

The *Rev. F. C. Massingberd*—About fifteen months. I am unable to name the authority, but the passage here bears the date "Dec., 1789." He says further, in the *Arminian Magazine*, 1790 :—

"Two young men sowed the word of God, not only in the churches, but literally by the highway side. They were members of the Church of England, and had no design of separating from it, and they advised all that were in it to continue therein, although they joined the Methodist Society; for this did not imply leaving their former congregation, but only leaving their sins. As long as the Methodists keep to this plan they cannot separate from the Church, and this is our peculiar glory. It is new upon the earth. Revolve all the histories of the Church from the earliest ages, and you will find that whenever there was a great work of God in any particular city or nation, the subjects of that work soon said to their neighbours, "Stand by yourselves, for we are holier than you." But with the Methodists it is quite otherwise; they are not a sect or party. They do not separate from the religious community to which they at first belonged. They are still members of the Church, such as they desire to live and die. I believe one reason why God is pleased to continue my life so long is, to confirm them in their present purpose not to separate from the Church."

These were the words of John Wesley in 1790, certainly but a short time before his death. Before I conclude this part of the subject, I may mention one other circumstance which is, I believe, very little known generally, and perhaps not even by the Wesleyan body. It appears that Wesley a short time before his death was induced to "lay hands" on a friend of his, Dr. Coke, a clergyman of the Church of England, and to give him a kind of commission to exercise a sort of superintendence over the Wesleyan body in America. From that circumstance the Wesleyan body in America derive what they consider their Episcopal government. They have now in America as many as eight or nine superintendents, whom they call Bishops. I have myself seen an account of a session of their body held in the most formal manner in the Senate-house at Cincinnati, from which it appears the Bishops sat round in a circle, as the Bishops in ancient times may have 'done, in a very imposing manner, with the preachers below. But all these forms have been derived from the circumstance of Wesley having "laid hands" upon Dr. Coke and given him a commission to exercise a superintendence over the Wesleyan Societies in America, empowering him to appoint Mr. Francis Ashbury, a resident in America, as another superintendent. Now, what I wish to state is the remarkable fact that after receiving this commission, this same Dr. Coke actually upon two occasions sought the Episcopate from English Bishops, and pledged himself that if he might receive from them Episcopal consecration, he would bring back to the Church of England the whole of the Wesleyan body in the American colonies. That circumstance is shown in a pamphlet which is very rare and difficult to obtain, but which a clergyman of the United States has been kind enough to send me from America. The pamphlet contains the copy of a letter, the original of which is in the possession of Dr. Seabury, the editor of the *Churchman*, New York. It is addressed by Dr. Coke to Bishop Seabury, who as we all know, was the first Bishop in America, consecrated by the Scotch Bishops. He says—

"But if the two Houses of the Convention of the clergy would consent to your consecration of Mr. Ashbury and me as Bishops of the Methodist Society in the Protestant Episcopal Church in these United States (or by any other title, if that be not proper,) on the supposition of the reunion of the two Churches, under proper mutual stipulations; and engage that the Methodist Society shall have a regular supply, on the death of their Bishops, and so, *ad perpetuum*, the grand difficulty in respect to the preachers would be removed. They would have the same