

## Charles Wesley In-Correspondence (1746–50)

Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition, Duke Divinity School

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**1746**

**From James Erskine**

July 7, 1746

“wherein he discusses at great length the doctrines of particular and universal redemption”

*Source:* Description of topic in inventory of Erskine’s manuscripts, The National Archives of Scotland (ref. GD 124/15/1642); current location of original letter unknown; cf. *WHS* 58 (2012): 264–75.

**From James Erskine**

July 12, 1746

“on the primary nature and notion of *being* — creator and creature; and of the independency and dependency necessarily thence resulting; with reference to the doctrine of particular and universal redemption. Explication of the term ‘predestination’, etc.”

*Source:* Description of topic in inventory of Erskine’s manuscripts, The National Archives of Scotland (ref. GD 124/15/1642); current location of original letter unknown; cf. *WHS* 58 (2012): 264–75.

**From James Erskine**

July 12–28, 1746

“on practical Christianity, as independent of the disputed doctrines of particular and universal redemption”

*Source:* Description of topic in inventory of Erskine’s manuscripts, The National Archives of Scotland (ref. GD 124/15/1642); current location of original letter unknown; cf. *WHS* 58 (2012): 264–75.

**From James Erskine**

1746

“on the same topics (unfinished)”

*Source:* Description of topic in inventory of Erskine’s manuscripts, The National Archives of Scotland (ref. GD 124/15/1642); current location of original letter unknown; cf. *WHS* 58 (2012): 264–75.

From Elizabeth (Stafford) Vigor

[Bristol]  
November 18, 1746

Honoured Friend,

My mind was sensibly affected in reading your last.<sup>1</sup> I rejoiced to hear from you, but my spirit has mourned for the baseness and ingratitude you continually meet with from an unthankful people for all your pains and labours of love bestowed upon them. I do not condemn them all. God forbid I should not have love and pity for the sincere of them, for I hear they grieve for the ill behaviour of their brethren. But I beseech you let not these things trouble you. It was the lot of the servants of God in all ages to be thus treated. So that the scripture is daily fulfilled, “The disciple is not above his master.”<sup>2</sup> Our dear Lord himself was evil-entreated and endured the contradiction of sinners, and we plainly see those that faithfully follow him are made partakers with him. Therefore I entreat you, faint not at the many tribulations you meet with, for surely great will be your recompense of reward in heaven.

Blessed be God, that hath given you the hearts of his children who love and highly esteem you for his sake and the gospel’s. I’m persuaded not one of them do (or dare) believe evil of his ministers (no, not so much as to mention what they hear). And we find that those children of Belial that have thus spoken would now gladly retract,<sup>3</sup> for they hang their heads and are quite ashamed and confounded at what they have said. And well they may, for it is very remarkable how God has punished those wretches that have reproached his messengers, and that suffered them to be brought to shame and extreme poverty. May he give them sincere repentance before it be too late.

We are concerned to hear you have had a return of the late illness since you left London.<sup>4</sup> Pray do us the favour to let us know how you are. We wish you would please to come by way of Bristol, for we greatly long to see you. We greatly rejoice to hear of the success of the gospel, and that the hearts of the faithful hath been by you refreshed.

Glory be to God, he is greatly blessing the labour of his ministers and prospering his work in their hands. Therefore it is that he is graciously pleased still to spare them unto us. O that we may walk worthy of the many favours we daily receive. May the Lord protect and strengthen you, and give you the continual consolation of his Spirit, is the fervent prayer of

Your weak, unworthy Friend,

E. V.

I greatly desire your prayers, being weak and body and soul. My sisters,<sup>5</sup> with sister [Susannah] Designe, desired their duty and respects may be acceptable. Pray excuse the tedious scroll.

*Address:* “To / Mr. Charles Wesley.”

*Endorsement:* by CW, “Nov. 18. 1746 [[Vigor’s]] / Vigor.”

*Source:* holograph; MARC, MA 1977/502/2/29.

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<sup>1</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>2</sup>Matt. 10:24; Luke 6:40.

<sup>3</sup>Both Thomas Williams and Elizabeth Story had retracted their earlier charges.

<sup>4</sup>CW left London for the northern circuit on Oct. 9.

<sup>5</sup>Some or all of the four Stafford sisters.

From Priscilla (Wilford) Rich<sup>1</sup>

London  
November 27, 1746

Dear and Reverend Sir,

I am infinitely obliged to you for your kind letter.<sup>2</sup> It gave me great comfort, and at a time I had much need of it. For I have been very ill, both in body and mind. Some part arose from my poor partner, who I fear has in a great measure stifled his convictions which God gave him.<sup>3</sup>

As to myself, God has been pleased to show me so much of my own unworthiness and helplessness that the light has almost broken my heart; and I might truly be called a woman of a sorrowful spirit.

O think what it is to be obliged to conceal this from the eyes of those that know nothing of these things, but call it all madness! The Lord teach them better—at whose table I have been greatly strengthened, and through his grace I still hope to conquer all the enemies of my soul.

I gave a copy of the hymn to Mr. Lampe,<sup>4</sup> who at the reading shed some tears, and said he would write to you, for he loved you as well as if you was his own brother. The Lord increase it, for I hope it is a good sign.

As to the sale of the hymns, he could give me no account as yet, not having received any himself, nor have I got my dear little girl's.<sup>5</sup>

The enclosed is a copy of a song Mr. Rich has sung in a new scene, added to one of his old entertainments, in the character of harlequin preacher, to convince the town he is not a Methodist.<sup>6</sup> O pray for him, that he may be a Christian indeed, and then he will be no more concerned about what he is called; and for me,

Your unworthy daughter in Christ,

P. Rich

[enclosed song on next page]

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/13.<sup>7</sup>

[1]

Adieu the Delights of the Stage  
My Barrow and rare Mellow Pears  
Poor Lun is reforming the Age

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<sup>1</sup>Priscilla (Wilford) Rich (c. 1713–83), converted to Methodism shortly after her marriage in 1744, much to the consternation of her husband. This is her only known surviving letter to CW.

<sup>2</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>3</sup>John Rich (1692–1761) was an actor and owner of a theatre in Covent Garden. Priscilla was his third wife.

<sup>4</sup>CW had met John Frederick Lampe (1703–51), a musician and composer, at the home of John and Priscilla Rich on Mar. 29, 1746; see *MS Journal*. Priscilla had likely given Lampe a manuscript copy of CW's hymn "The Musician's," published the following year in *Redemption Hymns* (1747), 34–36. See CW's elegy for Lampe in *Funeral Hymns* (1759), 30–31.

<sup>5</sup>Lampe had prepared tunes for several CW hymns, being published as *Hymns on the Great Festivals* (London: M. Cooper, 1746).

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Robert Glen, "Adieu the Delights of the Stage': An Anti-Methodist Song of 1746," *Notes and Queries* 46 (1999), 350–356

<sup>7</sup>Transcriptions of letter published in Jackson, *Life of CW*, 1:435; and *WMM* 120 (1897): 337–38.

By psa'Im singing preaching & prayers  
His Harlequin Coat thrown aside -  
To the Band and the Gown must give place  
And his Warnings go forth far & Wide  
To Convert Covent Garden to Grace

2

Tis Godliness only is gain  
That lasting contentment best yields  
And what the poor Stage tries in Vain  
May be done on a Stool in Moorfields  
The Scenes that [were rais'd] for [the Muse]  
Shall fill you with sanctify'd Qualms  
The Boxes be turn'd into Pews  
And the Musick play nothing but psalms

3

Precisely at Six it begins  
My Flock shall go edify'd hence  
your Methodist takes all your Sins  
So with em he takes but your pence  
Come Brethren and Sisters attend  
I'll open your Eyes to new Light  
Be warn'd by the Voice of a Friend  
And crow'd to my preaching each Night

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/14.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Transcription published in *Notes and Queries* 46 (1999), 352.

1747

From Howell Harris

[Wales]  
May 25, 1747

My Dear and Honoured Brother, Charles Wesley,

Yours I received yesterday.<sup>1</sup> The favour I thankfully acknowledge. The news in it much refreshed me. My prayers are most heartily for your success in bringing poor sinners out of themselves, and sin and misery, to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank you for the hymns.<sup>2</sup> And I hope to meet you at London soon, if possible. I shall now write no particulars, but that my soul longs deeper and deeper for union among all our societies' friends. And in order thereto that all hindrances should as much as possible be removed. That when George Whitefield comes over, some farther steps may be taken. In the meantime let us pray.

Did you know my daily trials of all kinds, you would renew your prayers for

Your poor unworthy fellow sinner and brother in the slaughtered Lamb of God,

H. H.

P.S. The work is on the increase in Wales everywhere. Many are awakened. Others are built up and grow in the knowledge of and conformity to our exalted Head. Whilst others, searching themselves, are abased. My sincere respects to brother John [Wesley] and the labourers and servants, as many as you think fit.

[there is a note in another hand: "This was not sent."]

Source: Harris's copy for his records; National Library of Wales, Trevecka Letters, #1657.

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<sup>1</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>2</sup>CW had likely sent Harris a copy of *Hymns on the Great Festivals* (London: M. Cooper, 1746). CW's collection *Redemption Hymns* (1747) would not be published until July 1747.

**From James Erskine**

[June 1747<sup>1</sup>]

“containing suggestions as to regulation of discussions at Conference, and cautioning against allowing the adoption of different, or particular explications, or phrases, expressions of the same fundamental truths to interrupt or destroy the harmony of the Society”

*Source:* Description of topic in inventory of Erskine’s manuscripts, The National Archives of Scotland (ref. GD 124/15/1642); current location of original letter unknown; cf. *WHS* 58 (2012): 264–75.

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<sup>1</sup>The draft is undated, but is almost surely a response to CW’s letter of May 30, 1747. The guidelines suggested fit well the topics discussed at the 1747 Conference; cf. *JW, Works*, 10:188–209.



From the Rev. John Wesley

Beercrocombe  
July 31, 1747

Dear Brother,

Yesterday I was thinking on a desideratum among us, a *genesis problematica*<sup>1</sup> on justifying faith. A skeleton of it, which you may fill up—or anyone that has leisure—I have roughly set down.

Is justifying faith a sense of pardon? *Negatur*—it is denied.

I. Everyone is deeply concerned to understand this question well; but preachers most of all, lest they should either make them sad whom God hath not made sad, or encourage them to say peace where there is no peace.

Some years ago we heard nothing about either justifying faith or a sense of pardon; so that when we did hear of them the theme was quite new to us, and we might easily, especially in the heat and hurry of controversy, lean too much either to the one hand or to the other.

II. By justifying faith I mean that faith which whosoever hath is not under the wrath and the curse of God. By a sense of pardon I mean a distinct, explicit assurance that my sins are forgiven.

I allow: 1) that there is such an explicit assurance; 2) that it is the common privilege of real Christians; 3) that it is the proper Christian faith, which purifieth the heart and overcometh the world.

But I cannot allow that justifying faith is such an assurance, or necessarily connected therewith.

III. Because, if justifying faith necessarily implies such an explicit sense of pardon, then everyone who has it not, and everyone so long as he has it not, is under the wrath and under the curse of God. But this is a supposition contrary to Scripture as well as to experience.

Contrary to Scripture: to Isaiah 50:10: “Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.”

Contrary to Acts 10:34: “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.”

Contrary to experience: for J[onathan] R[eeves], etc., etc., had peace with God, no fear, no doubt, before they had that sense of pardon. And so have I frequently had.

Again. The assertion that justifying faith is a sense of pardon is contrary to reason: it is flatly absurd. For how can a sense of our having received pardon be the condition of our receiving it?

IV. If you object: 1) “J. T.,<sup>2</sup> St. Paul, etc., had this sense,” I grant they had, but they were justified before they had it. 2) “We know fifteen hundred persons who have this assurance.” Perhaps so, but this does not prove that they were not justified till they received it. 3) “We have been exceedingly blessed in preaching this doctrine.” We have been blessed in preaching the great truths of the gospel, although we tacked to them, in the simplicity of our hearts, a proposition which was not true. 4) “But does not our church give this account of justifying faith?” I am sure she does of saving or Christian faith; I think she does of justifying faith too. But to the law and to the testimony. All men may err, but the word of the Lord shall stand for ever.

Source: published transcription; Whitehead, *Life*, 2:233–35.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>“An inquiry into the first principles.”

<sup>2</sup>This is possibly a misreading of JW’s “J. R.”, referring again to Jonathan Reeves.

<sup>3</sup>Reprinted in JW, *Works*: 25:254–55.

**From the Rev. John Wesley**

c. August 17, 1747

I received a second summons from my brother, hastening me to Ireland.

*Source:* summary by CW; *MS Journal*, Aug. 21, 1747 (DDCW 10/2, 2:213–14).

From the Rev. George Whitefield

Philadelphia  
September 11, 1747

Very Dear Sir,

Both your letters,<sup>1</sup> and your prayers I trust, have reached me. May mine reach you also. And then it will not be long ere we shall indeed be one fold under one Shepherd. However, if this should not be on earth, it will certainly be effected in heaven. Thither I trust we are hastening apace. Blessed by God that you are kept alive, and that your spiritual children are increasing. May they increase more and more! Jesus can maintain them all. He wills that his house should be full.

Some have wrote me things to your disadvantage.<sup>2</sup> I do not believe them. Love thinks no evil of a friend. Such are you to me. I love you most dearly. I could write to you much more, but time and business will not permit. You will see my letter to your dear brother.<sup>3</sup>

That you may be guided into all truth, turn thousands and ten thousands more unto righteousness, and shine as the stars in the future world for ever and ever, is the hearty prayer of, very dear sir,

Yours most affectionately, etc.

G. W.

*Source:* published transcription; Whitefield, *Letters*, 2:128–29.

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<sup>1</sup>These letters are not known to survive.

<sup>2</sup>Likely accounts of the accusation of Elizabeth Story, et al.

<sup>3</sup>This letter, of the same date, was sent with CW's, and can be found in Whitefield, *Letters*, 2:126–28.

From John Robertson, M.D.<sup>1</sup>

Pitcomb (near Somerset)  
September 23, 1747

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I am much afraid the account you had of Bengelius's death is too true, else I might have hoped to have heard from him before now.<sup>2</sup>

My disappointment this way makes me bethink myself of other means of coming by his writings, and the first that occurred to me was your acquaintance with several German gentlemen at London. Without any particular claim, your universal charity assures me of your readiness to assist me in my search after these books. And I am hopeful you may procure them for me by means of some or other of your German friends, which would greatly oblige me. The books I want are: 1. Bengelius's smaller edition of the New Testament at Stuttgart.<sup>3</sup> 2. His harmony of the evangelists.<sup>4</sup> (3.) His exposition of the Apocalypse.<sup>5</sup> Both these in his d[e]utch. These are the books I most earnestly desire, having already his quarto New Testament,<sup>6</sup> his *Gnomon*,<sup>7</sup> and *Ordo Temporum*.<sup>8</sup> But if I can find an easy way of coming at what I will, there are more writings of his I should be glad to have—viz., his edition of *St. Chrysostom de Sacerdotio*,<sup>9</sup> and of *Gregor. Thaum. Panegyricus*, with his own notes,<sup>10</sup> and a book Bengelius mentions in his *Ordo Temporum*, p. 315, viz. Isidori Charisii Logothetae *Theologia in Numeris*.<sup>11</sup>

It is about three years since I first employed Mr. [François] Changuion, the French bookseller, to get me the three first mentioned books, who has not be able yet to procure them. Could any of your German acquaintance but inform you what German bookseller Changuion could write to for them, that would put us in a way.

Forgive, dear sir, the freedom I use in giving you this trouble, and freely command me wherein soever I can serve you. As you desired I would let you hear of any emendations of our translation of the

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<sup>1</sup>John Robertson (c. 1691–1761) was educated at Marischall College, Aberdeen and was awarded his M.D. at King's College, Aberdeen in 1730. Born at Wells, Somerset, he married a widow, Jane Webb, of Pitcombe and settled on her estate there to the leisurely pursuits of a devout and scholarly gentleman. In 1747 he had published under a pseudonym *The True and Antient Manner of reading Hebrew without Points*. He wrote CW, inviting a visit, just before his death; Robertson to CW, Mar. 16, 1761

<sup>2</sup>Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687–1752), the eminent German scholar of the NT. Robertson had read some of his writings and had apparently tried to contact him by mail.

<sup>3</sup>Bengel, *Novum Testamentum Graecum* (Stuttgart: D. B. Faber, 1734).

<sup>4</sup>Johann Albrecht Bengels *Richtige Harmonie der vier Evangelisten* (Tübingen: Berger, 1736).

<sup>5</sup>Bengel, *Erklärte Offenbarung Johannis oder vielmehr Jesu Christi: aus dem revidirten Grungtext übersetzt durch die prophetische Zahlen aufgeschlossen* (Stuttgart: Christop Erhardt, 1740); Robertson published an English translation in 1757.

<sup>6</sup>Bengel, *Novum Testamentum Graecum* (Tübingen: Cottae, 1734).

<sup>7</sup>*D. Io. Alberti Bengelii Gnomon Novi Testamenti: in quo ex nativa verborum vi simplicitas, profunditas, concinnitas, salubritas sensuum coelestium indicatur* (Tübingen: H. Philip Schram, 1742).

<sup>8</sup>Bengel, *Ordo temporum a principio per periodos oeconomiae divinae* (Stuttgart: Erhard, 1741).

<sup>9</sup>Bengel, *Johannis Chrysostomi De sacerdotio libri sex Graece et Latine* (Stuttgart: I. B. Mezlerum & C. Erhardum, 1725).

<sup>10</sup>Bengel, *Gregorii Thaumata[t]urgi Panegyricus ad Origenem Graece et Latine* (Stuttgart: I. B. Mezlerum, 1722).

<sup>11</sup>I.e., Johann Christian Lange, *Theologia christiana in numeris* (Leipzig 1702)

⟨Scrip⟩tures<sup>12</sup> that occurred to me, I will give you a specimen, as far as my paper will go, in the ⟨order⟩ I thought of them and wrote them down to you.

John 5:39, ερευνάτε is indicative: “the search.” ⟨?⟩ Ye sent unto John and he bare witness ... / The works ... bear witness ... / the Father ... has borne witness of me ⟨/ S⟩earch the Scriptures ... and they testify of me. And (yet after all these testimonies) ye will not (you have no inclination to) come to (believe in) me (though it is so much for your own advantage to; or even for that profitable end) that you may have life (v. Bengel in loc<sup>13</sup>).

John 14[:1], πιστεύετε, imperative both times: Trust in God and in me too; me, the object of your senses, your tried friend. A great support to a weak trust or reliance or faith! (v. Bengel marg.<sup>14</sup>) for both.

Revel. 13:8, slain from the foundation. Point and read thus: written in the book of life of the slain (sacrificed) lamb from the foundation (v. Bengel in loc, and compare 17:8).

John 18:38, Τι εστιν ἡ ἀληθεια; i.e., Truth! What signifies (what great matter is) truth, that you should expose yourself to such sufferings for it? This seems to be a kind chiding, for Pilate appears hearty in endeavouring to spare Christ’s life; though he had not courage to go through with it, but acted on the maxim he here recommends to our Saviour.

2 Tim. 4:2, ευκαιρως ακαιρως; i.e., with or without opportunity. If you have a fair opportunity, embrace it; but if no easy occasion offers, yet be earnest to preach, do it even abruptly. Compare Philippians 4:10, ηκαιρεισθε, ye had no opportunity; not, you came in a wrong time (v. Bengel in loc).

Acts 4[:4]. The number of men became (was made up to) εγενηθη. In [Acts] 2:41 the number of souls (men and women) was 3,000. Here they were so increased that they became 5,000 men (ανδρων), besides women and children. Bengel. This is a greater number than the common exposition comes to.

Luke 11:41, δοτε τα ενοντα ελεημοσυνη; give what is in them (in your vessels), i.e., your meat and drink, in alms; and then all foods will be sanctified to you by this your religious offering of them to God, without your ceremonious washings, etc. See also Bengel.

Ephesians 2:18, Jesus Christ *himself* being, etc. Rather, Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone of *it*; i.e., of that foundation. Bengel.

John 1:16, χαριν αντι χαριτος; grace for grace; i.e., a grace in the soul of a believer for (i.e., answering to, as we say a man’s image in a glass represents him exactly, feature for feature) every grace in Christ Jesus. Mr. Monro, *Just Measures of the Pious Institution of Youth*, p. 174 (this is a truly Christian writer!), expresses it thus: “Grace answering to the grace of the Redeemer. They have a grace for every grace that is in him.”<sup>15</sup> The same mind that was in Christ Jesus.

Acts 8:33. Who shall (can) declare (or conceive יהוה, Isa. 53:8) his duration, or length of his lifetime (which is eternal) though (כי, v. Exod. 13:17, Deut. 23:18, etc.) he is *cut off* from the land of the living; though his mortal human life was but short, being *cut off* in the middle.

I have consumed my paper. Almost all of my samples are from Bengelius. If these should induce you to *like* him, when you converse with himself will make you *love* him, and *greatly* too. Let me leave Bengelius’s address. Perhaps he is not dead.

I am, reverend and dear sir,

Your obliged, faithful, humble servant,

J. Robertson

[Includes a sheet containing on two sides an excerpt on Rev. 20:3–4 from Bengel’s *Gnomon Novi Testamenti*, in Latin (arguing to two millennia), dated Aug. 20, 1747; at the bottom of the second side Robertson adds in English]

<sup>12</sup>A small portion is torn away by the wax seal; reconstructed as possible.

<sup>13</sup>I.e., see Bengel on this text.

<sup>14</sup>I.e., see Bengel’s marginal note.

<sup>15</sup>George Monro, *Just Measures of the Pious Institution of Youth* (London: Downing, 1711).

\* This great power the pope is to receive Tuesday, Oct. 28, 1832, as he (that last pope, the man of sin) is to appear (be elected pope, I suppose) Monday, Oct. 14, but 8 [sic] days before.

I shall add here, in answer to a question an unblameable curiosity may suggest to you, that Bengelius's calculation (which to me seems well grounded) makes that year 1836 and (be not surprised) the 18th day of June, a Sunday, the time of the destruction of the beast and false prophet (chap. 19:20) and the beginning of the 1,000 years of Satan's being bound. The power of the beast, you know, will be so great sometime before his destruction that no man shall be allowed to buy or sell who has not received his mark. Does the time of that power seem very distant? France conquers everywhere. The English are weak, the Dutch stupid, the Danes sit quiet, the Prussians and Swedes promote the power of France—i.e., popery is gaining ground without any, at least without proper, opposition from those who alone could be expected to oppose it. 89 years don't seem a long time for the series of affairs yet to come before the final destruction of the beast (the papacy), in which there is also included a grand revolution (or rather, two): The whore Babylon is to ride the beast, i.e., the power of the city of Rome or her senate (which still exists) is to become superior to the papal power; and afterward the pope, with the assistance of the king, is to burn her body with fire and to have all power, papal and regal.

*Address:* "To / The Reverd / Mr Charles Wesley at the Foundery / near Moorfields / London."

*Postmark:* "25/SE."

*Endorsement:* by CW, "[[Dr Robertson September]] 23" and "Dr. Robertson / 2 millennium."

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDP 1/67.

From [Thomas Williams<sup>1</sup>]

[Ireland]  
c. December 19, 1747

We reached Tyrrellspass, a little town about forty miles from Dublin on Thursday. I preached in an empty house to 500 or 600 people, who received the word with great attention. Next morning's audience was more numerous. They flocked from all parts to hear the glad tidings. Invited them to buy wine and milk without money and without price.<sup>2</sup> Their hearts were melted as before the fire, and many told me they would go ten miles to hear such comfortable doctrine. Surely a door is opened here for preaching the everlasting gospel.

Friday night I rode six miles farther, and preached at Mr. Handy's house.<sup>3</sup> The people looked at me as if I came from the clouds, being a mixed company of Churchmen, Dissenters, and papists.

Saturday morning many more came to hear. They seem better reconciled than last night—but seem perishing for lack of knowledge.

*Source:* copy in CW draft journal; MARC, DDCW 6/88a.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Williams (c. 1720–87), a native of Llanishen, Glamorgan, Wales, matriculated at Oxford in Oct. 1739, but did not complete his university education. In 1741, back in Llanishen, he was converted under the preaching of CW. Soon after he became one of JW's traveling preachers, often accompanying CW at first. When CW failed to support Williams's desire for ordination, Williams fought back by encouraging accusation of sexual impropriety with women by CW. William had recanted these accusations by now, and JW had quietly sent Williams to open ministry in Ireland. It is likely due to CW's continuing concern about Williams that he does not name him as the writer.

<sup>2</sup>Isa. 55:1.

<sup>3</sup>Samuel Handy (1713–79), who had been introduced to Methodism by his sister-in-law, Mrs. Meecham, owned a manor named Coolalough, just south of Horseleap, Co. Westmeath, Ireland; 6 miles west of Tyrrellspass.

<sup>4</sup>Transcription published in CW, *Journal Letters*, 276.

**From [Thomas Williams]**

[Ireland]  
c. December 22, 1747

I preach twice a day. About 600 came to hear me the first hour at Tullamore in the marketplace. Most behaved very careless at the beginning, but toward the middle of my discourse gave diligent heed. The mouths of gainsayers were stopped, or constrained to own it is the truth of God. The poor papists are my constant attendants, and receive the word gladly notwithstanding the severe penances their priests lay upon them.

The gentleman<sup>1</sup> where our brother is, sent word that he preaches with great success. My house is full of people, half of them Romans, who seem closely touched. Sunday morning he preached at Kilbeggan parish, to a great congregation of Churchmen, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Romans, to the satisfaction of all. The Romans in Kilbeggan parish are to fast three days in a week on bread and water for hearing mass, but they disobey the priest's order, and say, they will have him ⟨killed?⟩.

*Source:* copy in CW draft journal; MARC, DDCW 6/88a.<sup>2</sup>

**From [Thomas Williams]**

Tyrrellspass [Ireland]  
St. Stephen's Day [December 26]

I have preached again in Tullamore. The harvest truly is great. About 2,000 attended yesterday. I met many, many attentive souls here at 4:00 in the morning and preached and sang and rejoiced truly. In the evening we had a large congregation of Romans, Churchmen, and Dissenters—many of them Quakers. The whole company was in tears. You would rejoice, dear sir, to see the work which is begun in this part of the vineyard. O for more labourers! We stand in great need of them. Lord send them speedily!

*Source:* copy in CW draft journal; MARC, DDCW 6/88a.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Likely Samuel Handy.

<sup>2</sup>Transcription published in CW, *Journal Letters*, 277.

<sup>3</sup>Transcription published in CW, *Journal Letters*, 277.



1748

From the Rev. Charles Manning<sup>1</sup>

Hayes  
January 25, 1748

On Wednesday, January 11, 1748, Mrs. Jane Farmer of the parish of Hayes in Middlesex sickened. It was the Friday following, before she considered what would become of her soul in case she should die. Upon examination, she found *and said* there was no hopes for her; but to hell she must go, having been so wicked to forsake the way of righteousness after she had begun to run well. It is better than a twelvemonth since she first had conversation with one of the people I call “Christians,” but you “Methodists”; one Samuel Cole of Norwood Green. Till then, she had joined with her neighbours in despising and ridiculing them and me; but after her discourse with that man, her mouth was stopped, and she was convinced she fell far short of being a Christian. She then desired to see me, to be better informed concerning the people called Methodists; “for God forbid” (she said) “I should any longer sin against him by despising a people who may be good Christians.”

Accordingly, January 3, 1748, she sent for me to baptize her child. I found God had convinced her she was no Christian. Of his infinite mercy, he had touched her heart, and opened it to receive and delight in those people who had declared to her the truth as it is in Jesus; and she often wished she was such a Christian as they. And although by the persuasion of her neighbours and some of the best of the parish, she had less conversation with them latterly, yet her conscience would never suffer her to think or speak evil of them. And she acknowledged to me, the first time of my seeing her, that the Lord had met with and punished her for her backsliding.

She declared she was afraid to die, not knowing but her soul would be cast into hell, for she had deserved it, she said. “But if I have only half an hour to live, why should I not think of what is good and beg for mercy? If it is denied me, I can but perish at last.” I then prayed with her, and she desired to be prayed for at church. I asked her what I should ask God to do for her, one of her neighbours being present. She replied, “Pray to God, only that I may know, before I die, that my sins are forgiven me.”

On Sunday evening, she sent for me to pray with her, when I was agreeably surprised to hear her tell me she had an hope that God *would* forgive her her sins. She said it had been the sweetest day she ever knew. God had given her so much peace and comfort. She had not that fear, which she had the night before. She said Christ died for her, and she knew God loved her and would let her know her sins were forgiven. I then prayed with her and left her.

Monday morning early I was sent for again. I found her desirous to receive the blessed sacrament. She told me she had called upon Christ all night, and he had not answered her whether her sins were forgiven or not. She added she had but a short time to live and was frightened because Christ had not spoke peace to her soul. She said she should be easy after she had received the sacrament. I desired her not to trust to that, but look through the sign to Christ and call upon him till he should speak to her heart and say, “Daughter, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.”<sup>2</sup> She said she had been in a dark place that night, full of devils, as she thought, and one pushed at her and buffeted her much, so that she cried out often, “Get thee behind me, Satan.”<sup>3</sup> While the elements were preparing, she was a little impatient least she should die before she received. Nevertheless, in great distress of soul, she continued praying with her hands clasped, and crying out, “Lord, let me know my sins are forgiven; Christ let me know my

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<sup>1</sup>Rev. Charles Manning (1714–99), vicar of Hayes, Middlesex, was currently supportive of the revival, attending the Conferences of 1747 and 1748.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Matt. 9:2.

<sup>3</sup>Matt. 16:23; Mark 8:33; Luke 4:8.

sins are forgiven.” When on a sudden she said to me, and a neighbour by her bedside, “Hark, what sweet heavenly music and singing do I hear! Do not you hear it?” she said. “O there’s a voice that tells me, ‘Thy sins are forgiven thee! Thy sins are forgiven thee!’<sup>4</sup> O sir,” said she, “I shall be happy in heaven! Now I can die in peace if I do not receive the sacrament. O! I long to be dissolved and to go to Christ.” To me she said, “O, Mr. Manning, you would not desire to stay a day longer here, if you know how lovely Christ is, and how he loves *you*.”

By this time the neighbours were come who were to receive the sacrament with her. Her language now both before and after receiving was, “Christ loves me; Christ calls me; Christ waits for me.” Her heart was filled with love to every one. She called each by name, both young and old, and exhorted them not to trifle any longer with their souls, but prepare for eternity. To one old person she said, “Now you may believe me that we may know here our sins are forgiven, for I know mine are.” She commended her children to our care. She mentioned all her small debts. She told me she had begged of the Lord to spare her a day or two that she might see her mother, but he was not pleased to grant her request, and she was content. To one who asked her if she could give up her children to God, she answered, “Yes, children, husband, and all for Christ:” for she was going to a sweet and happy place. She ordered her burial in the plainest manner, for she said an handsome funeral would do her soul no good, would not carry it to heaven; and telling us again, Christ called her, she closed her eyes and fell into a doze for two hours. Her neighbours gave her a cordial, which brought her to herself, and then and not before appeared the signs of her being lightheaded, which continued till Thursday, the day of her death.<sup>5</sup> The burden of her out-of-the-way discourse was that we had brought her back to the world; she was near the holy Jerusalem, she said, and the angel, her brother Gabriel, waited for her, and the chariot of God was ready to receive her; but we would not let her depart in peace and must all answer for it to God.

And now, though it did not please God to restore to her her understanding, yet we ought not to doubt in the least of the safety of her condition. For my part, I verily believe she died in the Lord and is blessed; and when *you* have obtained an interest in Christ *your* Saviour, and know *your* pardon is sealed in heaven, as she did, then, *and not till then*, you will have a sure well-grounded hope of meeting her at the right hand of God.

You deny the knowledge of forgiveness of sins *here*; and God has condescended to raise up among yourselves a witness of his truth. See that you shut not your eyes any longer against the light, least the things which belong to your everlasting peace be hid from you!

*Endorsement:* by CW, “M[rs]. Fermor’s / Death.”

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDCW 7/110.

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<sup>4</sup>Luke 5:20.

<sup>5</sup>Jane Farmer was buried in Hayes on January 22, 1748.

From the Rev. John Wesley  
– a journal letter

[Dublin]  
[April 4, 1748]

Monday, [Mar.] 14. I began expounding the Acts of the Apostles at 5:00 in the morning. The room was pretty well filled today, but they increase continually. I see more and more the folly of giving place to the devil. Our preachers put off preaching till 6:00 in the morning, that more people might come. And now four times [more] come at 5:00 than ever came at 6:00.

Monday 21, and every evening this week, the power of our Lord was mightily with us. Wed. 23, I talked with a warm man, who was always exceeding zealous for the Church when he was just drunk enough to curse and swear, and bawl (in the Irish proverb), “No gown, no crown.” He was soon convinced that whatever these Swaddlers were,<sup>1</sup> he was himself a child of the devil. We left him full of good resolutions, which held above three days.

I preached at Newgate at 3:00, but found no stirring as yet among the dry bones. Only the poor prodigal that some time since returned to her father seems more and more established in the grace of God.

Fri. 25. I preached at Marlborough Street at 5:00 to the largest congregation I have yet seen in a morning. About 2:00 I began at Ship Street, where [were] many rich and genteel sinners. I was exceeding weak in body, having been visiting classes all the day. But I felt it not after I had spoke two sentences, for God strengthened me both in soul and body to trample under foot and tear in pieces every high [thing] which exalteth itself against the knowledge of Christ.

I finished the classes the next day, and found things just as I expected. I left 394 persons united together in the society; I now admitted between twenty and thirty who had given in their names since I came to Dublin. And the whole number at this day is neither more nor less than 396.

Sunday the 27th it rained almost all day long; so that I could only preach in the house morning and evening, and at Marlborough Street in the afternoon. We had a comfortable meeting with the society in the evening.

Mon. 28. Understanding John Cennick was gone to England, I wrote immediately to Mr. [Johann] Töltschig; the state of the whole affair will appear most clearly from the letters which passed between us from the beginning.

On the 14th instant I wrote to Mr. Cennick as follows: My dear brother, Cork Street, March the 14.<sup>2</sup>

Accordingly on Tuesday 29 at 5:00 I preached there to a large and quiet congregation, who seemed all to taste the good word. Only one gentleman, on my saying in the middle of the sermon that all is darkness and death without the living knowledge of Christ, rose up and went out in all haste. My text was, “We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus’s sake.”<sup>3</sup> At 2:00 I preached at Newgate in the common hall, the gaoler refusing us the room where we used to preach. But that is not the worst: I am afraid our Lord refuses his blessing to this place. Every time I have been here I have been as dead as a stone. A few more trials and I have done with this house of woe. I read the letters in the evening to a crowded audience. It was a time of solemn rejoicing in God.

Wed. 30. About 7:00 I set out with brother [Thomas] Williams. We dined early at Kilcock, fourteen miles from Dublin, at the house of a serious, loving woman, though a papist by profession. We had milestones for five or six miles farther. The computed miles which followed are of just the same

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<sup>1</sup>Swaddlers was a nickname for the Methodists gained by Cennick in 1745 when he preached in Dublin on “the Babe in swaddling clothes” (CW, *MS Journal*, Sept. 10, 1747).

<sup>2</sup>The text of the letter is not in fact given.

<sup>3</sup>2 Cor. 4:5.

length with those in Yorkshire, measuring about a mile and three-quarters each. A little before 6:00 we reached Philipstown, the shire town of the King's County. We found John Nelson, being afraid we should not come, had given no notice of my preaching here, so that we imagined a large room might contain the congregation. But we quickly found our mistake, and were obliged to go down into the street, which was soon filled with those who flocked from every side. I believe nine in ten of the troopers were there, with most of their officers. I declared to them Jesus Christ, of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. A clergyman who lives in the parish attended as earnestly as the rest, and when I began to pray fell down on his knees in the middle of the street. Shall not God have a people in this place?

Thur. 31. Brother Williams had dissuaded me from preaching so early as 5:00, being sure none would rise so soon. But I kept my hour, and had a large as well as serious congregation. After preaching I spoke severally to those of the society. Thirty of the dragoons were already joined; to whom ten of them more were joined today, whom with ten or twelve of the townfolk I divided into classes and appointed two or three of the steadiest to be their leaders.

At noon I preached once more, I think to the largest congregation I have seen since I came from Bultin, and indeed the Word of God had free course and was glorified among them.

In the evening I preached at Tullamore, to most of the inhabitants of the town (among them were the minister of the parish and another clergyman) and many who came out of the country. I soon found God had given them into my hands, and made them as grasshoppers before me. We had another happy meeting at 5:00 in the morning, with many more than the room would hold.

Fri. April 1. At 1:00 I preached at Clara, a town five miles beyond Tullamore. I never saw such a congregation before in Ireland, such a number of people so well behaved, although some of them came in their coaches, and were honourable persons of the best quality in the country. I could not but take particular notice of one gentleman, who stood as a statue, with his eyes fixed till the last word of the sermon. Upon inquiry I found he was lord of the manor, and proprietor of the whole town. But he is a sinner. It may be he begins to feel it, and to know that God is no respecter of persons.

In the evening I preached at Templemacateer, and again at 5:00 in the morning, Sat. 2. But being at ease and in honour, in a gentleman's house, I found little life or power. I could not bear to stay long in this place: all things are so pretty and convenient. About 12:00 we took horse, and at one came to Moate, the pleasantest town I have yet seen in Ireland.

Here I preached to a little handful of serious people, and then hastened on to Athlone, in order to disappoint two or three hundred who were preparing to meet me and bring me into the town in state. We escaped the greatest part by coming to Mr. Alder's (where we lodged) two hours sooner than they expected. At 6:00 I preached from the window of an unfinished house opposite to the market-house (which could not have contained a fourth part of the congregation) on, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>4</sup> I scarce ever saw a better behaved or more attentive congregation. Many of the better sort followed us to Mr. Alder's, and gave us abundance of thanks and good words. So civil a people as the Irish I have never yet seen, either in Europe or America.

Sunday 3. I began preaching, to the no small surprise of many, at 5:00 in the morning. I believe there were at least three hundred hearers, and their hearts were as melting wax. Thence I walked to see a poor woman that was sick, about a mile from the town. About a hundred and fifty people attended me. When we came to the spot where John Healy was knocked down we all stopped and sang praise to God.<sup>5</sup> After I had prayed with the sick person, being unwilling so many people should go empty away, I chose a smooth grassy place near the road, where we all kneeled down to prayer, after which we sung a psalm, and I gave them a short exhortation. At 11:00 we went to church, and heard a plain useful sermon.

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<sup>4</sup>2 Cor. 8:9.

<sup>5</sup>See CW, *MS Journal*, Feb. 10, 1748.

At 2:00 I preached on the Connaught side of the town, where there are only six families of Protestants, all the rest being papists. Such a company of people (we were informed) had never been seen before at Athlone, many coming from all the country round about, and receiving the Word with all readiness of mind. I preached again at 6:00 at the same place, and to nearly the same (only a little larger) congregation. About three in four (notwithstanding the prohibition of their priests), I afterwards found, were papists. Yet I cannot think all the seed has fallen by the wayside, or on stony ground.

Mon 4. I preached once more at 5:00. Great part of the congregation were in tears. So loving a people have I scarce ever seen, nor so strong and general drawings from above. Almost the whole town seems to be greatly moved, full of good will and desires of salvation. But the waters spread too wide to be deep. I find not one under any sound conviction; much less has anyone received remission of sins under thirty or forty sermons. So that as yet no judgment can be formed whether there will be any considerable work of God here or no; although all the people are now willing, were it possible, to pluck out their own eyes and give them unto us.

*Endorsement:* by CW, "[[March]] 14 [[Journal]]."

*Source:* holograph; (current location unknown) John Wesley Works Archive (Duke) holds copy.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 26:299–303.

From the Rev. John Wesley  
– a journal letter

Dublin  
April 16, 1748

We took horse at 10:00. About 12:00 I preached at Moate, to a little larger congregation than before. I could not but smile at the zeal of these young disciples. They were so above measure offended at a man's throwing a cabbage-stalk over the house, which fell at some distance from me. Let them keep their courage till they see such a sight as that at Walsall, or Shepton Mallet. In the afternoon, after dining at Templemacateer, we rode on to Tyrrelspass. In preaching here, on Jeremiah 8:22, I found much enlargement of heart. But when the society met my strength was exhausted; so that after a short exhortation and prayer we parted.

Tuesday, 5th. Our room was filled at 5:00. After preaching I visited the classes. I found a great openness among them. When I asked one in particular how he had lived in times past, he spread abroad his hands and said, with many tears, "Here I stand, a grey-headed monster of all manner of wickedness" Which I believe, had it been desired, he would have explained before them all. Much in the same manner spake a woman from Connaught, but with huge affliction and dismay; so that we determined to wrestle with God in her behalf, which we did for above an hour. And our labour was not in vain: her soul was filled with joy unspeakable. Mr. Jonathan Handy, before sorrowing almost without hope, was also enabled mightily to praise God;<sup>1</sup> and four young women were cut to the heart, so that I trust they will not sleep any more. I preached in the evening on, "He healeth those that are broken in heart."<sup>2</sup> Most of the neighbouring gentry were present, and desired to stay at the society, where we rejoiced in the God of our salvation.

Wednesday, 6th. We had more at the preaching this morning than yesterday, among whom was Mrs. Wade, above ninety-two years of age, but of as perfect understanding as when she was but fifty. The society now consists of about an hundred members, nine or ten of whom were papists, and several Quakers. Seven of them, at their earnest desire, I baptized this day; and not without a blessing from God, who greatly comforted our hearts, so that we hardly knew how to part. In the afternoon we rode to Philipstown, the most stupid, senseless place I have seen in all Ireland. The people here have neither religion nor curiosity. They care for none of these things. The congregations, evening as well as in the morn[ing] and at noon the next day, consisted almost entirely of soldiers and country people. I know not whether there were ten of the townsmen present. They neither meddle nor make. I do not wonder that Satan was sorely unwilling I should go out of this place. The moment I mounted my horse, without any visible cause, he began to boggle and snort, and drew backward, and from one side to the other, as if there were a stone wall just before him. Brother [Thomas] Williams whipped him behind, and I before, but it was lost labour. He leaped from side to side till he came to a gateway, into which he then ran backwards, and tumbled head over heels. My foot was under him; but I arose unhurt. He then went on as quiet as any horse in the world. Thus far only could Satan go.

At Tullamore in the evening all the town, rich and poor, were gathered together. I used great plainness of speech in applying those words, "There is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."<sup>3</sup> Yet I did not find that any were offended, no, not even the minister of the parish. April 8th, being Good Friday, I preached at 5:00 to a large and serious congregation, on "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever."<sup>4</sup> I afterwards spoke to those who desired to be united together in a

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<sup>1</sup>Jonathan Handy (1704–59) had a manor about 2 miles northeast of Horseleap, Co. Westmeath.

<sup>2</sup>Ps. 147:3 (BCP).

<sup>3</sup>Rom. 3:23.

<sup>4</sup>Heb. 13:8.

society. Between forty and fifty gave in their names this morning. But unto none of them yet is the arm of the Lord revealed. Between 1:00 and 2:00 I preached at Clara, and then rode to Athlone. But before we could reach the town a whole troop both of horse and foot came to meet us. We slipped into a little house at the town end, and let the bulk of the company pass by, after which we walked pretty quiet to Mr. Alder's. I preached at 6:00 on, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and after that to enter into his glory?"<sup>5</sup> So general a love I never found in any people; so that as yet none dare even to seem to oppose. A gentleman of seven or eight hundred a year only kept his hat on during the preaching; and our dragoons were so affronted that they could not be pacified till one of them got to him and took it off. And not long after, upon his breaking an innocent jest, the whole congregation was up in arms, so that they talked of nothing less (till I calmed them with much ado) than throwing him over the bridge into the Shannon. We had an hour's conversation in the evening with a clergyman living in the town, a sensible and candid man. He seemed exceeding willing to know the whole truth of God, and not to be far from the kingdom of heaven.

Saturday, 9th. We rode a few miles into Connaught, a large party from Athlone accompanying us. About 1:00 I preached at a lone house (one Mr. Wright's), where were several gentlemen who lived in the neighbourhood. They all heard with calm, stupid attention; but did not appear to feel anything, so that I question whether the time is come for preaching in this place. The Shannon comes up within a mile of the house, and I believe there is not such another river in Europe. It is here ten or twelve miles over, though without any tide, and thirty miles from the fountain-head. There are many islands in it, which were once inhabited, though now they are mostly desolate. In almost every one there is the ruins of a church—in one the remains of no less than seven. I never saw so many ruinous buildings in any country as in all parts of Ireland where we have been. I fear the curse of God still lies upon this land for the blood shed by its inhabitants. In the evening, while I was preaching on Ezekiel's vision of the resurrection of the dead bones,<sup>6</sup> there was a little shaking among them. But still they are very dry, and there is no breath in them.

April 10th, Easterday. We had a solemn meeting at 5:00, and my heart was enlarged amongst them. Never was there such a congregation seen before at the sacrament in Athlone. The service held till half-past two o'clock, so that I did not preach till 3:00. Abundance of papists flocked to hear, so that the poor priest, seeing he profited nothing, came at 6:00 himself, and drove them away before him like a flock of sheep. The captain of the dragoons was so enraged at this that on a word speaking he would have laid him in irons. And his soldiers were full as warm as himself when about the middle of the sermon an egg was thrown, as it was supposed, out of a window. It was some time before I could quiet them, the whole congregation being just on the point of pulling down the house. In conversing afterwards with ten or twelve people of fashion, who were full of zeal and goodwill, I was amazed to find them just as dead and unawakened as if they had never heard me open my mouth. How shall I find a way into the heart of the people? Hitherto they like all, and feel nothing.

Monday, 11th. I preached at 5:00 as terribly as I could on, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly appear?"<sup>7</sup> But still the people, who were ready to eat up every word, neither taste nor digest any part of what is spoken. The society now consists of about 110 members. We spent an hour with them after sermon, and God began to break the rocks in pieces. A voice was heard, lamentation and weeping and mourning. Many were cut to the heart, and roared aloud, particularly one grey-headed sinner, between seventy and eighty years of age, who seems just entering into the kingdom. In the evening there appeared more emotion in the congregation than ever I had seen before, while I enforced, "God is a spirit, and they that worship must worship him in spirit and in truth."<sup>8</sup> But still it appeared in a manner I never saw—not in one here and there, but in all. Perhaps God is working here in a way we have

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<sup>5</sup>Luke 24:26.

<sup>6</sup>Ezek. 37:1–14.

<sup>7</sup>1 Pet. 4:18.

<sup>8</sup>See John 4:24.

not known, going on with a slow and even motion through the whole body of the people, that they may all remember themselves and be turned unto the Lord.

There are four clergymen in Athlone. With one of them we conversed largely and close[ly] on Good Friday, and with his wife on Sunday. The wife of another invited me to her house this evening, where we met the two others, with their wives, and spent two hours in friendly conversation. Who would not follow that direction of the apostle, even upon the principles of reason, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men”?<sup>9</sup>

Tuesday, 12th. I preached on Hebrews 13:20, and took my leave of the loving people, the like to whom I have never seen either in Europe or America. I believe more than an hundred followed me on foot above a mile, to the top of the hill, and horsemen in abundance. We stopped here and sang the parting hymn, men, women, and children being in tears. Fourteen of the horsemen would needs go on to Clara, nine Irish miles farther. If the people of Athlone did but love God as they do me, they would be the praise of the whole earth.

Dublin

Saturday, April 16th, 1748

Dear Brother,

We returned hither last night. But I must (as you observe)<sup>10</sup> make another journey into the country. Our societies there already consist of 350 members. But they are most of them raw, undisciplined soldiers; and, without great care, will desert to their old master.

The Conference must be in London this year, in order to the meeting of the stewards from all the societies. I hope to be there about Wednesday in Whitsun week.

Skinner’s Alley is now, as it ever was, a millstone about my neck. I shall shake it off as soon as possible, and do as I would be done to. I can never get over, “We laid out so much money, and have not had a penny returned.”<sup>11</sup>

T. Alsop is not equal to Reading, nor can John Jones ride long journeys. I am glad you are returned ⟨...⟩

Mr. [John] Meriton will transcribe and send the letters next week.<sup>12</sup>

*Address:* “To / The Rev. Mr. Wesley.”

*Endorsement:* by CW, “Journal / April 10. 1748.”

*Source:* holograph; Huntington Library, Manuscripts, HM 57035.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Rom. 12:18.

<sup>10</sup>Apparently in CW’s reply of c. Apr. 11 to JW’s of Apr. 4; it is not known to survive.

<sup>11</sup>Quoting John Cennick to JW, Mar. 14, 1748.

<sup>12</sup>The letters about Skinner’s Alley mention in JW to CW, Apr. 4.

<sup>13</sup>The personal message and the address are in JW’s handwriting, the remainder in that of Robert Swindells. Transcriptions published in *WHS* 3 (1902): 42–46; and JW, *Works*, 26:305–10.



From Howell Harris

Montgomeryshire  
April 18, 1748

My Dear Brother Charles Wesley,

I was concerned I could not see you at Garth, and felt your burden and would willingly have borne it for you. I was thankful for that deliverance from the hands of unreasonable men, and that the Lord by your ministry has visited them that sat in darkness. Go on my dear, honoured brother and blaze abroad the fame of Jesus our God in human form. O good news, a Saviour is born for us! This his primacy for us! O mighty conqueror!

Well it is for poor vile abominable me, the chief indeed of all sinners, utterly unworthy indeed to lift up my eyes to heaven. I need go no further than myself to see what a creature the devil is and what a fall we have had. And is it possible? And shall *I*, my brother, spend an eternity with you among the faithful? I, the most unfaithful living? *Free*, free grace indeed! This is my song in my latest moment and to all eternity.

The care of our suffering brethren in northern Wales has been laid before you by Mr. Phillips,<sup>1</sup> as my rounds so happened to have been thus settled that I could not see you myself. As you promised to speak to Counsellor Glanville,<sup>2</sup> we don't move till we have his advice by a line from you.<sup>3</sup> I have perused the Act (22nd of Charles 2nd) on which Sir Watkins<sup>4</sup> proceeds. It is made and intended, you will see in the preamble, against seditious conventicles; and could not be intended, or with any show of justice executed, against the true sons of the Church meeting together for reformation in and not out of it or separate from it. As it never had been known that any *in* the Church have thus gone about for the Puritans, who seemed to be chiefly levelled at in that Act were nonconformists and drew people from Church-communion all they could—as we draw them into it. Which makes a great difference between our and their assemblies, and is a plea that ought to exempt us wholly from its power and ought to weigh also with the friends of the government, as our loyalty is so well known, if any true policy, justice, or prudence, with any spark of love to truth, is left in the land.

At Exeter, in the Quarter Session after Christmas, when a house was indicted on that Act, the council against our brethren desired the court to quash the indictment; and showed that, however it might do in the reign of King Charles, that it would not pass now in any court in England in this reign.

When I was bound over some years ago to appear in a Quarter Session, and that Act was read in court against me, a council did plead for me that unless they could prove there was sedition in the assembly I was concerned in, that Act had no power against me. And to spare them the trouble of proving that, I would prove the contrary by subscribing the Articles and taking the oath, etc., as I had done before when I was matriculated at Oxford. And upon that I was dismissed. The court judged that Act did not reach. I was again taken up in two other courts and it came to nothing.

But if it will be judged that we are under the tenor of that Act, it is of such a severe nature and empowers every magistrate to raise 40£ on all our assemblies. And many are ready to fall upon us everywhere, only they wait to see the event of this. Laws bend. We intend to try it. And there is no appeal to any other court, if we are under that Act, but to the next Quarter Session. And if judgment be given

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<sup>1</sup>Rev. Edward Phillips (1716–c. 1776), rector at Maesmynys, Wales, friendly to the revival.

<sup>2</sup>William Glanville Esq. (c. 1651–1748), a barrister of Plough Court, Fetter Lane, London had become a serious Christian earlier this year through reading JW's *Earnest Appeal*; see JW, *Journal*, Jan. 6, 1748, *Works* 20:204.

<sup>3</sup>This sentence replace one struck-through that read: "I am now in expectation of an answer with the Counsel's opinion in the matter what course to take."

<sup>4</sup>Sir Watkin Williams Wynn of Wynnstay, Rhiwabon, a bitter persecutor of the Methodist in north Wales. He died suddenly in March 1749.

there against the plaintiff, he is liable to pay triple costs. So that it is a hellish tool, such as our adversaries can't desire a better, and such as will oblige us to take the protection of the Toleration Act. Which will much cramp the work and stop field preaching in its present wideness, stumble the weak, and give a sad blow to the Church.

We have laid aside time for prayer and the Lord appeared much among us. All seem hearty. Let an effectual stroke be given. Let the King's nearest friends know how much it concerns his real interest to appear on our behalf, and how much it will hurt the Church that after all our suffering from the mob and wicked world that we should be obliged to licence ourselves and houses and so take dissenter's protection, when we are so faithful to the Church. Sure there is a storm before some glorious light breaking in. O Lamb of God, direct now our hearts, and council, and all our motion. What are all the little concerns in life to the concerns of thy house, oh God?

I know you'll leave no stone unturned. And as it is our Lord's common cause, exert yourself to the utmost. Much depends on this, therefore we mean to do nothing till a line of direction comes from you, my dearest fellow servant.

Yours to all eternity,

How. Harris

I wish the councillor's mind were known, whether any action may safely be maintained against the officers in another court than the Quarter Session there. For their not only taking up an ordained clergyman,<sup>5</sup> and going to his pocket to take 1£ - 0 - 2d out thence, whilst one held both his hands; in their levying a fine of 20£ on him, though he had also offered to take the Oath of Allegiance and declared he had never been under any ecclesiastical censure.

Q[uestion] 1. Whether it was lawful for them to fine a clergyman by that Act?

Q. 2. Whether the law justifies one to hold both his arms whilst the other took the money out of his pockets?

Q. 3. Whether the matter can be tried in any other than the Quarter Session, as that Act directs?

Q. 4. If so, what method is best to sue? What law to take?

There have been two houses and two preachers fined, besides several of the hearers. Would it not be right if our being conformists and continuing members of the Church—and so being, not making any seditious conventicles separate from or contrary or against the true interest of the Church—will but fairly and justly take in from the force of that Act to draw up a petition to the government for some means to ward off the power of such men that are now all ready greedily to take this ready tool to impoverish all the poor lambs? Rather than go under the protection of the Toleration Act, because it would carry such a face of dissent from the Church. Though indeed we are clear on this. We reject all such means, and through the little all the poor souls lie as a sacrifice to their ungodly hands!

These things are of such moment. And as we all meet now very soon here to determine, and at present many doors are locked, till we are fully persuaded what is the way to tread in now. So I am persuaded of your immediate answer to yours for (last word unclear).

Direct to me to be left at Mr. Mends,<sup>6</sup> clothier, at the Priory in Carmarthen. I shall be in that country after this week, for near a fortnight.

*Source:* Harris's copy for his records; National Library of Wales, Trevecka Letters, #1782.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Peter Williams, whom Sir Watkin summoned to appear before him at Wynnstay, took the money from his pocket, and levied a fine of £20 upon the goods of an *exhorter*.

<sup>6</sup>Christopher and William Mends, Methodist exhorters. see *Journal C.M. Hist. Soc.* xxix, p. 72).

<sup>7</sup>An abridged transcription appears in *Selected Trevecka Letters, 1747–94*, 14–17.

Marmaduke Gwynne to Sarah Gwynne Jr.<sup>1</sup>

Garth  
April 25 [1748<sup>2</sup>]

Dear Sally,

I take this opportunity by the Ludlow shoemaker of thanking you for your letter. I intended going last Monday to Prosteigne sessions, and to have come from thence to see you and the rest of my relations, but was prevented by having a sore throat and the weather being rainy. If I am well and the weather favourable, I design the first fair day after next Sunday to set out for Ludlow, and hope with God's leave to be there before night. I hear your brother is expected to return from London the beginning of next week. I come with an intention of bringing you all back with me. Therefore you and the rest, I hope, will return with as much pleasure as I shall take in coming for you. I am sorry for their own sake that the majority of the people of Ludlow are so averse to hear Mr. Wesley, but I believe God has a few of those there that would gladly receive him and the comfortable doctrine which he preaches, being no other than the same with the litany, Homilies, and Articles of the Church of England, which the greatest number of her own clergy have for several years so shamefully fallen away from, and that has occasioned so much immorality, profaneness, and atheism as abounds amongst the enemies of religious societies. But though Satan and his instruments are permitted by divine providence for a while to roar and invert his against Christ's real members, yet God in Christ will enable his children to rejoice at the ill treatment they meet with from the world, as well-knowing there can be no agreement or union between the seeds of the woman and the seed of the serpent. But after the battle is over, eternal happiness will be the portion of the former, and everlasting misery the reward of the ungodly. O may God of his free grace and rich and boundless mercy enlighten all those that are yet in darkness to see, believe, and obey the gospel, and then by experience they will not cease declaring that our Saviour has made their jobs easy and removed the burden that sin and Satan have laid upon them. And this our dear Redeemer by his blood has purchased for all real believers, without any wort or merit in them.

The bearer is going this day to Glanbran,<sup>3</sup> so that it is uncertain when he will be at Ludlow, and if he is not sure (provided no unforeseen accident happens) [of] being with you before Saturday night, I shall I hope be soon after him. All here unite with me in our dues to all or relations and enquiring acquaintances in Ludlow, being, dear Sally,

Your most affectionate father,

MDuke Gwynne

Give my love and service to Mr. Pyfinch.

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDWes 7/4.

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<sup>1</sup>Marmaduke Gwynne (1691–1769), a well-to-do landholder of Garth, Wales, and loyal member of the established Church, was drawn into the evangelical revival in 1737 through the preaching of Howell Harris. He began offering support to the leaders of the revival, including the Wesley brothers. CW met Gwynne's daughter Sarah (1726–1822) in Aug. 1747 and they would be married in April 1749. We have included in this collection letters of the extended Gwynne family that provide insight into CW and Sarah's relationship and developments within their family.

<sup>2</sup>Orig., "1745"; but Gwynne only came to know the Wesley brothers in. CW had been in Garth briefly the beginning of Apr. 1748 and indicated to Sally his interest in marriage. CW left Apr. 5 for London, and Sarah apparently went to Ludlow, where mention of the Wesleys drew negative reaction.

<sup>3</sup>The estate of Marmaduke's brother, Roderick Gwynne (1695–1777).

From the Rev. George Whitefield<sup>1</sup>

Deal  
July 5, 1748

Will you not be glad to hear that the God of the seas and the God of the dry land hath brought me to my native country once more? I came last from the Bermudas, where the friend of sinners has been pleased to own my poor labours abundantly. I hope I come in the spirit of love, desiring to study and pursue those things which make for peace. This is the language of my heart:

O let us find the ancient way,  
Our wond'ring foes to move;  
And force the heathen world to say,  
See how these Christians love.<sup>2</sup>

I purpose, God willing, to be in London in a few days. In the meanwhile I salute you and all the followers of the blessed Lamb of God most heartily.

Be pleased to pray for, and give thanks in behalf of, reverend and dear brother,  
Yours most affectionately in Christ,

G. W.

*Source:* published transcription; Whitefield, *Letters*, 2:146–47.

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<sup>1</sup>This letter was apparently sent to London, to the attention of either Wesley brother, announcing Whitefield's return to England from his third visit to America. He had been absent since August 1744. JW was currently in the north of England. CW was in London and met with Whitefield and Howell Harris two days later to discuss how there might be greater union among the branches of the revival.

<sup>2</sup>CW, Hymn on 1 John 3:18, st. 9, *HSP* (1740), 119.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

[Dublin]  
c. September 14, 1748

A Short Account of the Death of Daniel Galvin, Late of Dublin

He was born in and brought up and educated in the principles of the Church of Rome. In the year 17–, He was apprentice in Dublin to be a cabinet-maker. He lived as the generality of young people do, in pleasure and sensual delights, not regarding the one thing needful, thinking it sufficient if sometimes he attended the mass.

But about the latter end of last May or the beginning of June he went to hear Mr. [Thomas] Williams. The seed fell on good ground. He not only heard but kept the word of God. It was to him as a hammer which breaketh the rock in pieces. He was presently awakened and felt himself a sinner, which he no sooner did than he left his sins and the Church of Rome together. He was a penitent indeed, and brought fruits meet for repentance.

When he left the Church of Rome he joined in communion with the Church of England and soon became a member of the society here.

From that time he was remarkably serious, and never wilfully lost any opportunity of hearing the word, meeting his class, and attending the church and sacrament.

He warned all that came in his way to flee from the wrath to come and to seek the Lord while he might be found, but did not press on others what himself did not do. His reproofs were so reasonable that all who were acquainted him blessed God for him and deplored their loss when he took him from them.

About the beginning of September he caught a violent cold which introduced a spotted fever. Yet it did not hinder him from coming to the preaching three or four times. But it soon grew too hard for him and at last confined him to his bed.

He experienced a very great desire to see me, but something or other hindered that I did not go for the space of two or three days, in which time brother [Charles] Wesley (who was then in town) visited him. He found him very ill both in body and soul. The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmities but a wounded spirit who can bear?

Still he grew more and more uneasy to see me. I now went to see him and found him exceeding bad. But though he was delirious, he knew me and was glad to see me. I spoke a little to him and spent some time in prayer with those about him, and then departed, but did not neglect to visit him frequently after that time.

His disorder had some intervals, at which times he laboured to enter in at the straight gate, particularly on the Sunday before he died. He then seemed confident that the Lord would visit him with his salvation and said to one that was with him he would not take ten thousand worth for that confidence and added, “If I had a thousand lives they should all go for Christ.” And again, “if Christ would but reveal himself to me, I should not care how long I lay on this bed. Where is the physician of souls? Where is the blood of sprinkling? Oh that thou wouldst look upon me as thou didst upon the thief on the cross.”

Speaking of the blood of Christ, he said, “That blood is warmer than all the blood in the world,” and turning to them in the room he said, “Don’t be afraid my brethren, Christ will come. He hath said, ‘Look unto me and be ye saved.’ I know I shall see the Lord before I go hence to be no more seen.”

On the morrow morning he was sensible again and continued so till about three or four o’clock. He was now quite impatient to see me, and no marvel, for glory be to his name who sends by whom he will send, God designed me to be the welcome messenger—though neither of us knew it. One of our brothers who lived in the same house came to call me, but I was on my way shortly before he set out.

When I came in I found him past hopes of recovering, but earnestly wrestling with God for the blessing; for still he was without the knowledge of salvation which is given by the forgiveness of sins. I spoke a few words to him and then went to prayer. I soon felt that God was there. My own heart was

broken, as was most of theirs who were then present. I found access to the throne of grace, and begged the mediator to remember his own agony and bloody sweat, and by his cross and passion to deliver his servant who was appointed to die.

I rose up and began to speak of the suitability of Christ to save them that are ready to perish and of his willingness to do it. But I had not spoken long before the Lord came suddenly to his temple, took away the veil and revealed himself unto his sorrowful disciple.

Immediately he cried out, “I see him, I see him—the Lamb, the Lamb.” Now sorrow and sighing fled away while he ate and drank of the bread and water of life. Delight and satisfaction sat upon his countenance and the name of Jesus was like ointment poured forth. When I stopped speaking he cried out with eagerness a few words more. I asked him if he had any doubt or fear, he answered, “No, none at all,” and said, “I have no pain, I never had such pleasure in all my life. It runs all through me,” meaning the love of God. The words which he now spoke were spirit and life, for turning himself to them in the room we not only heard but felt him say, “My brethren make haste, give all diligence, for now is the accepted time,” or words of that import.

One of our brethren called to see him about two hours after I left him and asked him how he did. He answered, “Full of peace and joy in believing,” and squeezing him by the hand said to him, “Praise, praise.”

Soon after Mr. Williams called and found him rejoicing in God his Saviour. He now bore his affliction with great patience and was never heard to complain either of pain or sickness.

Most part of Tuesday he was light in the head till towards evening, when the minister of Saint John’s came to see him.<sup>3</sup> He asked him how he did. Daniel replied, “Very well with the blessing of God.” The minister then asked him if he had no doubt, he told him, “No, none at all.” He then bid him take care he did not deceive himself. He told him he did take care.

To one that came in to see him, he said it will be but a day or two we shall see one another here before we meet in glory. He sung and rejoiced often even to his last moments, which was on Wednesday, the 14th of September in the twenty-first year of his age after about 14 days’ sickness.

O let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his.<sup>4</sup>

*Endorsement:* by CW, “[[? death of papist]]” and “Death of Dan Galvil [sic] / papist once, now a Saint / in Glory.”

*Source:* holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/62.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>This may have been John Owen, D.D., prebendary of St. John the Evangelist 1746–61; but more likely it was the current curate at the church, John Gart.

<sup>4</sup>See Num. 23:10. At the end of the account CW has written a note in shorthand: [[Whatman(?) read recantation]] (the opening could possibly be “a woman” instead, or any similar name with the consonants wtmn). CW was likely referring to Galvin’s formal recantation of his Catholic identity, required for him to join the Church of Ireland.

<sup>5</sup>For a digital copy and “as-is” transcription, see:  
<https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/services/digitisation-services/projects/rapture-and-reason/>

From the Rev. John Wesley  
–a journal letter

[Bristol]  
[September 15, 1748]

[Monday, Aug. 29.] In the evening I preached at Booth Bank. The hurry occasioned here by the inimitable Joseph Piccop is now over.<sup>1</sup> But he insists to this day upon the conversation which he says passed between him and me upon the road, and faces down both John Bennet and William Darney,<sup>2</sup> though they were close to him all the time.

Tue. 30. I preached about 1:00 at Oldfield Brow, and then rode on to Stockport. A little handful of people I found here also who are desirous to flee from the wrath to come. I stopped half an hour and gave them a short exhortation, for which they appeared to be exceeding thankful. Then we rode on to Woodley. We found many marks by the way of the late flood. John Bennet gave me the following account.<sup>3</sup>

Wed. 31. As we were riding toward Bangs, John Bennet showed me the gentleman's house, who was a few years since eminent through all these parts for all manner of wickedness. But two or three years ago (about the sixty-third year of his age) God laid his hand both upon his soul and body. From that time he was a new man. All his sins dropped off. He lived holy and unblameable in all things. And not being able to go about doing good, he resolved to do what he could at home. To this end he invited as many as pleased of his neighbours to his house every Sunday morning and evening, to whom he read the prayers of the Church [of England] and a sermon. Often a hundred and fifty or two hundred of them came at once. When I had done preaching at Bangs I received an invitation from him to call at his house. John Bennet and I rode down together. We found him rejoicing under the hand of God, and praising him for all his sufferings. And he was as teachable as a little child. Surely thou art not far from the kingdom of God!

In the evening I preached at Chinley; the next day, Sept. 1, near Finney Green at noon; and in the evening at Astbury, where the congregation was double to any I ever saw here before. Here I heard of something certain concerning Bridget Bostock, who lives in the parish of Sandbach near Middlewich, Cheshire. She is an elderly woman, neither rich nor poor, therefore she receives nothing of anyone. For about three months she has undertaken to cure blindness, lameness, and many diseases, only by stroking the part chiefly affected, and sometimes applying a little spittle. She commonly adds those words, "God bless you," or "God give you faith." She will suffer none to commend or thank her, but cuts them short with "Thank God, praise God." We found no room to doubt but that great numbers of sick had gradually mended from the time they were with her, and that some who had been blind, and some paralytic, had been healed at once, without any relapse.

Fri. 2. I rode to Wednesbury, and preached there about 4:00 in the afternoon. The congregation was as usual not inferior to that at Bristol, either for number or serious attention. I set out immediately after preaching, and about 9:00, with some difficulty, reached Meriden.

Sat. 3. Being on horseback at 4:00, I made as long stages as I could, and about 8:00 reached St. Albans. God sustained both man and beast, so that neither was weary, though I had rode today about seventy-eight miles.

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<sup>1</sup>Orig., "Pickup," a Baptist preacher; see JW, *Journal*, May 8, 1747, *Works*, 20:174.

<sup>2</sup>William Darney (d. 1774) became a pedlar-preacher on his conversion in the Scottish awakening in 1741 and formed religious societies in the West Riding of Yorkshire, which were secured for Methodism by the advocacy of William Grimshaw. At the 1747 Conference Darney was listed as a local preacher, and in 1748 he was received as an Assistant; but he proved so uncouth that he was laid aside in Nov. 1751 (see JW, *Works*, 10:206, 214, 264).

<sup>3</sup>The account is not in fact included in this copy.

Sun. 4. Being on horseback again at 4:00, I reached the Foundery between 7:00 and 8:00. I preached at the chapel before noon, in Moorfields at 5:00, to a larger congregation than I have seen there for some years. Finding myself much out of order, I thought it best not to delay till I was quite laid up, and so in the evening took a little physic, by which, through the blessing of God, I was [so] much better the next day that I was able to preach at Wapping in the evening. Only I felt much weakness. But if it be best, God is able to make me strong.

Tue. 6. I went on in visiting the classes where Mr. Jones had left off.<sup>4</sup> But I did not find that life as when I met them last. Many were wanting, and many were asleep again. I doubt, if I live to visit them again when I am not so straitened for time, they will find me such as they would not.

Wed. 7. Being not able with tolerable decency to excuse myself any longer, I went to Chelsea,<sup>5</sup> and spent two or three hours as in the times that are past. I hoped one journey would serve, but I was too hasty in reckoning. Lady Huntingdon pressed me to come again on Friday, so that I could not handsomely decline it. Our pew at the chapel in the evening was so full I could hardly stir. Colonel Hilliard, Lord Townshend,<sup>6</sup> and many others were there, who came with Lady Bath,<sup>7</sup> Lady Townshend, and Lady Charlotte Edwin.<sup>8</sup> I scarce ever spake stronger in my life than I did tonight, from those words in the second lesson, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect, ...?”<sup>9</sup> Perhaps even the rich may be witnesses of these things.

Fri. 9. I took up my cross once more and came to Chelsea a little after eleven. After some conversation Lady Huntingdon desired me to preach. Part of the congregation was Lord Huntingdon<sup>10</sup> (just come from Oxford), Lady Bath, Lady Townshend, and Baron Sölenenthal, the Danish ambassador’s brother.<sup>11</sup> I spoke exceeding plain from those words, “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.”<sup>12</sup> Yet I cannot find that any one of the audience was offended. What is this which God is working in the earth? Before I went I had an opportunity of talking alone with Lady Huntingdon. I trust I delivered my own soul. And she received it well, the tears standing in her eyes. But at the same time there was a consequence I was not aware of. She begged [me] to come once more, “if but for one hour—for half an hour.” Not knowing what God might have to do I told her I would “endeavour to come on Sunday evening,” though my time would “be but short.”

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<sup>4</sup>John Jones (1721–85), a native of Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, was one of JW’s most scholarly lay helpers. He matriculated at Trinity College, Oxford in 1736, receiving his BA in 1739, his MA in 1742, and a B.Med. in 1745 (by virtue of this last degree he was known as Dr. Jones). Originally converted under Whitefield, Jones gravitated to the Arminianism of the Wesley brothers and began serving JW as an assistant in London in 1746.

<sup>5</sup>Where LH had a home.

<sup>6</sup>Charles Townshend (1700–64), third Viscount Townshend, who married Etheldreda (or Audrey) Harrison, who died 1788.

<sup>7</sup>Anna Maria Gumley (1694–1758; sister of Samuel Gumley) married in 1714 William Pulteney (1684–1764), the opponent of Sir Robert Walpole; in 1742 Pulteney ruined his political career by becoming the Earl of Bath.

<sup>8</sup>Charlotte (1704–77), daughter of James, fourth Duke of Hamilton (1658–1712); she married Charles Edwin, M.P., who died in 1756.

<sup>9</sup>Rom. 8:33.

<sup>10</sup>Lady Huntingdon’s husband had died in 1746, and this was young Francis (1729–89), the tenth earl, a young man quite unsympathetic to his mother’s religious enthusiasm.

<sup>11</sup>Orig., ‘Zulendahl’. Henrik Frederik van Sölenenthal (1685–52) was ambassador to England from Denmark, 1736–50. His brother’s name is unclear.

<sup>12</sup>Mark 12:34.



Sat. 10. I visited the classes in Southwark, the only part of the society in London which increases daily. This I chiefly impute to the zeal and vigilance of the leaders, who do indeed labour in the work, and spare no care or pains to seek and save that which is lost.

Sun. 11. At seven and five I preached in the fields, at ten in the chapel. The congregations in one place and in the other were equally quiet and attentive. About eight I reached Chelsea, and found Lord Huntingdon, Lady Huntingdon, Lady Betty,<sup>13</sup> Lady Bath, Lady Townshend, Lady Thanet,<sup>14</sup> Lady Hotham,<sup>15</sup> and several others, waiting for my coming. I spoke much closer than on Friday, from those words, “God is a spirit, . . .”<sup>16</sup> After preaching they gathered round me on every side, and I was enabled to speak to their hearts. They all stood without either speech or motion till Lady Huntingdon sunk down into a chair. Surely I am not come this warfare on my own cost. Now let God do as seemeth [good] in his own eyes!

Mon. 12. I rode to Reading, and preached there to a well-behaved but small congregation. It does not appear to me that the time is come for doing much good in this place. Only it [is] well that a seed should be kept alive. By and by God may give an increase. In the evening we rode to Hungerford.

Tue. 13. After a short stay at Kingswood we came to Bristol. I preached in the new-built room, which is indeed an awful place, and contains near twice as many people as it did before. At five in the morning there was such a congregation there as I never saw before in a morning at Bristol.

After preaching I talked with the stewards of the building, men whose hearts God has prepared for the work. They have expended all the money they had received, and about an hundred pounds more. But they are not discouraged, believing he will provide, whose is the earth and the fullness thereof.

Thur. 15. I set out at 4:00, brother Moss and Slocomb accompanying me.<sup>17</sup> As we rode through Langford, a town ten miles from Bristol, a man observing me read as I rode, suspected who I was, and called after me again, telling me, “Mr. Thomson of Cornwall was in that house.”<sup>18</sup> We turned back and found it was so indeed. Not knowing of my coming, he was going to see Mr. Chapman.<sup>19</sup> We spent an hour in declaring to each other the wonderful things [that] God had done. After that I rode on to Middlezoy. Hav[ing] heard an exceeding good account of a young man here, Cornelius Bastable, both with regard to his gifts and grace and fruits, I asked him if he was willing just then to leave all—his relations, friends, business, home—and to give himself up to the one work of calling sinners to repentance. He said he was, and that he had weighed all circumstances before, knowing in his own mind that I would now ask him the question.<sup>20</sup> I desired him then to go home and fetch his horse. He did so, and

<sup>13</sup>LH’s daughter, Elizabeth Frances Hastings (1731–1808).

<sup>14</sup>Mary (1700–51), daughter of William Saville, second Marquess of Halifax, and his second wife Mary (daughter of Daniel (Finch), second Earl of Nottingham), who in 1722 married Sackville (Tufton), Earl of Thanet (1688–1753).

<sup>15</sup>Lady Gertrude (Stanhope) Hotham (1696–1775), widow of Sir Charles Hotham (1693–1738), 5th Baronet of Scarborough, became a Methodist sympathizer and friend of CW’s family, including him in her will. See CW’s epitaph for her in *AM* 2 (1779): 545; and *MS Funeral Hymns* (1756–87), 78.

<sup>16</sup>John 4:24.

<sup>17</sup>Richard Moss (1718–84), born in Hurlston, Cheshire, came to London in 1737 and heard JW preach. By 1744 he was not only a Methodist but living at the Foundery and accompanying JW on preaching trips. John Slocomb (d. 1777) was one of JW’s travelling preachers from 1744; see JW, *Works*, 10:147, 464.

<sup>18</sup>Rev. George Thomson (1698–1782), vicar of St. Gennys.

<sup>19</sup>Rev. Walter Chapman of Bath.

<sup>20</sup>Cornelius Bastable (c. 1725–1775), apparently a native of Middlezoy, Somerset, began “exhorting” in 1747 and now came to JW’s attention. He appeared in the Minutes as a “probationary helper” in 1750, but did not advance to the regular itinerancy, likely because he married Catherine

we rode on together to Beer Crocombe.  
You'll hear more first opportunity.

Endorsement, by CW, "[[Journal Sept]] 1748."

*Source:* holograph; (current location unknown) John Wesley Works Archive (Duke) holds copy.<sup>21</sup>

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Stockdale (1726–86) in Cork in 1752 (see *Works*, 10:205, 237). Their time thereafter was split between Cork and Bristol.

<sup>21</sup>Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 26:328–32.

1749

From Sarah (Evans) Gwynne to JW<sup>1</sup>

Garth  
January 9, 1749

Reverend Sir,

I received the favour of yours,<sup>2</sup> and entirely concur with you in every particular mentioned in the first part of your letter, and wish I could join in approving of the proposals you was pleased to make in the latter part of it. My objection is that nothing can be settled where no money is laid down, or lands secured for the due payment thereof. If that can be compassed without inconvenience to your brother and self, I find it would be [satisfactory] to as many of this family as have been made acquainted with it, who all join with me in hearty respects to you, being, reverend sir,

Your faithful humble servant,

Sa: Gwynne

*Address:* 'To / The Revnd. Mr John Wesley'

*Endorsement:* by CW, '[[January]] 9, [[Mrs. Gwynne]], 1748 / [[to my brother]]'.

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDCW 5/17.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Born to a wealthy family in Cardiganshire, Wales, Sarah Evans (1695–1770) married Marmaduke Gwynne (1691–1769) in July 1716. As this letter indicates, she initially resisted the possibility of her daughter Sarah marrying CW. She eventually relented when the Wesley brothers pledged appropriate financial security.

<sup>2</sup>JW's letter, apparently sent Jan. 3, is not known to survive. But CW's letters to both Mrs. Gwynne and her daughter Sally of that date do survive and enumerate some of the financial arrangements that JW's letter surely mentioned as well.

<sup>3</sup>Transcription published in *Works*, 26:346–47.

From Sarah (Evans) Gwynne to CW

Garth  
January 9, 1748/9

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I am obliged to you for the favour of your letter,<sup>1</sup> and assure you with the utmost sincerity that I should be pleased was there no objection could be made to your good brother's proposal; which, however kind in itself, yet is (as you justly observe) no sufficient ground of satisfaction to me, as being only a present provision. But to let you see how willing I am that the affair now in hand should take effect, I intend to mention what I imagine may make it feasible. Your brother's and your writings are, I find, very valuable. Would it therefore be inconvenient to raise money on them for the purpose I mentioned to you? If it can be attended with any ill consequences, I would not for the world it should be attempted. I expect, dear sir, you will deal as faithfully with me on that head as I believe you have in every other particular.

If I have done anything to oblige you, I am sure I have therein much more obliged myself, for without dissimulation, I have a real regard and affection for you, and shall do everything that I think is consistent with my duty to convince you of it.

I shall be glad to receive what farther particulars you think proper, and wish all obstacles may be removed.

As to my girl's fortune,<sup>2</sup> I shall insist on nothing in relation to it that can give you any just cause of uneasiness. If other matters can be compassed, you and she shall order that as you please.

I should at first have been, and still am, perfectly pleased that the whole affair should be decided by Mr. [Marmaduke] Gwynne, none being more capable or so proper as himself to determine what so nearly concerns his child.

Mr. Gwynne and all this family join me in sincere respect to you, whom am, dear sir,  
Your most faithful, humble servant,

Sa. Gwynne

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDCW 5/18.

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<sup>1</sup>See CW to Sarah (Evans) Gwynne, Jan. 3, 1749.

<sup>2</sup>Sarah Gwynne Jr., to whom CW was proposing marriage.

From John Bennet

[Chinley]  
[c. January 10, 1749<sup>1</sup>]

Upon the Occasion of Edward Dunston's death<sup>2</sup>

Sir,

The righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come.<sup>3</sup>

It is an unaccountable loss we have sustained in these parts by the death of our dear brother Dunston. His bright example of holy living is scarce to be paralleled. I am constrained by the Lord and Giver of life to do justice to his character, and therefore to speak simply what I know of him, since the grave cannot praise the Lord. Death cannot celebrate him. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day.

It is no small time I have had given me to inspect narrowly into his behaviour, both in public and private, during which I always observed his zeal and love to God in his readiness and willingness to do good to the bodies and souls of the children of men. He was endued with a double portion of the Spirit of God. His speech and his preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. By manifestation of the truth commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

He was one, I observed, that would not give way to Satan or ever suffer anyone (was it in his power to prevent them) to handle the Word of God deceitfully. He was not ashamed of the testimony of his Lord, but was a willing partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God. His courteous behaviour and affableness of mind gained him a good report of them that were without.

His being so young caused me the more narrowly to inspect his behaviour in public and private, lest he should err. But I acknowledge, to the praise of the glory of God (by whose grace alone he stood), I was never able *justly* to reprove him of any fault worthy of blame.

I acknowledge with shame and grief I was tempted to think hardly of him, and to have entertained hard thoughts against him, as though his love was feigned, because I always perceived the same mind in him. I was tempted also to think him self-confident, because he always rejoiced.

And again, at other times I found a desire would have lodged in my heart (had I not, through the grace of God, been prevented) to have had him removed to some other part of the vineyard for no other reason but this: he drew the multitudes after him wherever he went. In Derbyshire, Cheshire, and Lancashire he was very useful. The publicans and sinners drew near to hear him, and many were ready to say, "He spoke as never man spoke."<sup>4</sup> I have heard him, not only in public but in private, with meekness instruct the ignorant how to recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who were taken captive by him at his will. From the first day he came amongst us he kept back nothing that was profitable unto us, but hath showed us and hath taught us publicly and from house to house, testifying to all repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

And though he had trials of diverse kinds, with persecutions, yet none of those things did move him. Neither counted he his life dear unto himself, so that he might finish his course with joy, and the

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<sup>1</sup>CW received this account in time to read to the society in London on Jan. 14, 1749 (as recorded in a letter of that date to Sarah Gwynne Jr.).

<sup>2</sup>Orig. throughout, "Dunstone." Edward Dunston became an itinerant Methodist preacher about 1746, appearing in the 1747 Minutes (see JW, *Works*, 10:205, 827). In a letter of John Bennet to JW of Oct. 22, 1748 he is described as "exceedingly feeble."

<sup>3</sup>See Isa. 57:1.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. John 7:46.

ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God. Which ended on Friday, the 6th of January 1748/9, as follows.

His health was much impaired by the abundant pains he took in spreading the glad tidings of salvation, and the more so because of a disorder he continually laboured under and not known, not until a little before his death—a rupture. I was with him at John Nelson’s, and during the time I was with him I was almost continually telling him of death. But it was not in my power to move him, or in any wise to alter his countenance; unless, as I have observed, I could have extorted a smile. (I added to the above his last words, as on page 25).

*Source:* Bennet’s copy for his records; Letterbook (MARC, MA 1977/130), 26–28.

[p. 25]

Mr. Edward Dunston’s Dying Words

Mr. Dunston was born at \_\_\_\_\_ in Cornwall. He was a young man of ready wit and quick understanding. He was called of God when very young to preach the gospel, and though many hindrances were strewed in the way, yet nothing was able to obstruct him in his pilgrimage here below. And notwithstanding his youth, he was an example to the believers in every place in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. He was vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that opposed themselves. After a few years spent in publishing the glad tidings, he sickened and died at John Nelson’s in Birstall, Yorkshire (to wit) on Friday evening, about ten minutes after 11:00, the 6th of January 1748/9. A little before his death, Mary Rendor of Bradford being with him and observing his strength decay, she was pensive and sad; and coming sit in the room she felt an unusual presence of the Lord, even so as to seize upon her bodily strength. She believed he was at that moment struck with death. She got up from the seat on which she sat and went to the bedside to see if she could see any visible mark of death. She saw a great change in him. All expectations of recovery fled away, which caused her to weep. He perceiving the tears flow from her eyes put forth his hand and wiped them away, saying “Why are you so cast down? Will you go with me?” She answered, “I wish I might.” A few hours after he broke out in prayer saying “O Lord take us into thy care and heavenly benediction, and unto thy heavenly kingdom for evermore.” And then resigned his breath.

*Source:* Bennet’s copy for his records; Letterbook (MARC, MA 1977/130), 25.

**From Mary Naylor**

[Bath]  
[c. January 10, 1749]

Dear Sir,

I return you hearty thanks for your kind letter and bless God on your behalf who hath given you patience to bear with all my impertinence. I am not now anxious to know your affairs. All my desire is that in every circumstance of life you may be directed and guided by the Spirit of wisdom. And when I am thus persuaded, it is not in the power of Satan to give me any uneasiness on your account.

*Source:* quoted in CW letter to Sarah Gwynne Jr., Jan. 15–17, 1749; MARC, DDCW 5/20.

**From Charles Perronet<sup>1</sup>**

[Shoreham?]  
[c. January 10, 1749]

I suppose it will be no news to you, nor breach of trust in me to tell you some in London are distressed concerning your affair. I must confess I could not give up the matter on account of any one—or more—being affrighted at it. For can we conceive that though a voice from heaven showed you you were right in it, yet if it was a private revelation and not known to others, what effect could it have upon them? Could it be supposed possible to silence their prejudices? That the devil would do some harm by it, if God does not stop him, I look for. But as for it in general, the thing itself, I have this day and last night had a clearer witness of its being of God then ever. I have half wished to have been in London with you, considering how many you may have had to conflict with, that I might be as a screen against flies, and to help brush off those little stinging insects, who from not viewing you or the thing in a right light, do mightily infest, if not torment you.

*Source:* quoted in CW letter to Sarah Gwynne Jr., Jan. 15–17, 1749; MARC, DDCW 5/20.

**From Elizabeth (Stafford) Vigor**

[Bristol]  
[c. January 10, 1749]

I am not unmindful of our dear friend and minister. No, my soul has been deeply engaged for you, and truly sympathises in all your trials. For my heart's desire and prayer to God has been, and still is, that he would be pleased clearly to manifest his whole will unto you at this important juncture and remove all your doubts, and make your way plain before you. I have sure confidence to believe that he who hath not withheld his mind and counsel from you in times of greatest distress, is with you, and will still continue to be your support through all the troubles of this mortal life, and in the end will safely conduct you to his heavenly kingdom.

*Source:* quoted in CW letter to Sarah Gwynne Jr., Jan. 15–17, 1749; MARC, DDCW 5/20.

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Perronet (c. 1719–76), was a son of Rev. Vincent and Charity (Goodhew) Perronet of Shoreham. When his family aligned with Methodism in the mid-1740s, Charles became a travelling preacher. By the mid-1750s, he became estranged from the Wesley brothers, through his advocacy of separation from the Church of England. See CW's hymns on his death in *AM* 6 (1783): 224, 336.

From Rev. Vincent Perronet to Sarah (Evans) Gwynne<sup>1</sup>

Shoreham  
January 14, 1748<sup>2</sup>

Madam,

As the trouble of this proceeds from the most sincere friendship, I have reason to believe you will easily excuse it.

Give me leave then, madam, to say that if you and worthy Mr. [Marmaduke] Gwynne are of opinion that the match proposed by the Rev. Mr. Charles Wesley be of God, neither of you will suffer any objections drawn from this world to break it off. Alas, madam, what is all this world, and the glories of it? How little does the world appear to that mind, whose affections are set on things above! This state is what I trust you are seriously seeking after. I am sure it is a state worth every Christian's seeking after, and what every Christian must seek after, if ever he hopes to get to heaven.

I have a daughter now designed for a pious gentleman whose fortune is not half that of our friend's,<sup>3</sup> and yet I would not exchange him for a Star and Garter.<sup>4</sup> I only mention this that I might not appear to offer an opinion which I would not follow myself.

However, I have been hitherto speaking as if Mr. Wesley's circumstances really wanted an apology. But this is not the case. The very writings of these two gentlemen are, *even at this time, a very valuable estate*; and when it shall please God to open the minds of people more, and prejudice is worn off, it will be still much more valuable. I have seen what an able bookseller has valued a great part of their works at, which is £2,500, but I will venture to say, *that this is not half their value*. They are works which will last and sell while any sense of true religion and learning shall remain among us. However, as they are not of the same nature with an estate in land, they cannot be either sold or pledged without the most manifest loss and inconvenience.

I shall trouble you, madam, no farther than only to add that from the time I had the pleasure of seeing Miss [Sarah] Gwynne at my house,<sup>5</sup> I have often had her upon my mind. I then perceived so much grace and good sense in that young lady that, when this affair was first mentioned to me, I could not help rejoicing at what promised so much happiness to the church of God.

May that God in whose hands are the hearts of the children of men direct all of you in such a manner as may tend to the promoting his honour, and the kingdom of his dear Son. I am, with great respect to worthy Mr. Gwynne, yourself, and good family, madam,

Your very sincere and affectionate friend and servant,

Vincent Perronet

Source: published transcription; CW, *MS Journal*, Jan. 14, 1748.

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<sup>1</sup>Rev. Vincent Perronet (1693–1785), vicar of Shoreham from 1734 to his death. He first met JW in Aug. 1744, being introduced through Henry Piers. His interest in and support of the Methodist revival was intensified by the death of his son Vincent in 1746. Within a couple of years Peronnet was one of the strongest supporters and confidants of both JW and CW. This letter on CW's behalf is typical.

<sup>2</sup>This dating is in "old style." It is really January 1749.

<sup>3</sup>William Briggs (1722–88), whose wedding to Elizabeth Perronet CW would officiate Jan. 28.

<sup>4</sup>I.e., for a Duke.

<sup>5</sup>See CW, *MS Journal*, July 5, 1748.



From James Erskine

London  
January 16, 1749

Dear Sir,

The paper from which the enclosed was copied was for that purpose put in the hands of an honest Christian friend last Tuesday morning. He brought me not the copy which you now have under this cover till late yesternight; having, it seems, been much taken up with his own affairs. If your brother and you will take the trouble to read and consider it, I entreat to know your judgements of the contents, which though differing from your opinions, yet I humbly hope are not expressed with self-confidence, nor unsuitably to the respect and love which I bear to you. To find on solid grounds what is God's truth is all the aim of, dear sir,

Your most affectionate friend and humble servant,

James Erskine

[Page 1]      **Some Observations on Mr. John Wesley's Sermon Preached by Him  
1 January 1748/9 on Genesis 17:1<sup>1</sup>**

I having not only heard but seen, and I humbly hope have in some measure felt, that the power of God has accompanied and still accompanies his ministry and his brother's, Mr. Charles [Wesley], I cannot but have much respect and love for them. And this cannot but incline me to listen favourably to what they deliver in their office as ministers of the New Testament. And all this has for several years produced more intercourse between them and me than I have had with several other clergymen of my acquaintance. Yet they maintain some opinions, and use some expressions and ways of speaking and explaining, which hitherto I have not seen good ground for. And no esteem or favour for any men whomever can persuade me to receive their opinions or modes of speaking or explaining, but only the evidence of truth as it shall humbly appear to me on due examination in the presence of God. And I know that these thy<sup>2</sup> friends expect no more, and would as much as any blame the person who should receive anything as true and right because said by them. They preach, or earnestly in public and private urge home on the conscience, the great and essential doctrines of the gospel, and labour therein incessantly with more than ordinary success. Why then should I take offence at some differences, even as to material points? And how can I, notwithstanding thereof, but honour, love, and endeavour through grace to profit by them, whom I see the Lord honours to bring many to receive Jesus Christ as offered to us in the gospel, and as they have received him so to walk in him? And nothing that to me appears sinful is required to hold communion with them in the ordinances of the gospel; their administration whereof I have often known attended with great grace and power from on high as aforesaid.

I am only here to make my poor observations on that part of the aforesaid sermon which was about the attainableness of what he calls sinless perfection in this life, which is one of his opinions that I have not yet seen ground to embrace.

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<sup>1</sup>Erskine wrote in the margin: "Written very soon after hearing this sermon." The manuscript is a group of five leaves; on the back (page 10) is written: "Observations on the sermon preached by Mr. John Wesley, at the chapel in West Street near the 7 Dials, London, the 1st of January 1748/9, on Gen. 17:1, written very soon after hearing this sermon preached."

<sup>2</sup>Orig., "~~my honoured~~" changed to "thy." [There are scattered instances where text has been marked out and replaced. I note only those which are more than corrected mistakes or mere alternative wording.]

At hearing the sermon, he seemed to me to talk of this point more intelligibly than he formerly used to speak or write of it. I cannot tell whether it might not have partly proceeded from this, that he came not to particulars in the explication of it. But supposing an opinion intelligible, yet for all that it may be insufficiently proved, and I was not then satisfied that the arguments he used for it were good. I have since considered deliberately that which, according to the best of my apprehension and memory, he then said on this subject. And I write my humble thoughts [so] that I may lay them before him, that if he pleases to oblige me so much, he may give me his own farther thoughts on the question and what he delivered about it in that sermon.

He seemed to allow that the greatest saints in the patriarchal and Jewish states of the church did not attain to sinless perfection; and proved it as to the first by Job, and as to the other by Hezekiah and David. Job is expressly called a perfect man, and yet he sinned grievously under his severe afflictions. So did Hezekiah, who is said expressly to have been the best of all the kings of Judah, and particularly in his great unwillingness to die when Isaiah from the Lord bid him set his house in order. And David, expressly called a man after God's heart<sup>3</sup> (what can be stronger?), sinned much and greatly, and even at his death showed a spirit of revenge against Shimei—to whom he had sworn not to put him to death, and yet in his last instruction to Solomon bid him bring down Shimei's hoary head to the grave with blood.<sup>4</sup> And it not appearing that David had any special warrant for this (as some without sufficient evidence say he had), if a professed Christian should now at his death show such a spirit of revenge, it would be a great stretch of charity to think well of him. Yet none who reads the Scriptures can doubt that David on his death was conveyed to Abraham's bosom.

Here then Mr. [John] Wesley allows that a man's being expressly called "perfect," or by some appellation equivalent, does not prove that he was sinlessly perfect, but that the words must be taken under some limitation, though they be not restrained in the text. And it being allowed that none under the Old Testament could be sinlessly perfect though expressly called perfect, then the command in the text,<sup>5</sup> and other such, though expressly and unliedly<sup>6</sup> given, must be restrained to such perfection as they could attain to, since they could not arrive at sinless perfection. Or else they must be understood (as some other divines do) for what they ought, though they could not in this life be; for what they ought incessantly to press after, and come near to as they can, though in this life they never can fully attain it. If it be thought that there are other such texts in the Old Testament which are not to be restrained, it is incumbent on Mr. Wesley to produce them, and the reasons for excepting them from the general case. For the words of Scripture are not to be taken now this and then another way *ad libitum*.<sup>7</sup> Till that be done, no argument can be [p. 2] brought by him from the Old Testament for his opinion of sinless perfection.

And since such express appellations and precepts in the Old Testament are to be restrained, it is also incumbent on Mr. Wesley to show why they are not to be so restrained in the New. The language of God in both is much the same, though in different tongues. And his commands in both, when applicable under both of these his dispensations, are the same; and when otherwise to be taken in the New than in the Old, when abrogated or enlarged or limited, I suppose we are expressly told so in the New Testament, or have it by good consequences from what we are plainly taught in the New Testament, and not left to grope or wander in the dark after our own conceits and suppositions, and from thence to infer a different meaning of the New Testament words from the like in the Old. And till this be done, I do not see how Mr. Wesley can argue from such appellations or precepts, or other such expressions, in the New Testament any more than in the Old. And this the rather because, so far as I remember, there is not any mere man

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<sup>3</sup>Cf. Acts 13:22; 1 Sam. 13:14.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. 1 Kings 2:9.

<sup>5</sup>I.e., in Gen. 17:1.

<sup>6</sup>The spelling is fairly clear in the text; the meaning is less clear—perhaps something like "not open to error."

<sup>7</sup>"at one's pleasure."

called perfect in the New Testament. What is said of Zechariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1:6) comes nearest to it. They are said to be righteous before God, and walking in all his commandments and ordinances blameless. But though this be said in the New Testament, it is said of two that were under the legal dispensation, which was not then abrogated and succeeded by the gospel. And therefore, according to Mr. Wesley's own acknowledgment, it is to be limited. And indeed it must be limited from the text, for notwithstanding of this testimony for Zechariah, he then sinned by unbelief, and for that was struck and remained dumb several months (*ibid.*, v. 26 and v. 64). And it may be considered whether our Lord's rebuking the ruler for calling him good, though he knew him not [to] be God but took him for a mere man,<sup>8</sup> does not show his disapprobation of giving such appellations to any mere human creature. But to speak particularly to this text would lead me farther than my present business requires. And it is fitter for me here to notice these farther parallels between the Old and New Testament as to this matter. In the Old we read of the sins of the most eminent saint; so do we in the New. In the Old we are expressly told that all are sinners; so are we in the New. And whatever method be taken to restrain these texts will, I humbly conceive, afford the like for restraining such as may be adduced on the other side. I do not here enter on the consideration of any of those texts, because that were to enter on the question itself and my intention here is only to consider what Mr. Wesley delivered on it in that sermon.

But as to the limiting such texts in the Old yet not in the New Testament, as spoken to above, it will be said that there is a strong reason of the difference—namely, that no saint before Christ could be so great as the saints under the full revelation of the gospel. Answer: I will not dispute this, but it requires some explication to avoid mistakes. For our Lord says (Matt. 11:11) “Among them that are born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” He that is least under the gospel fully revealed by Christ and those he employed to preach and write his doctrine, and has it in his mind and heart, is greater than John the Baptist. But nothing follows from this for Mr. Wesley's opinion, unless it could be proved that one could not be greater than John [the] Baptist in what our Lord calls “the kingdom of heaven” if he attained not to sinless perfection. But this cannot be proved, and seems not to be true. There are many degrees between these two, and by no reason nor logic can it follow that he is not greater who really is so by one or several degrees, if he be not greater by the highest. And a concession of Mr. Wesley's own, which we shall presently see, shows the contrary—for he allows that everyone in the kingdom of heaven is not sinlessly perfect, yet it is plain by our Saviour's words that even such are greater than John [the] Baptist.

Hitherto we have only examined Mr. Wesley's concessions. But I humbly conceive it has also been shown that these concessions go farther than perhaps he intended, and wound his cause very deep.<sup>9</sup> Let us next consider his other concession just now hinted at, and then state the precise point of difference between his opinion as delivered in that sermon and the doctrine of the Church of England and almost all other Protestant (i.e. not popish) churches, and lastly humbly examine the arguments he brought in that sermon for his opinion. I say almost all other not popish churches because the Quakers among us, and I suppose some Mennonites and Anabaptists abroad, maintain this doctrine of perfection even to a higher degree than Mr. Wesley seems to do. And several of the popish monastics, and mystics, and quietists seem to do so too. And the Socinians and high Arminians do also maintain that a Christian may in this life perfectly fulfill God's law. A strange mixture of (protege<sup>10</sup>) to be for the same opinion concerning sinlessness here! But their agreement therein, I humbly appeal, [p. 3] may be accounted for by their agreement in other points not so obviously observed (for extremes often meet), which it is not my present business to attempt. I beg leave only to observe that (except it be Dr. Gill, a learned London minister before the Restoration) I do not know any but Mr. Wesley and some of his friends who thoroughly

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<sup>8</sup>Erskine wrote in the margin: “Mark 10” and “Luke 18.”

<sup>9</sup>Orig., “to the Heart” changed to “very deep.”

<sup>10</sup>The word is indistinct, at the bottom of the page; this seems the most likely match to visible letters.

maintain and strenuously urge the doctrine of grace in the substantial thereof, and yet maintain this opinion of perfection; which none else that I know of do maintain but such as are reckoned Pelagians or else enthusiasts, or near to one or other of these seeming extremes. Therefore Mr. Wesley is not for this to be reckoned like any of the two, but to maintain their opinion on better principles, and principles which appear more adapted to support it; which nevertheless I have not yet seen that they do, but much rather the contrary. But leaving this short digression, I proceed to the matter in hand.

Mr. Wesley seemed to allow (and from daily and common experience it must be allowed) that under the gospel new converts, and such as are not yet grown up to the full stature in Christ, may and do sin. But he said that “fathers in Christ” might attain to live sinless. If they sought after it in faith and in faith prayed for it, the want of will is the reason they attain not to it.

Then those who have not yet arrived to be fathers in Christ, though greater than any Old Testament saint, yet in this are much in the same case with them—they sin, they are not sinlessly perfect. And as to fathers in Christ, it strikes me with amazement to hear Mr. Wesley say the reason why so few of them do attain to sinless perfection, when yet they might, is that they do not seek after it and pray for it in faith. Is it possible that such as may deservedly be called “fathers in Christ” can be so negligent and lazy, so cold and unconcerned, in a thing so eminently for the glory of God in his gospel and for the higher benefit of his own soul that it could partake of on earth, as not to seek after it and pray for it? Is it possible that such can seek after and pray for it, but not in truth, though his great rule is to do everything by faith, and in faith his joy and confidence is that his life is hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3) and that the life he now lives in the flesh is by faith in the Son of God?<sup>11</sup> Can such a man be so reluctant to act faith for the most important of all things in this life? One would rather incline to think so unhappy a person scarcely a real Christian, or at best but a weak infant, a very bruised reed or smoking flax not yet well kindled. But some reason must be thought of why, since advanced Christians may attain to sinless perfection, we neither read nor see such as did. We read of none such in the New Testament, and the contrary of the greatest, as Paul, Peter, etc. And to suppose that others of whom the contrary is not said were sinlessly perfect is *gratis Dictum*,<sup>12</sup> and against all probability, since we know no good reason to prefer them so highly to men more eminent in the gospel than they, and at least as eminent. Suppositions are not proofs, which I wish the perfectionists did not so often forget. Can we expect instances of it now, where we read of none in those times?

But supposing that we had instances of it then, how comes it that we see none now? We still, to the praise of his glorious grace, see instances of his grace and of his divine power in his gospel ordinances, confirming to us the truth and reality of such things we read in the New Testament, and that were before hand prophesied and foretold by the Spirit of God, by whose effectual working they were brought to pass. Is his hand shortened? Is the efficacy of gospel grace? Are the operations of the Holy Ghost in working and carrying it on? Are they ceased, as many say all miraculous operations are? It surprized us to hear this asserted lately by a bishop in a Christian church, and asserted in order to condemn the Methodists; but surely Mr. Wesley, who among others has confuted that bishop, will not say so.<sup>13</sup> Mr. Wesley gave a reason, which for what I have already said I humbly think is not good, why so few attain to it. I have neither seen [p. 4] nor heard nor read of any who could on solid grounds be thought to have attained to it. I have heard of some, who I suppose are still alive, that pretended to be such to their Christian acquaintances and friends. Persons of knowledge, judgment, experience, and really gracious had not that opinion of them, and thought they were inferior to others who were far from pretending so high. I know too that some who have been Quakers, but now are with Mr. Wesley of the Church of England, say

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<sup>11</sup>Erskine wrote in the margin: “Col. 3:17” and “Gal. 2:20.”

<sup>12</sup>A “free” or ungrounded assertion.

<sup>13</sup>Erskine is almost certainly referring to Richard Smalbroke’s *A Charge Delivered to ... the Clergy* (London: Knapton, 1744), 7–10; to which JW replied in *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, Pt. I (1745), V.4, *Works*, 11:141ff.

they know instances of such. But so far as I know they have never produced these instances and showed them to be indeed such. O that I ever had known or now did know any really such! It would rejoice my soul. Since it is quite otherwise, I cannot but earnestly wish that all who think they have known such would seriously lay to heart whether their own sentiments of the heart of man in this life, and of the extent and spirituality of God's Word, and of perfect holiness, be not exceeding imperfect.

Yet I humbly hope I have known those who, in the apostle John's sense in his first epistle, were indeed "fathers in Christ"; though they neither thought themselves, or by other real and friendly Christians were thought to be, sinlessly perfect. I cannot doubt but such persons did always in faith earnestly seek after and pray for all holiness, and still for more and more, and never stopping at any degree but always going on, as we read the apostle Paul did (Phil. 3:12, 13, 14). If it be said that yet they have not expressly in faith endeavoured and prayed for sinless perfection, since they did not attain to it; I answer, I may well suppose, and with reason, that they prayed and endeavoured for all holiness, and for the most part without reflecting on or thinking of any distinction, because so do all the real Christians I have ever been acquainted with. They pray in faith against all sin, and as in the Ambrosian hymn called *Te Deum*: "Vouchsafe O Lord to keep us this day without sin." Such prayer offered up in faith, though not expressly for sinless perfection, I humbly conceive none will venture to say but they may accept it and answer it to the full, and even more than was expressly asked or thought of. And that such prayer, and particularly as to being kept from falling and being established in the gospel, may and will be accepted, heard, and granted, humbly appear to me from Eph. 3:20, Rom. 16:25, Jude 24, see also Isa. 65:24. But perhaps it will be said that, supposing sinless perfection was not expressly excluded in the time of such prayer, yet the person not believing it attainable, it was not included nor at all prayed for. I answer, such a saint praying earnestly and in faith to be kept from all sin and for all holiness, and sinless perfect holiness being the restless longing desire of his soul which can never be satisfied till attained unto, though he thinks it not attainable till death and fully in heaven, where on that as on other accounts he earnestly longs to be, yet it would be rash to venture to say that, for the mistake of his judgement and not knowing that this earnest desire of his soul might be now obtained, these his prayers may not be answered above what he could expressly ask or think of, and he obtain (if it could be obtained) in this life that sinless perfection he so much pants after. That he might and would is agreeable to the foresaid texts, and to the infinite goodness and bounty of God in Christ in other such cases; and to deny this would involve us in great difficulties and mistakes in many cases in practical Christianity and the life of faith.

I shall add but one other observation on this. Since it is not at all credible that first-rate Christians do not in faith seek after and pray for sinless perfection in this life, if they believe it attainable; and it being as little credible that the prayers of faith of such Christians have not been heard and granted in such a matter; yet it being owned that very few (and as far as I know, none) have attained to it; how can we but conclude that either it is not at all attainable or that such Christians have not in faith sought and prayed for it because they found [p. 5] not a divine warrant for such faith, and a divine warrant is necessary for divine faith. This is the most charitable and reasonable construction that I see can be put upon it. But it reduces the number of first-rate Christians that ever were or now are of Mr. Wesley's opinion to be very few or none.

I should next, according to what I above proposed to do, state the precise point of difference. But that will better appear after stating his arguments. And these were two.

1. The sufficiency of power and grace in our blessed Lord Jesus for this great salvation from all sin even in this life. But Mr. Wesley is a more accurate reasoner than to argue *a posse ad esse*, and from the absolute possibility of a thing to infer that it actually is. Therefore I suppose he adduced this as a consideration to remove a prejudice and obviate an objection which some might thence have made against his opinion, but not as an argument to prove it actually true. There can be no doubt of our Lord's power and grace. The question only is about his being pleased thus to exert the same in this life. And we may in this respect compare the saints in this life and their present habitation together, this earth and the heavens we see round about it. We are sure by revelation that this earth and these heavens will be burnt and purified, and that in their place or stead there will be new heavens and a new earth, wherein will dwell

righteousness, and there can in no wise enter into the great city thereof, the new Jerusalem, anything that defileth. This our Lord's power and grace could just now bring to pass. And just now his power and grace could make us as clean as our habitation is to be made. But it follows not that therefore it is already done. We see it is not done. And we are not told that either of them will be done in this life, but at the end of this life. And we and our habitation are spoken of as much alike in this respect (Rom. 8:9–23 with 7:24), which rather makes against than for Mr. Wesley's opinion.

2. His other argument was to this effect: No sin or sinful person can enter into heaven, and therefore everyone must be sinlessly perfect before he be admitted there. Now when shall they be made so previously to the admission into glory? It must either be in this life or in the portal of death, for immediately after death they will be carried into heaven; except you feign a purgatory or some middle state wherein they are to be made sinless and perfect, and afterwards carried into heaven. It cannot be in the point of death, for that point is like a mathematical point, having no parts, and is indivisible. Therefore it must be in this life. And since it must be in this life, you must allow it some time. And if but a minute, why may it not also be for an hour, or a day, or week, or month, or for a year or years?

Now let us see wherein lies the precise difference betwixt this opinion and the common doctrine of the Reformed churches. This last I shall take from the *Shorter Catechism* of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, Question 37: "What benefit do believers receive from Christ at death? Answer. The souls of believers are *at their death made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory ...*"<sup>14</sup> Mr. Wesley agrees with them that the souls of believers do from the death of the believer immediately pass into glory, and that when they enter into that glory they are perfect in holiness. But they say that such [a] soul is made thus perfect at the death of the believer. And he says that it is before his death, and therefore in this life—from whence, by way *sorites*,<sup>15</sup> he infers that a believer may for a considerable time be sinlessly perfect in this life. Which is contrary to the doctrine of the Reformed churches which we have in the foresaid *Catechism*, Question 82: "Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God? Answer. No mere man since the fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandment of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed." And in the 15th Article [of the] Church of England: "Sin (as St. John saith) was not in him" (Christ). "But all we the rest, although baptized and born again in Christ yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us."

Let us next humbly examine Mr. Wesley's second argument aforesaid against this doctrine of the Reformation. So far as it agrees with this doctrine as above there is now no dispute with him. But wherein it differs therefrom it is founded on four suppositions which he has not at all proved, and which to me humbly appear not to be true. And when I have endeavoured to show this, I will next endeavour to show that his own former concessions are not consistent with this argument of his, and the only one I remember he adduced in that sermon for a positive direct proof of his opinion. [p. 6]

1. It supposes, but he has not offered to prove, that a believer's soul cannot be made perfect in holiness in an instant, a mere point, the very point of death. And to say that a point is without parts and indivisible, as the mathematicians define their point, is but a wittier's jest and not a solid argument as to any real existence. No mathematician ever said that some point did or could actually exist; though very fit to be supposed in *pure mathematics*, but not literally taken in *mixed mathematics*, which deal in real existences. It is not fit for creatures of our narrow capacities and faculties to hu(nt)<sup>16</sup> after and entertain subtleties unnecessarily that do not enlighten us in our way but bewilder and perplex us—and like an *ignis fatuus*<sup>17</sup> lead among briars, bogs, and pits—especially in divine matters, and more especially when

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<sup>14</sup>The phrase placed in italics was written in larger letters than surrounding text. I have used italics to show this emphasis.

<sup>15</sup>I.e., a chain syllogism.

<sup>16</sup>A fragment of the page is missing, but the word seems clear.

<sup>17</sup>A flitting phosphorescent light sometimes seen in marshes.

we could not have known their truth but by revelation. It is sufficient here if I show that this blessed change in [the] soul of a believer may be wrought in an instant, in the smallest conceivable point of duration. For which I humbly offer these two arguments: (1) In so small a point the soul was brought into existence, according to any ideas we have. For we (at least I, or any I ever conversed with or read) have none of any midst between not-being and being. The soul, as all creatures else, once did not exist; then it did exist. What kind of point of duration was it in which from nothing it came to be something? Do you have any notion of it but as a very instant? I suppose not. Those who deny the *preexistence* of the soul, or that it comes *ex traduce*,<sup>18</sup> say that *creando infunditur et infundendo creatur*.<sup>19</sup> And this has long been the commonly received opinion in our Western world. These men, whether their opinion be true or not, must think this creation and infusion to be instantaneous. But all who allow the soul to have been created, and brought from nothing in whatever part of duration, must hold it to have been instantaneous. Why then may not a less thing be brought to pass instantaneously? It is less to make perfect a soul wherein work is already solidly and really begun and advanced than to make that soul to be when it had no being, to make it something, and what it is, when it was nothing. And is it so great a matter to render perfect a soul already very good, a soul that already is regenerated and became a new creature, is grown up in Christ, and that is even a father in Christ, by the mighty working of the Holy Ghost? Is this, I say, so great a matter that the same Holy Spirit cannot complete his own divine work in an instant? Pardon me to say that this seems a gross absurdity, and to such our little subtleties often lead us. (2) A work of the same kind, but greater, shall be done instantaneously, and therefore so may this be. And being of the same kind, and for the same end and purpose, so it probably will be. By 1 Cor. 15:50–54, with 1 Thess. 4:15, we learn that the believers who shall be on the earth when our Lord comes to judge the world and carry all his saints to full and endless glory with him shall not die. But because flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, they shall be changed *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*.<sup>20</sup> And their corruptible shall put on incorruption; and their mortal, immortality. One cannot doubt but that then also their souls shall be changed, and all that was corruptible or sinful therein shall put on incorruption and perfection, for then shall they be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they ever be with the Lord. Since so complete and perfect a change shall be made on the whole man, soul and body, *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*, why should you think that the soul alone cannot be made sinless and perfect, according to its then state, *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*? The apostle does not here entertain us with subtlety and pretended mathematical point, but solidly and substantially as things themselves are really to be. But if any will yet be so curious and over-subtly inquisitive as to insist on his indivisible mathematical point of death which has no parts, and ask whether that point be in this life or the next, before death or after it (since it must be one or other of them and cannot be any way reckoned in both, or one side of it before and the other after death, since it is indivisible and has no parts), I beg leave to ask him whether the point of duration of the soul's creation was before this life or after it? And whether the point, the moment, the twinkling of an eye of the foresaid blessed and grand change of the whole man is to be in this life [p. 7] or the next? And when he falls on a good answer to these queries, he will find it as good an answer to his own.<sup>21</sup>

2. This argument supposes what Mr. Wesley did not prove, nor so far as I yet see can be proved, that death is a precise point—or, to avoid that subtlety, is instantaneous. If you take death for the soul's local departure from its habitation, the body, why may not the soul linger at the door, as the man when

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<sup>18</sup>I.e., the soul of the child comes “by transfer” from its parents.

<sup>19</sup>“It is created as it is poured out and infused into the creature”; i.e., the soul is created in the instant it is joined with the body.

<sup>20</sup>This phrase placed in italics here and the next two instances was written each time in larger letters than surrounding text. I have used italics to show this emphasis.

<sup>21</sup>Erskine strikes out five lines of text closing this first point, and rewrites them as the beginning of his second point.

acting in this world might linger in the door of his house when going abroad? Again, a man may lay in his house, or in a machine that he actuates, till it be taken to pieces and be no more house or machine, but a mere heap of materials. If you take death to be the ceasing of the organical connexion and influence between soul and body, then death seems not for the most part to be instantaneous. In few diseases, and in few deaths by outward force, is it so. It is evident to common observation that for the most part the body does not die at once but gradually, and animal life wears out of it like the flame of a candle dying away in a socket. Before all animal life seems wholly to cease, we often see strong animal motions in the body. But whether or not, or how far, the person has then what we call sensation, we in many cases do not know. Yet we say not that the man is then actually dead, nor yet that he is alive, but that he is in the pangs of death. It is not easy to determine whether the man be dead when the animal motion remains yet there is no sensibility. Or when all animal motion, all heat, and everything belonging to animal life ceases. Nor whether in either of these cases the soul has locally departed from the body or not. The ceasing of the organical connexion and influence between body and soul, either wholly or in the most essential parts of it, wherever the soul then locally be, whether you call it strictly death or life, if it be such that death in the strictest sense must inevitably follow, and that the reciprocal operations of body and soul on each other never can again recover to anything that can be called animal and rational life but by a miracle, it is fully enough in the present case. For in this state that seems to be neither life nor death. There is a duration not instantaneous, wherein the soul may be made perfect. If I be asked why I form so nice cases, I will beg leave to answer that it is not because I have pleasure in them, but to meet the subtleties used on the other side, and show why I think them not true nor conclusive. My purpose in the former number was to show that the soul might be made sinlessly perfect at the very point of death, though it were but an instant; and in this to show that, for the most part at least, it is more, and maybe considerably more, than an instant. Each of these seems to me to overthrow the argument. And we need not take the words “at death” in the foresaid 37th Question for the precise point of death in the strictest sense, but for about the time of death as above; and such a way of speaking, taking “at” more laxly for “about,” frequently occurs in good authors and in common conversation.

3. This argument supposes it to follow, but has not proved the consequence, that if the soul in any point of time in this life may be made sinlessly perfect, it may likewise be made so in larger portions of time—yea, for a day, a week, a month, a year, or years. For a proof we have a question put: Why may it not be so, since all these times are in this life? If therefore a sufficient difference be assigned, a sufficient reason why it may be in the one and not in the rest, the reason implied in the question will be sufficiently answered. If you take death only to be the soul’s local departure from the body, and call the time “life” wherein the organical connexion is ceased or impaired as above, then in that time the body, having no influence on the soul, is not a bar to its sinlessness, which cannot be said of the former time of life. And if the connexion be not wholly broken, yet in the essential parts of it, then the influence of the body [p. 8] on the soul is so far gone that it cannot disturb the soul nor draw it to sin, which till then cannot be said. There was a remarkable passage of a husband and wife who, being very devout and earnestly wishing to be quite free from all entanglements of every fleshly affection, did voluntarily part and went into different monasteries, where they lived with great strictness. The husband becoming very old, and his life being but a mere breath which departing hovered on his lips, the wife came from her monastery to take her last leave of him. After good discourse and just going away, she bowed down and kissed him, and the dying old man, with the very small remainder of strength he had, said to her—*abi, abi, restat adhuc scintilla!*<sup>22</sup>

4. This argument justly supposes that on death the soul presently passes to heaven, and being perfect is received there. But it also supposes, which it proves not, that this passage is instantaneous. For if it be not instantaneous, there is a time wherein it may be made perfect before it gets into heaven— even according to Mr. Wesley’s notion that it cannot be instantaneously made perfect, and therefore [he] says

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<sup>22</sup>“Go [away], go [away], the spark [of attachment] remains even yet!”



it<sup>23</sup> must be made so in this life. But it may be made perfect in this passage, which is not instantaneous. I say not that in this passage it will be made perfect. Nor is it the doctrine of the foresaid Question 37. It is a query I have now nothing to do with. But it may be then perfected according to Mr. Wesley's notion, if the passage be not instantaneous, which is enough to answer this argument. I believe it is true that this passage is not instantaneous but takes some time, because of its length, even for a spirit to travel it. We know by Dan. 9:23–24 that an angel so exalted as Gabriel, though made to fly swiftly, took some time, though a short time, to fly from heaven to earth. It cannot take less to fly from earth to heaven. And farther, we know not whether the angels employed to convey souls to heaven be as exalted as Gabriel and can do as much as he. And yet we have reason to apprehend that in their carrying souls to glory they may meet with opposition and retardments from the prince and power of the air (through which region they must pass), as the Scripture calls the devil. For that he opposes the angels in executing their duty we see in this same book of Daniel.

5. Let us now try whether Mr. Wesley's concessions are consistent with this argument, or rather whether this argument be consistent with them; for the concessions being mostly good, the argument must be bad if it be inconsistent with them. Mr. Wesley yielded that none of the patriarchal or Jewish saints were sinlessly perfect in this life, and yet on their death went straight to heaven. And he yielded that under the gospel new converts, Christians not fully grown up, did sin; and that even some fathers in Christ were not sinlessly perfect, because they sought it not and prayed not for it in faith. Yet he denies not that all such Christians, though sinfully imperfect in this life, go immediately to heaven when they die. And he claimed this great privilege of sinless perfection in this life only to such fathers in Christ as sought after it and prayed for it in faith. And for this reason: because they must go sinlessly perfect to heaven, and therefore must be made so in this life. Then when were the Old [Testament] saints made perfect? When was David, who on his death bed not only had such a spirit of revenge in him but did all he then could to execute his revenge, and by what seems an evasion and eluding his own promise and oath? We read not of his amendment in this particular, but what we read of him immediately after is, "so David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David."<sup>24</sup> And if he had changed to a better mind, he would have countermanded his revengeful instruction to Solomon. And then Solomon probably would not have fulfilled it. Which yet he did, having first laid a trap for Shimei, as if he had intended that his being put to death should not be attributed to his old offence (for which he had the king's oath that he would not slay him) but to a new offence just then committed. And it would appear that David intended some such contrivance should be used, for on mentioning his own oath, which seemed to secure Shimei in succeeding reigns as well as his own (as the oath of Israel to the Gibeonites secured them under succeeding rulers<sup>25</sup>), he adds, "for thou art a wise man, and knoweth [p. 9] what to do unto him; but his hoary head bring thou down to the grave with blood" (1 Kings 2:1–10). When then was David made sinlessly perfect, even in his heart, sentiments, and inclinations, if not in the point or in the pangs of death, when death had laid so sure hold of him and all his faculties and powers that he could not return to life but by a miracle, and when the bystanders and witnesses of his dying could not perceive what was working in his soul separating gradually from his body, and could not perceive his advancing to and attaining sinless perfection? So it is also now under the gospel, when many believers are dying who had not been sinlessly perfect. The witnesses of their death, to the last gasp of breath that they can perceive, see imperfection still in them, as some remains of impatience, some former misapprehensions and prejudices, etc. But they see not what is wrought in the soul when outwardly the connexion of it with the body is, to their apprehension, gone or just a going. What then do these witnesses think? Do they conclude or fear that he is not to go to heaven, because they see he is not sinlessly perfect when they think he is out of life and dies? O no! God forbid that real Christians were in so woeful [a] case, and brought to

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<sup>23</sup>Ori., "in"; likely an error.

<sup>24</sup>1 Kgs. 2:10.

<sup>25</sup>Cf. Joshua 9.

sorrow for dead saints, who really were saints, as those without hope! And this would indeed make the gate of heaven so strait that much fewer than our Lord has told us of could enter in thereat,<sup>26</sup> and that many would be excluded to whom our blessed Saviour will say, “Enter ye into the joy of your Lord.”<sup>27</sup> I gladly own that some saints die with hardly any remains of sin perceivable by the witnesses observing their death. And every such instance is the rejoicing and comfort of a Christian’s heart. But all who are really in Christ, and therefore go really into his glory, do not die so. When can these be made sinlessly perfect, if not at such time as I above argued as to David and need not repeat? And there having been and still being such instances, as Mr. Wesley according to his concessions must acknowledge, this argument cannot be thought conclusive.

I thought to have subjoined an argument against sinless perfection in this life, and some remarks on adding this epithet “sinless” to “perfection,” etc. But these not particularly touching this sermon but the whole cause itself, I forebear to say any more at present and to lengthen this long paper. God of grace and truth, lead us into all truth by thy grace which is in Jesus!

*Source:* Erskine’s draft copy for his records; Emory University, Rose Library, Wesleyan Collection (MSS 101), Box 1, Folder 1<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Cf. Matt. 7:14.

<sup>27</sup>Matt. 25:21, 23.

<sup>28</sup>Transcription published in Randy L. Maddox, “James Erskine’s Critique of John Wesley on Christian Perfection,” *WHS* 59 (2013): 39–53.

From Sarah Gwynne Jr.<sup>1</sup>

Garth  
January 18–19, 1749

Wednesday evening [January 18]

O what a good God do the Christians serve! What a mercy is it that such a poor weak worm as I am enabled to say

Thy gifts, if called for, I resign;  
pleased to receive, pleased to restore.”<sup>2</sup>

Hitherto hath God helped me! This was the language of my heart in perusing your sweet letters last night.<sup>3</sup> And my prayers were almost swallowed up in praises for the unspeakable blessings the Lord had made me a partaker of already through your ministry. This sweet frame did not last altogether uninterrupted, for oh I found my burden heavy on me so soon as I laid me to rest on my bed. “From short ... disturbed repose, I woke,”<sup>4</sup> envying those who were entombed in the silent grave,<sup>5</sup> who had fought the good fight, and kept the faith. I am sensible that it is wholly owing to the weakness of nature that no sooner is the cross laid on me but I shrink back and wish my work finished, when it is hardly begun. Ere long I trust I shall know assuredly “The cross, the cross, O that’s my gain,”<sup>6</sup> and gladly take it up, after my suffering Saviour. My dearest friend’s letters comforted me not a little, finding such strong confidence and trust in the Lord had taken up its residence in your heart as that, if a disappointment happens (says you), “it must be best for you, for me, for the whole church.”<sup>7</sup> These words checked my fears for all future events in this matter.

My mother began to talk with me a few hours ago, and bid me say a few things to you. But I chose she should employ my father or sister (as both, I believe, will write).<sup>8</sup> Only I must inform my best beloved friend that (contrary to what I dared expect) she told me with satisfaction that it was left to my father’s decision; which on two counts she was glad of. The first was because she had positively said she could not consent if it was laid entirely on her to determine, without money raised for a settlement. The second was that she was afraid to hinder it. But she has assured me, with great sincerity, she “will readily acquiesce in what my father thinks well of, even without having what she proposed in her letter to you; and only have that done which your brother proposed in his letter to her; viz., having the books secured to you after his decease.” She added to me, “But settle that as you both think proper.” I have no doubt of

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<sup>1</sup>This is the first surviving letter to CW from Sarah Gwynne (1726–1822), daughter of Marmaduke and Sarah (Evans) Gwynne, in Garth, Brecknockshire. Sarah (“Sally”) first met CW in Aug. 1747. Although there was nearly twenty years difference in their ages, the two were quickly drawn to one another. They would be married, with JW presiding, on April 8, 1749.

<sup>2</sup>Antoinette Bourignon, “Renouncing All for Christ,” st. 10, as included in translation by JW in *HSP* (1739), 124.

<sup>3</sup>See CW to Sarah Gwynne Jr., Jan. 14, 1749; and Jan. 15–17, 1749.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Edward Young, *Night Thoughts*, Night 1, lns. 6–7. “From short (as usual) and disturb’d repose, / I wake: how happy they, who wake no more!”

<sup>5</sup>This phrase is underlined; likely by CW.

<sup>6</sup>The opening line of a hymn (possibly by Miss C. Taylor, in 1742), found in *A Collection of Hymns ... From the hymn-book of the Moravian Brethren* (London, 1743), 207.

<sup>7</sup>CW to Sarah Gwynne Jr., Jan. 14, 1749.

<sup>8</sup>See Marmaduke Gwynne to CW, Jan. 19, 1749; if Rebecca Gwynne wrote, it does not survive.

your care of me, though very unworthy. My mother said she must beg of you both to come here so soon as it is convenient after she returns home (for she intends going next week abroad and make a fortnight or three weeks stay). But I made an objection to your taking so much trouble at an uncertainty. But she hinted as if either papa's letter or my sister's should give you to know on what account she was desirous of it.

Beck seems certain that *every* obstacle will be removed after having some conversation with you both here.<sup>9</sup> I can't help mentioning she has been a faithful friend in endeavouring to bring this matter to pass. The Lord has made her an instrument in his hand for good to me, rather to *us* (for one cannot receive a benefit without the other). I believe the Lord intends *you* should be a particular blessing to Beck, as well as to many belonging to this family. With this view I know it is you are so willing and desirous to come among us.

I can proceed not farther till I assure my dear and honoured minister that I am quite concerned you should venture your life on my account, as you have of late frequently done. O, as you regard me, do so no more. Praised be the almighty God for giving his holy angels charge over you. When you passed through the waters, *he* was with you. Yea, the Lord *shall* preserve *thy* going out and *thy* coming in, from this time forth for evermore. I'm glad you had my letter which was wrote on December 17th–18th.<sup>10</sup> The same (if possible, a greater) love and regard do I continually find for you with which I wrote that in. Your kind sympathy cannot do otherwise that endear you to me. May the Father of all mercies give me an humble, thankful heart for dealing thus tenderly with the most undeserving rebel in the world. Why me, Lord? Why me?

Thursday morning

I find mother intends writing herself.<sup>11</sup> Our cause is in the hands of God. "Therefore, under the shadow of thy wings will we rejoice."<sup>12</sup> I sought the Lord and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fear, by giving me power to cast my care on him who careth for us. Who is a God like unto thee? Who hearest the prayer of the poor destitute and givest us not according to our desserts but according to thine own mercy!

Far was it from me yesterday morning to expect the least token of my mother's willingness and consent to go with my best friend. But God has surely touched her heart. Yet still I dare not be sure of its coming to pass. The happiness seems too great for me to presume so. On thee, O Lord will I wait. "I cannot choose; Thou canst not err."<sup>13</sup> And if we are permitted to join hands, as well as hearts (the latter we have done already), I shall (I'm firmly persuaded) receive you as the greatest blessing heaven could bestow this side [of] the grave, and as believing nothing here below could further my everlasting welfare so much.

I am very tedious in my manner of expressing myself when I come to you. You must teach me to say more in fewer words than at present I am capable of doing.

That worthy gentleman Mr. [Vincent] Perronet wrote such a letter as quite pleased me, leaving part of his last paragraph out.<sup>14</sup> And no less did yours to my papa.<sup>15</sup> A few days ago he was taking notice

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<sup>9</sup>Rebecca ("Becky" or "Beck") Gwynne (1724–99) was SGW's second oldest, and closest, sister. She never married and was a frequent presence in CW's family from this point.

<sup>10</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>11</sup>See Sarah (Evans) Gwynne to CW, Jan. 19, 1749.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Ps. 63:8 (BCP).

<sup>13</sup>CW, "Waiting for Christ," st. 4, *HSP* (1740), 40.

<sup>14</sup>This letter, likely written at the same time and accompanying that of Perronet to Sarah (Evans) Gwynne dated Jan. 14, 1749 (above), is not known to survive.

<sup>15</sup>This letter, not known to survive, was mentioned in CW to Sarah Gwynne Jr., Jan. 14, 1749.

that your courtship was very much like the patriarchs.

I am glad your brother is employed in confuting the principles too much is vogue among many in these days. May God make it a powerful means to reclaim them from their dangerous error. They can't be in better hands than your good brother's, to have all their arguments brought to naught.

Give my kindest love to him. I'm ashamed of the trouble you both have on my account, but especially to make such a request as to have *you* here. O consider, can I make any suitable returns for the pains you have already taken?

Was Mr. [Edward] Dunstone the wonderful young man you told me of, that was but 18 years of age and whose memory and gifts of preaching were so great. O how soon he has run his race and obtained the prize! "Sweet Jesus, let me die his death, and let his latter end be mine."

Remember me always to my dear friends at Lewisham, Newington Green, and Shoreham.<sup>16</sup> I am greatly indebted to them for their love to me, but it is through you. May the Lord abundantly reward you all. I read the hymns you sent with pleasure.<sup>17</sup> O "How happy the pair, whom Jesus unites."<sup>18</sup>

Pray write to mama next post.<sup>19</sup> It may be she'll be here to receive it. The weather has prevented her journey some weeks past. It is not impossible it may yet detain her. Otherwise, I'll be careful of it, till she returns. Mr. [Edward] Phillips is ill since Sunday night, which I'm sorry for. My father was to visit him yesterday. A cholic and fever are the distempers he has. But I hope he'll soon get over it, if it be the Lord's blessed will. He does not seem in any danger. Your brother's letter was sent to him. I delivered yours to Mr. Thomas.<sup>20</sup>

Indeed, I'm ready to say I have no compassion for my dear friend which I look on this long harangue and the many letters I enclose.<sup>21</sup> But I will have done with only commending you to the Almighty's care and protection. In his light may we see light, and know the way he would have us go in. I humbly beseech him to remove every doubt and scruple out of your heart. I cannot doubt whether this will be of good to me, but I must not conclude from hence what is best for you, feeling my utter helplessness and inability to be useful to any. This I believe, that the Lord loves you—and me—too well to suffer you to be stumbled by me, either in having too great a regard for me, so as to draw you from God, or to be less useful in the church afterwards. God forbid this should ever happen. Yea, he has forbid it and it shall never be. This God shall be our God forever and ever. He shall be our guide unto death. Amen. Amen.

Adieu my dearest of friends.

*Address:* "To / The Revnd. Mr. Charles Wesley."

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDWes 1/48.

<sup>16</sup>Ebenezer and Elizabeth (Molland) Blackwell, Capt. Edward and Mary (Jackson) Stotesbury, and the Perronet family.

<sup>17</sup>CW included two hymns in the text of his letter to Sarah of Jan. 15–17, 1749.

<sup>18</sup>The first line of a hymn CW had clearly shared with Sarah in manuscript, and is found in the two collections devoted to his reflections on their possible marriage: MS Friendship I, 49–50; and MS Friendship II, 20–22. It was later published in *HSP* (1749), 2:283–84.

<sup>19</sup>If CW wrote Sarah (Evans) Gwynne immediately after receiving this letter, it is now known to survive.

<sup>20</sup>This is almost certainly Rev. Joshua Thomas (d. c. 1759), who was born in Llanlleonfel parish, the parish of the Gwynnes at Garth. While he currently held the living at Llanbister, Radnorshire, about 20 miles north of Garth, he retained his family connection to Llanlleonfel and is buried there.

<sup>21</sup>The letters of the same date by her father and mother, etc.

From Marmaduke Gwynne

Garth  
January 19 [1749]

Reverend Sir,

The sentiments you entertain of me both with regard to my wife and yourself are kind and just, and I shall be glad to have it in my power to oblige you. I have seen the good Mr. [Vincent] Perronet's letter to my wife,<sup>1</sup> and thereby find what she proposed would be greatly inconvenient to you. But if your brother's personals can answer the ends he has mentioned, I can do no less than give you my free consent. My wife has thoughts of going soon into Carmarthenshire to see my eldest son,<sup>2</sup> and when she returns we should be glad that your brother and you would come here, at which time we may be able to conclude on what is Christianly prudent to be done in an affair of such consequence.

May God guide us in this and every other transaction of our lives to do all to his glory, and to our temporal and eternal happiness, so prays, reverend sir,

Your most affectionate, most sincere humble servant,

MDuke Gwynne

My household join with me in our best respects to your good brother, yourself, etc.

*Endorsement:* by CW in shorthand; "[[January]] 19 / 1749 [[Mr. Gwynne consent]]."  
and another "[[February]] 19 / 1749 [[Mr. Gwynne]]."

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDWes 1/68.

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<sup>1</sup>Rev. Vincent Perronet to Sarah (Evans) Gwynne, Jan. 14, 1749, CW, *MS Journal* (and above).

<sup>2</sup>Howell Gwynne (1718–80), the eldest son of Marmaduke and Sarah (Evans) Gwynne, married Lady Mary (Powell) Rudd (c. 1706–1802), the widow of Sir John Rudd (d. 1739), 4th baronet of Aberglassney in 1740. Howell Gwynne and Lady Rudd lived on her family estate in Broadway, Carmarthenshire, just west of Swansea.

From Sarah (Evans) Gwynne

Garth  
January 19, 1748/9

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I am sorry that what I mentioned in my last is not proper to be complied with. I acknowledge my entire ignorance in an affair of that nature, having never dealt but in the landed way. However, if your good brother's proposal can be made firm to yourself and posterity, *that* will, I believe, be satisfactory.

I hope what I have here mentioned will not be misconstrued, as if we suspected Mr. John Wesley's honour or integrity. But as a testament is on no force so long as the testator liveth, I can't doubt but that he will sign proper instruments to secure it to you, if any such can be prepared.

Mr. [Marmaduke] Gwynne speaks for himself, who has the best right to dispose of his daughter, and rejoiced I am that I am excused in an affair of that consequence.

My hearty service attends yourself and brother, who am, dear sir, his and

Your sincere and faithful friend,

Sa. Gwynne

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDCW 5/21.

From Sarah Perrin

Bristol  
January 25 [1749]

I received my good friend's kind letter and read it with some satisfaction.<sup>1</sup> It stirred me up to call on the name of the Lord, and in his hands I can trust thee.

I long for thy perfection. And in what state it may be the soonest completed I think thee must be a better judge than any other. I do not know that I have received either true or false light from anyone concerning it. All that I have known of friend [Elizabeth] Cart's mind was in a letter to brother Perronet,<sup>2</sup> and a few queries which I did not well understand and which I thought she had better let alone. Friend Vigor returns thanks for her letter,<sup>3</sup> and desires me to let thee know friend Cart knows nothing of her mind concerning it, for she has not writ[ten] to her or any other person in London but thyself this eight months.

I am very sorry for friend Cart. I thought to write a little advice to her, but since I received thine I put it off.

I want to see thee here. I think a pretty room might be contrived for thee by adding a little room joining to that thee pitched on to hold the bed and a study. But thee must come and order for thyself.

I cannot enlarge now, but remain with duty and sincere affection,

Thy unworthy friend,

S. P.

*Endorsement:* by CW, "Sarah Perrin / Jan. 25 1748/9 / of the match."

*Source:* holograph; MARC, MA 1977/428/2/52.

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<sup>1</sup>In this letter, which is not known to survive, CW surely informed Perrin of the positive developments related to his proposed marriage to Sarah Gwynne Jr.

<sup>2</sup>Perrin spells "Perinot." She likely means Vincent, but could be referring to either Charles or Edward.

<sup>3</sup>This letter is not known to survive.



From Rebecca Gwynne

[Garth]  
February 2, 1749

My very dear friend's favour came last post,<sup>1</sup> by which I perceive letters have been intercepted or lost. None but one has been received from Mr. John Wesley, which was to my mama.<sup>2</sup> We suspect our neighbor [Edward] P[hillips]; but whether justly or not, I can't determine. My sister acquainted you that my brother's coming here prevented my mama's journey to him. He is in an ill state of health. We hope his native air will agree with him. Your affair has not been plainly mentioned to him yet, but his Lady has been let into the secret.<sup>3</sup> It's kept from him till papa hears from or sees Mr. John Wesley; the latter we wish for, hoping the personal regard he has for him will in some measure abate his prejudice.

However obliged you think yourself to my mama, she bids me assure you she is not less to you for all the kind thoughts you are pleased to entertain of, and for the confidence you intend to repose in, her. Yours directed to me (but for my sister) was opened;<sup>4</sup> yet believe none but Mr. P[hillips] (whose jealousy would help him out) could make much of it. My health is still very indifferent, but many in our house are at present worse than myself—viz. my brother [Howell], Lady Rudd, and Mr. Ketelbey.<sup>5</sup> And my mama is not so well as commonly, or she would have signified her grateful sentiments with her own pen, though no answer has been received to her's or my papa's letters to you. Mr. Ketelbey, I believe, imagines you have forgot him. I believe my good friends can't be dubious any longer of its being the Lord's will you should come into our family. I am sure I shall think God will send a peculiar blessing on us, as he did on the house of Obed-edom for the ark's being there.<sup>6</sup> My mama's sincere service attends you, as does that of, reverend sir,

Your faithful and obliged servant,

R. G.

I have scribbled this in great pain, for my hand and wrist is so swelled with an old sprain that I can scarcely move the pen.

*Address:* "To the Reverend Mr. Charles Wesley."

*Endorsement:* by CW, "Feb. 2, 1749 [[Beck]]" and "Feb. 2, 1749. Beck welcoming me as the ark."

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDWes 1/74.

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<sup>1</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>2</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>3</sup>Lady Mary (Powell) Rudd (c. 1706–1802), the widow of Sir John Rudd (d. 1739), 4th baronet of Aberglassney retained her title after marrying Howell Gwynne in 1740.

<sup>4</sup>Likely CW to Sarah Gwynne Jr., Jan. 31, 1749.

<sup>5</sup>Abel Johnston Ketelbey Esq. (1727–56) was a friend of the Gwynne family and gave them legal advice; he included Rebecca Gwynne and others in his will at his death.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. 1 Chr. 13:14.

From Marmaduke Gwynne to JW

Garth  
February 9, 1749

Reverend Sir,

My wife is fully satisfied that you will make good the proposal you mentioned to her. In order therefore to accomplish what I trust in God will redound to the temporal and eternal happiness of all parties, my neighbour Miss Jones of Cribart,<sup>1</sup> by the directions of my wife, has wrote to her uncle, Mr. Hope of Lincoln's Inn,<sup>2</sup> which I have enclosed for you and your dear brother's perusal. I desire you will seal it and let it be given either by you, your good brother, or whatever friend you are pleased to entrust, into the gentleman's own hand. My wife is at present much out of order with a complication of distempers, or she would have wrote to you. Your prayers are desired for myself and all mine. My spouse and daughters join with me in our best respects to yourself and brother, and I am, reverend sir,

You very affectionate and obliges humble servant,

MDuke Gwynne

P.S. Having but one frank made me (to save expense) send but half the paper that formality required.

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDCW 5/26.

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<sup>1</sup>Anne Jones (c1725–1802), daughter of John Jones and Mary (Hope) Jones of Cribart.

<sup>2</sup>John Hope (1691–1761), of Llanrindod Hall and a lawyer at Lincoln's Inn; see *Radnorshire Society Transactions* 59 (1989): 59–62.

**From Marmaduke Gwynne to CW**

Garth  
February 9, 1749

Reverend Sir,

My eldest son [Howell] is come here in hopes this air will restore him to a better state of health than he had at the seaside. If he had not come, my wife has been so ill since she wrote to you that she was not able to go to him. I believe these crosses are by divine grace intended to our good, and may God keep me in the mind of being always thankful to him. As to the time of your good brother's and your coming here, it is left to yourselves. I trust God will direct all our undertakings so as we may do what will be most to his glory. And if I as an instrument am employed to promote the great designs of the Almighty in the happiness of my fellow-creatures, may I ever be humble and thankful, as becomes a Christian, for his peculiar mercies to me. I need not tell you how welcome you will be to me, and how glad I shall be to see your brother and you, who am, reverend sir,

Your most affectionate and most obliged humble servant,

MDuke Gwynne

*Address:* "To / The Reverend / Mr. Charles Wesley

*Endorsement:* by CW "[[Mr. Gwynne February]] 9 1749."

*Source:* MARC, DDCW 5/28.

**Elizabeth (Stafford) Vigor to Sarah Gwynne Jr.**

[Bristol]  
March 9, 1749

Although I esteem it one of the greatest pleasures of life to hear from absent friends, and am often strengthened and encouraged by the godly advice to go on in the Christian race, yet [I] find such a backwardness and reluctance in writing, through a consciousness of my incapacity of saying anything in return that will be beneficial or profitable to any (that I cannot express). This has been the occasion of my silence, not want of affection to my dear friend, to whom I find my spirit united in that love that is unchangeable and hope in that love you'll look over my weakness and defect with an eye of favour. The time seems to draw nigh when we shall be better acquainted and if you'll please to permit it, I hope shall converse with the freedom of friends, and of those who have the same object in view, and is travelling to the same heavenly country. O that we may so run that we may obtain.

Our dear friend and minister [CW] does us the pleasure of being pretty much at our house, which we take as a favour. And though he is much engaging in writing, yet we have sometimes the benefit of his good conversation and prayers, which is very comfortable. May the Lord bless him and you with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, and sanctify your happy union. And whenever it shall please God to join you to this church and people I trust we shall receive you at his hand with that true affection and regard which is just due. In meantime, my best wishes attend you. With sincere desires for your prosperity and happiness, I remain

Your friend in the Lord,

Eliz. Vigor

*Address:* "To / Miss Sally Gwynne / at Garth."

*Source:* holograph; MARC, MA 1977/502/2/30.

From Sarah (Evans) Gwynne

Garth  
March 10, 1748/9

Dear and Reverend Sir,

Mr. [Marmaduke] Gwynne and I are greatly rejoiced to hear that you got safe and well to Bristol. I delivered yours to Mr. [Abel] Ketelbey, and should be glad it was in my power to do him any real service.

Molly Leyson's promises in your presence are come to nothing.<sup>1</sup> She has again entertained the mason's addresses. Mr. Gwynne sent to tell her if she would discharge him she was welcome to his house, otherwise not. Her reply was she would make no such promise; and last Tuesday evening (without Mr. Gwynne's or my knowledge) she left his house. I should not have troubled you with this relation had not your intercession prevailed with Mr. Gwynne and myself to pass by her former ill behaviour.

I've seen Mr. [Henry] Thornton's draught and have taken a copy of it for farther perusal.<sup>2</sup> If the works therein mentioned will certainly answer the sum proposed, it is very well. My son [Howell] objects greatly to it. And was it not for the confidence I have of your integrity in making a provision in a more unexceptionable way hereafter, I should not so readily have come into that scheme myself, as being entirely ignorant of the efficacy of such settlements.

The securing of Sally's fortune to her own disposal in case she has no children is, I find, omitted. But if you are determined that it shall be in her own power, it ought (I think) to be mentioned in the deed now intended to be executed.

Would it not be thought impertinent in me to desire to know in what manner your good brother determines to secure the effects he will be possessed of at the time of his decease to your use and your posterity after you? A deed is generally reckoned the most secure. I am greatly at a loss what counsel to apply to on this occasion, for I fear least prejudice should raise needless scruples in all those I know of that profession. Judge Forster is I suppose on the circuit, else the character I've heard of him would incline me to take his directions in this affair.

I've had variety of troubles and vexations since you left us, which really affects me so that I can scarce recollect my thoughts or act consistently with reason. I therefore wish you could with conveniency to yourself and the approbation of your good brother postpone the conclusion of this affair for some time longer. I hope this will not be construed as if I had an intention to act disagreeably to your desires (notwithstanding Mr. [John] Meriton's sentiments of me), but to gain some time for the recovery of my thoughts and spirits, which have been greatly oppressed of late.

Poor little Jenny Gwynne has been again miserably burnt by the carelessness of her own maid.<sup>3</sup> I pray God she may escape with her life.

Mr. Gwynne joins with me in hearty love and service to Mr. John Wesley, Mr. Peronnets,<sup>4</sup> and yourself; who am, dear sir,

Your sincere and affectionate humble servant,

Sa. Gwynne

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<sup>1</sup>Mary Leyson (1721–50), a cousin of Sarah Gwynne Jr. [daughter of her father's sister, Mary (Gwynne) Leyson], suffered from chronic illness. She was currently receptive to a young man of whom the family did not approve (because just a mason). She died the next year, without marrying. See CW's epitaph "On Miss Molly Leyson," in MS Richmond, 127; and his hymn for her in *Funeral Hymns* (1759), 22–23.

<sup>2</sup>Thornton had prepared a draft of the marriage proposal.

<sup>3</sup>Jane Gwynne (1748–1816) the daughter of Sarah's son Marmaduke (1722–82) and Jane (Howells) Gwynne (1723–55), did live.

<sup>4</sup>I.e., Vincent and his sons.

I did not give your compliments to my son [Howell], knowing he would ask to see your letter, which I thought would not be altogether agreeable to him. A line from you, I believe, would be acceptable to him. Excuse this freedom and also this horrid scrawl.

*Address:* “To / the Reverend Mr. Charles Wesley / in / Bristol.”

*Endorsement:* by CW, “[[March]] 10. 1749 / [[Mrs Gwynne]].”

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDCW 5/36.

**From Miss Button**

Cardiff  
c. April 10, 1749

Your weak state of health while here gave me concern.<sup>1</sup> I hope you are better. Your work is not yet finished. Your Master has more messages to send by you to a careless nation. When I heard you intended marrying I was satisfied as to your intention and believed that it was the will of God and would tend to his glory. God may have great things to bring about by it. Mamma and I join in wishing you the divine blessing. May the Lord God make you helpers of each other's salvation. May it tend to the good of his church and the glory of his great name.

*Source:* transcription by CW in letter to SGW; MARC, DDCW 5/49.

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<sup>1</sup>CW had been in Cardiff April 4–5, 1749; see *MS Journal*.

From Martha (Wesley) Hall

[Foundery, London]  
April 17, 1749

My Dear brother,

I thank you for the best letter you ever sent me.<sup>1</sup> Surrounded as I am with distress on every side, I find my heart can rejoice for you. I verily believe the glory of the Lord is risen upon you, and your sun shall no more go down! It is well you was so happily disappointed. But I cannot say I am, for I could not help believing that the master would once more honour his own ordinance with his sacred presence. May the God of *our* fathers bless you both, and enable you to glorify him all your days by showing forth to all men what he wills the marriage state should be. Pray give my kindest love to my sister,<sup>2</sup> and tell her I heartily wish her all the happiness her heart desires. You do not say whether you will give us the pleasure of seeing her along with you or no? I wish you would let us know if you intend to bring her hither, till you can provide her a better place, that we may prepare for her the best accommodations this place can afford.

[Your ever affectionate sister,

Martha Hall]

*Endorsement:* "From Mrs Hall at the Foundery."

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDWes 1/34.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>This letter is not known to survive, but it clearly included an account of the wedding on Apr. 8, 1749 of CW and Sarah Gwynne; and of his intention to be in London by early May.

<sup>2</sup>I.e., Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley.

<sup>3</sup>The closing appears in Stevenson, *Memoirs*, 374; but it is unclear whether that portion of the letter survived at that time, or if Stevenson crafted the closing himself.



From Sarah (Evans) Gwynne

Garth  
April 23, 1749

Dear and Reverend Sir,

I hope this will find you as safely arrived at Bristol as your friends (who accompanied you to Abergaveny) are here.<sup>1</sup>

I trust our next meeting will be infinitely more to my satisfaction than our last was. And [I] shall be rejoiced to see your good brother and self at Ludlow, where I hope you will be able to do much good. I am sure the inhabitants of that place want even an outward reformation.

I find you have left with dear Sally a bank bill of two hundred pounds, which I will take from her on Mr. Gwynne's delivering her a bond (for that sum) to your use.

Mr. Gwynne, Beck, and the rest of your sisters join me in hearty love and service to you,<sup>2</sup> and beg you'll be assured that I shall always be, dear sir,

Very faithfully and affectionately yours whilst,

Sa: Gwynne

I hope you'll excuse this.

My son and his Lady do not know of my writing,<sup>3</sup> else would I believe [have] presented their dues. The former spoke to our parish priest, who denies the charge laid against him, on which he sufficiently recompensed him.

*Address:* "To / the Reverend Mr. Wesley."

*Endorsement:* by CW, "[[April]] 23, 1749 [[Mrs. Gwynne]]."

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDWes 1/70.

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<sup>1</sup>CW was accompanied to Abergaveny by Marmaduke Gwynne, SGW, and her younger sister, Elizabeth ("Betsy") Gwynne (1730–95); see *MS Journal*, Apr. 29, 1741.

<sup>2</sup>In addition to Elizabeth and Rebecca ("Beck"), SGW's other sisters still at Garth were Joan ("Juggy") Gwynne (1729–1801), Margaret ("Peggy") Gwynne (1733–52). Her older sister, Mary (Gwynne) Baldwin (1720–69) resided in Ludlow, Shropshire.

<sup>3</sup>Howell Gwynne and Lady Rudd.

Elizabeth (Stafford) Vigor to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

Stoke's Croft, Bristol  
April 29, 1749

Most Esteemed Friend,

Affection as well as good manners would have obliged me sooner to have acknowledged the receipt of your former letter, which I took as a particular favour. But the various interruptions I have met with, together with the natural aversion I have to writing, has made me guilty of a breach of duty to my friend, which [I] hope your goodness will excuse and accept of my sincerest congratulations, wish you all the prosperity and happiness that is possible from your new state of life. May the Lord grant you long to live, to be a blessing to each other and to all the churches of God. That they may be strengthened by your mutual union and friendship is my earnest prayer.

My best respects and thanks attends your good parents and you, to whom I am greatly obliged for your kind invitation to Ludlow. But [I] have often such relapses of weakness since my last illness that I am fearful of undertaking so long a journey or of being so troublesome to my friends. But [I] hope we shall have the pleasure of seeing you at Bristol soon after Mr. [Charles] Wesley's return from London.<sup>1</sup> And if you will please to excuse our plain way of entertaining you, I sincerely assure you none shall be more welcome to me till you have a more agreeable place of your own, and will gladly assist you in anything that lies in my power.

I long to you, for [I] find my heart daily cleaves to you with an affectionate regard. I think myself happy that you have taken me into the number of your friends, but must be leave you would not give me the appellation of a mother—of which I am quite unworthy, have no qualification but that of years to recommend me to the title. I receive you as my dear friend and partner to my minister, whom I have the greatest reason to love and honour. In the same love I unfeignedly salute you and bid you

Farewell in the Lord Jesus,

E. Vigor

I will take care about the bed.

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/18.

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<sup>1</sup>CW picked up Sarah from Ludlow and they arrived in Bristol for the first time as a married couple, to stay with Elizabeth Vigor, on June 10, 1749; see *MS Journal*.

From the Rev. John Wesley  
– a journal letter

Athlone  
May 5, 1749

[May 1, Mon.] ... time before received remission of sins, though never had heard any of these preachers. In the afternoon I rode to Edenderry, and met the leaders of society at five. I preached to an exceedingly well-behaved congregation. Many of them were Quakers. I spoke a few words concerning John Curtis,<sup>1</sup> at which they seemed not a little amazed. Several of them afterwards desired to be present at the meeting of the society. I was ⟨g⟩lad they did, for the power of God was upon us in an uncommon manner, and much more in the morning (Tue. 2) while I was ⟨ex⟩plaining, “Ye shall be all taught of God.”<sup>2</sup> One of the Quakers now invited us to his house, and was quite loving and open-hearted. In returning from thence to the town I fixed my eyes on a venerable, grey-headed man, walking along, who immediately stopped as one in amaze, and said, Friend, dost thou know me? I spoke a few words. The tears started into his eyes, and he dismissed me with a hearty blessing. Our brethren who came behind met him with the tears running [down] the cheeks. O why should we lose one moment!

I sent brother [Robert] Swindells from hence to Killucan, seven or eight miles north-east of Tyrrelspass, at the earnest request of a gentleman who came thence on purpose to desire a preacher might be sent thither. Two of the brethren who came the night before to meet me rode with me to Mountmellick, where is now the largest society we have in Ireland next to those of Dublin and Cork. Being informed the Quakers in general, as well here as in Cork, Athlone, and Edenderry, had left the preaching from the time of John Curtis’s coming, I took occasion before I preached to mention here also the real state of the case between us, but with the utmost caution and tenderness. An hour or two after James Gough,<sup>3</sup> the speaker, with two more of his friends, came to expostulate with me upon the head. James laboured hard to persuade me I was misinformed, and that John Curtis had neither directly nor indirectly said one word against the Method⟨ists.⟩

*Source:* manuscript copy in anonymous hand; Wesley’s Chapel (London), LDWMM 2000/7962/4.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>A Bristol Quaker, noted by Joseph Smith (*Bibliotheca Anti-Quakeriana*, London, Smith, 1873, p. 447) as the author of *A Letter to the Author [JW] of a Pamphlet entitled “A Letter to a Person lately joined to the People called Quakers”*. Curtis was on a preaching visit to Ireland, and JW had heard that he was attacking the Methodists, of whose society at Bristol he claimed (JW believed mistakenly) that he had formerly been a member.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Isa. 54:13; John 6:45.

<sup>3</sup>James Gough (1712–80), whose *Life of Lady Guion* (Bristol, Farley, 1772) was abridged by JW. He was master successively of Friends’ schools at Cork, Dublin, and Mountmellick.

<sup>4</sup>Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 26:355–56.

From Robert Swindells<sup>1</sup>

Athlone  
May 5, 1749

Reverend and Dear Sir

I received your kind letter,<sup>2</sup> for which I thank you. Your dear brother came in *good time* to this nation. I trust that I may say that his coming has answered yours and the desire of many. Glory be to God for him, and all, etc. I hope that I *heartily* say Amen.

I should be glad to receive a line from you when you write to your brother. And, dear sir, ever pray for

Your weak, but obedient son and servant,

R. Swindells

*Source:* manuscript copy in anonymous hand; Wesley's Chapel (London), LDWMM 2000/7962/4.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Swindells (d. 1782) was an early traveling preacher (from 1741). He went with JW to Ireland in 1748 and spent a large part of the next three decades itinerating there, though he returned to England on occasion.

<sup>2</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>3</sup>Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 26:357.

From the Rev. Vincent Perronet

Shoreham  
May 8, 1749

My Dear and Beloved Brother,

I rejoice to hear of your nearer approaches towards us, and hope nothing will prevent us the pleasure of your company on the day mentioned.<sup>1</sup>

The Garth friends, who are left behind, we shall be glad to see when opportunity serves. But pray favour me, in the meantime, with sending my very sincere respects to them; and in particular to my dear child, whom I must view in that light, as having the joint care of her with her honoured father—though her dear partner was alone abundantly sufficient for the task. But I see that God would have it so, and therefore it is right and proper.

As I am sure you never forget us at the throne of grace, so I cannot forget you and yours. I have known sometimes even *my* prayers to be answered. Oh the riches of divine goodness in Christ! How immense, how inconceivable is his condescension! Pray that I may be humble and thankful. The Lord Jesus be with us all. Our love and respects attend you.

Yours affectionately,

Vin. Perronet

P.S. I long much to hear of our dear brother [JW] in Ireland.

*Address:* “C. W.” (clearly hand-delivered)

*Source:* holograph; MARC, MA 1977/472/1.

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<sup>1</sup>CW had just got to London, and had apparently sent word to set up a visit to Shoreham before he headed back to Wales on May 22.

From Elizabeth (Stafford) Vigor

[Bristol]  
May 10, 1749

Dear and Honoured Friend,

We thank you for kindly informing us of your safe arrival in London, at which we rejoice but am concerned to hear of Mr. [Marmaduke] Gwynne's illness, which I hope will not oblige you to go to Garth before you return to Bristol.<sup>1</sup> We greatly miss you and seem to have lost one of our family, and daily wish for your return.

I've talked to the landlord about the water (it was the woman's mistake).<sup>2</sup> There is a good spring pump at the bottom of the garden, in the passage that leads to the street, which belongs to the house and some little tenements that's un[in]habited. But a door parts, so that the passage is quite private from them. The landlord seems pleased with the hopes of having so good a tenant and says the house and garden shall be cleaned and put in good repair. He will let it for 14£ per annum, if taken for any time. But believe he will let it for that rent if you only take it yearly. Which I told him I believed would be most convenient for you. Please to consider of it against [when] you come.

Mrs. [Ann] Wigginton will take care to enquire about your boxes from Oxford. I shall forward the bed for Garth as soon as I can get it done.

Nancy Nowell intends to go with the first boat.<sup>3</sup> All we can say on the advantage of going to meeting cannot prevail with her to stay longer here. We expect to see our friend Sarah Perrin and sister Nancy on Friday.

Brother Jones we received with pleasure on Tuesday last<sup>4</sup>. Pray, when you write, make my best and kindest love acceptable to your dear friend and mine, and let me know if you go to Garth before you come hither.

With due respects I conclude in haste  
Your assured and sincere friend,

E. V.

I have this day paid Mr. Evans the money and have taken his receipt.<sup>5</sup> He will bring me the bill when it is presented, which I shall lay up till I see you.

[My] sisters and Nancy Nowell join in best respects. Mine to friend [Elizabeth] Cart, whom I love and pity, but cannot commend. I hope you will not forget us in your prayers.

*Address:* "To / Mr. Cha. Wesley."

*Endorsement:* by CW, "[[Vigor's May]] 8 / 1749."

*Source:* holograph; MARC, MA 1977/502/2/32.

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<sup>1</sup>CW spent about a week in Bristol in late May, before heading to Wales.

<sup>2</sup>Elizabeth (Stafford) Vigor was arranging for CW and Sarah to rent a house in Stokes Croft, near her own home; see CW, *MS Journal*, May 27, 1749.

<sup>3</sup>Ann Nowell was returning to Cardiff.

<sup>4</sup>Dr. John Jones was moving from London to Bristol, to teach at the Kingswood school.

<sup>5</sup>Likely Llewellyn Evans (c. 1688–1763), who was active in Bristol Methodist from at least 1741.

From the Rev. John Wesley  
– a journal letter

Ireland  
May 3–10, 1749

Wednesday 3. I rode to Tullamore and found Mr. Tubbs<sup>1</sup> of Balliboy had come over the day before on purpose, expecting to meet me there. I called at the barracks in the afternoon on a kinsman of his and left one or two little books. I suppose these travelled about before night, for several of the officers came to the preaching, and more of the troopers than ever were there before either this year or the last. I think the Irish congregations in general abundantly exceed the English, both in earnest attention, and constant decency, and seriousness of behaviour.

Thursday 4. A little circumstance much surprised me. In every place sister [Grace] Murray met the women in band. In several, [she met with] all that were in the society, and spent some time in conversation and prayer. I was this morning coming down stairs while she was praying with the women below. Some who kneeled at the door blocked up my way, upon which I stood a while. Her words and tone of voice were like those of John Trembath,<sup>2</sup> only more free and unaffected. But I had not stood two minutes before the tears were in my eyes, I know not how, and I shivered from head to foot. What is this? [[A god of magic]]<sup>3</sup> or the supernatural power of God? I think verily Montanus and his *prophetesses*<sup>4</sup> would over-run the world!

About noon, I preach[ed] at Clara to a large congregation, among whom were a coachful of Mr. Armstrong's family.<sup>5</sup> Michael Fenwick (whom I had left at Tyrrellspass) met me here, with whom I went on to Athlone.<sup>6</sup> I never saw so large a congregation here on a weekday before, among whom were many of the soldiers, the remainder of that regiment wherein John Nelson was, and seven or eight of the officers. They all behaved well, and listened with deep attention while I declared, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."<sup>7</sup>

Friday 5. Being concerned for many who did run well, I resolved to spend this day in trying to save that which was lost. I went first unto William Sproule's.<sup>8</sup> He appeared the same as ever till I asked what John Curtis had said concerning me? Then his countenance fell, and he began in a loud stern tone to tell us, "How near men might come and yet miss the mark." I understood him well. But one being come to call me to the class, I had not [time] to explain with him.

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<sup>1</sup>Orig., "Tubs." This is apparently the "honest Quaker" mentioned by CW in *MS Journal*, Aug. 18, 1748.

<sup>2</sup>John Trembath (fl. 1740–60) was a native of St. Gennys, Cornwall, who became one of JW's traveling preachers as early as 1743. But he proved disinclined to study and self-discipline, drifting in and out of the itinerancy from 1750 onwards.

<sup>3</sup>JW crossed out his original phrase and added this in shorthand above the line.

<sup>4</sup>Prisca and Maximilla were associated with Montanus as prophetesses.

<sup>5</sup>Andrew Armstrong, J.P. of Clara, son-in-law of Samuel Simpson of Outfield; see Crookshank, *Ireland*, 294

<sup>6</sup>Michael Fenwick (d. 1797) first appeared as a preacher on trial (or probationer) in 1749 (see *Works*, 10:237), but both JW and CW were doubtful of his gifts and discipline (see JW to CW, Aug. 3, 1751). In 1755 JW took Fenwick as his groom for a period, commenting that he was "upon occasion a tolerable preacher" (JW to E. Blackwell, Sept. 12, 1755, *Works*, 26:586–87).

<sup>7</sup>2 Cor. 5:19.

<sup>8</sup>Orig., "Sprowle's."

Either this day or the next, I endeavoured to see all the rest who were offended or faint in their minds. Samuel Sproule appeared the most loving of all. I myself think he has had hard usage. A little common sense and common humanity might have kept that valuable man still with us. Most of the rest had been likewise vilely thrown away, either by want of prudence or want of love. Oh who will have tenderness enough for the child, except the real parent?

I believe all the clergymen in town were present at the evening sermon. None of them now appears to be at all dissatisfied, although they have cause. For one of our last preachers that were here told the people in his public preaching that 999 in 1000 of the clergy were priest[s] of Babel.

Saturday 6. I visited several more of the backsliders and several that were sick. And my labour was not in vain, either with one or the other. God is swiftly lifting up those that were fallen. And such an effect has attended the little medicines prescribed as I never saw before. One told me she had had sore legs for five years, but that she took the advice I gave her last May. And she was well in a few days. Nor had had any return of the disorder to this day. Another I had visited yesterday who was ill in bed. Today I found him well and walking about his house. Surely it is not so much the means as the blessing, which heals both soul and body.

I breakfasted at Mr. Hancock's, the curate of Athlone.<sup>9</sup> Another clergyman was also present. They were both full of good will before. And I believe their last objection, concerning "the suffering these laymen," was now pretty well removed.

Sunday 7. I preached, as usual, at 5:00 and 3:00, with the spirit of convincing speech. Mr. Grüber (the rector)<sup>10</sup> preached in the afternoon (though it was called the Morning Service) a close useful sermon on the fear of God. At 5:00, I had great numbers of the poor papists (as well as of Protestants) notwithstanding all the labour and menaces of their priests. I called aloud, "Ho! every one that thirsteth come to the waters: And he that hath no money."<sup>11</sup> Strange news to them! One of whom had declared frankly, but a few days before, "I would fain be with you, but I dare not leave our own church, because then I can't be saved. For now I have all my sins forgiven for four shillings a year. But this could not be in your church!"

We had a triumphant hour, when the society were met, in which several captives were set at liberty. One of these were Mr. Charles,<sup>12</sup> a gentleman who rode fifteen miles on Monday last to Tyrrellspass and came thither some time before I began preaching. He had been an eminent man for cursing and swearing, drinking, and all kinds of wickedness. He was immediately condemned and followed me in to desire some of our preachers might come to his house. I was then examining a class in which were several believers. Their words cut him to the heart. He followed me (after a day or two) to Athlone, having his eyes continually filled with tears, and being unable either to eat, drink, or sleep. But God now wiped away the tears from his eyes. And the next morning he returned to declare to his house what things God had done for his soul.

Monday 8. I rode to Aughrim, where the face of things is quite changed since last year. Here is now a serious congregation from all the country round of high and low, rich and poor. I preached about 7:00, and explained afterwards the nature and use of a society. The first who desired to join therein were Mr. Simpson (a neighbouring justice of the peace, the son of a clergyman whose name is still scarce

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<sup>9</sup>Orig., "Hancock"; Rev. Richard Hancock (1712–91), who would become Dean of Achonry in 1752.

<sup>10</sup>Orig., "Grubier"; Rev. Arthur Grüber (1713–1802), was vicar of St. Mary's, Athlone 1747–54. See J. B. Leslie & W. J. R. Wallace, *Clergy of Meath and Kildare* (Blackrock, Co. Dublin: Columba Press, 2009).

<sup>11</sup>Isa. 55:1.

<sup>12</sup>Joseph Charles, of Dumcree, whose conversion recorded here proved permanent, became an effective occasional preacher; see JW, *Journal*, July 17, 1756, *Works*, 21:69.



mentioned without a tear by any of his parishioners) his wife and daughter,<sup>13</sup> and Mr. Wade and his wife.<sup>14</sup>

I asked Mr. Wade concerning his brother, whose death I am not now surprised at.<sup>15</sup> By persisting two or three months in his buttermilk diet, he was grown strong and easy. Upon this he dropped it entirely and fed as he did before. The consequence was, all the consumptive symptoms returned and carried him off in a few weeks. Let this be a warning to all other good-natured murderers, who will pamper their friend into his grave

Tuesday 9. Mr. Simpson (at whose house I lay) and all his family rose at 4:00 and accompanied me to Aughrim, where we had full as many at 5:00 as were there the evening before. I rode thence to Ahascragh,<sup>16</sup> six miles south, at the desire of Mr. Glass, the rector.<sup>17</sup> Mrs. Mahon<sup>18</sup> came soon after to his house, and pressed us to go to Castle-Gar (a mile off), where was Mr. Mahon's seat, the greatest gentleman in those parts. The coach came for us before one and brought us back again after dinner. At 4:00 (on consideration the papists durst not come to church), I preached before Mr. Glass's door. I could never have imagined this had been the first time that the greatest part of the congregation had heard this preaching, so fixed and earnest was their attention. In the morning, Wednesday 10, I think we had more than at night, among whom were Mrs. Mahon, her brother and three daughters (who came some time before I began), and Mr. Mead, the rector of a neighbouring parish, a man athirst for God and teachable as a little child. Surely he is not far from the kingdom.

Mr. [Jeremiah] Wade rode with me hence to Eyrecourt, a little town about fourteen mile[s] from Ahascragh. Here I preached in the market-house, a large handsome room, to an exceedingly well-behaved congregation. Mr. Glass's servant rode on with me to Birr, eight Irish (computed) miles further—I suppose near sixteen English [miles], for they took us near three hours, though we made all the haste we could without spoiling our horses.

At this uncomfortable place I preached about 7:00 to a large company of very civil stocks and stones. I had designed to set out at 4:00 in the morning. But brother [Robert] Swindells begged me to halt one day, and, if possible, settle the poor shattered society, which partly the imprudence, partly the remissness and complaisance of our preachers, had thrown heaps upon heaps.

*Source:* holograph; Bridwell Library (SMU).<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Samuel Simpson (d. 1783) of Oatfield later built at his own expense the first Methodist chapel in Athlone in 1767. Crookshank, *Ireland*, 208.

<sup>14</sup>Jeremiah Wade (1711–72) was a significant landholder in Aughrim, Co. Galway.

<sup>15</sup>This is apparently the “young Mr. Wade” mentioned as ill in CW, *MS Journal*, Sept. 27, 1748.

<sup>16</sup>Orig., “Ahaskur.”

<sup>17</sup>Rev. William Glass was rector at Ahascragh; see National Library of Ireland, Mahon Papers, Ms 47,905 / 1.

<sup>18</sup>Orig., on all three occurrences, “Meighen.” Ross Mahon (1696–1767) and Jane (Ussher) Mahon (1694–1768) were the current proprietors of the Castlegar estate.

<sup>19</sup>Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 31:366–70.

**Mehetabel (Wesley) Wright to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley**

Frith Street, Soho  
May 12, 1749

Dearest Sister in Christ,

(As I hope I shall ever call you.) This waits on you to congratulate your marriage to a man who I trust will never knowingly deceive you, and has no equal in some accomplishments which I forbear to mention because of our kindred, and that you may think I intend to write a panegyric—which is not my present purpose, but to wish a blessing on you both, and it usually attends those who have done building castles in the air. I verily believe most marriages are blessed, if the blame is not in themselves in expecting more happiness in each other than any creature, however excellent, can give; since conjugal happiness consists more in mutual endeavours to soften and alleviate the miseries of life than any vain pursuit of pleasure. However, I may venture to pray that God would vouchsafe you the greatest earthly comforts: health, peace, and competence. So wishing you may prove a help to each other in things of higher moment, and that if ever we meet again we may rejoice together, I take leave, with compliments to your papa. I remain

Your most unworthy sister in Christ,

Mehet. Wright

When you are most at leisure, I should be glad of a line from you, and your prayers. Adieu.

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDCW 5/53.

From the Rev. John Wesley  
– a journal letter

May 14, 1749

... Thur. 11. I preached as roughly as possibly I could, if haply some might awake out of sleep. I then visited the classes, full of good resolutions and promises of better behaviour.

In the evening I preached again, with great plainness of speech, and perceived the word to sink deep. The congregation had now quite another appearance from what it had the night before. So that I was clearly convinced, love will not always prevail. But there is a time also for the terrors of the Lord.

Fri. 12. We set out early from Birr, and before nine came to Nenagh. I did not design to preach here. But one of the dragoons importuned me so much, telling me, with many tears, how the people would triumph over them if I went through the town with (out) preaching, that at length I ordered a chair to be carried out, (and wen) t to the market-house. Presently such a congregation was round about me as I had not seen since I left Athlone. And I have scarce felt so much of the presence of God, ever since I entered the kingdom.

Hence we rode to Limerick, where I received a letter from Jonathan Reeves at Cork,<sup>1</sup> in which were these words: "Please to let me know which way you come, and what day, that I may meet you. For otherwise your life will be in danger. The town is set on fire of hell, and all the powers of hell are stirred up against your coming."

More in my next. I am extremely hurried now. You may read any part of this to Mr. [Ebenezer] Blackwell or the society, and then send it to my brother, who will be impatient for it. Peace be with you.  
Adieu!

*Address:* "To / The Revd. Mr Wesley / At the Foundery / T. M[axfiel]d."

*Endorsement:* by CW "[[Journal]] 1749."

*Source:* privately held; John Wesley Works Archive (Duke) holds copy.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Jonathan Reeves (d. 1787) was drawn into the Methodist revival in Bristol in 1739, and became one of JW's earliest lay preachers.

<sup>2</sup>Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 26:357–58.

From Sarah (Evans) Gwynne

Garth  
May 18, 1749

Dear and Reverend Sir,

I attempted doing myself the pleasure of writing to you last post, but was interrupted three times before I could finish three lines. I hope my domestics will be a little more favourable now, for no call has yet happened. Therefore [I] shall endeavour to proceed to acquaint you that my dear Mr. [Marmaduke] Gwynne is, God be praised, pretty well recovered from his late severe illness. But his poor aged servant Pessot(?) died at Ludlow last Monday night, at which place we had sent him to assist in setting things in order against [when] we were to go there.<sup>1</sup> I trust he is infinitely happy.

We expect one wagon more will carry the remainder of our luggage to Ludlow, which was to have been here this week, but is not yet come. Betty, Peggy, and Rod go tomorrow there,<sup>2</sup> and if our house is ready for our reception, the rest of us intend to follow them with all possible expedition.

I find my pretended friend Harper disappointed me, but my real one has not used me so, for which you have my just thanks.

You'll be sure to hear when the day is fixed for our leaving this place, and [we] shall be truly glad to see you at Ludlow as soon as our house will be properly fitted to receive so welcome a guest.

Mr. Gwynne joins me in hearty prayers for your happiness and good success in all your undertakings, who am, dear sir,

Yours very affectionately and sincerely whilst,

Sa. Gwynne

I hope your good brother [JW] is well. Our hearty respects attend him.

My dear Sally (and yours) speaks for herself. All this family send their love and kind respects to you.

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDCW 5/54.

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<sup>1</sup>Marmaduke and Sarah (Evans) Gwynne were in process of moving from Garth to Ludlow, Shropshire; allowing their son Marmaduke Jr. to take over the estate in Garth.

<sup>2</sup>Roderick ("Rod") Gwynne (1735–69) was the Gwynne's youngest son.

Rev. Vincent Perronet to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

Shoreham  
May 24, 1749

My Very Dear Child,

You will easily excuse the address of these few lines, which proceed from the most cordial esteem and affection. I could no longer restrain congratulating of you upon your happy marriage with my much beloved and much valued brother [CW]. I call it “happy,” as being fully assured it is of God and because you will both unite your endeavours that it may prove to his honour and the good of souls. And since this will be the joint view and labour of you both, therefore I know that whatever trials infinite Wisdom may see proper to exercise his children with, they will only bring you both nearer and nearer to himself. So that after a life led in his true fear and love, I doubt not but you will both spend an happy eternity together in those regions of bliss which Christ has prepared for all his true and faithful disciples.

Mrs. Perronet joins in hearty respects to yourself and worthy family, and will be very glad to see you at Shoreham.<sup>1</sup> I am, my dear child,

Yours affectionately,

Vin. Perronet

*Address:* “To / Mrs Wesley.”

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/16.

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<sup>1</sup>Charity (Goodhew) Perronet (1689–1763) did not share her husband’s strong support of Methodism, but she was ever the faithful host to the Wesley brothers and their wives.

From the Rev. John Wesley

[Limerick, Ireland]  
Sunday, May 28, 1749

[[Dear Brother,]]

This being my last day here (for tomorrow morning at 4:00 I intend to set out for Cork), you may easily believe I have not time to transcribe the inclosed.<sup>1</sup> You will print it when, and where, and how you see good. Perhaps not only in the newspapers.

I suppose you have received the former parts of my journal. But I have none of yours yet. There is much life here. Sometimes I feel a little of it.

A German preacher<sup>2</sup> lives in brother Verney's house,<sup>3</sup> so at present I have no hopes of him.

Take care your scheme does not prove abortive. *Si quidem hercle possis, nihil prius, neq[ue] fortius.*<sup>4</sup>

James Wheatley (so far as I can learn) has done more hurt than good in Ireland. He not only *is* popular, but *loves* to be so. His is fond of the Germans to the last degree. He tramples upon all order and discipline, and thereby steals away the hearts of the people and makes them evil-affected to the other preachers who have some regard for rule left. Therefore, by all means prevent his coming over. I had rather he lay down and slept.

I hold another eel by the tail here. Pray and fight.

Adieu.

[[I do not]] think it at all expedient that [[brother [Thomas] Richards should marry]] sister Davey.<sup>5</sup> Pray warn her strongly.

Do not you warn B[illy] New<sup>6</sup> and the people of brother Williamson?

*Source:* holograph; privately held (WWEP Archive holds digital copy).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The enclosure is JW's account of the persecution in Cork (see next), which he hoped CW would publish in the newspapers, in hopes this would stir support for the Methodists.

<sup>2</sup>Both JW and CW use "German" broadly for Moravians.

<sup>3</sup>Moses Verney (fl. 1744–85) was a bookseller in Dublin, who had sold some of JW's earlier publications. He became a leader in the Moravian community in Dublin.

<sup>4</sup>Terence, *The Eunuch*, Act. I, scene 1, ln. 5; "if indeed you only can, there's nothing better or more spirited."

<sup>5</sup>Thomas Richards was married to Mary Davey (a housekeeper at Kingswood) on Nov. 15, 1749, with JW performing the service.

<sup>6</sup>William New (1708–67) was one of the first Methodists in Bristol. JW preached his memorial service on Sept. 25, 1767 (see his *Journal, Works*, 22:104).

<sup>7</sup>Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 31:370–71

From the Rev. John Wesley  
– a journal letter<sup>1</sup>

[Limerick, Ireland]  
[May 28, 1749]

This was farther explained in a letter from one of the stewards of the society,<sup>2</sup> whose account was as follows:

On May 3 I complained to the mayor that a ballad singer had brought several mobs about my house.<sup>3</sup> The major promised to stop him. But notwithstanding this he got a kind of stage fixed directly in the passage which leads to the place of preaching. Here, holding a bible in one hand and his ballads in the other, he began to sing and blaspheme; which, he called preaching. He quickly had a numerous mob, who insulted all that went toward the house, throwing dirt and stones. One of the sheriff's bailiffs came to him while he was thus employed and bad[e] him, "Preach on, and see who would hinder him." The two sheriffs<sup>4</sup> themselves also stood by, while many that went by were hurt by the mob. One of them prayed to God that the man might preach no more. The sheriff asked, "Who is that?" She replied, "It is I."<sup>5</sup> On which he said she affronted him and immediately sent her away to gaol. Intercession being made for her, after three hours he ordered her to be discharged.

We related all that the mob had done the next day to the major, who promised it should be so no more. But he did not make good his promise. For in the evening the mob was greater than before. They came to the house with sticks and hangers,<sup>6</sup> throwing in stones and bricks upon us. I went out among them and appeased them as well as I could. When the preaching was over, we went out in a body together. Several were hurt, but not much, till brother Williams,<sup>7</sup> being struck, drew his hanger and cut two or three of them on their legs. On this many of them fell upon him, and would probably have murdered him soon, had not a gentleman rescued him out of their hand!

May the 5th, the mob being more numerous and more outrageous than ever, the major himself came but could not dispense them, till he sent for a party of soldiers, who brought out the congregation from the house and suffered none to hurt them. But in the meantime alderman Millard<sup>8</sup> and the two sheriffs came and demanded of me the keys to the house. Upon my refusing to deliver them, they took hold of Mr. Stockdale<sup>9</sup> and me by the shoulders and turned us out, and nailed up the doors.

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<sup>1</sup>JW expanded upon this initial account of the events in Cork in a letter to CW on June 17, 1749, providing the identity of several persons as noted below.

<sup>2</sup>Daniel Sullivan, a baker in Cork.

<sup>3</sup>The current mayor was Daniel Crone, Esq.; the name of the ballad singer was Nicholas Butler.

<sup>4</sup>James Chatterton and Hugh (or John) Reilly.

<sup>5</sup>The woman was Elizabeth Holland.

<sup>6</sup>*OED*, "a type of short sword; originally hung from the belt."

<sup>7</sup>This may be Thomas Williams (c. 1720–87), the itinerant preacher; if so, JW discreetly did not name him in the account of June 17, 1749 (and mentioned him cutting only one person).

<sup>8</sup>Hugh Millard Jr.

<sup>9</sup>John Stockdale, a tallow-chandler in Cork and active Methodist.

I plainly saw not only the wisdom of the devil herein, but likewise the providence of God—making the way plain for me to spend some time at Limerick, till the storm at Cork should blow over. Between 6:00 and 7:00 I preached at Mardyke, an open place a little without the walls,<sup>10</sup> to (I believe) about two thousand people. It was not the custom for anyone here to laugh or look about him, or to mind anything but the sermon. I have not seen so serious and so large a congregation since I came from Bristol.

Saturday, [May] 13, at 5:00 we had (it was supposed) about six or seven hundred people in our church, which was rebuilt seven or eight years since with a design to have public service therein.<sup>11</sup> But no more than the shell of it was finished. I believe it will hold about a thousand people. We went thence to the prayers at the Cathedral,<sup>12</sup> an ancient and venerable place. I breakfasted at Mr. Mansell's,<sup>13</sup> one of the vicars, a friendly man who constantly attends the preaching in every place and owns the truth as it is in Jesus. In the afternoon I walked round the walls of the town. The extent is near the same with that of Newcastle. The fortifications are much in the same repair. But they are strong enough to keep out any force that is likely to assault them. Five hundred or some more were at the preaching today than were yesterday. I have seen few congregations behave so well since I was at Berwick upon Tweed. This appears to be an understanding people. But by their fruits we shall know them.

May 14, being Whitsunday, the church was more than full in the morning, many being obliged to stand without the doors. I was carried out so that I know not how the time passed, but continued preaching till near 7 o'clock. I went at 11:00 to the cathedral, where there used to be laughing or talking through the whole service. But whether it were from the fear of God, or of me, there was nothing of it now, from the beginning to the end. I scarce knew how to behave amidst the huge respect which was shown me both by the people and the clergy. It is well that honour is balanced by dishonour, or what minister of Christ could be saved? In the evening I preached to such a congregation as we used to have at Bristol in the orchard on a Sunday evening, from those words, "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink."<sup>14</sup> We afterwards met the society. Ten or eleven prisoners of hope were set at liberty that day.

Monday, [May] 15, I began visiting the classes, consisting of more than 160 persons. Above forty of them know in whom they have believed. And the far greater part of the rest appear so serious and settled in their minds that one would think they were of six years', rather than six weeks' standing. I have hitherto see no such society as this, all things considered, either in England or Ireland.

The evening congregation was nearly as large as that the night before. Abundance of revellers and dancers had taken possession of the ground before I came, so that some advised me to preach at another place. But I knew it needed not. As soon as ever I came in sight the holiday mob vanished away.

Tuesday, [May] 16. The church was again more than full at the morning sermon. I then desired those who were willing to enter into the society to call upon me at my lodgings—which an hundred and five persons did before Thursday night. So mightily does the word of God run and prevail. After hearing an honest, useful sermon at the Cathedral concerning the necessity of all Christians receiving the Holy Ghost, I went to the Abby (so our church is called) and read the letter to a crowded audience.<sup>15</sup> It was a happy time indeed. I afterwards went to dine with one of our brothers in the island (a peninsula at one end

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<sup>10</sup>The site where the Granary was built in 1787.

<sup>11</sup>This was the old Saint Francis Abbey, site now of the Franciscan Church, Henry Street, Franciscan Lane, Limerick.

<sup>12</sup>St. Mary's Cathedral, for the Church of Ireland, on King's Island.

<sup>13</sup>Likely Rev. William Maunsell (c.1720–1804), of Limerick.

<sup>14</sup>John 7:37.

<sup>15</sup>JW was surely reading to them a draft of *A Letter to a Roman Catholic*, which he would publish in Dublin in July 1749; see *Works*, 14:166–75.



of the town),<sup>16</sup> where we had hardly taken our dinner before one, and another, and another of the neighbours came in upon us; till we had a company of 16 or 18, papists and Protestants! Our hearts were soon knit together and we thanked God for the consolation.

How does the greatness and frequency of the works of God (such is the baseness of our hearts!) lessen our thankfulness rather than increase it! A few years ago if we saw or heard of one notorious sinner who was truly converted to God, it was a matter of the most solemn joy with all that loved or feared God. And now that multitudes of every kind and degree are every day turned from the error of their ways, we pass it over as a common thing! O God give us thankful hearts!

*Source:* privately held; John Wesley Works Archive (Duke) holds digital copy.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>I.e., King's Island.

<sup>17</sup>Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 31:371–74.

From the Rev. John Wesley  
– a journal letter

[Ireland]  
[May 30, 1749]

Wed. May 17. I met the class of soldiers at Limerick myself, eight of whom are Scotch Highlanders. Most of these once knew the fear of God, but evil communications corrupted good manners. From the time they were in the army they all grew worse and worse, till they had no fear of God before their eyes. But as soon as Mr. [Thomas] Williams came he called them again. And they knew the day of their visitation.

Thur. 18. I had heard, when I first came to town, that the Limerick liars were almost grown into a proverb. I found today they had not forgot their cunning, it being currently reported in the town that the archdeacon was gone to the bishop on purpose to put a stop to these preachers, and had declared there should “not be one of them left by the first of next September.” All this time the archdeacon knew no more of the matter than I did of what was affirmed with equal confidence, viz., that Mr. Wesley said in his public preaching, “the clergy” were “all lazy, indolent fellows,” and he was come “to do their duty for them.”

Fri. 19. I was informed by letters from Cork that the mob there was as boisterous as ever, and that both the mayor and sheriffs, instead of taking any care to suppress it, were the encouragers if not the authors of all the tumult. It is well that he who is higher than the highest regardeth. The poor committeth himself unto thee!

Sat. 20. I saw one of the most terrible sights which I ever met with in my life. A gentlewoman of an unspotted character, and in an uncommon degree beloved by all that knew her, on May 4, 1747, while she was sitting in her own house, said something seized her by the side, then that it was in her mouth, and quickly after complained of her head. From that time she wept continually for four months, saying God had forsaken her, and the devil possessed her soul and body. She afterwards grew more and more outrageous, still persisting in the same account.

I found her understanding less impaired than I expected. Yet it availed nothing to reason with her. She only blasphemed the more, being in the deepest despair, cursing God, and vehemently desiring, yet fearing, to die. However, she suffered me to pray, only saying it signified not, for God had given her up for ever.

Her brother gave me almost as strange an account of himself. Some years since, when he was in his full career of sin, in a moment he felt the wrath of God upon him, and was in the deepest horror and agony of soul. This increased so that he had no rest day or night, feeling himself under the full power of the devil. He was immediately incapable of all business, so that he was obliged to sell his goods and shut up his shop. Thus he wandered up and down, in the most exquisite torture, for just eighteen months. And then in a moment the pressure was removed: he believed God would have mercy upon him. His understanding was [as] clear as ever. He resumed his former employ, and lived in the fear of God.

Sun. 21. A gentleman came to me in the morning (by his habit, I suppose a clergyman), who had rode, he said, fourteen miles on purpose to talk with me. He seemed to be of a mild, advisable spirit, and appeared well satisfied with his journey.

I dined at Mr. Beauchamp’s, with the Dean of Limerick,<sup>1</sup> an affable, well-behaved man, and one of the skilfullest farmers in all the country. But he escaped unwounded out of my hands. O Lord, forgive me my sins of omission.

Mon. 22. Mr. Williams and I visited the poor lunatic again. She was now much calmer than before, and did not blaspheme at all, but bemoaned herself in such a manner as drew tears from all around her. We found much liberty in prayer. Surely God *will* arise, and the captive shall be delivered.

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<sup>1</sup>The Revd. Charles Massy, dean from 1740 until his death in 1766.

The more I converse with this people, the more I am amazed. That God has wrought a great work among them is manifest. And yet the main of them, believers and unbelievers, are grossly ignorant of the plainest principles of religion. It is plain God begins his work at the heart. Afterwards the inspiration of the Highest giveth understanding.

Tue. 23. I spent some time (as I did once before) among the sick soldiers at the infirmary. Surely there is not so teachable [a] people under heaven! Not one soul objected to anything I said, but all received the word of exhortation with all thankfulness and readiness of mind.

Wed. 24. A gentlewoman called upon me with her son, who (she informed me) was given over last summer, and expected death every day, when one of Mr. [George] Whitefield's sermons was read over to him. This put him upon earnest prayer, during which God revealed his pardoning love. He immediately declared this to his mother, telling [her] at the same time: 'I shall not die now. God has told me I shall not, and I believe him.' And he recovered from that hour.

About eight several of us took boat for Newton (six miles off), a gentleman who lived there coming for us himself. The boat was small and overloaded, and the wind contrary. However, we made shift to get thither before 11:00. I should have rode back but for the sake of those who came with me. It blew a storm when we went into the boat. And we were forced to keep on the windward side of the river, having several times tried to cross over, but in vain, the wind and waves not suffering us. The boat was soon deep in water, as it leaked much, and the waves washed over us frequently. And there was no staying to empty it, the men being obliged to row on with all their strength. After they had toiled about an hour the boat struck upon a rock. It had four or five shocks before we could get clear. But our men wrought for life, and about six o'clock God brought us safe to Limerick.

Thur. 25. I visited many of the people, who seem to be more and more established. I preached in the evening on, "It must needs be that offences will come,"<sup>2</sup> and reckoned up the chief occasions of offence which had already been either at this or other places. Great part of the congregation, particularly the strangers, appeared like men thunderstruck. And I am almost persuaded that a majority of those who have begun to run well will watch and pray, and endure to the end.

Fri. 26. A large company of us walked out a mile or two into the country. I doubt we had not a sufficient call so to do. It may be for this reason we were rebuked by a vehement shower of rain. In the evening I met the bands, consisting now of between sixty and seventy persons, one or more having found remission of sins (I believe) every day since I came.

Sat. 27. I visited the prison a second time, and found a company of mere sinners, one and all willing to hear of the Saviour of sinners, and saying, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"<sup>3</sup> We had a joyful time in the evening. The whole assembly was moved, and some did come and drink of the water of life freely.

Sun. 28. I preached much the closest sermon in the morning that I have ever yet done in Limerick. But I do not find that any at all were offended; hitherto they are able to endure sound doctrine. I preached at Mardyke in the evening on, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself."<sup>4</sup> I never saw a congregation at Bristol which was at once so numerous and so serious.

Mon. 29. I was determined to set out for Cork, although Jonathan Reeves knew not how to advise, the mobs continuing to rise every day, by the connivance (if not encouragement) of the magistrates. A little before I set out an astrologer (so called) came to me and said: "Sir, I find that if you go to Cork your life will be in danger, by a red-haired man with a mark on his face." I told him God would see to that, and took horse about six o'clock.

We breakfasted at Bruff, nine miles from Limerick. When I afterwards went into the kitchen, more and more of the neighbours gathered about me, listening to every word I spoke, so that I should

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<sup>2</sup>Matt. 18:7.

<sup>3</sup>Matt. 21:9, etc.

<sup>4</sup>2 Cor. 5:19.

soon have had a congregation if I could have stayed. I hope Mr. Williams will tomorrow.

A mile or two beyond Killmallock (once a large and strong city, now a great heap of ruins) we saw the body of a man lying dead in the highway, and many people standing and looking upon him. I stopped and spoke a few words. All had ears to hear, and one on horseback rode on with us. I soon perceived he was a priest. We entered into discourse, and I found him a serious, sensible man. I gave him a book or two at parting, and he dismissed me with, “God bless you,” repeated twice or thrice over, in a solemn and earnest manner.

We stopped awhile at Kildorrery in the afternoon, and took the opportunity of speaking closely to everyone that understood English, and of leaving a few books among them. Surely there is not such a nation as this under the sun: every man, woman, and child we meet (except a few of the great vulgar) not only patiently but gladly suffers the word of exhortation.

Between six and seven we reached Rathcormack. Mr. Lloyd read prayers, and I preached to almost as many as the pews would contain.<sup>5</sup> I found we were mistaken in thinking the papist[s] would not come to the church. They were the larger half of the congregation. Though I should scarce have imagined it by their behaviour. For they were all serious and deeply attentive.

Tue. 30. Hearing nothing certain from Cork, only that the mob was on Friday greater than usual, I judged it best to send brother Reeves thither this morning, that he might bring me word in what state things were, and we might then consider what steps would be most proper to be taken.

I preached again at 11:00, to many papists as well as Protestants, with great enlargement of heart. And their hearts seemed to be as melting wax. The Lord *will* work, and who shall hinder him?

In the afternoon I received a second invitation from Colonel Barry,<sup>6</sup> with whom I spent two hours, not in vain. I found him a serious and an understanding man, well read both in books and men. And his long and painful illness had been made a blessing. What he knows not yet may God reveal unto him.

Our congregation in the evening was larger than before. And never since I came into this kingdom was my soul so refreshed as it was both in praying for them and in calling them to accept of the redemption that is in Jesus.

Charles Skelton came from Cork just as we came out of church, and brought us an account of still increasing tumults.<sup>7</sup> So that it was clear to us all, I had no place there yet, it being not only impossible for me to preach, but even to appear in the town, while the rioters filled the streets, without immediate hazard of my life.

*Source:* holograph; current location unknown, John Wesley Works Archive (Duke) holds copy.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Lloyd, Rev. Richard Lloyd (1699–1775) was rector of Rathcormack.

<sup>6</sup>Possibly James Barry, in 1721 a captain in Col. Onslow’s Regiment of Foot.

<sup>7</sup>Charles Skelton (c. 1725–98), a native of Ireland, became a travelling preachers in 1747.

<sup>8</sup>Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 26:360–65.

From the Rev. John Wesley  
– account of persecution in Cork

Athlone  
June 17, 1749

1. On Friday, June 2, 1748, Mr. [Thomas] Williams and Mr. [Robert] Swindells came to Cork. Mr. Williams preached that evening on Hammonds Marsh, to a quiet, attentive congregation. They continued in Cork about a fortnight, one or the other preaching every morning and evening. After a short absence Mr. Swindells came again, and remained there for several weeks. The Revd. Mr. Charles Wesley came Aug. 20, and stayed till Sept. 19. Multitudes of people of all ranks attended his preaching, and appeared extremely pleased therewith.

2. Some of the preachers vulgarly called Methodists continued here till April following, during which time many who had lived in all manner of vice became patterns of all virtue. The churches were crowded more than ever. The number of communicants daily increased. And among these were many who had been papists, but had now relinquished the Church of Rome. These are facts which no man can deny. The instances are too numerous and notorious.

3. Nevertheless several of the clergy, particularly Mr. Baily,<sup>1</sup> chaplain to the corporation, and Mr. Echlin,<sup>2</sup> were disgusted more and more, and began to say many bitter things of those preachers, in public as well as private.

Many papers were printed and dispersed abroad, laying grievous crimes to their charge; and many sermons were preached, accusing them of blasphemy and all manner of wickedness. These were well relished by a society of gentlemen in the city, not very eminent for their attachment to the present government, who had now entirely turned out all that were so, and kept the power in their own hands. Yet this did not produce much present effect; only among their intimates or dependents, who now began to bestow some hard names upon those preachers as they passed along the streets.

4. But in April 1749 it was determined to proceed a little farther, and one Nicholas Butler, once a weaver, now a ballad-singer, was appointed to open the same. Accordingly he fixed himself several times over against the house of Mr. Thomas Jones, a linen-draper in the city (where the preachers frequently were), and began singing a ballad called, “Swaddling John,” intermingling abundance of oaths and curses, and ribaldry of all sorts; and swearing he had drove the Swaddlers out of several towns already, and by God, he would drive them out of Cork. The same thing he also did in several parts of the city, and thereby gathered many mobs together, who insulted the Methodists (so called) wherever they met them, so that it grew difficult for them to pass the streets.

5. These mobs (in which a vast majority were papists) continually increasing, Mr. Daniel Sullivan, a baker, whose house they frequently attended, not knowing what the consequence might be, went on May 3 with Mr. Jones to the mayor.<sup>3</sup> They informed him that Butler, at the head of a popish mob, was daily insulting and threatening them in their own houses, giving them the most opprobrious language, and cursing and blaspheming in the most dreadful manner. He gave them his word and honour, “It should be so no more.” He “would put an entire stop to it.”

6. Yet that very day a larger mob than ever before were gathered together near Dant’s Bridge. Mr. Butler stood on a table or chair in the middle of them, having his ballads in one hand and a Bible in the other, which he opened and read: “They that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly;

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<sup>1</sup>Apparently Rev. John Baily, rector of Kilcully, on the northern outskirts of Cork, who had been born at Bandon c. 1700, and educated at Trinity College, Dublin. It was in response to his pseudonymous attacks that JW published *A Letter to the Revd. Mr. Baily of Cork*, *Works*, 9:289–314.

<sup>2</sup>Rev. Arthur Echlin (1705–52).

<sup>3</sup>Daniel Crone, Esq.

and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”<sup>4</sup> He went on preaching, as he termed it, but in a manner not fit to be repeated. The two sheriffs of the city<sup>5</sup> stood at a small distance, listening, and laughing much; and one of their sergeants went to him, and bade him to go on, and see who would dare to hinder him.

7. Mr. Lewis and Mr. Stockdale soon after,<sup>6</sup> meeting the sheriffs near the place, Mr. Stockdale complained of the rudeness of the mob, and desired those gentlemen to assist them. They laughed at them, and said, “It is none of our business.” Mr. Stockdale answering, “It is in your power to suppress them.” Mr. Reilly replied, “If you don’t hold your tongue I will send you to Bridewell.”

8. About the same time a woman coming through the mob cried out, “What a parcel of devils are gathered together here!” Another woman (Elizabeth Holland) walking near, Mr. Reilly tapped her on the shoulder and said, “Who is that?” She not understanding him, answered, “It is I.” Upon this he immediately ordered her to Bridewell, saying she abused him.

9. The mob, now knowing their friends, went on with more courage, [ab]using all alike who came to or from the preaching. They threw whole showers of dirt and stones, used the women in the most shocking manner, cut and tore their clothes, and beat several of them on the breast, head, and face. This continued some hours, nor was the town quiet till pretty late in the night.

10. One of those who had been so treated went to Alderman Jackson<sup>7</sup> to make information of it. Observing he turned all she said to ridicule, she said, “Sir, if I was a papist, you would do me justice.” He replied, “So I would. Go and turn papist, and I will receive your information. But so long as you stay among these Swaddlers I shall mind nothing you say.”

11. Mr. Jones, Mr. Sullivan, and some others, went in the morning, May 4, to the mayor, and gave him an account of these things. He said he could not help it. They replied, “Sir, you can help it, by speaking three words. You need only tell Butler, ‘Sing no more.’” After some time he answered, “Gentlemen, I give you my word, there shall be no more disturbance.”

12. Notwithstanding this, about six o’clock Mr. Butler appeared in the same place, and soon gathered a mob abundantly greater than that the night before. They were now fiercer than ever, and armed with clubs and hangers<sup>8</sup> beset the house where the preaching was. They threw in abundance of dirt and stones, and as the people came out, without any provocation of any kind, knocked several of them down. They struck and wounded others with their hangers, of whom one only made resistance; who as he rose again (having been knocked down) drew his hanger and cut one of them on the leg. Him they knocked down five or six times, and had not a stranger interposed would have dispatched on the spot.

13. May the 5th Mr. Jones, Sullivan, and Stockdale went to the mayor with this man, cut and mangled as he was, bruised all over, and covered with his own blood. The mayor said at first he could not help him, but afterwards bade him make information against the rioters, which he did. Although the clerk told them plainly it signified nothing, for the bill would be thrown out—and he said the truth. For the honourable jury would not find the bill. At the same time they found another against him, for striking the rioter on the leg. In consequence of which warrants were issued out to take him, which obliged him to quit the city.

14. Mr. Jones added, before he left the mayor, “Mr. Butler has given public notice that tonight he will bring the Blackpool mob and the Fair Lane mob together (two famous parish mobs, who used to fight with each other) and destroy all the Swaddlers at once.” The mayor promised once more it should not be; he would take care there should be no more such riots.

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<sup>4</sup>Rom. 16:18.

<sup>5</sup>James Chatterton and Hugh (or John) Reilly.

<sup>6</sup>Lewis is not otherwise known, but like John Stockdale, a tallow-chandler, he seems clearly to have been a Methodist.

<sup>7</sup>Surely Ambrose Jackson, sheriff in 1726, mayor in 1735.

<sup>8</sup>Short swords (orig. hung from the belt).

15. But Mr. Butler was the man of his word. In the evening he did as he had promised. The mob of Fair Lane joined that of Blackpool, and came pouring down together. Mr. Jones being previously informed that the mayor intended to go out of the way, sent two men to see if he went from home, and to observe which way he went. Instructed by this, when the mob was at the height he followed his worship to a little blind alehouse. But the landlady stiffly denied his being there, as did also the drawer and the maid-servant. Mr. Jones insisted, “He went in here. I sent men to watch him; and I will not leave the house till I see him.” There being then no help, Mr. Mayor appeared, and walked with him till he came near the place. He beckoned to Mr. Butler, who came down from his table, but mounted again when the mayor was passed by. He then went to the preaching-house, where the people were still, but dirty and bloody enough, and being much importuned sent for a party of soldiers, who preserved them from farther outrage.

16. When most of the people were gone, Alderman Millard the younger<sup>9</sup> and the sheriffs went into the preaching-house, and ordered Mr. Jones and Stockdale to get out of the house; which they refusing to do, Mr. Reilly took them by the shoulders and thrust them both out by main strength. The alderman and sheriffs then ordered the doors to be nailed up, and stood by while it was done.

17. From this time Mr. Butler (being well paid by several of these gentlemen) was continually moving up and down the town, singing his ballads, and preaching, as he termed it. In the meantime his faithful friends and allies, the Rev. Mr. Baily, the Rev. Mr. T.,<sup>10</sup> and the Rev. Mr. D.,<sup>11</sup> continued vehemently to revile the Methodists, to curse them in the name of the Lord, and to incite all their hearers to “follow the blow, and drive them out of the city.”

18. Notwithstanding this, Mr. Reeves preached morning and evening in Mr. Sullivan’s house. But most evenings Mr. Butler planted himself near the house, and gathered his mob together, who threw dirt and stones very plentifully at those that came out, and abused them all manner of ways.

19. May 15, being Whitsun: Monday, Mr. Butler’s retinue was much larger than usual. The next day Mr. Sullivan complained to the mayor. But there was no redress. In the evening they were more numerous than before. Mr. Sullivan went to the mayor again, and earnestly begged he would come and disperse them. But he desired to be excused. This was soon noised abroad, to the no small comfort and encouragement of the rioters, who knocked down many as they came out of the house, hurt Mr. Sullivan himself, broke a great part of his windows, and much damaged the goods in his shop. Mr. Butler continued in the meantime damning all the people “for a parcel of heretic dogs,” and exhorting his good Catholics to “strike home,” and to “let none of the dogs and whores escape.”

20. Sometimes the mayor and at other times the sheriffs went by while he was thus haranguing his auditors; but they were too great friends to liberty of conscience to interrupt either him or them.

Yet one evening, as they were assembling near the main guard, the soldiers obliged them to disperse. But the commanding officer, at the instance of the mayor, forbade them to do so any more.

21. May 28. The mob gathered as usual, near Mr. Sullivan’s, [and] declared they would pull down his house the next day. The next day they came according to their word, swearing they would now be revenged of the heretic dogs once for all. A messenger went and informed the mayor of this. He answered, “Don’t trouble me.”

22. The rioters growing more and more outrageous, Mr. Sullivan went himself and begged the mayor to come. After many refusals, at length he came. But instead of dispersing “the mob,” he told him before them, “It is all your own fault. Why don’t you turn these preachers out of your house?” On which they gave a loud huzza and began to throw stones at the windows faster than ever. Mr. Sullivan then saying, “What fine usage we have got under a Protestant government!” The mayor replied, “You prate too

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<sup>9</sup>Hugh Millard, Jun., had been sheriff in 1742, mayor in 1747.

<sup>10</sup>Rev. Thomas Tuckey, M.A., born in Cork c. 1710, and now rector of Litter (Castle Hyde) a mile west of Fermoy.

<sup>11</sup>Possibly Rev. Boyle Davies, M.A., prebendary of Liscleary, 5 miles south-east of Cork.

much,” and left him and the mob together.

23. A little before he went a man took up a large stone, Mr. Sullivan’s back being towards him, and was going to dash his brains out. Mr. Sullivan the younger caught hold of him, and carried him to the mayor, who ordered him [to] the guardhouse. Mr. Sullivan inquired for him there the next morning, and the sergeant of the guard informed him he had been “discharged by an order from the mayor.”

24. May 31. The stewards of the society opened the door of the preaching-house, and at seven in the evening Mr. [Charles] Skelton preached. Meantime Mr. Butler gathered all his forces, who assaulted many women and children with sticks and stones, and whatever came to hand. A few remained in the house, whom Mr. Peter Connor<sup>12</sup> was obliged to lock in with himself. The mob returning from the pursuit soon broke in at a window. Mr. Connor, bursting open the door, leaped out among them. They pursued him, till he slipped into an house, and then [they] went back to the preaching-house. They broke the branches,<sup>13</sup> and threw them into the river. They tore down whatever could be moved, even the floors and frames of the door and windows. The benches, pews, and thin boards, with many small things, they carried out, and burned in the middle of the street. The double planks which were there (to the value of £20), they carried off for their own use. In this work they continued from about eight till after ten o’clock. When they had finished, between eleven and twelve, the good mayor sent a guard of soldiers. For who knows but they might have come again, and carried away the house and the ground it stood upon?

25. It should be observed that while any of the soldiers attended the preaching the mob was awed, and did little mischief. But to remove this restraint, Major Dalrymple<sup>14</sup> gave orders that none of them should hear it at all. Nay, they went farther yet. For on this very day, May 31, James Mitchell, a common soldier, and a corporal, walking together on the quay, saw Mr. Butler and his mob throwing dirt and stones at Mrs. Packer, and then throwing her down, and beating her as she lay. They stepped up and bade them leave off. On this dirt was thrown upon them likewise, upon which they drew their swords. A captain coming by ordered them both into custody. The corporal was broke, and James Mitchell sentenced to receive three hundred lashes, which was executed on June 2nd, not in the barracks, as usual, but on the open Change, Mr. Butler himself being sent for, and standing by to see the execution.

26. Upon the whole one question readily occurs, whether, setting aside both Christianity and common humanity, it be *prudent* thus to encourage a popish mob to tear Protestants in pieces. And such Protestants as are essentially and remarkably attached to the present government! Nay, and on that very account peculiarly odious both to papists and Jacobites!

27. If it be asked, But how can it be prevented? I answer, either by suffering the soldiers to attend the preaching, which at once would put a stop to all these riots, or by giving a proper check to those worthy magistrates.<sup>15</sup>

Athlone  
June 17

[[Dear Brother,]]

Cannot one of these points be carried either 1) to procure a letter from Lord Harrington<sup>16</sup> (if not a formal order) testifying a disapprobation of these things? Or 2) an order from the Duke that the Irish

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<sup>12</sup>Possibly one of the stewards, and related to Jacob Connor, a clothier, who deposed that on June 24 he was badly beaten by the mob.

<sup>13</sup>The chandeliers.

<sup>14</sup>Apparently Major Robert Dalrymple, of the First Battalion of the First Regiment of Foot.

<sup>15</sup>In a space between JW’s summary and letter, CW copied in shorthand the opening sentences of the summary, altering “Mr. Williams” to “another of the preachers frequently called Methodists.”

<sup>16</sup>William Stanhope, first Earl of Harrington (1690?–1756), Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, 1746–51.



soldiery may have liberty of conscience?<sup>17</sup> Or 3) some kind of letter from Andrew Stone<sup>18</sup> to the Primate? Or from some in power to the government here? Let us do all we can do, little as it is. Else are not we partakers of other men's sins?

[[Adieu.]]

I think of meeting you in Bristol next month.

*Source:* holograph; current location unknown, John Wesley Works Archive (Duke) holds copy.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland (1721–65), Captain-General of the British land forces at home and in the field.

<sup>18</sup>Andrew Stone (1703–73), older brother of the Archbishop of Armagh (George Stone, 1708–64).

<sup>19</sup>Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 26:366–73.

From Marmaduke Gwynne

Ludlow  
June 22, 1749

Dear Son,

I sincerely thank you for your kind and obliging letter.<sup>1</sup> And as you may be assured it was not for want of love and respect I owe you that I have been so backward in writing, therefore hope you'll not take it unkind in me.

We were all of us much rejoiced to hear that you and my dear daughter were got well to Bristol, and that your wife bore her journey like an old traveller.<sup>2</sup> I long to see you both and hope God will bring us soon together. I visited only Col. Herbert<sup>3</sup> and parson Cole<sup>4</sup> since you went from hence. I made no long stay with either, but after having some talk with the vicar and his wife about your brother, yourself, and the Methodists, I took out your brother's two volumes of *Sermons* and read the first sermon in it to them,<sup>5</sup> and asked if they had any objection to the doctrine. They said not. I could not forbear lamenting the unkind treatment he and you had met with from too many of your brethren the clergy. If it be the Lord's will that I make my abode for some time in this town, I doubt not but the friends that will come to see our family may be instruments that God will make use of to convert several souls who seem at present ignorant of the gospel.

I intend writing a few lines in answer to my dear child's letter, so shall add no more now, only to beg the continuance of your prayers for me and mine, who are reverend and dear son,

Your most affectionate father and humble servant,

Mduke Gwynne

Dearest Sally,

I just now received your kind letter.<sup>6</sup> Your mother and I have disorders upon us, which prevent our resting well at night. I believe your mother as well as myself are better pleased in our minds that you are married to Mr. Wesley than to the greatest worldly monarch on earth. As I readily consented to the match, so I hope he and you will let us be as little apart on this earth as possible; for when we are called out of this world I doubt not of our happy meeting in heaven, never to part.

My kind love and service to Mrs. [Elizabeth] Vigor, Mr. [James] Wheatley, Mr. Perronet<sup>7</sup> and all inquiring friends.

Your brother Rod went well to Yazor [Herefordshire], but he has wrote to none of us since he went away. All your relations in the square desire their love and service to your good husband and you, and I am my dear Sally,

Your most affectionate father,

MDuke Gwynne

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<sup>1</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>2</sup>CW had picked up Sarah in Ludlow and they arrived in Bristol on June 10, to settle into their home in Stokes Croft.

<sup>3</sup>Henry Arthur Herbert (1703–72) was commissioned a colonel in 1745; he was also currently Baron Herbert of Chirbury and would be named 1st Earl of Powis.

<sup>4</sup>Rev. Brian Cole (c. 1681–1752) had been rector of Ludlow since 1741.

<sup>5</sup>JW, Sermon 1, *Salvation by Faith, Works*, 1:117–30.

<sup>6</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>7</sup>Likely means Edward Perronet (1726–92), a son of Rev. Vincent Perronet of Shoreham, began to assist both CW and JW after his family aligned with the Methodists in 1746.

Give my service to Mr. Williams and thanks for his letter.<sup>8</sup> I spoke with Mr. Baugh,<sup>9</sup> but it was too late.

*Endorsement:* by CW, “[[My father June]] 22, 1749.”

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDCW 5/56.

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<sup>8</sup>Thomas Williams was in Ireland; this may be John or Anthony Williams, both early members of the Bristol society.

<sup>9</sup>Thomas Folliott Baugh (1717–57), heir to the Stonehouse estate near Ludlow

From Sarah (Evans) Gwynne

Ludlow  
June 27, 1749

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

I can't express the pleasure yours gave me, finding that you and my dearest Sally were then in health.<sup>1</sup> I hope God will be pleased to continue that possessing to you both, and that she will ever make it her endeavour to deserve the esteem you so kindly express for her.

An account has been sent sometime ago of the increase of my son's family.<sup>2</sup> His wife has, since she was brought to bed, been extremely ill, but is I think now in a fair way of recovery.

Mr. [Abel] Ketelbey was so far on the mending hand that he was carried out this day. I've told him it is but a short reprieve, and therefore begged he would be thoughtful of that unchangeable state we were all hastening to. He thanked me kindly and I trust, if he lives, he will not forget the innumerable mercies of God in preserving him longer upon earth to "work out his salvation."<sup>3</sup> He has, I find, prayers in his family now, and he promised me he would always have them continued. He desired me to present his hearty service to you and your wife.

The natives of this place seem to show no regret for their ill treatment of you. And it is my sincere belief that if you attempted preaching among them again, they would use you worse than they have done. Yet [I] hope this will not prevent our having the pleasure of seeing you and my dear Sally here when it is convenient to you. Yet [I] hope you'll not again throw pearls before swine.

If poor Sally is very well, she has no need of a physician. And [I] hope she has a greater regard for truth than to conceal any disorder and to say she is in health when she really is not so.

I am much obliged to your good brother [JW] for his kind remembrance of us. I beg you'll return him our best services.

Captain Baldwyn, his wife, and (little idol) their son left us yesterday.<sup>4</sup> I obeyed your orders to them and our friends in Broad Street, who all begged I would present you and their sister with their love and service. Mr. Gwynne and the rest of his household join me in truest regards for each, who am, dear and reverend sir,

Yours most faithfully and affectionately whilst,

Sa. Gwynne

And beg you'll excuse this.

*Endorsement:* by CW, "[[June]] 27 1749 [[Mrs Gwynne]]."

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDCW 5/57.

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<sup>1</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>2</sup>Marmaduke Gwynne (1749–86) was born to Sarah's brother Marmaduke Gwynne (1722–82) and his wife Jane (Howells) Gwynne (1723–55) in June; he was baptized in Ludlow on July 13.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Phil. 2:12.

<sup>4</sup>Captain Edward Baldwyn (1691–72) of Diddlebury was the husband of Marmaduke and Sarah's oldest daughter, Mary. Their first son, Richard, was born in 1748.

From Rebecca Gwynne

Ludlow  
Friday morning [July 7, 1749]

I am doubly indebted to my dear brother Wesley, therefore hope my sister will excuse my answering you first;<sup>1</sup> which I do with pleasure, particularly as you gave me hopes of seeing you both soon, which I've often wished for, and think it is tedious time since we parted.

I have lately been at Diddlebury for a few days,<sup>2</sup> where I received the melancholy news of my poor cousin's death,<sup>3</sup> which has been a great concern to us all and appeared very sudden to those about her, for they thought her in a fair way of recovery till within an hour before she died. Though a letter I received last night from sister Juggy [i.e., Joan] informs me that she was sensible to the last moment, and knew her time in this world was just at an end. She was quite resigned and seemed assured of happiness; took her leave of her husband, and told him she should (if it had pleased God) been glad to have lived a few years longer with him, but the Lord's will be done; desired him to pray for her and take care of her poor little girl,<sup>4</sup> and then expired without a groan.

I beg when you write to mamma that you'd remind her of her promise for one of us to return with you to Bristol, for I spoke to her the other day about it and [she] seemed almost to have forgot it. Papa is in Breconshire, but my mamma, my brother, my sisters, cousin Molly,<sup>5</sup> aunt Leyson,<sup>6</sup> and my nurse<sup>7</sup> join me in kind love and service to you and my dear sister, and am, dearest brother,

Yours most affectionately,

Reb. Gwynne

*Endorsement:* by CW, "July 7, 1749 Becky M[rs] / Popkins death resigned."

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDCW 5/58.

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<sup>1</sup>CW's letter to Rebecca is not known to survive.

<sup>2</sup>The home of Edward and Mary (Gwynne) Baldwyn.

<sup>3</sup>Justina (Stepney) Popkin died June 28, 1749. She was the wife of Thomas Popkin (b. 1719, of Forest Fychan, Abertawe, Glamorgan), a son of Rebecca (Evans) Popkin (1690–1759), who was a sister of Sarah (Evans) Gwynne; see CW's epitaph in MS Six, 25; and MS Richmond, 91.

<sup>4</sup>Rebecca Elenora Popkin (c. 1748–99), who would marry Watkin Lewes (1737–1821).

<sup>5</sup>Mary ("Molly") Musgrove (1706–84) was an unmarried niece of Sarah (Evans) Gwynne; daughter of her deceased older sister Mary (Evans) Musgrove (c. 1680–1708).

<sup>6</sup>Mary (Gwynne) Leyson (1701–74) was the widowed sister of Marmaduke Gwynne.

<sup>7</sup>Grace Bowen (d. 1755) was a beloved nurse for the Gwynne family. See CW's two-part hymn on her death in *Funeral Hymns* (1759), 24–28.

From Sarah (Evans) Gwynne

Ludlow  
July 15, 1749

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I do most heartily thank you and my dearest Sally for your repeated favours and kind affectionate expressions towards me and the rest of my family.<sup>1</sup> The loss we have all had by the death of my dearest niece is not to be described.<sup>2</sup> And had it been the sole will of the Almighty's to deprive us of her, I don't doubt but he would have enabled her nearest friends to have bore it as Christians. But I am told (which I heartily pray may not be true) that she lost her life through a mistaken kindness of those about her. The consideration, if true, must add greatly to their affliction, as well as increase every person's concern that knew either her or them.

We shall be much rejoiced to see you, your good brother [JW] and my dear Sally at Ludlow; but must beg that your stay may be much longer with us than ever it has been hitherto. Otherwise I shall have little or none of your company, for I am engaged to attend my daughter Baldwyn during her confinement. I intend going to Diddlebury the latter end of next week or the beginning of the following one, for she expects her time before this month ends.<sup>3</sup> God send it may be a truly happy time to her, whether it be for life or for death. Betty and Peggy went to their sister yesterday,<sup>4</sup> and intend returning home Monday and Tuesday. Mr. [Abel] Ketelbey has taken lodgings in the country for the benefit of the air, about two miles out of town. I saw him yesterday morning and he returned to dine at his lodgings. He sits a horse and rides tolerably, but still looks like a ghost. I've often told him he is as one raised from the dead. God send he may live to be raised *indeed* from a death of sin to a life of righteousness.

Mr. [Marmaduke] Gwynne is very uneasy at not being able to find your brother's answer to Doctor Conyers Middleton,<sup>5</sup> having promised to show it some gentleman who seem to admire that gentleman's performance. He therefore begs you'll procure him two of Mr. Wesley's books, and (if no sooner opportunity happens) that you'll bring them with you to the place when you come. My dear Sally must excuse my writing to her by this post. You'll let her know that her father's and my prayers attend her. Our sincere dues wait on your self and all inquiring friends, I am, dear and reverend sir,

Yours faithfully and affectionately whilst,

Sa. Gwynne

Sister Leyson, Popkin,<sup>6</sup> and cousin Molly Musgrove desire their love and service to yourself and partner

Endorsement: by CW, "[[Mrs. Gwynne, July]] 15, 1749."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDCW 5/59.

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<sup>1</sup>These letters are not known to survive.

<sup>2</sup>Justina (Stepney) Popkin.

<sup>3</sup>Sarah Baldwyn, second child of Edward and Mary (Gwynne) Baldwyn was baptized Sept. 13, 1749 in Diddlebury; sadly, she died within months, being buried there on Dec. 11, 1749.

<sup>4</sup>I.e., Elizabeth and Margaret Gwynne.

<sup>5</sup>JW, *A Letter to the Reverend Dr. Conyers Middleton occasioned by his late "Free Enquiry"* (London: [Bowyer], 1749).

<sup>6</sup>I.e., Mary (Gwynne) Leyson and Rebecca (Evans) Popkin

By the Rev. John Wesley  
–Reflections on Grace Murray Episode<sup>1</sup>

Whitehaven  
September 25, 1749

1. From the time I was six or seven years old, if anyone spoke to me concerning marrying I used to say I thought I never should, because I should never find such a woman as my father had.

2. When I was about seventeen (and so till I was six or seven and twenty) I had no thought of marrying, “because I could not keep a wife.”

3. I was then persuaded “it was unlawful for a priest to marry,” grounding that persuasion on the (supposed) sense of the primitive church.

4. Not long after, by reading some of the mystic writers, I was brought to think marriage was “the less perfect state,” and that there was some degree (at least) of “taint upon the mind, necessarily attending the marriage-bed.”

5. At the same time I viewed in a strong light St. Paul’s words to the Corinthians,<sup>2</sup> and judged it “impossible for a married man to be so without carefulness, or to attend upon the Lord with so little distraction, as a single man might do.”

6. Likewise, being desirous to lay out all I could in feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, I could not think of marrying “because it would bring such expense as would swallow up all I now gave away.”

7. But my grand objection for these twelve years past has been: “A dispensation of the gospel has been committed to me.<sup>3</sup> And I will do nothing which directly or indirectly tends to hinder my preaching the gospel.”

8. My first objection was easily removed by my finding some, though very few, women whom I could not but allow to be equal to my mother both in knowledge and piety.

9. My second, “that I could not keep a wife,” held only till I found reason to believe, there were persons in the world who, if I were so inclined, were both able and willing to keep *me*.

10. My third vanished away when I read with my own eyes Bishop Beveridge’s *Codex Conciliorum*.<sup>4</sup> I then found the very Council of Nice[a] had determined just the contrary to what I had supposed.

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<sup>1</sup>While this document is not technically a letter, JW surely shared it with CW, and it marks the beginning of a major fracture in the relationship of the brothers. After officiating at CW’s marriage to Sarah Gwynne in Apr., JW found himself inclined to marry as well, and was drawn to Grace Murray—see his glowing description of her contributions during a preaching tour in Ireland; JW to CW, May 3–4, 1749. Grace was still accompanying JW in the fall on a preaching around Newcastle, and CW learned in mid-Sept. that JW had announced an intention to marry Grace. CW was aghast, in part because JW had published *Thoughts on Marriage and a Single Life* in 1743, which argued the single life was preferable to marriage for those who wish to dedicate their lives to serving God. CW knew opponents of Methodism would portray JW marrying as hypocritical. CW also appeared to consider Murray an inappropriate choice if JW should marry, because of her social status and he understood she had already promised to marry the lay preacher John Bennet. This document was JW’s response to such challenges. CW continued to interfere in these matters, ultimately marrying Bennet and Murray without JW’s knowledge. For more, see Bufford W. Coe, *John Wesley and Marriage* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1996), 29–35, 115–23; and G. M. Best, *A Tragedy of Errors: The Story of Grace Murray* (Bristol: New Room, 2016).

<sup>2</sup>1 Cor. 7:32–33.

<sup>3</sup>1 Cor. 9:17.

<sup>4</sup>William Beveridge, *Synodikon; sive Pandectae Canonum Apostolorum et Conciliorum*.

11. St. Paul slowly and gradually awakened me out of my mystic dream, and convinced me, “The bed is undefiled, and no necessary hindrance to the highest perfection.”<sup>5</sup> Though still I did not quite shake off the weight till our last Conference in London.<sup>6</sup>

12. I was next, though very unwillingly, convinced that there might be such a case of Dr. Koker’s, who often declared, he was never so free from care, never served with so little distraction, as since his marriage with one who was both able and willing to bear that care for him.

13. The two other objections weighed with me still—increase of expense, and hindering the gospel. But with regard to the former I now clearly perceive that my marriage would bring little expense if I married one I maintain now, who would afterward desire nothing more than she had before, and would cheerfully consent that our children (if any) should be wholly brought up at Kingswood.

14. As to the latter, I have the strongest assurance which the nature of the thing will allow that the person proposed would not hinder, but exceedingly further me in the work of the gospel. For from a close observation of several years (three of which she spent under my own roof) I am persuaded she is in every capacity an help meet for me.

15. First, as a housekeeper, she has every qualification I desire. She understands all I want to have done. She is remarkably neat in person, in clothes, in all things. She is nicely frugal, yet not sordid. She has much common sense; contrives everything for the best; makes everything go as far as it can go; foresees what is wanting, and provides it in time; does all things quick, and yet without hurry. She is a good workwoman, able to do the finest, ready to do the coarsest work; observes my rules, when I am absent as well as when I am present; and takes care that those about her observe them, yet seldom disoblige any of them.

16. As a nurse (which my poor, shattered, enfeebled carcass now frequently stands in need of), she is careful to the last degree, indefatigably patient, and inexpressibly tender. She is quick, cleanly, skilful, and understands my constitution better than most physicians.

17. As a companion she has good sense, and some knowledge both of books and men. She is of an engaging behaviour, and of a mild, sprightly, cheerful, and yet serious temper.

18. As a friend she has been long tried and found faithful. She watches over me both in body and soul, understanding all my weakness, sympathizing with me and helpful to me in all; never ashamed, never afraid; having a continual presence of mind in all difficulties and dangers; in all enabled to cover my head and strengthen my hands in God.

19. Lastly, as a fellow-labourer in the gospel of the Christ (the light wherein my wife is to be chiefly considered), she had in a measure which I never found in any other both grace and gifts and fruit. With regard to the first: she is crucified to the world, desiring nothing but God, dead to the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, the pride of life; exemplarily chaste, modest, temperate, yet without any affectation. She is teachable and reprovable; gentle and long-suffering; eminently compassionate, weeping with those that weep, bearing both my burdens, those of the preachers, and those of the people; zealous of good works, longing to spend and be spent for the glory of God and the good of men.

20. As to her gifts, she has a clear apprehension and a deep knowledge of the things of God; a quick discernment of spirits, and no small insight into the devices of Satan. She has been trained up, more especially for these ten years, in the Word of truth; having constantly attended both the morning and evening preaching, without despising the meanest of our preachers. She is well acquainted with, and exercised in, our method of leading souls, having gone through all our little offices, and discharged them all entirely well. She has a ready utterance, a spirit of convincing as well as of persuasive speech, a winning address, an agreeable carriage, in whatever company she is engaged. By means of all which she is exceedingly beloved, almost wherever she comes, and is dear, in an uncommon degree, to great numbers of the people.

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<sup>5</sup>Cf. Heb. 13:4.

<sup>6</sup>I.e. in 1748; see §32 below.



21. And as to the fruits of her labours, I never yet heard or read of any woman so owned of God—so many have been convinced of sin by her private conversation, and so many have received remission of sins in her bands or classes, or under her prayers. I particularly insist upon this. If ever I have a wife, she ought to be the most useful woman in the kingdom—not barely one who probably *may* be so (I could not be content to run such a hazard), but one that undeniably is so. Now, show me the woman in England, Wales, or Ireland, who has already done so much good as Grace Murray. I will say more. Show me one in all the English annals whom God has employed in so high a degree! I might say, in all the history of the Church, from the death of our Lord to this day. This is no hyperbole, but plain, demonstrable fact. And if it be, who is so proper to be my wife?

22. I cannot doubt but such a person being constantly with me (for she is both willing and able to accompany me in all my journeys, another circumstance which is absolutely necessary in such an helper as I want), would be so far from being a hindrance to my work that she would remove many hindrances out of the way. She would, in great measure, either prevent or remove those bodily weaknesses and disorders which now increase fast upon me. By caring for me she would free me from a thousand cares, and enable me to serve God with less distraction. She is and would be a continual defence (under God) against unholy desires and inordinate affections—which I never did entirely conquer for six months together before my intercourse with her. Now that it is κρείττον μᾶλλον γαμεῖν ἢ πυροῦσθαι<sup>7</sup> is owned. And marriage being supposed, point out a properer person.

23. But she would not only remove hindrances. Such a friend and fellow-labourer (I do not say probably would, but actually does) greatly assists and furthers me in my work; enlivening my dull and dead affections, composing and calming my hurried thoughts, sweetening my spirits when I am rough and harsh, and convincing me of what is true, or persuading me to what is right, when perhaps no other could. At the same time loosening my soul from all below, and raising it up to God.

24. She would likewise remove many hindrances from others, from women in particular. She would guard many from inordinate affection for me, to which they would be far less exposed, both because they would have far less hope of success, and because I should converse far more sparingly with them. Perhaps not in private with any young women at all—at least not with any member of our own societies.

25. And she might directly further the work by employing all her grace and gifts on that very thing—in regulating female classes and bands; in examining, instructing, reproofing, comforting; in awakening souls (under God), bringing them to the faith, and building them up therein. Therefore all my seven arguments against marriage are totally set aside. Nay, some of them seem to prove both that I ought to marry, and that Grace Murray is the person.

26. But it is objected to this, first, that my marrying her would turn the greater part of our preachers out of the way, insomuch that they would despise my authority, and act no more in conjunction with me.

Secondly, that it would break up our societies, and cause them to cry out, “Every man to his tents, O Israel!”<sup>8</sup>

Thirdly, that it would give such scandal to the world as never could be removed.

27. I cannot receive any one of these propositions without proof. Let us hear, then, the reasons that support them.

The first is: “Because she is low-born.” Her parents were poor, labouring people.

I answer, “This weighs nothing with me, as it does not prevent either her grace or gifts. Besides, whoever I marry, I believe it will not be a gentlewoman—I despair of finding any such so qualified.”

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<sup>7</sup>“Much better to marry than to burn”; cf. 1 Cor. 7:9, the intensification of “better” being added from the Greek of Phil. 1:23.

<sup>8</sup>2 Sam. 20:1, etc.

28. The second reason is: “Because she was my servant.” I answer, “I therefore like her the better. By that means, *intus et in cute novi*.<sup>9</sup> By living so long with her under one roof I am as secure against being deceived in her as I can well be against being deceived in anyone. Indeed I should scruple marrying any woman who had not done so for some time.”

29. A third reason is: “She has travelled with me six months.” With regard to this, I grant some would probably say, “She was my mistress before she was my wife.” And let them say this; it would hurt just as much as a thousand things they have said before. But let them know withal I should never marry any woman till I had proof that she both could and would travel with me. It is my belief that when these things were fairly represented, not only nineteen in twenty of our preachers and societies would be satisfied, but also the reasonable part of the world. And for the rest, the good would outweigh that evil.

30. But the fourth and grand reason is behind: “She is already engaged to another.”

I ask, “Where?” You say, “At Epworth”—John Bennet then asked, “Will you marry me?” and she replied, “I will.”

I grant it. But without insisting on numerous circumstances which account for her weakness in so doing, I insist only on one—she was contracted before. Therefore this promise was null and void.

And that contract was far stronger than this. At Epworth she only said, “I *will* take you”; at Dublin she said, “I *do*.”

“But before she went to Dublin she consented in Derbyshire to John Bennet’s proposal.”

I grant this also. But before that she had consented to my proposal at Newcastle.

Therefore what was done at Newcastle vacated a thing of the same kind done afterwards in Derbyshire. And the contract *de praesenti* made at Dublin vacated the contract *de futuro* made at Epworth.

31. “But John Bennet” (this is the fifth reason) “will not believe this. Therefore he will expose you as having married his wife.”

Perhaps he will believe it by and by. And I am willing to stay any reasonable time till he does. At least there is reason to think most others will believe it when a fair state of the case is laid before them.

32. But there is one reason more: “You have said, and have printed, that you would never marry.”

This is a mistake. I have never said any more, either in public or private, than, “I do not design to marry.” And I said true. I did not design it, nor thought that I ever should, when I said so. But the reasons which I then had against it are now wholly removed.

I never said so much as this in print. Indeed I published *Thoughts on Marriage*. But in our last Conference I was convinced they were not just; and accordingly I then altered them.<sup>10</sup> And as to those words in the *Appeal*, “My wife and children are yet unborn,”<sup>11</sup> they imply no more by natural construction, nor did I then intend any more thereby, than that I had neither wife nor children at that time, viz. in the year 1744.

The short is this: 1) “I have scriptural reason to marry.” 2) “I know no person so proper as this.”

*Source:* British Library, Department of Manuscripts, Add. MS. 7119, 66–79.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>“I know her inside out”; cf. Persius, *Satires*, iii. 30.

<sup>10</sup>The “Minutes” of the 1749 Conference do not record in what way JW was to revise the *Thoughts on Marriage*, and no known edition appeared after 1743 (until it was completely redrafted for publication as *Thoughts on a Single Life* in 1765).

<sup>11</sup>JW, *An Earnest Appeal*, §95, *Works*, 11:86.

<sup>12</sup>Published transcription with same pagination in Augustin Leger, *Wesley’s Last Love* (London: Dent, 1910)]; also appears in JW, *Works*, 26:380–87.

From the Rev. Vincent Perronet

Shoreham  
November 3, 1749

My Dear Friend and Beloved Brother,

Yours came this day to hand. I leave you to guess how such news must affect a person whose very soul is one with yours and our friend.<sup>1</sup>

Let me conjure you, of all love, to continue to soothe his sorrows. Pour nothing but wine and oil into his wounds. Indulge no views, no designs, no desires, but what tend to the honour of God, the promoting of the kingdom of his dear Son, and the healing our wounded friend. Act the part of divine charity (a part I know you will gladly act). Bear all things. Hope all things. Believe all things. Cover all things. Be not easily provoked, but suffer long and be kind. Keep in view the tottering church of Christ! The ark trembles, and seems in danger of falling. Lord, stretch out thy gracious hand and now support it!

How would the Philistines rejoice, could they hear that Saul and Jonathan were in danger from their own swords? Let us be attentive to the common danger! Christ sleeps not, though we may. Let us go earnestly to him, and with tears cry out, "Save Lord, or we perish!"<sup>2</sup> And he will tenderly reprove us for our want of faith, and our want of zeal, of prayer, and watchfulness. Had we not been asleep, then things had not happened. Let us awake to righteousness. Let us exert ourselves with noble diligence; search well our hearts; put away from us whatever makes between us and our god; and the Lord will pity and save his people.

The post waits, and I must finish. You may read your brother's letter,<sup>3</sup> but seal it and send it the first opportunity.

My love attends you and my dear child. The Lord Jesus be with us all, amen.

Yours affectionately,

Vin. Perronet

*Address:* "To / The Revd Mr Charles Wesley."

*Endorsements:* by CW, "[[Mr. Perronet November]] 3. 1749 / [[Peacemaker]]," "Nov. 3. 1749 / Mr P[errone]t / Peacemaker," and "Nov. 3. 1749 / Mr Perronet, healing."

*Source:* holograph; MARC, MA 1977/472/2.

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<sup>1</sup>In his letter of Oct. 30, 1749 to Perronet CW reported that JW on how tense and fractured his relationship with JW had become (JW was in Bristol at the time; the first time the two brothers were together since CW forestalled JW's marriage to Grace Murray.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Matt. 8:25.

<sup>3</sup>Perronet's matching letter to JW is not known to survive.

From Sarah (Evans) Gwynne

[Garth<sup>1</sup>]  
December 26, 1749

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Your affectionate lines and Christian-like favour I received, and return you hearty thanks for it.<sup>2</sup> I do with sincere gratitude acknowledge that myself and family are under infinite obligations to you. Your tender concern for the eternal welfare of us all far exceeds all worldly pomp and treasure.

Your kind thoughts of coming here in March gives me some pleasure, but the time you propose staying I can't be pleased with at all. When I see you, you shall know more of our minds as to our leaving this place, which will much depend on my poor son Duke's doing the same,<sup>3</sup> for I shall be very sorry to leave him here after me. Poor Beck and myself live like bees in a hive. The air is here so sharp that we never go out without increasing our sever disorders. Mr. [Marmaduke] Gwynne has had a severe complaint, but he now goes to church, which is so cold, damp, and offensive with new plastering that it is as much as he can well bear. I fear he suffers greatly by it.

I sent two franks last post directed to Betty.<sup>4</sup> In one was a letter from Mr. Gwynne to you.<sup>5</sup> And the Bewdley carrier tells me that he will be careful of a piece of brawn<sup>6</sup> which I have ordered (to be directed to Mrs. [Ann] Wigginton in Bristol) for Sally, for I suppose you will not partake of it. I chose to direct it to Bess, lest the carriers should impose on you as the Brecon carrier did.

Captain Balwyn and his family are with us.<sup>7</sup> They join with Mr. Gwynne, myself, and Beck in affectionate services to yourself and my three girls.<sup>8</sup> I am, dear sir,

Yours most obediently and faithfully,

Sa. Gwynne

Pray excuse me to dear Sally for not writing to her now. And tell her little Rod is better than he has been, though far from being well; and that poor Jenny is sadly peppered of with the Welsh distemper.<sup>9</sup> I suppose she caught it from her maid, so that poor Rod stands but a poor chance of being long free from that horrible disorder.

*Endorsement:* by CW, "[[December]] 26. 1749 [[Mrs Gwynne acknowledging obligations]] / [[All these are read?]]."

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDCW 5/60.

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<sup>1</sup>The family was visiting Marmaduke Gwynne Jr.'s family at their old estate in Garth.

<sup>2</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>3</sup>Possibly referring to marital tensions between Marmaduke Jr. and his wife; cf. CW, *MS Journal*, July 28, 1750.

<sup>4</sup>Elizabeth Gwynne, who was visiting CW and Sarah.

<sup>5</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>6</sup>I.e., meat (CW would not partake because of his all-vegetable diet).

<sup>7</sup>Edward and Mary (Gwynne) Baldwyn, with their son Richard; Sarah died early Dec.

<sup>8</sup>Either Joan and Margaret were also in Bristol with Elizabeth, visiting CW and Sarah.

<sup>9</sup>Roderick Gwynne (1747–50) and Jane Gwynne (1746–1816), children of Marmaduke Jr. and Jane (Howells) Gwynne.

1750

From the Rev. John Wesley<sup>1</sup>

c. January 1750

[opening section missing]

One glaring instance of this<sup>2</sup> is your staying spending so long much time at Bristol, since April<sup>3</sup> last midsummer. I see no sense or reason in your staying being there more than four months in a year. That you have married a wife is not a sufficient cause, unless we refer the matter to flesh and blood.

Nay, sometimes you are so far from furthering, that you greatly hinder me in my work. I see such or such a thing to be for the general good of the societies. You not only do not second me therein, but purposely weaken my hands. Take the instance of tea, which I had weighed some years before I determined anything.<sup>4</sup> You ~~can be~~ was no judge of the merits (of the) cause, for you had not so much as read my reasons. Not to read them was an amazing instance proof both of unkindness and of unwillingness to be convinced. Your behaviour in this has made such a breach upon in my authority as you will scarce ever be able to repair. Your plea, “that you conformed, till I made it a matter of conscience,” is not true. It did not stick [i.e., stop] you. Although it is true, I do make conscience of setting the people an example in all frugality and self-denial.

You have likewise often hindered me by breaking in upon my plan, and countermanding my orders. I send the preacher ~~you recall him. I recall, you send him~~ one way, and you another. In the same like manner you have hindered me at Kingswood. (1) I ~~had~~ have charged brother [Walter] Sellon<sup>5</sup> not to stir out of the house. You have come and sent him to [remainder missing]

Source: incomplete manuscript draft; MARC, MA 1977/157, JW III.7 (single page, numbered “3”).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>After CW’s interference with JW’s intended marriage to Grace Murray correspondence between the brothers was greatly reduced for some time. The present (potential) letter is known only from a draft among JW’s papers; it is unclear whether it was actually sent. It demonstrates well the level of frustration and tension between the brothers at this point.

<sup>2</sup>The topic is clearly JW’s charge that CW is not providing sufficient support to the revival.

<sup>3</sup>I.e., from the time of his marriage to Sarah Gwynne.

<sup>4</sup>In 1746 JW began encouraging his lay preachers to abstain entirely from drinking tea (for both health reasons and reasons of cost). He made this position more formal in 1748 in *A Letter to a Friend Concerning Tea* (*Works*, 32:276–88). CW was not present at the 1746 Conference where the initial move was affirmed, and conveyed his disagreement to JW; see CW to JW, July 15, 1746, *Journal Letters*, 214. CW tried abstaining from tea briefly (*MS Journal*, July 28, 1746), but soon abandoned the attempt and defended drinking tea to JW; see particularly CW to JW, Oct. 29, 1747. Others invoked CW’s example in rejecting the call to abstinence; see JW, *Letter to a Friend Concerning Tea*, §22, *Works*, 32:283.

<sup>5</sup>Rev. Walter Sellon (1715–92), grandson of a Huguenot minister, was a quiet scholarly man. JW appointed him in 1748 as classics master for Kingswood School. In 1750 Sellon left to become a protégé of Lady Huntingdon, who would secure episcopal ordination for him in Sept 1759.

<sup>6</sup>See Randy L. Maddox and Richard P. Heitzenrater, “New John Wesley Letter to Charles Wesley,” *Methodist History* 50 (2012): 187–88; and JW, *Works*, 31:375–76.

From Sarah Perrin

Bristol  
March 7 [1750]

My Dear Friend,

I received thy affectionate letters and acknowledge the favour.<sup>1</sup>

I have received great benefit by being in the air. I have walked in the garden several times and I seem in a fair way of recovery, though I gain my strength but slow[ly]. Above all things I want a healthful mind, a constant power to pray that I might give up my body, soul, and spirit a sacrifice continually to the Lord, for I feel and see I can be happy no other way.

I much desire the perfection of those whom God has so often strengthened and comforted my soul by. And I believe I shall see the desire of my heart wrought on you. Glory be to the God of Israel. He has not forgot to be gracious. Ye shall dip your feet on the brim of the Jordan and the people shall see the wonderful works of the Almighty. I find great faith for and union both to thee and thy brother, that your love may be may perfect and your joy be full in the Lord. O my dear friend, let all old things pass out of remembrance and be the twain as one love.<sup>2</sup>

I find brother [John] Jones knows not how to write to thee. He is conscious of his ingratitude. He acknowledges it and desired me to excuse him as well as I could. And if I may ask the favour, I should be glad if thou wouldst condescend to break the way to him by writing a few lines first. I believe it would have been better for him if he had ask[ed] thy advice. But let us forget that now. I am sure he highly esteems thee.

The work of God revives. O let us look through the things to him in whom all fullness dwells, who has commanded us to open our mouths wide that he might fill us.

O Lord Jesus, what is lacking in thy priests and people supply. What has been amiss, forgive. What is still wrong, remove. That we might be a people valiant for the truth, giving glory unto thee continually.

I have sent all the hymns brother Grou had ready.<sup>3</sup> Hoping I shall hear from thee soon, and not forgetting my dear friend, though at a distance from thee, I conclude with sincere desire for your happiness, with duty

Thy affectionate friend,

S. P.

*Endorsement:* by CW, “[[Sarah Perrin March]] 7, 1750” and “Mar. 7. 1750 S. Perrin Animating.”  
*Source:* holograph; MARC, MA 1977/428/2/53.

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<sup>1</sup>These letters are not known to survive. They would have been written after CW left Bristol to minister in London on Mar. 1, 1750.

<sup>2</sup>Referring to the current fractured relationship between CW and JW.

<sup>3</sup>Orig., “Grew”; Abraham Grou served as French Master at Kingswood school 1748–50, see Ives, *Kingswood*, 27, 44.

From Ebenezer Blackwell<sup>1</sup>

[Lewisham]  
Sunday, March 18, 1749 [i.e., 1750<sup>2</sup>]

Dear Sir,

I pray you to bear with my folly if you see the things I write of in another light than they appear to me, though I trust the whole I shall say will be spoke in much love and not with an evil desire of finding fault.

The Almighty has been pleased to place you in a high station, therefore as a city that is set on a hill you cannot, nor ought good actions, to be hid, but like unto a candle properly situated should give light unto all that are round about you.

I shall omit mentioning all old things, and only speak a little of what has passed since you last came to town. Your brother, the Sunday before he left London, gave notice that he should meet you at Oxford the Wednesday following,<sup>3</sup> and that you designed being in town the next day and desired that as many as could would meet you at the Foundery on Thursday evening. You did indeed come to town time enough to have met the people as you appointed, but was so exceedingly tired you could not stop at the Foundery, but went on to Mr. [Vincent] Perronet's. The people waited for some time, every moment expecting you as they knew you was come to town, but you ordered Mr. [Thomas] Maxfield to give them an exhortation, etc. Dear sir, if the same spirit that rested on David had dwelt in your breast, would you not, like him, have rejoiced when they said unto you, come let us go into the house of the Lord?<sup>4</sup> And on recollection, do you not think it would have been proper, if it were only for an example to the people, to have spent some short space with them in prayer and thanksgiving, if you strength would not have admitted of more? For sure you must own that praise was due to your kind preserver in your journey, etc.

With regard to what I shall now mention I assure you it has been the cause of great uneasiness to several that frequently attend the service in the [West Street] chapel; that is, your keeping the people very often so long there on a Sunday that it is impossible that either they or their servants who are at home preparing dinner for them should go to their parish church, or any other place of worship, in the afternoon before they come to the Foundery. Indeed, your brother does not act in that manner, therefore I pray you sir to follow his example.

My intention this morning was to have spent the time I am writing this with you at the sacrament, but indeed I am sorry to tell you, but I must, that you this day (instead of your holy, devout behaviour invite me to) did by your unthinking, careless behaviour force me from the table of the Lord. You did indeed read the prayers, but alas it was more like a priest of the world who had been up all night and was now half asleep on the desk. Sir, I say that neither myself or many that were about me could understand one half of what you said, and pray how do you think we could say "Amen," or beseech the Lord to hear us, when we knew not what petition you had asked. And as for the first lesson in particular, you read it so very low that I dare say not one in ten throughout the [West Street] chapel could hear or perfectly understand what your read. And then how unlike to the rule laid down in that book by which all of our

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<sup>1</sup>This is CW's first surviving letter from Ebenezer Blackwell (1711–82). Blackwell apprenticed in banking under Thomas Martin of Martin's Bank, London—where he became a partner in 1746. Raised as an Anabaptist, Blackwell was baptized into the Church of England by his cousin George Whitefield in June 1739, and in August of that year helped Whitefield deal with money collected for establishing a school for colliers at Kingswood. He became a long-time friend and supporter of the Wesley brothers. On his death in 1782, CW composed an extended funeral hymn—see MS Funeral Hymns (1756–87), 59–62; and published in *AM* 6 (1783): 108–10, 164–66.

<sup>2</sup>Blackwell was using old-style dating. Mar. 18 falls on a Saturday in 1749.

<sup>3</sup>See JW, *Journal*, Feb. 28, 1750, *Works*, 20:322.

<sup>4</sup>See Ps. 122:1.

actions should be governed and wherein we are told that all things should be done in decency and order,<sup>5</sup> was your going into the pulpit to preach with the surplice on, and though it may be done in some places and on particular occasions, yet it is very uncommon in and about this city. Therefore indeed, sir, I must own that your discourse had little effect on me, and I am afraid not much more on many others. When the preaching was over I enquired whether you had a cassock on. They told me you had, but that it was your whim every now and then to preach so. I pray you, dear sir, that you will leave off these odd whims and act with decency and consistency in the solemn work you are engaged in. Surely as you have separated yourself from the world, you ought to have a double watch over your actions, that you do not cause an evil report to be brought of the Gospel you have in so particular a manner engaged to preach and support.

And now sir, though I have been thus free in telling my mind (which I should not have done, had not one very closely concerned with you told me that you had both been spoke and wrote to several times about your irregularity, but to little or no purpose) yet I must entreat you to remember what I say in the beginning of this letter—that it is only done in love, and I earnestly pray the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ it may be deeply impressed on your heart.

And though I shall not sign my name to this, yet you must know from whom it comes. Many of the circumstances, as well as the handwriting will tell you, nor shall I in the least deny it, if you ask me the question. And I pray you dear sir in return—and how you can answer the contrary at the great day of accounts, I know not—that you will freely (for you are not to mind the persons of anyone) tell me, as oft as you can see, the faults and errors of my life, so that by an earnest and deep humiliation before my God, he may be pleased through the merits and for the sake of our Lord Jesus to give a repentance unto life eternal and a power to forsake and hate sin with an utter hatred.

I am, dear sir,

[as stated, there is no signature]

*Source:* Blackwell's copy for records, privately held; MARC, PLP 9/23/1 (photocopy).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>See 1 Cor. 14:40.

<sup>6</sup>Transcription published in *WHS* 36 (1967), 75–76.



From Sarah Perrin

Bristol  
March 25 [1750]

Dear and Honoured Friend,

I have deferred writing only for the opportunity of sending it in a frank.

I greatly rejoice in the success you meet with and I trust our God, even our own God, will bless you with all spiritual blessings and make you more than conquerors through the Son of his love, who has hitherto so highly favoured you.

Thy brother's visit to the church this time has been attended with a great blessing. Surely the Lord looks down from heaven and has compassion for his people. He will not suffer his standard bearers to faint or any of the devices of Satan to prevail. I cannot be without hope of seeing you more united than ever. Love, powerful love, shall conquer all things. O my friend, yet a little while and your joy shall be full in God. He will purge the dross and take away the sin and refine you finer than pure gold. I do not expect this from your righteousness, or for any of ours, but because the Lord has said it. And I see his arm is made bare to bring it to pass.

Thou hast not mentioned a word of the earthquake to us.<sup>1</sup> I should be glad to know thy thoughts upon it. By several letters I have read from London I find it has had a great effect on the minds of many natural people, for I can perceive their style quite altered, from trifling to dry seriousness. And I hope God will make it a means for the conversion of many.

I sent all the hymns which came to my hand and brother [Abraham] Grou says that was all he had to write out. And brother [John] Jones says he gave brother Grou all that he had.<sup>2</sup>

I find great benefit from the air and my health mends. But on the account of my feet, I cannot walk to the [New] Room yet. I conclude with duty and great affection,

Thy friend,

S. P.

*Endorsement:* by CW, "Mar 25. 1750 / S. Perrin prophecying / union."

*Source:* holograph; MARC, MA 1977/428/2/54.

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<sup>1</sup>There was an earthquake in London on Mar. 8, 1750; see CW's account in his letter to JW of that date, and the collection of hymns he rushed into print: *Hymns occasioned by the Earthquake, March 8, 1750* [Pt. I]. London: [Strahan,] 1750.

<sup>2</sup>It is not certain what hymns were being copied and sent to CW. One possibility is that he had started to write hymns related to the earthquake that happened Feb. 8, 1750 in London (while he was still in Bristol), and forgot to take them with him to London. Thus they may be some that appeared in the volume mentioned in the previous note.

From John Downes<sup>1</sup>

Newcastle  
May 26, 1750

My Dear Friend,

I trust this will find your dear companion and you in good health.<sup>2</sup> As, thanks be to God, I am at present, though I have been much indisposed of late, occasioned by rather too much exercise.

Thanks be to God, the work prospers here and extends itself, one would imagine, through the whole country. But what a pity it is we have no more assistance. The harvest truly is great but the labourers are few. The children cry to us for bread and we have not to spare for them. At the same time that this moves one's pity, how must it raise one's admiration taken in the other view, when we see the beneficence of our great Parent at once reaching out the bread of life to an almost infinite multitude, when we see the great Husbandman has been labouring to clear the soil in places where our little minds had hardly thought of.

It is now some time since they hear the glad tidings at Barnard Castle, and the grace of God enables them to bear up against all the opposition which they meet, though they have no human comforter nigh. We have lately received an invitation by the hands of a poor publican to go to preach in Kendal. I fancy the place may be as big again as Deptford, and supposed to be well disposed for hearing, occasioned by the exemplary behaviour of some lady who has been there. And we are just now making an attempt upon Whatley, as also Durham and Chester le Street, where there are multitudes who are willing to hear the word. How far the gospel net may reach we know not. All we have to do is to be diligent and pray to God for a blessing.

From your servant for Christ's sake,

J. Downes

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDWes 9/32.

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<sup>1</sup>John Downes (c.1723–74) was one of JW's earliest and most trusted lay preachers. On June 26, 1764 he married Dorothy Furly. When he ceased traveling, due to ill health, Downes became JW's printer.

<sup>2</sup>There is no address portion or CW endorsement to certify that this letter was to CW; but Downes writes as to an overseer and the reference to a spouse would fit CW but not JW (at this time).

From Sarah Perrin

[Leominster]  
June 12 [1750]

Dear and Honoured Friend,

Much did I desire to hear from you before thy acceptable [letter] came to my hand.<sup>1</sup> I now rejoice in your welfare.

When I left Ludlow I had no thought of returning until a little before my leaving this country. But if it is your desire I should, I must beg you to acquaint Mrs. [Sarah] Gwynne it is your desire. Otherwise, I shall look upon [my]self an intruder in the house.

This week I have made several appointments to meet a few people.<sup>2</sup> Since I came back I have not been idle. Last week I missed meeting only two nights. You had need to pray for wisdom for me. They increase that come to hear and sure there never was a weaker instrument used in the work.

Till last Sunday, for the sake of privacy, we always met up two pairs of stairs. The room was so excessive hot and for convenience I ventured on Sunday evening in the lower room. But when I rose up from prayer and saw the room full of people, the enemy buffeted and told me not, [lest] I should expose myself and dishonour the cause of God. Immediately I found power to look up to him and cast my care upon him and he gave me utterance more than an hour. I exhorted them to repentance and to come to the knowledge of God by the remission of sins.<sup>3</sup> A solemn awe was over them and though some came on purpose to make game, the Lord prevented and we departed in peace.

What can we say to this? Your prayers reached the throne of God. In answer to them he has raised me from the gates of death. And you requested of him to make me of use in the work and must not I leave it unto him in what way and take every opportunity he gives me confess his holy name. Of all persons in the world, I have ever seen myself the most unfit to exhort, having neither mouth nor wisdom. Yet several times of late I could not refrain. Last Sunday was a week, while I was at the Quakers' meeting, the Spirit groaned within me with desires for their salvation. I found I must either utter my petitions to God for them or grieve his Spirit. I obeyed his voice and but two persons kept their seats. Several afterwards said they joined in their heart with me and they felt what Spirit it proceeded from.

I write thus at large that thou mayst know how to advise and to pray for me. While I was at Ludlow I could not meet with those only that are under your care. Some others would come and I hope not altogether in vain. My outward strength increases and I think I know a dying daily to my own will, though I find much dross yet remaining that must be purged away. I often find power to wrestle for the labourers, and especially for those who have most profited my soul. Never was my soul nearer united to thee and thy brother than at this time. God I know will do great things for you.

O for a heart to praise my God,  
A heart from sin set free ...<sup>4</sup>

How do I long for this. When Lord? O when shall I worthily magnify thy holy name?

My kindest love attends dear Mrs. Wesley and Mrs. Vazeille.<sup>5</sup> I should be glad to hear from them.

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<sup>1</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>2</sup>Sarah had met with Methodists in Leominster previously, since it was the hometown of her sister Mary (Perrin) Southall.

<sup>3</sup>Hereby Perrin was becoming one of the first female Methodists "preaching" in public settings.

<sup>4</sup>CW, "Hymn on Ps. 51:10 (BCP)," *HSP* (1742), 30–31.

<sup>5</sup>CW and Sarah lodged for about a week in early June 1750 at the home on Threadneedle Street in London of Mrs. Vazeille (see *MS Journal*). Mary Goldhawk (1710–81), daughter of Ambrose and

Pray write to me soon, for I cannot go to Ludlow till I hear again from thee. Notwithstanding I found great comfort the few days I stayed after you. I am fully persuaded the Lord is spreading his skirt over more of the family. His peace shall be given unto them.

My dear friends,

Farewell

S. P.

*Address:* “To / The Revd Mr Charles Wesley / at the Foundry Moorfields / in / London.”

*Postmark:* “15/IV” and “Leominster.”

*Endorsement:* by CW, “[[Sarah Perrin June]] 12, 1750” and “June 12 1750 S. Perrin Prophecying!”

*Source:* holograph; MARC, MA 1977/428/2/55.

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Margaret Goldhawk of Staines, Middlesex, married Anthony Vazeille (c. 1706–47), a London merchant in 1734. Both were of Huguenot descent. She was introduced to CW after the death of her husband by Edward Perronet (see CW, *MS Journal*, July 20, 1749). She had travelled with CW, helping care for his domestic needs in May 1750. The warm relationship evident at this time turned decisively within a few months when JW married Mary (Goldhawk) Vazeille on Feb. 18, 1751.

Margaret Gwynne to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

Ludlow  
June 19, 1750

Dear Sister Wesley,

I am glad to find you and brother Wesley are well. I return you a great many thanks for your kind letter.<sup>1</sup> I do own myself to blame for not buying a coloured knot, for I might have known you would not be in mourning long.<sup>2</sup> Sister Betty and I was at the uxbarn<sup>3</sup> Saturday and Sunday last. Little Dukey<sup>4</sup> is come home from nurse and does take his weaning very well. The little ones are all well,<sup>5</sup> which is all at present. Brother Rod, dada, Betty Thomas join with me in love and service to you, brother Wesley, and all that ask for us.

I am,

Dear sister Wesley's affectionate sister,

M. Gwynne

P.S. Cousin M[olly] M[usgrove] gives her love to you and brother Wesley. I shall be very glad to hear from you. Aunt Leyson and Aunt Harvey give their love to you.<sup>6</sup>

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDWes 7/8c.

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<sup>1</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>2</sup>Sarah had miscarried in Feb. 1750.

<sup>3</sup>This seems to be a reference to the estate in Garth.

<sup>4</sup>Marmaduke, son of Marmaduke and Jane (Howells) Gwynne, born in 1749.

<sup>5</sup>The other three children of Marmaduke and Jane were Sarah (b. 1744), Jane (b. 1746), and Roderick (born 1747).

<sup>6</sup>Mary (Gwynne) Leyson, and Ann (Gwynne) Harvey (1700–1770), who husband George Harvey (c. 1696–1760) was a minor canon at the Hereford Cathedral.

From Sarah Perrin

Ludlow  
June 19 [1750]

Honoured Friend,

Mrs. [Sarah] Gwynne was so kind as to send for me the morning after I received thine [letter].<sup>1</sup> I hope it be good for me to be here, though my work increases at Leominster. Many seem very desirous to know the way of peace. Last week I found an inclination to visit Samuel Even(?), his father, and mother. They live about two miles from Leominster. I let them know of my intention, and they let their neighbours know, and I believe near fifty persons came there to meet with us. They said almost all in the village was present and not above five or six had heard of this way before. But they showed such love and thankfulness that anybody should care for their souls that they made my heart glad with hope of their salvation. They desire we may visit them again and if I had not been sent for I should have gone this week, but intend to visit them at my return.

My spirit daily rejoices in God, and I thirst more and more to perfect holiness in his fear. I see in so strong a light that for this end he has raised me from the grave, that if I do not redeem the time to come I shall of all souls be the most ungrateful to God.

My sister told me some days before I left her she expected the enemy to rage soon because she found the work revived, and according to her words we soon found her name was cast out evil. But she continues bold in defending the cause of God. Pray for her.<sup>2</sup>

Our Ludlow friends receive me gladly and we have appointed to meet at the Ware every evening while I stay. Last night we met together in your room here and was comforted.

I want to know very much when thy brother is expected and what way he intends to come, and whether there is any certainty of seeing you this way soon. I long to hear the word preached. Life increases our desire for more life. Pray write to me to Leominster the first post, because my sister talks of going for a week to Llandrindod Wells and Mr. [Marmaduke] Gwynne has some expectation of meeting thy brother at Garth. Is so, I am likely to see him at Builth, if I could know the time.

I am ready to reason sometimes concerning the way I take. I think surely if God required this of me I should see the fruit of my labour. I am very sensible whenever we meet God is with us. He refreshes our souls. Many are quickened and are desirous of being saved and are affected at what they hear. One woman lately that had never heard before made strong resolution in her mind not to cry or be any way moved as she had heard others were. But poor thing, she was broken in pieces, she could not refrain weeping all the while. But still this is not the deep work, the proof I want. O may the Lord direct my way in every step I take.

My dearest love attends Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley. She has not yet been so good as her promise. I should be glad to hear from her.

Please to give Betty Holmes's letter to any of the sisters that will let her have it soon.<sup>3</sup> With duty I remain,

Thy affectionate though unworthy friend,

S. P.

*Address:* "To / Mr Wesley / in / London."

*Endorsement:* by CW, "[[July]] 19 1750 [[Sarah Perrin]]" and "July 19. 1750 S. Perrin. / Labouring much in the Lord."

*Source:* holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/19.

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<sup>1</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>2</sup>Mary (Perrin) Southall.

<sup>3</sup>Elizabeth Holmes appears as a single woman in the Foundery Band Lists (1742–46).

**From the Rev. John Wesley**

September 18, 1750

[[Dear Brother,]]

I wish you could talk a little with every preacher and every exhorter that comes in your way. Perhaps you may find some who are capable of being taken into the general work. We have a blessed time here. The fields are white. Are they not so in the north also?<sup>1</sup> Adieu!

*Address:* “To / Mr Cownly / At the Orphan-house, in / Newcastle upon Tyne.”

*Postmark:* “18/SE”

*Source:* holograph (part of double letter to Cownley); Wesley’s Chapel (London), LDWMM 1994/1974.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>JW wrote this letter after CW had just left London the day before for Newcastle. But CW was injured by a fall from a horse and returned the next day, so the trip never took place that year.

<sup>2</sup>Transcription published in *Works*, 26:439.