

“Person Bearing Testimony” (1747)¹

[cf. Baker list, #137]

Editorial Introduction:

Edmund Gibson (1669–1748) was Bishop of London from 1720 till his death. He was the bishop that ordained Charles Wesley to the priesthood in 1735. There had been several friendly contacts between Gibson and the Wesley brothers both before and following the beginnings of the Methodist revival. But Gibson became increasingly concerned by some of the reports he was hearing of the Methodists—particularly about George Whitefield and about the supposed connections of the Methodists with the Moravians. He issued a *Pastoral Letter* in 1739 raising a few of these concerns. This in 1744 he was almost certainly the one behind an anonymous critical pamphlet titled *Observations upon the conduct and Behaviour of ... Methodists*. He was also the explicit author of *The Charge of ... Edmund, Lord Bishop of London, at the visitation of his Diocese in the years 1746–47*. This latter work highlighted six “pernicious doctrines” that Gibson ascribed to the Methodists, including such charges as antinomianism, relying upon sudden inward impulses to guide their decisions, and sinless perfection.

In response to Gibson’s final publication, John Wesley published *A Letter to the Right Reverend, the Lord Bishop of London* in June 1747. In this letter John politely disputed the charges, and stressed that the Wesleyan branch of the Methodist movement affirmed the central theological convictions of the Church of England. John appended an anonymous, untitled poem to this letter which summarized the teachings of a Methodist preacher. In the 1748 reprint of John’s *Letter* the poem was given the title “For a Person Called Forth to Bear His Testimony.” This was changed in the 2nd edn. (1749) of the *Letter* to “For a Preacher of the Gospel.”

Charles Wesley made clear that he was the author of this poem by including it in his collected *HSP* (1749), 1:330–32. He retained the title “For a Person Called Forth to Bear His Testimony.”

Editions:

[Charles Wesley.] [“For a Person Called Forth to Bear His Testimony.”] In John Wesley’s *A Letter to the Right Reverend, the Lord Bishop of London*, 30–32. London: Strahan, 1747.

Dublin: Powell, 1748

2nd Bristol: Farley, 1749

Also appended to John Wesley’s *Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*. 3rd edn.

Bristol: Farley, 1749. [titled “For a Person Called Forth to Bear His Testimony”]

¹This document was produced by the Duke Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition under the editorial direction of Randy L. Maddox, with the diligent assistance of Aileen F. Maddox. Last updated: Feb. 20, 2008.

*[For a Person Called Forth to
Bear His Testimony.]*²

- 1 O thou, who at thy creature's bar
Thy glorious Godhead didst declare,
 A true and good confession make;
Come in thy Spirit from above,
And arm me with thy faithful love,
 For thy own truth and mercy's sake.
Called forth by thee, thou know'st, I am,
Thy truth and mercy to proclaim,
 Thy Godhead, and eternal power,
The man whom God his fellow owns,
Whom angel-powers, dominions, thrones,
 Through all eternity adore.

- 2 Thee high-enthroned above all height,
Thee God of God, and light of light,
 I come undaunted to confess,
With God essentially the same,
Jehovah, JAH, the great I AM,
 The Lord of hosts, the Prince of Peace:
The sovereign everlasting Lord,
The glorious unbeginning Word,
 The Son of God, the Son of man,
God over heaven and earth supreme,
Made flesh thy creature to redeem,
 For me incarnated, and slain.

- 3 Slain for a sinful world and me,
Our surety hung upon the tree;
 Thy body bore our guilty load:
My Lamb for sin an offering made,
The debt of all mankind hath paid,
 And bought, and sprinkled us with blood.
That blood applied by faith I feel,
And come its healing power to tell,
 Through which I know my sins forgiven;
A witness I, that all may find
The peace deserved for all mankind,
 And walk with God, my God, to heaven.

²The poem is published without a title in the first edition, given this title in the 1748 edition and in *HSP* (1749) 1:330–32, and titled “For a Preacher of the Gospel” in the 2nd edn. (1749).

- 4 I come, to testify the grace
My Lord obtained for all our race,
Enough ten thousand worlds to save:
Salvation is in Jesu's name,
Which every soul of man may claim,
And all that seek, the grace shall find:³
Salvation from the power of sin,
Salvation from the root within,
Salvation into perfect love,
(Thy grace to all hath brought it near)
An uttermost salvation here,
Salvation up to heaven above.
- 5 Thy power, and saving grace to show,
A warfare at thy charge I go,
Strong in the Lord, and thy great might,
Gladly take up the hallowed cross,
And suffering all things for thy cause,
Beneath that bloody banner fight.
A spectacle to fiends and men,
To all their fierce or cool disdain,
With calmest pity I submit,
Determined nought to know beside
My Jesus, and him crucified,
I tread the world beneath my feet.
- 6 Superior to their smile, or frown,
On all their goods my soul looks down,
Their pleasures, wealth, and pomp, and state:
The man who⁴ dares their god despise,
The Christian, he alone is wise,
The Christian, he alone is great!
O God, let all my life declare
How happy all thy servants are,
How far above these earthly things,
How pure, when washed in Jesus' blood,
How intimately one with God,
An heaven-born race of priests and kings!

³“Find” remains in all 3 edns. appended to *Letter*, even though it does not rhyme; changed to “have” in *HSP* (1749).

⁴“Who” changed to “that” in *HSP* (1749).

- 7 For this alone I live below,
 The power of godliness to show,
 The wonders wrought by Jesus' name:
 O that I may but faithful prove,
 Witness to all thy pard'ning love,
 And point them to th' atoning Lamb!
 Let me to every creature cry,
 (The poor, and rich, the low, and high,)
 Believe, and feel thy sins forgiven:
 Damned, till by Jesus saved, thou art,
 Till Jesus' blood hath washed thy heart,
 Thou canst not find the gate of heaven.
- 8 Thou, Jesus,⁵ thou my breast inspire,
 And touch my lips with hallowed fire,
 And loose a stammering infant's tongue,
 Prepare the vessel of thy grace,
 Adorn me with the robes of praise,
 And mercy shall be all my song.
 Mercy for those who⁶ know not God,
 Mercy for all, in Jesus' blood,
 Mercy, which⁷ earth and heaven transcends,
 Love that o'erwhelms the saints in light,
 The length and breadth, and depth, and height
 Of love divine, which never ends.
- 9 A faithful witness of thy grace,
 Long may I fill th' allotted space,
 And answer all thy great design,
 Walk in the works by thee prepared,
 And find annexed the sure⁸ reward,
 The crown of righteousness divine.
 When I have lived to thee alone,
 Pronounce the welcome word *Well done*,
 And let me take my place above,
 Enter into my Master's joy,
 And all eternity employ
 In praise, and ecstasy, and love.

⁵“Jesus” changed to “Jesu” in *HSP* (1749).

⁶“Who” changed to “that” in *HSP* (1749).

⁷“Which” changed to “that” in *HSP* (1749).

⁸“Sure” changed to “vast” in *HSP* (1749).