

Charles Wesley In-Correspondence (1727–35)
 Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition, Duke Divinity School
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1727

From Mary Wesley¹

[Wroot]
January 20, 1727

Dear Brother Charles,

It is a satisfaction I can scarce hope for to be serviceable to my friends, and particularly to my relations. Nay, I should be glad if I could (next to serving my creator, which ought to be the chief end of all my actions) spend my whole life doing good to my fellow creatures. You was very much mistaken in thinking I took ill your desiring my sister Em[ily] to knit you another pair of gloves, or so much as intimated any such thing to you. What I meant was to my brother Jack [i.e., JW], because he gave her charge to look to my well-doing of his. But I desire you no more to mention your obligation to me for the gloves, for by your being pleased with and acceptation of them I am fully paid.

Dear brother, I beg you not to let the present straits you labour under sour your mind or render you morose or churlish in your converse with your acquaintances.² But rather resign yourself and all your affairs to him who best knows what is fittest for you and will never fail to provide for whoever sincerely trusts in him. Every state of life have their temptations, and with submission to your better judgement I shall name two or three. Poverty inclines us to discontent and repining at God's providence; affluence, to luxury and forgetfulness of God. The first I take to be much the safest. And though it may not suit with your inclination so well as the other, yet I think would you take the pains to look back, you might easily find (as all good Christians do) that instead of murmuring at your present state you have a great deal of reason to thank God for denying your desires. I think I may say I have lived in a state of affliction ever since I was born, being the ridicule of mankind and the reproach of my family;³ and I dare not think God deals hardly with me. And though he has set his mark upon me, I still hope my punishment won't be greater than I am able to bear. Nay, since I am sensible God is no respecter of persons, I trust I shall be happier in the next life than if I enjoyed all the advantages of this.

My unhappy sister Wright was at Wroot the week after you left us,⁴ where she stayed two or three days and returned again to Louth without seeing my father. Here I must stop, unless I end my letter; for when I think of her misfortunes I may say with Edgar "Oh fortune!"⁵ It would be a needless repetition to tell you the reason of my writing no oftener. But you very well know it is not for sparing pains, for it can never take too much to oblige a friend. If ever it pleases God to let me see more fortunate days, I will promise you shall have no more cause to blame me for my silence. Which, that you and I may see, is the sincere wish of,

Your loving sister,

Mary Wesley

P.S. Johnny Romley now inherits your and my office.⁶

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/182 (enclosed in letter to JW of same date).⁷

¹Mary (Wesley) Whitelamb (c. 1696–1734).

²CW was in his first year of studies at Christ Church, and under significant financial constraints.

³Mary was injured as an infant, incurring some physical and mental limitations.

⁴Mehetabel (Wesley) Wright.

⁵Thomas Powell, *Edgar and Elfrida*, Act V, scene 7: "O fortune! Thou hast lopped me of my best and stateliest boughs"

⁶John Romley (see 1732 letter below) was now Samuel Wesley Sr's amanuensis.

⁷Transcription published in Stevenson, *Memorials*, 289–90.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Jr.

Dean's Yard, Westminster
Monday, May 15, 1727

Dear Charles,

I am somewhat saving of postage and therefore send to you under the same cover and with the same conveyance as to brother John. By this time I reckon you may be returned from Gloucestershire. If not, the messenger is to stay a fortnight at Oxford, and to be sure by that time you will have finished your visit for the first time. I expect an account of your pleasure there, which I do not doubt made you quite forget that Westminster election was just at the same time. Somebody told me a little while ago that you had let your room for a little while. If you can gain forty or fifty shillings a year by living in a cheaper than you own, I fancy it would not be amiss. I question whether you will get more from Epworth. I do not wonder at your not knowing the money I sent was what your father borrowed, but rather at your finding it out at last. For though I told him of it—contrary to my first intentions—I cannot help thinking it was I that borrowed it, since it was positively denied to be lent to him, and I gave my note for the repaying it, when my uncle¹ would not take my father's. But of these matters we shall talk more when we meet, which I hope will be somewhere or other this summer.

Pray give my service to Mr. Hutcheson, and tell him his work is very slow. I hope he designs it shall last for eternity. I would have you take up 3s and 8d of Mr. Sherman on my account,² and pay for the cask I enquired about last time. I shall desire Mr. Le Hunte³ to pay a small driblet now in his hands to Hall, the rest of it to be expended as far as it will go for your necessaries. I have had two or three letters from my father (I think) since I wrote to you, but no more sign of any money to be transmitted to you than if you were a mere chameleon (though by the breadth of your shoulders one may guess that you can scarce feed on air⁴).

My wife [Ursula] sends her love to you, and wants you every now and then to dawdle the child or rock the cradle.⁵ Your niece is very thriving, and very merry, though not very big.⁶ Your sister bids me not forget to tell you she shall be very glad to see you here in town nursing. I should be glad if my brother Jack and you make some enquiry for me what manuscripts you can hear of, of Juvenal, in Oxford, either in the public or college libraries. I'll pay you for your trouble if you can collate any. It begins to grow late at night, so I must be forced to conclude before I have filled my paper, which otherwise perhaps I should hardly do. My service to all friends. Don't let me be long without an answer. I am, dear Charles,

Your affectionate friend and brother,

¹Likely Matthew Wesley, brother of Samuel Wesley Sr.

²Henry Sherman (1691–1739) received his BA and MA at Christ Church, Oxford, before becoming a fellow there. He left Christ Church in 1728 to become vicar of Staverton, Northamptonshire, where he served until his death. See *Alumni Oxonienses*.

³William Le Hunte (born c. 1692) was Samuel's contemporary at Christ Church, though a year behind him. In 1729 he became vicar of Kidderminster, Worcestershire, and in 1731 rector of Oxhill, Warwickshire.

⁴It was popularly believed that chameleons gained their sustenance from air.

⁵Ursula ("Nutty") Berry (c. 1695–1742) was the daughter of the Rev. John Berry (c. 1662–1730), vicar of Watton, Norfolk, and Ursula (Bentham) Berry (1669–1753). She and Samuel Wesley Jr. began courting in 1719, but appear to have waited until 1724 to marry. The couple was blessed with at least five children—but only one, Philadelphia (b. 1728), lived to adulthood. Ursula outlived her husband by about three years.

⁶Samuel and Ursula's first two children had died as infants. This was their third child, Ursula. She was born in Feb. 1727, but would also die as an infant, being buried on August 15 of that year.

S. Wesley

Show the bearer, Taylor, a cousin of Mr. Leybourne's,⁷ the university if you can.

Address: 'To the Revd. Mr. Wesley, Fellow of Lincoln, Oxford'

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 5/6 (joint letter to JW and CW).

⁷Robert Leybourne (1693–1759), a contemporary of Samuel Jr. at Westminster School and Christ Church, became fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford, in 1717, BD and DD in 1731. For some time it had seemed likely that Leybourne would marry Emily Wesley, but “a near relation” (apparently her brother Samuel) and her mother intervened. See Emily's letter to JW, Apr. 7, 1725; and *Alumni Oxonienses*.

From Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Bawtry
June 21, 1727

Dear Lads,

This moment I had the satisfaction of yours of 14 instant.¹
In answer to John [...]

[next page]

Ah Charles,

You shall see Wroot again, and your bowers of bliss, as soon as I'm able—if you dare, for fear of sister collusion: John Romley being gone from me² and (I hope) preferred to Mr. Johnson the counsellor at Spalding.³ Go on with Blenheim,⁴ beat them all! Or at least, be not distained, as I've heard your father was not. And when that is over you may perhaps remember what you need not be told any more of by,

Your loving father,

S. Wesley

Address: “For ye Revd Mr Jno Wesley / Fellow of Lincoln College / Oxon.”

Postmarks: “Bawtry,” “26/IV.”

Endorsement: by JW, “my f[ather] June 21st, 1727.”

Source: holograph: MARC, DDWF 1/7 (joint letter to JW and CW).⁵

¹These letters are not known to survive.

²I.e., Romley was no longer Samuel's amanuensis.

³Maurice Johnson (1688–1755) was a barrister and the founder of the Spaulding Gentleman's Society (of which both Samuel Sr. and Samuel Jr. were members).

⁴CW was currently seeking additional funds to support his admission to Christ Church. Blenheim refers to a contest, for which participants submitted poetic compositions (likely in Latin).

⁵Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 25:223–24.

From Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Wroot
June 26, 1727

Dear Charles,

I must be succinct, for my servants are just for coals, which we now eat, as we did before some of our horses.

Were I a man, the argument should be—Job’s horse, or sea monsters.¹ Were I you, it should go hard but I would get one of the Blenheim prizes. Thomas calls. Good night to ye.

[bottom of page]

Wroote, June 26, 1727

I promise to pay £10 per annum (at the least) to my son, Charles Wesley, of Christ Church, Oxon, at every May Day, commencing at May Day next for this present year.

Sam. Wesley, Sen.

Endorsement: by JW, “F. Jun. 26, 1727.”

Source: holograph; Charterhouse School, Godalming, England (joint letter to JW and CW).²

¹Cf. Job 39:19; 40:15. The question was which of these passages CW should use for the poem he was constructing for a Blenheim prize. He prepared and sent to his father poems on both (see next two letters).

²Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 25:224–25.

From Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Wroot
July 5, 1727

Dear Children,

I had yours of the 25th instant, and that before, I think of the 14th.¹ In answer, though you could neither of you be assisting to me here, as I know you would both be much so, yet your company would be very acceptable if we can possibly find any way to get you hither. The main reason of my being willing to delay my son John's coming was his pupil, but his last has satisfied me that is over. There was another, that I knew he could not then get between Wroot and Epworth either on foot or horseback (nor can he yet) without hazarding his health or life (though I hope it will soon be better). Whereas my hide is tough, and I think no carrion can kill me—having walked eight or ten miles on Monday, the breadth of Hatfield Moor,² part of it; and about sixteen yesterday, which was like to be enough for me. But this morning I thank God I was not a penny worse. (Only sixpence I spent, myself and my attendant, in my two days' journey.) The occasion of this pretty rank-booted walk, for I cannot spare one horse from [carrying] coals, was to hire a room for myself, and sometime perhaps for you, if I can get you hither, to lodge in at Epworth. And now I have achieved it. I writ you last that I approve my son John's proposal of buying a horse for the journey, and think, for the reasons there given, that at the far end it will cost him less than nothing. All the difficulty is for Charles, for I think you would be, either of you, like a bird with one wing without the other. The only way your mother and I can think possible is if he could go to Banbury, whence they say there is a carrier and wagons come to Nottingham, whither we could send an horse for him, as we could to Lincoln, for I see your route is now laid per London. And further I cannot say on this head, but would have you write both from Oxon and London.

I thank Charles heartily for "The Horse."³ He who made those verses need not fear winning the poetical prize in any academy in Europe.

God bless and guide you, and send you both a speedy and happy meeting with,

Your loving father,

Sam Wesley

You'll find your mother much altered. I believe what will kill a cat has almost killed her.⁴ I've observed of late little convulsions in her mouth, very frequent, which I do not like.

Endorsement: by JW, "my F[ather]. July 5."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 1/8 (a double letter from Samuel and Susanna Wesley).⁵

¹Neither of these letters are known to survive.

²A moor due west of Epworth.

³A poem CW composed for the Blenheim prize competition; apparently on Job. 39:19. This poem is not known to survive.

⁴I.e., curiosity.

⁵Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 25:225–26.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley (to JW and CW)

[Wroot]
[July 5, 1727]

Dear Jacky,

I had answered your letter,¹ but was prevented by an unusual illness, which I thank God is pretty well over. When I wrote last I thought your father had laid aside his design of sending for you hither, but perceive now he has altered his purpose and has desired you to come. He does certainly want an assistant, though I believe if you stay a little longer ere you come hither he will want none. How Charles can get to Wroot I cannot tell. It is impossible for us to send horses farther than Nottingham, and I suppose he may scruple coming so far with the carrier.

In great haste I send ye both my love and blessing.

S. W.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 1/8 (a double letter from Samuel and Susanna Wesley).

¹A letter of June 14, which is not known to survive.

From Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Wroot
July 18, 1727

Dear Charles,

Double thanks for your second kindness. “The Leviathan” is as stout a fellow, though not as pretty a fellow, as “The Horse.”¹ Is there any such word as “*cinctutum*”?² Have you any authorities for the last word (“*superbum*”) for “*superbonum*”?

I told you the Chaldee would be easy (Scaliger says the Ethiopic is but a dialect of it³). So will the Syriac, and even the Arabic, as soon as you can crack it. It [i.e., Arabic] I believe pleasanter as well as richer than all the rest. And I doubt not but he that is master of the Hebrew may soon conquer all the others, which will both receive it and give light to each other, especially (as I have heard) the Arabic; whereof I question whether it be ever exhaustible, and which is yet spoken and written from the hills of Granada to the uttermost easterly bounds of the world. I have a sample of it for you here, if you are got so far, in a specimen of the Arabic Testament, and have picked out a pretty many words in Job which the commentators say are of one of those three languages, wherein your assistance will do me a great pleasure. If you can get the Oxford edition of Tacitus’s *Annales*, transcribe the passage in the sixth book concerning the phoenix, and the annotations upon it, and be so kind as to bring them with you.

I’ve wrote on the other side to your brother my thoughts of the best way of your coming, and the sooner the better. You will send word by post the day we must send for you to Lincoln. I heartily wish I could as well send you both a *viaticum*,⁴ as I do my best blessings.

From your affectionate father,

Sam. Wesley

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 1/9 (joint letter to JW and CW).⁵

¹See the letter of July 5; ‘The Leviathan’ was a second poem Charles had crafted as a prospect for the Blenheim prize competition.

²The Latin word means “girded” or “wearing a girdle.”

³Joseph Scaliger (1540–1609).

⁴I.e., money for the journey.

⁵Transcription published in Clarke, *Memoirs* (1836), 1:303–04.

1730

From Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Epworth
Tuesday, January 27, 1730

Dear Charles,

I had your last with your brother's,¹ and you may easily guess whether I were not pleased with it, both on your account and on my own.² You have a double advantage by your pupils, which will soon bring you more if you will improve it, as I firmly hope you will, in taking the utmost care to form their minds to piety as well as learning. As for yourself, between logic, grammar, and mathematics, be idle if you can. And I give my blessing to the bishop for having tied you a little faster, by obliging you to rub up your Arabic. And a fixed and constant method will make all both easy and delightful to you. But for all that, you must find time every day for walking, which you know you may do with advantage to your pupils. And a little more robust exercise now and then will do you no harm.

You are now launched fairly, Charles. Hold up your head and swim like a man. And when you cuff(?) the wave beneath you, say to it, much as another hero did,

*Carolum vehis, et Caroli fortunam.*³

But always keep your eye fixed above the Pole Star. And so God send you a good voyage through the troublesome sea of life! Which is the hearty prayer of

Your loving father,

Sam. Wesley

My kind love to Mr. Kirkham.⁴ And if you think he has not yet application and funding enough, tell him I desire him to put in for the next place of a Job tutor or amanuensis.⁵

Address: "To / The Revd / Mr John Wesley / Fellow of Lincoln College / Oxon."⁶

Postmark: "30/IA."

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/26.⁷

¹These letters are not known to survive.

²CW had just completed his BA degree at Christ Church, and assigned to tutor some younger students (thus relieving his father of need for financial support) while beginning work on his MA degree.

³"Thou carriest Charles, and Charles's fortune."

⁴Robert Kirkham (c. 1707–67), son of Rev. Lionel Kirkham, rector of Stanton, Gloucestershire, had entered Merton College, Oxford in 1727, was one of the four earliest members of the Oxford Methodists.

⁵I.e., helping Samuel on his major manuscript on the book of Job.

⁶This was surely a double letter to JW and CW; only the text to CW remains.

⁷Transcription published in Clarke, *Memoirs* (1823), 205–06; (1836), 1:306–07.

From Martha Wesley

[London]
March 10, 1730

[at end of letter to JW]

Dear Brother Charles,

I can but just tell you I hope these lines will find you in good health, as I am at this present writing, and that you will let me see as much under your own hand.

Poor Lee Kirkham!¹ Are they not all very much concerned for him? I think I should not be sorry to hear Mr. Morgan was dead,² after the account you have given me of him; since he is past recovery and has, as you say, so soon finished the business of life. I shall be glad when he receives the reward of his labours.

Dear brother, farewell.

Address: "To / The Revd Mr John Wesley / Fellow of Lincoln College / Oxford."

Endorsement: by JW, "S[ister] M[artha] March 10. 1730 / Acct of m[y] U[n]cle."

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/174.³

¹Rev. Lionel Kirkham (1675–1736), rector of Stanton, Gloucestershire.

²William Morgan (c. 1712–32) of Dublin, one of the original members of the Oxford Methodists who had begun gathering around JW and CW. Morgan suffered a physical and nervous breakdown which eventually led to his death, attributed by some critics to his ascetic Methodist practices. See *DEB*, 792; Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 4–15; and Vickers, *Dictionary*, 245.

³Transcriptions published in Clarke, *Memoirs* (1823), 515–16, (1836), 2:324–25; and Stevenson, *Memorials*, 363–64.

From Emilia Wesley

[Lincoln]
October 15, 1730

[at end of letter to JW]

Dear Charles,

I designed to have writ[ten] a merry line or two. But answering brother Jack's letter has sunk my spirits so low that I can only tell you I have longed a great while for one of your edifying epistles, and shall think it very hard if I may not enjoy that satisfaction as well as others. Pray what has become of that young Bernard,¹ related to Mr. Terry?² He is an ungrateful and uncivil spark, never to take any notice of them who have been so good to him. I am going to Epworth. Dick is very good. Suky is recovered of lying in of a son.³ My mother is well. All might yet be well with our family, but alas. I will write again to brother Jack and you when I get to Epworth.

I am,

Your loving sister,

Emilia Wesley

Address: "To Mr. John Wesley / Fellow of Lincoln College / Oxford / by the way of London."

Postmark: "15/OC."

Endorsement: by JW, "S[ister] Em[ilia] Oct. 15 1730."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 6/5.

¹This is likely Francis Bernard (1712–79), who matriculated at Christ Church in June 1729. He would eventually serve as governor of New Jersey and the Massachusetts Bay colony, and be named a baronet.

²Rev. Dr. Thomas Terry (c. 1678–1735), Regius Professor of Greek, and Canon of Christ Church.

³Richard Annesley Ellison (1730–54), new son of Richard and Susanna (Wesley) Ellison, was baptized on Sept. 8.

1731

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley

[Epworth]
July 12, [1]731

Dear Charles,

Though I have spent my time and almost filled up my paper, yet I must thank you for yours by Mr. Horbery.¹ That same gentleman came to Epworth last Thursday about noon and told us the pleasing news of your and your brother's health. I suppose ere this ye have received mine of the 5th instant.² You would do well to burn yours, for I wrote perhaps too warmly about the Christ Church gentlemen, though I was strangely provoked at them.

Adieu

Remember my love to poor starving Johnny [Whitelamb].³ Service to Mr. [Robert] Kirkham.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 2/8.⁴

¹Matthew Horbery (1707–73), son of Martin Horbery, the vicar of Haxey, Lincolnshire (just south of Epworth), matriculated at Lincoln College in May 1726. He received his BA in Jan. 1730 and was ordained deacon in Dec. of that year. He was frequently in Epworth between Jan. 1731 and Mar. 1733 (when he was ordained priest), perhaps serving as Samuel Wesley Sr.'s curate. Several Wesley family members sought to match him with Martha, but she was not so inclined. On Dec. 21, 1733 he officiated at the marriage of Mary Wesley to John Whitelamb.

²This letter is not known to survive (perhaps burned as requested).

³John Whitelamb (c. 1708–69) was the son of Robert Whitelamb of Hatfield, Yorkshire. Due to the financial straits of his parents, he was placed in the Travis Charity School in Wroot. There he came to the attention of Samuel Wesley Sr., who recruited Whitelamb as his amanuensis when John Romley left that role in June 1727. Whitelamb came to live in the Epworth rectory, and saved Samuel Sr. from a potential drowning on Aug. 30, 1728. In 1731 Whitelamb matriculated at Lincoln College, Oxford, where he was active among the Oxford Methodists. He returned to Wroot to wed Mary Wesley in Dec. 1733, though she unfortunately died in childbirth a year later. In Nov. 1734 Samuel Sr. resigned the living of Wroot to Whitelamb (who had been ordained by the Bishop of Lincoln a month earlier), where he served until his death. See Maser, *Sisters*, 40–49; and Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 374–86.

⁴Transcription published in Stevenson, *Memorials*, 419–20.

1732

From John Romley¹

[Epworth]
[1732]

Ἐντιμε καὶ Πεπαιδευμένε Κύριε,

Πατήρ σου αιδέσιμος οὐκ ἐπηξίωσεν ἐμὲ διδάσκειν τὴν Γλῶσσαν τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν: ἠρξάμην μαθάνειν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς ἑορτῆς τοῦ ἁγίου Μιχαήλ ἔγγισα παραδραμούσης: καὶ οὐκ ἔμαθον τρίμηνον, ἕως τῶν γενσίων τοῦ Χριστοῦ· μέρος οὐ χρόνου Διδάσκαλος ἐμὸς ἄπη. Ὅταν ἠρξάμην, οὔτε ἀναγινώσκειν οὔτε γράφειν χαρακτήρας Ἑλληνικῶν Στοιχείων ἐδυνήθην ἕως ἂν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀπογράφου σου ἔμαθον· ἀλλὰ νῦν, χάριν ἔχω τῷ Θεῷ μετρίως δύναμαι ἀναγινώσκειν Ἑλληνικὴν Διαθήκην, καὶ μόλις ἐξηγεῖσθαι καὶ ἐξετάζειν ἄνευ ἐπικουρίας, καὶ ἐλπίζω ἐμὲ οὐ παντελῶς ἄχρηστον ἔσεσθαι Διδασκάλω. ἤδη γὰρ μετέγραψα μέρος τῶν στοχασμῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς Ἰώβ. Οὐκ ἐτόλμησα ταῦτα σοὶ γεγραφέναι (οὔτε δέον ἐστὶ με λέγειν τὴν εἶναι συνθήκην ἐμὴν, ὅτι εὐχερῶς φανεῖται ἐκ τῶν βαρβαρουμῶν οἷς πανταχοῦ περιβλύζει) εἰ μὴ Διδάσκαλος ἐμὸς ἐκέλευεν ἐμοὶ οὕτως ποιεῖν. ἀλλὰ σφοδρὰ χαίρω διὰ τοῦτον καιρὸν ὑπογράφειν ἐμαυτὸν.

Ταπενότατον σου δούλον,

Ἰωάννην Ρόμλει

Πᾶσα οἰκία ὑμετέρα καὶ ἡμετέρα πλεῖστον ἀσπάζονται σὲ, καὶ ἀξιότατον σου ἀδελφόν²

[Translation³]

Esteemed and Learned Sir,

Your respected father did not expect to teach me the Greek language. After arriving, I began to learn on the day accompanying the festival of the holy Michael.⁴ And I did not really learn for three months, until the beginning of Christ[mas], a portion of which time my teacher was gone. When first I began, I could neither read nor write elementary Greek characters, until I learned from your copy. But now, by the grace of God, I can read the Greek Testament modestly, and with difficulty I can exegete and study on my own. And I hope I will not be completely useless as a teacher. For already I have translated some of his comments on Job.⁵ I dared not write these things to you (nor is it proper for me to speak as my own endorsement, because it might appear not long removed from the many everywhere who cannot understand Greek), except that my teacher urged me to do so. But I was very happy through this opportunity to write myself.

Your humble servant,

¹John Romley (1711–50) was a son of William and Ann Romley of Finningley, Nottinghamshire (a couple of miles from Wroot). He lived with the Wesley family for a time, serving as Samuel's assistant, and briefly courted Martha Wesley. Romley returned to serve as a curate at Epworth, under Samuel Hurst, who succeeded Samuel Wesley Sr. as rector.

²There are some short phrases written in Greek on the margins, in a different hand, possibly intended as corrections of Romley. We have ignored these.

³I am indebted to Prof. Richard Thompson of Northwest Nazarene University for help both in transcribing and translating this letter.

⁴I.e., September 29.

⁵I.e., Samuel Wesley Sr.'s comments in Greek in his treatise on the book of Job.

John Romley

Your whole house and mine salutes you warmly, and your equally worthy brother.

Address: “For Mr. Char^{les} Wesley⁶ / Student of Ch^{rist} Church / [<]Oxford / per London.”

Postmark: obscured, but may be “OC.”

Endorsement: by CW, “Jo Romley 1732” and “Jo Romley. / How he learned Greek in 3 months.”

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/213.

⁶The bottom portion of this page was torn away (likely as scratch paper), but the missing material is clear.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley

[Epworth]
Monday, February 21, 1732

[at end of letter to John]

Dear Charles,

Though you have not had time to tell me so since we parted, yet I hope you are in health; and when you are more at leisure, I shall be glad to hear you are so from yourself. I should be pleased enough to see ye here this spring, if it was not upon the hard condition of your walking hither. But that always terrifies me, and I am commonly so uneasy for fear ye should kill yourselves with coming so far on foot that it destroys much of the pleasure I should otherwise have in conversing with ye.

I fear poor Patty has several enemies at London and that they have put it in her head to visit us this summer.¹ I am apt to believe that if they get her once out of my brother's house, they will take care to keep her thence forever. It is pity that honest, generous girl has not a little of the subtlety of the serpent with the innocence of the dove.² She is no match for those which malign her, for she scorns to do an unworthy action and therefore believes everybody else does so too. Alas it is great pity that all the human species are not so good as they ought to be.

Prithee what is become of John Whitelamb? Is he yet alive? Where is Mr. [William] Morgan? If with you, pray give my service to him. I am sorry the wood drink did him no service. I never knew it fail before, if drank regularly. But perhaps he was too far gone before he used it. I doubt he eats too little or sleeps cold, which last poisons the blood above all things.

Dear Charles, I send you my love and blessing.

Em[ily], Molly, [and] Kez[ia] send their love to ye both.

Address: "To The Revd Mr John Wesley / Fellow of Lincoln / Oxon."

Postmark: "25/FE."

Endorsement: by JW, "Feb."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 2/9.³

¹Martha Wesley, who was currently in London staying with her uncle Matthew.

²See Matt. 10:16.

³Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 25:326–27.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Jr.

A Poetical Epistle to my Brother Charles
April 20th, 1732

Though neither are o'erstock'd with precious time—
If I can write it, you can read my rhyme;
And find an hour to answer, I suppose,
In verse harmonious, or in humble prose.
What I, when late at Oxford, could not say,
My friends so numerous, and so short my stay.
Let useless questions first aside be thrown,
Which all men may reply to, or that none:
—As, whether doctors doubt the dean will die,¹
Or F[rewin²] still retains his courtesy;
Or I—n³ dies daily in conceit,
Dies without death, and walks without his feet;
What time the library completes its shell;⁴
What hand revives the discipline of Fell;⁵
What house for learning shall rewards prepare,
Which orators and poets justly share,
And see a second Atterbury there?⁶

Say, does your Christian purpose still proceed
To assist, in every shape, the wretch's need?
To free the prisoner from his anxious jail,
When friends forsake him, and relations fail?
Or yet, with nobler charity, conspire
To snatch the guilty from eternal fire?
Has your small squadron firm in trial stood,⁷
Without preciseness, singularly good?
Safe march they on, 'twixt dangerous extremes
Of mad profaneness, and enthusiasts' dreams?
Constant in prayer, while God approves their pains,
His Spirit cheers them, and his blood sustains!

¹The dean of Christ Church at the time was William Bradshaw (1671–1732); he would die on Dec. 16.

²Richard Frewin, MD (c. 1681–1761), of Christ Church, was a physician and Professor of Ancient History.

³The name would have three syllables, and by custom the “I” may be a “J.”

⁴Work on building a new library at Christ Church had begun in 1717. It was progressing slowly, and would be fully completed only in 1772.

⁵John Fell (1625–86), was a respected earlier dean of Christ Church.

⁶Francis Atterbury (1663–1732), with whom Samuel Jr. had been close.

⁷Referring to the Oxford Methodists.

Unmoved by pride or anger, can they fear
The foolish laughter, or the envious flier?⁸
No wonder wicked men blaspheme their care;
The devil always dreads offensive war.
Where heavenly zeal the sons of night pursues,
Likely to gain, and certain not to lose;
The sleeping conscience wakes by dangers near,
And pours the light in, they so greatly fear.

But, hold! perhaps this dry religious toil
May damp the genius, and the scholar spoil!
Perhaps facetious foes or meddling fools
Shine in the class, and sparkle in the schools;
Your arts excel, your eloquence outgo,
And soar like Virgil, or like Tully flow;
Have brightest turns and deepest learning shown,
And proved your wit mistaken, by their own!
If not, the wights should moderately rail,
Whose total merit, summ'd from fair detail,
Is sauntering, sleep, and smoke, and wine, and ale!

How contraries may meet without design,
And pretty gentlemen and bigots join!
A pert young rake observes, with haughty airs,
That “none can know the world who say their prayers”;
And Rome, in middle ages, used to grant,
The most devout were still most ignorant.
So, when old bloody Noll⁹ our ruin wrought,
Was ignorance the best devotion thought.
His crop-hair'd saints all marks of sense deface,
And preach that learning is a foe to grace:
English was spoke in schools, and Latin ceased;
They quite reform'd the language of the beast.

One or two questions more, before I end,
That much concern a brother and a friend.
Does John beyond his strength presume to go,
To his frail carcass literally foe?
Lavish of health, as if in haste to die,
And shorten time to insure eternity?
Does Morgan weakly think his time mis-spent?¹⁰
Of his best actions can he now repent?
Others, their sins with reason just deplore,
The guilt remaining when the pleasure's o'er:
Shall he for virtue, first, himself upbraid,

⁸A mocking look; or sneer.

⁹A nickname for Oliver Cromwell.

¹⁰William Morgan's health was declining seriously; he would die on Aug. 26.

Since the foundation of the world was laid?
Shall he (what most men to their sins deny)
Show pain for alms, remorse for piety?
Can he the sacred Eucharist decline?
What Clement poisons here the bread and wine?¹¹
Or does his sad disease possess him whole,
And taint alike the body and the soul?

If to renounce his graces he decree,
O that he could transfer the stroke to me!
Alas! enough what mortal e'er can do
For him that made him, and redeem'd him too?
Zeal may to man, beyond desert, be show'd;
No supererogation stands with God.
Does earth grow fairer to his parting eye?
Is heaven less lovely, as it seems more nigh?
O, wondrous preparation this—to die!

Source: manuscript copy in CW's hand; Drew, Morgan MSS, pp. 1–4.¹²

¹¹Perhaps a reference to Pope Clement VII (1478–1534) who was believed to have died from poisoning.

¹²Transcription published in *AM* 3 (1780): 564–65; and Whitehead, *Life*, 254–55.

From Richard Morgan Sr.¹

[Dublin]
September 5, 1732

Sir,

From the intimacy which I understood to have been contracted between you and my dear son, I make no doubt but that you must have some concern upon you at the reading the account of his death, as I have the greatest in writing it.² His distemper threw him into a fever, of which he died the 20th past about 4:00 in the morning. The Wesleys he raved of most of all in his sickness. This is the soonest that I could attempt writing anything about him, since my affliction was consummated.

[after giving orders for disposing of his son's goods, he goes on:]

You see I make very free with you, but the candour and generosity which I have heard you commended for embolden me to it, and I shall (I hope) find some opportunities to make some amends, and beg you will upon all occasions let me know when I can be serviceable to you in anything in this kingdom. If I can, you may be assured I will. This is a melancholy subject which I am obliged to write upon. I must therefore conclude, and for this time subscribe myself

Your afflicted, but affectionate, humble servant,

Richard M[organ]

Source: manuscript extract in CW's hand; Drew, Morgan MSS, 10.

¹Richard Morgan Sr. (c. 1679–1742) was born in Barbados, and educated at Hart Hall, Oxford, and the Middle Temple, London. Currently the Second Remembrancer in the Court of Exchequer in Dublin, he was father of both William and Richard Jr., who participated in the Oxford Methodists.

²William Morgan (c. 1712–32), elder son of Richard Morgan of Dublin, was a founding member of the Oxford Methodists with CW and Robert Kirkham, and led the way in their ministry to prisoners. William became both physically and mentally ill in 1731, his final year of studies, and returned to Dublin in 1732, where he died on August 26. Some critics attributed his health breakdown to his ascetic Methodist practices. See *DEB*, 792; Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 4–15; and Vickers, *Dictionary*, 245.

1733

From Richard Morgan Sr.

[Dublin]
September 6, 1733

Dear Sir,

Having demonstration of yours and your brother's sincerity and friendship, I desire your consulting together and to give me your opinion in this nice point. I make no doubt but you have heard from my dear son Will that I have one other, now my only son. It is now three years and a quarter since he left school, having been then fit to enter the university, and at least as good a scholar as his brother was when he went to Oxford. I then purchased an office for him in the law, which diverted me from sending him to the university. I fear he has read but very little of Greek or Latin since, and that he has forgot a great deal of what he had learned at school. But I don't think his parts very bad. He was nineteen years of age last July, and is very lusty of his age, I believe 5 foot 10 inches high. He has been somewhat gay, and gone sometimes to plays and balls, but addicted to no vice. He has often wished rather to have been put forward in his learning than to stick to an office, which if practicable I am now inclined to indulge him in. Then pray be so kind as to give me yours and your brother's opinion whether in two years he may attain to a tolerable knowledge of the Latin and logic, and what other learning you think proper to qualify him for the study of the law, that he may then commence in the Inns of Court. Whether you would advise to enter him a commoner or gentleman commoner, and what may be the expense of maintaining him decently in either quality. If it be advisable to put him in this new way of life, you may be sure I can think of no other for his tutor but yourself. I am heartily glad to hear of the recovery of the good old gentleman your father, to who and your good brother pray [give] my best respects, and believe me to be,

Most sincerely and affectionately yours,

Richard M[organ]

Pray do not delay favouring me with your answer about my son. The more I think of this new scheme, the fonder I am of it, and therefore would lose no more time. Be so kind as to look out for proper chambers for him at least as good (if to be had) as those his brother had, the rent to commence from next Michaelmass. For I do not despair of his being with you by that time, if you advise it, and will send Mr. Lasher's money by him when I how how much it is. And pray write immediately to Bristol to stop sending off the books, and order them back to Oxford.¹ My Lord Primate being now in the country, I don't care to wait for his franking this, the postage of which I will order to be repaid you. Play let me know if you be yet in holy orders, of if not, when you expect to be, that I may not mistake in addressing to you.

Source: manuscript extract in CW's hand; Drew, Morgan MSS, 41–43.

¹These would be William Morgan's books, being returned to Ireland after his death.

From Richard Morgan Sr.

Dublin
October 20, 1733

Dear Sir,

Yours and your brother's favours of the 14th September I received,¹ and most greatly esteem the candour, generosity, and apparent integrity of both of you. I readily acquiesce under your opinions, and I expect that my son will sail tomorrow to make the best of his way to Oxford. My dear son Will's books, etc. arrived home, which were reshipped today, with a few more books and necessaries, for Bristol, with directions to forward them to your brother at Lincoln College. Young lawyers and other gentlemen here have persuaded my son that he should be pointed at and slighted if entered a commoner at his age and stature. I have reasoned with him of the liberties and inconveniences that gentleman commoners are exposed to. In answer he has given me the greatest assurances that the station shall have no bad influence on him, but that he will be as conformable to all the rules and discipline of the college as if he were a servitor; that he is only desirous to enter a gentleman commoner in order to have a little superiority over his contemporaries, that he may not be slighted or despised by them. Therefore, I am willing to comply with his desires, and desire he may be entered a gentleman commoner of Lincoln, under my good friend your brother's tuition. I have not communicated this my resolution to my son, but told him that I would submit it entirely to Mr. Wesley in what quality to admit him, chiefly that he may think himself under obligations to his tutor for gratifying him in his desires, and be the more influenced by his admonitions. He goes as well rigged, and with as great a quantity of all sorts of apparel as I believe a gentleman commoner need be furnished with, so that I think he will have occasion to buy but little for a year or two to come. You are pleased to say you have 9£ 5s. 9d. in your hands towards paying Mr. Lasher's debt of 20£ 17s. 6d. You observe that there is some expense unknown and still to be charged for entering the boxes at the custom house. I shall send 50£ by my son, out of which please to make up Mr. Lasher's sum and the custom house expenses. The remainder after his travelling charges is to be deposited with his tutor for the necessary uses. He will be so kind as to let me know all further necessary payments and allowances, which shall punctually be answered. I shall not value the quantum, so that it be for my son's benefit and advantage. I omitted acquainting you with one infirmity of his, that he has a bad sight. I can't call it the near sight, but a dull optic. So that he will require a good print and the use of glasses in his private reading. He is happy in an extraordinary memory, and people flatter me that his parts are good. He makes the largest promises of diligence, etc., whether commoner or gentleman commoner. I have resolved to pay his tutor ten guineas a year, and I beg that a proper chamber may be provided for him against his coming. I shall write by myself to your brother, to whom this is designed in conjunction with you. A thousand thanks to you and your good brother, from

Your most obliged and most affectionate,

Richard M[organ]

Source: manuscript extract in CW's hand; Drew, Morgan MSS, 43–46.

¹This letter is not known to survive.

1735

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley and Samuel Wesley

[Epworth]
[ca. February 1735¹]

⟨...²⟩ that as pleases God. But if while I have life and any remains of health, it may be useful or pleasing to you that we hold a correspondence together by letters, I shall gladly do it. But then, dear Charles, let us not spend our time in trifling, in talking of impertinent matters that will turn to no account. Rather let us converse as beings whose existence on earth is of short continuance, and yet have a work of great, I should say of the greatest, importance to finish in this uncertain duration, or we are lost forever.

This consideration will readily suggest to your good sense that we ought carefully to improve our time. And in order to do it effectually, I must earnestly conjure you to set apart two hours every day for private devotion—one in the morning, the other in the evening, which will answer to the morning and evening sacrifices that you know were appointed by God himself! It is not for me to fix the particular hours. Those must be determined by yourself, who best know the method of your studies and what time you are least engaged. But then having once made your choice, you must peremptorily adhere to it, nor suffer company, pleasure, or any business that is not truly unavoidable to break in upon you and cause you to neglect your retirement. For what is once devoted to God ought never to be alienated from him. It is probable you will find some difficulty in this practice at first, and when it is observed, perhaps you may sometimes lie under the imputation of singularity, moroseness, or ill breeding. But let not such things trouble you, for they are not worth regarding. What wise man would not be singular among such as have no taste of sincere piety? Or would not rather be thought defective in complaisance and good breeding by men of license, than neglect such an excellent means of advancing spiritual life?

Slight those that say amidst their sickly health,
Thou livest by rule. “What doth not so but man.”³

⟨...⁴⟩ knew of my worry.

Dear Charles, my love and blessing attend thee.

S. Wesley

Since you desire me to write, I will, though with great pain and to little purpose. I pity and love you, but that’s all I can do unless praying to God to help you.

Your affectionate father,

Sam. Wesley

Endorsement: by CW, “My father and mother 1735.”

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 1/5.

¹The letter would have to have been written before Samuel Wesley’s death on April 25, 1735; and before CW and JW walked home from Oxford, arriving on April 4.

²Only a half-sheet of the letter remains, commencing here.

³George Herbert, “The Church Porch,” st. 23.

⁴The poem is at the bottom of the front page; material is again missing on the backside.

From Thomas Broughton¹

Oxon
October 9, 1735

Dear Mr. Charles,

I have sent the prayers by Mr. Wogan.² Mr. Smith was at the university sacrament the day Mr. Carter and two or three were absent.³ Mr. Smith breakfasts with me on Saturday. Carter, I hope once a week. Mr. Whitefield sends me good news from Gloucester.⁴ Mr. Horne has taken St. Thomas.⁵ Mr. Chapman will have pupils.⁶ We have all great temptations to struggle with. Oh, pray for us.

Adieu!

Address: "To / The Rev. Mr. John Wesley."

Endorsement: by JW, "Oct. 9 1736⁷ / Mr Broughton."

Source: holograph, MARC, WCB, D6/1/198a (addition to letter to JW).

¹Thomas Broughton (1712–77) matriculated at University College, Oxford in 1731. In early 1733 he became part of the Oxford Methodists.

²William Wogan (1678–1758), educated at Westminster School and Trinity College, Cambridge, was a devout London layman who published several works. He was a good friend of John Clayton and Thomas Broughton, and sympathetic to the Oxford Methodists in general. See *Alumni Catabrigienses*; and *ODNB*. Broughton was likely sending to Wogan JW's *Collection of Forms of Prayer for Every Day of the Week* (1733).

³Richard Smith (b. 1714), whom CW tutored at Christ Church, was active for a time among the Oxford Methodists. Richard Carter (c. 1713–37?), of Christ Church (1730–34) and New College (M.A. 1737), was ordained in 1737 and may have died the same year (see CW, MS Journal, Oct. 1, 1737).

⁴George Whitefield (1714–70), of Gloucester, matriculated at Pembroke College, Oxford in 1732, receiving his BA in 1736. CW befriended him, introducing him to JW, and he was soon active in the Oxford Methodists. While the junior of the Wesley brothers in age, Whitefield preceded them by three years in his evangelical conversion in 1735. Ordained deacon in 1736 (and priest in 1739), Whitefield began preaching in London in various churches with almost immediate success. This success carried over to Bristol in Jan. 1737, and then across the Atlantic on his first journey there. In Feb. 1739, back in Bristol, he turned to field preaching and soon convinced JW and CW to join in this new setting. Despite their shared passion in the revival, the Wesley brothers and Whitefield held divergent theologies (Arminian and Calvinist). These caused tensions (and eventual divisions) in the broad Methodist movement, which are reflected in their frequent correspondence. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 492–502; *DEB*, 1180–81; *ODNB*; and Vickers, *Dictionary*, 392.

⁵Thomas Horne (1707–69), received his BA (1728) and MA (1731) from Christ Church, and remained there as a tutor (working for a while alongside CW) until 1736, when he became vicar of Spelsbury. He was likely serving as curate at St. Thomas, Oxford.

⁶Walter Chapman (1711–91), another of the Oxford Methodists.

⁷JW misdates by one year.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Jr.

[Tiverton]
October 11, 1735

Dear Charles,

Your desire has power to make me write, though I am sure it is vanity of vanities—nay, and I may add, vexation of spirit.

I knew you was not in your own power, else your common sense (if not love to me) would have inclined you to stay for my advice when you had once asked it. I would not therefore send my reasons and enter into an idle dispute. For I saw I could no more prevail on you to stay than the sirens could Ulysses, when he himself was tied to the mast, and all about him had their ears stopped. An apposite simile, since everything I can say is but as one of their songs in your opinion—calculated only to promote your destruction.

I heartily hope you belie my brother [JW] when you say he would not have gone without you. Was that his zeal or his apostleship? Did it depend on a younger brother's resolution? Did St. Paul cease labouring when St. Barnabas left him? Did even the latter do it when parted from his superior? But I think the edge of these questions may fairly be taken off. Jack knew his strength and used it. His will was strong enough to bend you to go, though not me to consent. I freely own it was the will of Jack, but am not yet convinced it was the will of God, except in such a sense as is included in Spenser's question:

Is not his deed whatever thing is done,
in heaven or Earth?¹

I fear not my wife's widowhood since your voyage, though the issues of life and death are in God's hand. If you return she will be glad to see you, but you shall not catch me in haste at hoping. It is not a bad wish either for yourself or others to wish them in heaven. By "being renewed after the image of God" if you mean growing still better,² it is sense and piety. But if you hint at your not being now in a state of salvation, I should fear you are distracted.

I perceive I have embittered your cup. But what should I have done? Should I have told a lie, and pretended to approve a thing which I disapprove almost in every circumstance? Had I said nothing at all, that would have been as bad or worse.

Ah! What can change of place avail!
Care will not be forgot or lost
Twill reach us though we are under sail
And find us on another coast.³

We heartily pray God to bless you both, and desire the continuance of your prayers. I should like some account of your progress, if Jack or you have any leisure. I am [closing omitted].

Source: Samuel Jr's manuscript draft; MARC DDWF 5/11.⁴

¹Edmund Spenser, *Faerie Queen*, Canto ix, l. 42.

²Samuel is quoting a letter from CW that is not known to survive.

³Cf. "The Sixteenth Ode of the Seventh Book of Horace; translated by an unknown hand," st. 8, in John Dryden (ed.), *Miscellany Poems* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1716), 4:211

⁴Transcription published in *WHS* 11 (1918): 150–51.