnestly cry for mercy."⁴⁸

Whatever the motivation for their pamphlets, the result, as their opponents summarized it, was unmistakable. Johnson and Wesley had become defenders of tyranny. And those opponents sought to reveal that tyranny, to show that the tyranny masked by the apparently innocuous argument over the right to tax was, in the words of one title, the worst taxation. One satirist asserted that Lord North, the prime minister, put into practice Johnsonian principles and depicted Johnson as an eighteenth-century Machiavelli:

*Thus into Practice Theory is brought,
And future K——s by J——s—n may be taught;
To him for Truth all Tyrants may appeal;
W—sl—y has stamp'd it with the Found'ry-Seal.*⁴⁹

Wesley was depicted as the hireling of tyrants, as a religious knave:

Who, like *Guy Fawkes*, to be thought *pious*,
Destroy's [*sic*] God's works with *loyal Bias*.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ *The Works of Augustus M. Toplady, A. B.*, new ed. (London, 1825), V, 443. The charge that Wesley sought consecration as a bishop was a perennial one. It had appeared as early as 1763 when Erasmus, a Greek Orthodox bishop, had ordained six Methodist laymen. See L. E. Elliott-Binns, *The Early Evangelicals: A Religious and Social Study* (London, 1953), p. 222; Tyerman, II, 486; and Lee, p. 201.

⁴⁷ Bull, pp. 22-23. ⁴⁸ P. 5.

⁴⁹ *Tyranny the Worst Taxation*, p. 22.

⁵⁰ *Voltaire's Ghost*, p. 45.

An anonymous satire, *The Temple of Imposture*, asserted that Wesley was impelled by "The Spirit of Tyranny, Lust, Avarice, Persecution, and Imposture."⁵¹ The author of *Tyranny the Worst Taxation* attributed to both Johnson and Wesley an unusual definition of a rebel:

In *this*, *Divine*, and *Layman*, both concur,
"That *Subjects*, stabb'd, are *Rebels*, if they *stir*."⁵²

A number of attacks sought to link Johnson and Wesley and the principles which they espoused to Jacobitism and Jesuitism, those perennial bogies of the eighteenth century. John Hall Stevenson's hero, visiting Hell, finds among "a crew of perjurd dead," whom he identifies as "The Jacobites, that took the oaths to government," "Old Samuel shaking his Colossean head."⁵³ Both Wesley and Johnson were hailed as Stuart partisans who believed in the divine right of kings.

But essentially the attacks upon Johnson and Wesley sought to demonstrate that pamphlets such as *Taxation No Tyranny* and the *Calm Address* were treasonable and to remove the stigma of disloyalty from the opposition to the government's policies. One author's indictment of Johnson for publishing *Taxation No Tyranny* might exemplify the verdict of their pro-American contemporaries upon both Johnson and Wesley:

He [Johnson] calls it *Treason*, but to wish *Success*
To *Liberty*, or *supplicate Redress*,
If *Wishing's* *Treason*, *Writing* is no less.⁵⁴

Although the opponents of Johnson and Wesley may have chosen to call names rather than to refute their arguments, the attack upon the two men was designed to bring their ideas into disrepute. The anger of the response to *Taxation No Tyranny* and to the *Calm Address* (although we must remember the source of Wesley's ideas) indicates that the anti-government opposition saw in the two pamphlets powerful, if "unanswerable," arguments which had to be weakened by any means possible.

⁵¹ *The Temple of Imposture; a Poem* (London, 1778), p. 28.

⁵² P. 23.

⁵³ *Essay upon the King's Friends*, p. 17.

⁵⁴ *Tyranny the Worst Taxation*, p. 18.