

Charles Wesley In-Correspondence and Related Items (1756–60)

Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition, Duke Divinity School

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1756

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

January 13, 1756

Dear Sir,

Sir Harry shall return.¹ I send back the letter, never remembering your ever having said anything of Mr. Rouquet's wickedness or enthusiasm, or once naming his several courtships.² All that was said that can be remembered was of his unsettled disposition and that all Methodists, you hoped, would not be judged by his irregularity. I cannot say I am ready to write to the Archbishop till I have seen my letter he had shown. Consistent with that I must write, and as it was seen without my knowledge its subject matter was and is quite out of my head. On these terms only, you see, can I say one word further. Which was it your own case, you could act to the Archbishop no otherwise. A line to him by tonight's post would do that, if you choose it. My love to dear Mrs. Wesley. May our Lord bless and keep you in his love and peace. Sir Harry returns tonight. But I think to call upon Mr. and Mrs. Jones as I think to have him up of a Saturday and stay all Sunday. Every week the child has so bad a cough for the sake of the air.

Address: "To / the Rev'd / Mr Charles Wesley."

Endorsement: by CW, "L. H. & Rouquet / Jan. 13. 1756."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/53.

¹Henry Hastings (b. 1739), her youngest son, was being tutored in Bristol by John Jones., and staying with John and Sarah (Perrin) Jones.

²James Rouquet had written LH, seeking to clarify and defend his interactions with Sarah Fenwicke (cf. LH to CW, Oct. 30, 1754 & Sept. 15, 1755). CW instructed his wife to "lay up" the letter when it arrived back in Bristol; see CW to SGW, Jan. 31, 1756.

Mary (Degge) Manners to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

[Grosvenor Square, London]
January 14, 1756

I own myself in my dear friend's debt two letters; one of the 29th, and one of the 31st.¹ I depend on her excusing their not being answered till now when she considers the hurry I have been in. At last [I] am resolved not to put it off any longer, and hope we shall continue our correspondence as regularly as we did before. I ought also to mention the receipt of a letter of your partner's from Devonshire Square.² Pray tell him whenever he comes to town that Lord and Lady Robert Manners breakfast at the usual hour in Grosvenor Square. As it has suited him to come, I hope it will still. I desire you will remember me and my friend in your prayers. You may believe me to be sincere with regard to you. And I hope that you will continue to write in the friendly way as you did. Remember there is no reserve between *sincere friends*. As I once reckoned myself of the number, I am not willing to give up so valuable a character. Whenever you find me deficient, it is your part to remind me. I can only add at present my sincere wishes for your happiness and assure you I am my dear Mrs. Wesley's

Sincere friend,

M. Manners

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/428/1/94.

¹These letters are not known to survive.

²This letter is not known to survive.

Mary (Degge) Manners to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

[Grosvenor Square, London]
February 5, 1756

I hope I need not doubt of my dear friend's believing me sincere when I assure her what great pleasure it gives me her kind remembrance of me.¹ And be assured I can take no reproof amiss from one I believe a friend. While I cannot see you, I am glad of this distant conversation and hope it will continue with the same freedom it has ever been of. I am sure you wont forget me in your prayers, as I want assistance more than ever. You tell me to trust you till we meet for the sufficiency of Lady Huntingdon's reasons and Mrs. [Anne] Grinfield's for not writing. I own I can have no guess at them. What must they be when my friend don't write them to me? You need not fear any misinterpretation of them. I will agree not to enquire into them if you will give me some hopes of seeing you in town.

Where is your partner? You say nothing of him in your last. Pray remind him of me. I wish I had anything to say of my aunt that was new, but I think [the situation] grows worse and worse. Your partner I suppose told you he did not come to our wedding; not have I seen him since only once by chance.² My aunt is better in health. She is now at Isleworth alone. I hope the air will do her good. She comes to town Saturday.

I desire you will place the lad you mentioned to me at Mr. [John] Jones's, and let me know the particulars.

My dear friend will forward the enclosed letter for me, who am
Your sincere and affectionate friend,

M. Manners

Source: holograph; MARC, DDP# 2/34.

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²Col. Samuel Gumley and Martha (Meighen / Colvill) Gumley were now estranged, due to actions on his part.

Mary (Degge) Manners to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

February 25, 1756
[Grosvenor Square, London]

It always gives me great pleasure the kind remembrance of my dear friends.¹ Such, without flattery, I call my dear Mrs. Wesley. I desire you will think of coming to town if possible. Why not with your partner—in April, he says. I can say nothing from my aunt [Gumley], who has been at Isleworth this week past; and I went this morning to see her, when she was gone to Chertsey. As for Mr. [Samuel] Gumley, I have not seen him at all since your partner saw him. I fear they go on much as usual.²

As you wont trust your *secret* to paper, I leave you to make what compliments you think proper at Clifton. I content myself with telling you I am not quite satisfied. You may at least tell me in your next letter. I expect it! Write soon, for I propose going in the country for a little while if my Lord [Manners] can get a few holidays at this busy time. We shall not stay long.

Remind your partner of me, and pray tell him I don't know when the testament is to come out but I suppose they will carry mine with my aunt's. I have nothing to add, as I hope you are still persuaded of my sincere and best wishes for you. I trust you will constantly remember *me* in your prayers, who am

Most sincerely yours,

M. Manners

Excuse bad ink and hasty writing. I depend on a life from you when anything is due to Mr. [John] Jones.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDPr 2/33.

¹SGW's letter to Lady Manners is not known to survive.

²Tensions were emerging in the marriage of Samuel and Martha Gumley. They would live largely separate lives in the following years.

Mary (Degge) Manners to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

[Grosvenor Square, London]
March 18 [1756]

My dear friend's most welcome letter of the 11th I have received,¹ and had I been very well lately, or had an opportunity, I should have chided you for being so long in writing to me. I should much rather have had your letter before I went into the country than at my return. My Lord [Robert Manner]'s being obliged to give constant attendance to the House of Commons, from 11:00 in the morning till as late at night, has prevented our intended journey. He is this day gone to his regiment at Hertford, and when he can we shall go to Lincolnshire. We are not so much alarmed now in town concerning the French, though everything is preparing for their *proper* reception—which as they did not expect, we hope will prevent their molesting our island.² It is certain (I believe) a war in America. The public spirit of most of our peers have encouraged the people greatly. However, I am sorry to say all the officers are preparing camp equipage. I do not know how to write politics, so think I have said enough, only sincerely join with you (though perhaps for more reasons) in wishing God may give us peace.

I am impatient to see my dear friends in Grosvenor Square, where I can assure them both of a hearty welcome. I hope they won't want that to prove them my change of situation has not altered the sentiments I have for them. I hope that they will have no reason to change their opinion to worse of me. I own the great hurry I have been in makes me rather tired than pleased with it. I get off all I can and am reckoned rather odd. I wish for a little of the country. My dear friends will, I hope, continue to assist me with their mutual prayers. I am very weak and unable of myself to do anything. The Lord has brought me on thus far. He gives us both to will and to do. May I never neglect asking his assistance!

Pray continue to direct as usual. I make no secret of our correspondence. I am again obliged to you for your favourable excuse of your Clifton friends.³ I own I am not quite satisfied, and think they might have wished me joy in manner as suitable to their quality as our profession. I will tell you more what I think of it when we meet.

My aunt is again down in Chertsey. As to Mr. Gumley, I never know anything of him.

I again repeat my desire of your and your partner's kind remembrance of me (you are bound to it). My best wishes attend you. From

Your sincere friend,

M. Manners

Endorsement: by SGW (likely of date of reply), "March ye 26."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/428/1/97.

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²The Seven Year's War (1756–63) was just breaking out, with the French threatening to invade England.

³Lady Huntingdon and Anne Grinfield; see Manners to SGW, Feb. 5, 1756.

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

Clifton
Easter Eve [April 17], 1756

Dear Sir,

I was glad by your very kind letter to find you and dear Mrs. Wesley was safe at (?).⁴

Never more talk of obligations to me. You will give me more pain than you can conceive, for I really feel always willing for more than ever can be in my power to bless [those] I love, as I do now truly both you and your partner. I am glad you have hopes of Lady Robert [Manners]. God may have gracious designs in placing her in that family. May his power be magnified in her treatment. Dear Lady Gertrude Hotham⁵ came by surprise and stays a week with me, and to carry me back to Bath for a fortnight. She is well and sits by me and begs her humble service; as does Miss Melly,⁶ and with me hopes you will remember us all in your prayers. Our house-hotel is well and sends their love. Haste obliges me to conclude that I ever am,

Yours most faithfully,

S. Huntingdon

Address: "To / the Revd. Mr. Charles / Wesley."

Annotation: by CW, "L. H. April 17. 1756."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/54.

⁴This letter is not known to survive.

⁵Lady Gertrude (Stanhope) Hotham (1696–1775), widow of Sir Charles Hotham (1693–1738), 5th Baronet of Scarborough, was a Methodist sympathizer and friend of CW's family, including him in her will.

⁶Lady Gertude's younger daughter, Melusina Hotham (1734–64). See CW's hymn occasioned by her dying works: MS Death of Melusina Hotham.

Mary (Degge) Manners to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

[Grosvenor Square, London]
May 13, 1756

How is it that I have oftener the pleasure of hearing from a dear friend from Bristol than from Moorfields? I flattered myself their being in town would give me often the pleasure of their company, when I have as yet only had a sight of them and am reduced to the same method of conversing as if they were a hundred miles distance. This reproach I should have made before, had I not been incapable of writing from a violent headache, which has confined me for above this fortnight and this is the first day I could write. Other reasons prevent my going out at present more than to the next street in a chair, or in the park to take the air—which latter I have not done yet.

My aunt [Gumley] is in town, therefore you may make two visits in one day. I should be glad to know what time and where you come this way a day or two beforehand, that I might endeavour to make it as agreeable as possible. I shall expect to see your partner with you, or sometime when it suits him best.

I cannot write more, though I have rested between. Be assured my best wishes attend you both and I hope you have the same for me, who am, most sincerely,

Dear Mrs. Wesley's affectionate friend,

M. Manners

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 24/11.

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

[Donington Park?]
Monday, May 31, 1756

Dear Sir,

Nothing but having been extremely ill should have prevented my giving you intelligence. But a colic and jaundice has left my strength much impaired. And though in appearance much better, I find such remain that render me incapable of anything that wants the least application. May our Lord but fit me for my removal, and his will be done. My hope is full of immortality, and yet weakness bows me low and makes the object less joyous than is to be wished in its present offering. I (?) my love to dear Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley and live both assured in every state which I breath I shall ever be

Yours and hers most affectionately,

S. H.
turn over

I am sorry your Mr. [Samuel] Lloyd is ill. May our God bless your faith and prayers to him. I am without strength to him and myself.

Address: "To / The Revd Mr Charles / Wesley at Mr Lloyds / Merchant in / Bishopgate Devonshire Square / London."

"To / The Revd Mr Charles Wesley / at Mrs Bolts in / Christopher / Ally Moorfields."

Postmark: "2/IV."

Endorsement: by CW, "L. H. sick / May 31. 1756."

Source: MARC, MA 1977/504/1/55.

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

[Donington Park]
June 12 [1756]

Dear Sir,

You claim from me the first opportunity to thank you and dear Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley for your kind inquiries after me.¹ I have, I praise God, some ease. And though still the sensations that accompany have pain, yet here do I bless him who does yet deliver me and support me under many and grievous conflicts both of soul and body. I am thankful to hear of the rejoicing of any, in or out of tribulation, and they that sow in tears will reap in joy. I look forward for this time and wait with patience for the Lord to come, and his reward is with him.²

My love to dear Mrs. Wesley and let me know when you expect to be at Bristol. My stay or returns are quite uncertain. Yet my resolution will be taken suddenly, as I find business goes off my hands. My kind remembrance to all that ask after me. Has dear Mr. Madan had my letter,³ I long to know. All spiritual blessings be your portion for ever,

S. H.

Address: "To / The Revd Mr Charles / Wesley at Mr Lloyd's / Merchant in Devonshire / Square / Near Bishopgate / London."

Postmark: "14/IV."

Endorsement: by CW, "L. H. June 12 1756."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/56.

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²See Rev. 22:12.

³Martin Madan (1726–90) was currently a barrister at the Inner Temple. A son of Col. Martin Madan, MP of Hertingfordbury, the younger Martin prepared for a career in law. He was goaded into listening to JW preach, as a means of improving his oratory style. But Madan was so moved by the sermon that he joined the Methodist cause. With the aid of the Countess of Huntingdon he secured ordination in 1757, and became very friendly with many Calvinistic evangelical clergy, especially David Jones, William Romaine, and George Whitefield. In later years he gained notoriety for defending polygamy in *Thelyphthora* (1780). See *DEB*, 733; and *ODNB*.

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

[Donington Park]
June 29, 1756

Dear Sir,

I had a reproach from your kind letter this evening.¹ But my not being well and having much business and sickness in the family engages me perpetually. As to my going to Bristol or when, I know it as much as you do. It may be in a fortnight, and it may not be of some months. Lord Huntingdon's affairs wanting me so unceasingly. This is vast self-denial at present, that all my Christian friends I might see there, and in no capacity to see them here. I at present think of being with Lady Gertrude Hotham at Cheltenham in ten days or a fortnight. But then if I return to Leicestershire, or go from thence to Clifton, is quite a thing I cannot yet know till Lord Huntingdon's return into England is determined.² My engagements to him must be fulfilled to the utmost. Under these difficulties I have a great one at my heart: dear, niece Kitty Wheler is fallen ill of the scarlet fever. She is not only as my natural child, but without doubt [of] all ties the dearest, kindest, spiritual one that a creature can have. She grows in all things to the praise of the gospel.

Mr. [Martin] Madan I shall lose, which I am truly sorry for as he is a sincere, good soul. I had a sweet letter from that excellent woman his mother.³ My love to dear Mrs. Wesley and Mr. [Thomas] Hartley when you see him, and tell him I hope to hear from him as often as he can spare me a letter. May our Lord bless you and all your faithful labours in him, and believe me most truly

Your affect[ionate] friend,

S. Huntingdon

Kind services and best wishes to Mr. [Samuel] Lloyd.

Address: "To / The Revd Mr Charles / Wesley at Mr Lloyd's / Merchant in Devonshire / Square / Near Bishopgate / London."

Postmark: "30/IV."

Endorsement: by CW, "June 29. 1756 / L. H."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/57.⁴

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²In July 1754 LH's son Francis Hastings, who become Earl of Huntingdon in 1749, had departed on his second tour of Europe, spending two years abroad. LH was directing preparations at the estate at Donington Park for his return

³Judith (Cowper) Madan (1702–81), wife of Col. Martin Madan.

⁴Cf. the previous transcription in Tyson, *Correspondence*, 98.

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

July 5, 1756

Dear Sir,

Your great kindness in begging to hear about me engages my thankful gratitude to you.¹ I have felt nothing of my body since I had on Saturday last every moment the thought and expectation of losing my dear niece, Kitty Wheler. She lay in strong convulsions in her fever and oh, who can express the distress of my heart. But as from the grave I received her back and show the goodness of the Lord in the most eminent manner. Three were undone of it, two that came as visitors; but the Lord has spared all these lives though some nigh unto death. I think a time will come when I shall delight in sufferings, when the hand of our Lord by them is so bared in deliverance.

My love to Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley. I don't know exactly my removal from hence to Cheltenham, but as soon as my niece can move. Ever

Your sincere friend,

S. Huntingdon

My best wishes to Mr. [Samuel] Lloyd, who I hope is better. Should you see Mr. [Thomas] Hartley, tell him I will write soon. But at present you must see my difficulty: business, workmen, and sickness, all engaging me in thought or body night and day. Praise God for me that Lady Selina holds well yet.

Address: "To / The Revd Mr Charles / Wesley at Mr Lloyd's / Merchant in / Devonshire Square / Near Bishopgate London."

Postmark: "7/IY."

Endorsement: by CW, "July 5. 1756 / L. H."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/58.²

¹CW's letter to LH is not known to survive.

²Cf. the previous transcription in Tyson, *Correspondence*, 98–99.

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

Cheltenham
July 27, 1756

Dear Sir,

I have longed to rejoice with you first on your being better from bathing,¹ and next for your happy departed friend.² I know from a long experience of your friendship, all that is the object of your regard you wish her to share in. Mr. [Martin] Madan tells me sweet things of this friend of yours, for which cause you do lament. But oh remember her blessed privilege above us who has fulfilled much in a short course, and that it is a kind of sacrilege to bring back by a wish the consecrated vessels of the sanctuary! I should, as well as the rest of our friends here, be glad of a sight of dear Mrs. Wesley and yourself. I stay but a short time I believe here and then return to my post [at Donington Park]—at present that of little better than that of a pack horse, but this I am satisfied with.

A sweet man died a few days before I left home; a gentleman who had had a wild and idle life but young. His wife and he extreme[ly] happy, both brought to think soberly by many various providences. A year ago, while I was in the country, they came over to see me. I saw his heart very desirous but quite unacquainted with the nature of the Christian salvation. However they bought all books and searched faithfully for the best path and it pleased God to bless extremely Mr. Law's *Spirit of Prayer*.³ About three months before his last illness he told his wife he should not stay long with her. He thought God would prepare him for heaven and remove him and said "I am earnestly seeking and I *must* find." He was seized with his last sickness, which was a fiery furnace for him, during a fortnight—I mean as to his body. The physician said nobody could suffer more. But all the time no complaint, and always saying he suffered nothing he had, and did pass the time; but he was unhurt by it, for he said he had full possession. Such love and witness and goodness never, I believe, was visible in any creature. And to his last breath his mouth was filled with praise and spiritual counsel to others. He wished for an easy passage, and though convulsed all over about an hour before he died, he was quite sensible and easy and asking for something to drink. Begged a blessing, and as soon as he gave it out of his hands, with his eyes lifted up and with a smile and confidence of heaven upon his face, resigned his blessed soul to enjoy an eternity of that glory which he had so largely tasted here. His death was occasioned by an inflammation of his lungs and it was attended with distressing circumstances, as the breath cannot be drawn without the utmost agitation of all nature. His wife is all peace and resignation, left with three little children under the loss of the one of the most affectionate and best beloved partners on earth of all her cares.

I could not forebear this account, it being upon the strictest examination with all things considered the most evident signs of an extraordinary power accompanying the whole world I ever met with. O that I may I so lay down my head in the grave and so breath my spirit to him whose love can only prepare it for himself!

Believe me, with dear Mrs. Wesley, most truly and affectionately ever
Yours and hers most faithfully,

S. Huntingdon

¹CW had apparently been to Margate, to bath in sea-water.

²Little biographical information is available upon Mrs. LeFevre (c. 1723–56). CW wrote two poems on the occasion of her death on July 6, 1756; the second implied that she was thirty-three years old; see *Funeral Hymns* (1759), 46–49. Scattered clues indicate that she had been converted and become a Methodist only two or three years earlier.

³William Law, *The Spirit of Prayer; or, The Soul Rising Out of the Vanity of Time into the Riches of Eternity*, 2 vols. (London: William Innys, 1749–50).

Dear Lady Gertrude Hotham, who I praise God I have found well, ever speaks of you and Mrs. Wesley with a tender regard. As does dear Mr. Madan, here with us everyday, and is a most sincere and excellent person. May God preserve him in zeal and love for his services, for I do hope he will make a blessed instrument. Bid compliments to Mr. [Samuel] Lloyd and most affectionate remembrances to dear Mr. [Thomas] Hartley when you see him

Address: "To / The Revd Mr Charles Wesley / at Mr Lloyd's Merchant in / Devonshire / Square Near Bishopgate / London."

Postmark: "29/IY."

Endorsement: by CW, "L. H. July 27. 1756 / happy Death."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/59.⁴

⁴Cf. the previous transcription in Tyson, *Correspondence*, 99.

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

Cheltenham
Thursday night [August 5, 1756¹]

My Dear Sir,

Today and not before did your kind letter find [me] as it was sent round from Donington.² My old dear friend [Lady Hotham] with all her family is well, which with the zeal and warmth of heart of Mr. [Martin] Madan makes our situation at Cheltenham comfortable. We have wished for you and dear Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley, myself in particular, as I am to return into Leicestershire and I believe for a good while.

I trust the Lord will be in the midst at the Conference and you will want nothing. I shall beg his protection of you that in all things he may keep and uphold your upright heart. And had I been within reach some jealousies would spring up that all is indeed best.

My love to dear Mrs. Wesley. Mr. Madan talks of writing to you soon. He wants some to rouse and awaken here. Dear Mrs. Lefevre's dying is sweet.³ O how can you bewail one moment for her so happily safe as she now is in the arms of our Lord! Do write often and let me know of all my friends. And don't forget your high office in praying for

Your unworthy but faithful and affectionate friend,

S. H.

I have the best wishes of all here to send you as a service offering.

Address: "To / The Revd Mr Charles / Wesley to be left at / Mrs Naylor's at / Bath."

Endorsement: by CW, "L. H. Aug. 1756."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/60.⁴

¹Dated by CW's endorsement and reference to recent death of Mrs. Lefevre

²This letter is not known to survive.

³On the address side of the sheet CW has written in shorthand: [[Eager to drink her master's cup, to fill her Lord's afflictions up, with Jesus crucified. To her own will entirely dead she languished till she bowed her head]] This is an initial draft of what became stanza 8 of part I of CW's hymn "On the Death of Mrs. Lefevre, July 6, 1756," see *Funeral Hymns* (1759), 48.

⁴Cf. the previous transcription in Tyson, *Correspondence*, 99–100.

From the Rev. Samuel Walker¹

[Truro]
August 16, 1756

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I am greatly concerned about the issue of the conference your brother is to have with his lay preachers. We had a short correspondence on that head last winter,² wherein I saw he was greatly pushed by his preachers, unwilling to part with them, and yet not caring to part from the Church of England. To say the truth, I was fearful of going any further with him at that time, lest while I was arguing against a separation upon such arguments as entered into the heart of the matter, I might unwarily drive him into it.

The point I had then in view was that which is now the occasion of your Conference. You will give me leave to open myself fully upon it. A church of Christ is a congregation of Christian people where the pure word of God is preached and the sacraments duly ministered. A particular church is that where these things, essential to the being of a church of Christ, are executed with such appointments as are peculiar to that particular church. Consequently, the essence of a particular church is not that wherein it agrees with all the churches of Christ, but that which is particular to itself. And so it is by submitting to these particular rites that a man professes himself [a] member of that particular church; whereas, to depart from them is to separate from it. All that can be left to a particular church is to settle government and modes of worship, because all other things are settled already by Christ.

If this be well considered, it will appear that lay preachers, being contrary to the constitution of the Church of England, are, as far as that point goes, a separation from it. It is quite another question whether lay-preachers be agreeable to the appointment of the Spirit respecting the ministry; though I suppose some of the more sensible may have had serious thoughts on that head in reading the Scripture, and would be better content had they an outward regular commission. But this is not the point. Is lay preaching agreeable with the constitution of the Church of England? And if not, is it not a separation in part, inasmuch as it offends against one of the greatest ends of our Church establishment? That it was so was not perhaps seen at first, but hath now come out by experience; while it appears that lay preachers are found at the head of so many distinct bodies of people, to whom they minister the word, and who only want the sacraments at their hands to be as much particular churches as any other. The matter is not whether lay preachers be needful, or what their calling may be. Be the one and the other as it will, the thing is plainly inconsistent with the discipline of the Church of England—and so in one essential point setting up a church within her which cannot be of her.

You easily see what an impossibility there is [that] a ministration of the word in a manner contrary to the establishment should be consistent with that establishment, where one of the two great points that constitute that practical establishment is its peculiar way of appointment respecting the ministration of the word. I speak the whole of this because your brother did not seem to see the thing in that light. The consequence of this is, lay preaching is a separation in part. When therefore it is asked, “Shall we separate from the Church of England?” it should rather be asked, “Shall we make the separation we have begun a separation in all forms?” And if we do not think ourselves allowed to do this, shall we

¹Samuel Walker (1714–61) was educated at Exeter Grammar School and Exeter College, Oxford. He received his BA in 1736, was ordained in 1737. In 1746 Walker became curate of Truro, Cornwall. During his first year there he was converted to evangelical views by George Conon, master of Truro Grammar School, and became a model evangelical clergyman. While Walker was a moderate Calvinist, he was friendly toward the Wesley brothers, and CW had reached out to him for support in resisting the potential rift between the Methodist societies and the Church of England posed by lay preachers seeking sacramental rights. Walker is replying to CW’s letter of Aug. 7–10, 1756.

²Walker had written JW at least twice the prior year, arguing against separation from the Church of England; see his letters of Sept. 5, 1755 (*Works*, 26:582–86) and Oct. 20 (*Works*, 26:606–08).

unite with her? We do not, unless lay preaching is laid aside.

Yourselves must judge of the call and necessity of lay preachers, whether that or anything beside may justify a separation. If not, and a separation be not found lawful, you must ever be united, which it is evident you shall not be effectually till the case of lay preaching be laid aside. Your difficulties will all remain, while they do [preach]. You will live on the brink of a perfect separation, and there will never be wanting those among you who will be calling out for it.

Meantime, there is a continual bar kept up between you and any regular clergyman, who cannot in conscience fall in with this measure. The most he can do is not to forbid them. He cannot take them by the hand. And so there must be two disunited ministrations of the word in the same place, by people who yet do call themselves of the Church of England. You cannot but observe there shall never be a nearer connection between the most zealous clergy of the Church of England and the Methodists than now subsists, until this block be taken out of the way; which, considering your most earnest desire of being serviceable among us, it will be worth your while to consider.

After all these considerations, might not an expedient be found out which might correspond with the word of God and the Church of England; and, at the same time, both remove all objections and render the body of Methodists more useful? I have long and often thought of such a thing, and should have mentioned it to your brother last year, had I thought the temper of the time would have borne it. Mr. [Thomas] Vivian of Cornwood is here, and bids me use his name in confirmation of my scheme—which is: 1) That as many of the lay preachers as are fit for, and can be procured ordination, be ordained. 2) That those who remain be not allowed to preach, but be set as inspectors over the societies and assistants to them. 3) That they be not moved from place to place, to the end they may be personally acquainted with all the members of such societies. 4) That their business may be to purge and edify the societies under their care, to the end that no person be continued a member whose conversation is not orderly and of good report.

I mention this only as an incomplete sketch, and the best thing I can see in your power to do, to promote usefulness on one side and to remove difficulties on the other. And if to this should be made an objection that hereby lay preachers would be prevented from preaching abroad, and so much good put a stop to, I would suggest it to be inquired into whether the many of these who have started up of their own heads (considered raw, disqualified, and sadly misbehaved many of them, by the by, after having publicly appeared), whether this considered, lay preaching hath been so much to the honour or interest of religion or Methodism as may be supposed? I remember when it first began, I said and thought lay-preaching would be the ruin of Methodism.

Whatever is done, sir, I trust it will be to the furtherance of the gospel. In which respect you will excuse my adding a brotherly caution—which is that if you should come to a closer conformity with us, you be all careful to guard against worldly views and respects; that you dread the friendship of the world more than ever, and endeavour to act, and conduct this affair especially, in such a manner as to convince an adulterous generation your aims are more than ever self-denying.

I pray God infinitely wise, to direct you, and am,
Your humble servant, though unworthy brother,

S. Walker

N.B. The following [is] a private letter enclosed in the above.³

Dear Sir,

Mr. Vivian and I apprehend from the tenor of yours, you might not choose your brother should know you had written to me. For which reason I have contrived mine to you in such a manner as to leave you at liberty to tell him it yourself, if you see fit. I have sent him a letter by the post, but should have been glad of a little longer time for digesting my thoughts on so important a matter. I thank you for yours

³This comment is given by Walker in his copy of the two letters retained for his records.

heartily, and for the spirit wherewith it is written. As you will see by mine to Mr. John Wesley, I have adopted as many of your sentiments as I thought his present circumstances would bear, reserving the fuller explanation of my mind to that other I write you, which you will communicate or not at your discretion. I thought this the most prudent way of putting it into your power to make what use you should see fit of my little help. In one or the other I have taken nearly all your scheme; perhaps a little more, but my rule is in such matters to declare myself *freely* and *fully*.

I will now add a word or two farther, which possibly you may not choose should appear in a letter of a more public nature. The Archbishop [of Canterbury] is greatly to be commended for his labours after peace, and without question, if the measures are obtained which you desire, it will be very advisable he be waited on and informed of them. But this must be done with fear, lest the leaders among you, being taken notice of by such great ones, do abate of their zeal. Especially it would be capable of a very bad interpretation, should any of them be advanced to considerable preferment.

To my thinking, you will not gain much by getting the preachers to subscribe the agreement of March 10, 1752.⁴ If things are left as they are, they will break out at last. Nor can anything less be expected at your brother's death, which is an event at no great distance in all human appearance. Or should he live, still the evil is unremoved.

I could wish there might be a reconsideration of that matter respecting *assurance*. I take it the way wherein your brother states faith, or the witness of the Spirit, to be unscriptural and unsafe. I have examined all he has said about it, but find no warrant of God's word whereon it is built. Especially I am not satisfied with the proofs produced in the *Minutes of Conversation*, etc.,⁵ which seem to me directly to make against it. I do not quarrel at sensible feelings, they are proper in their place. But faith and feeling appear to me direct opposites, and feeling alone cannot be the witness of the Spirit. I do not say that people that make more of sensible feelings than I do are not right, or suppose there may not be a true work under them. But as the thing is stated, it seems to me dangerous and often uncomfortable. That we are justified by faith alone, or by the merits of Christ applied by faith, is as clear as the sun. But then what is that faith and the witness of the Spirit? I wish this matter might be reconsidered. I think there are many ill consequences arising from this manner of stating it. I fancy were this matter regulated, the Methodists would be more useful, and in their classes more benefited. Believe me, dear sir, I say not this from a spirit of opposition, but simply for the promoting the interests of true vital Christianity among the Methodists and by them.

I am yours, etc.

S.W.

P.S. If something were said to the preachers respecting a proper ministerial call, might it be amiss at a fit time?

Source: manuscript transcription in Walker's records; Pitts Library (Emory), Samuel Walker Papers (MSS 437).⁶

⁴CW had included a copy of this agreement in his letter to Walker; see also ; see CW, *Journal Letters*, 351–52.

⁵*Minutes of Some Late Conversations Between the Rev. Mr. Wesleys and Others* (i.e., the "Doctrinal Minutes" of 1744–47; published in 1749); see JW, *Works*, 10:778–806.

⁶The holograph of neither letter is known to survive, only Walker's personal copy for his own records. For a (rather free) previous published transcription of Walker's copy, see Edwin Sidney, *The Life and Ministry of the Rev. Samuel Walker, B.A.* (London: Seeley and Burnside, 1838), 207–14.

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

[Donington Park]
[c. August 25, 1756]

I could not forbear a line as it easily could be conveyed to you. Dear Mr. [Martin] Madan goes on with a heart so honest and so zealous that he shames the old disciples. And did we not know how much of our own will and our own spirit had to do in our early works, we might have reason to fear.

Dear Lady Gertrude [Hotham] stays with me another week. I know not when I may see it, maybe never, but tomorrow is not ours. Let us be ready today having nothing to do but to receive.

I hope every blessing you wish or desire may attend the Conference.¹ I had a letter from Mr. Jennings,² who solicits me to write for orders for Mr. Haughton.³ The Bishop of Dromore, I hope I may succeed with.⁴ I shall (committing it to God) certainly attempt. Though few be let in, it is a blessing the door is not shut. I am a gay hen(?) (except in my own room). I shall be as in a desert. But in this retreat on this mountain I shall be fed from heaven, and the fountain is better than any streams. I own I feel more afraid of wanting to settle down and become what I ever most dreaded: “to live for myself.”

My love to dear Mrs. Wesley and believe me with great truth

Ever most faithfully yours,

S. Huntingdon

Be so good to desire Mrs. [Mary] Naylor to get for me a pound of scotch snuff of Mr. Bennet in the churchyard, Bath, the same Mr. Grigg has from him, and to send by Lady Gertrude's horses, when she comes on Sunday next to fetch her. I will give Lady Gertrude the money to pay for it when they send me what it is a pound.

Address: “To / The Revd Mr Charles / Wesley at / Bristol.”

Endorsement: by CW, “L. H. Aug. 1756.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/61.⁵

¹The Conference of JW with his preachers met Aug. 26–28 in Bristol. CW attended, continuing his push against actions that would lead to separation from the Church of England.

²Possibly the Mr. Jennings of Dublin, mentioned in Crookshank, *Ireland*, 95.

³John Haughton (d. 1781), a weaver in Chinley End, Derbyshire, became one of JW's early traveling preachers, mentioned as a special Assistant in Yorkshire in 1746. He went to Ireland with CW in 1747, and later returned there, being listed in 1755 as a local preacher in Dublin. It would be 1759 before he secured episcopal ordination, from the Bishop of Derry (William Barnard), and appointment as rector of Kilrea, Londonderry. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 202.

⁴George Marlay (d. 1763) was the current Bishop of Dromore.

⁵Cf. the previous transcription in Tyson, *Correspondence*, 100.

From the Rev. Samuel Walker

[Truro]
September 2, 1756

Dear Sir,

I am favoured with yours of the 21st,¹ and waiting with a good deal of concern for farther account of the issue of this conference. To say the truth, I have not much hope from it. I am fearful your brother will not exert himself as I wish he may. He is hindered by his own fears, which give the preachers an advantage they could not otherwise possibly have. He imagines more depends upon them than does, and so is apprehensive they will leave him, and the work come to the ground. I could wish he had resolution (shall I call it?) enough to follow his conscience, and leave them to theirs, and suffer the one and the other to be guided by Scripture. It is evident he is not easy in his own mind under the present irregularity, and so sees the necessity of either laying the preachers aside or making them a separate church. While also on the one hand his conscience will not digest a separation, and on the other he had too great a hand in setting them up to think of pulling them down.

Your case, dear sir, in such circumstances is peculiarly trying and interesting, nor is it easy for you to see the part you have to act. Yet I think (and thank God for it) you have the main qualification, a single eye. And I doubt not providence will open your way before you. Were this the case of those who have been in Conference with you, the matter had been easily decided. But the perverting influence of party, self-conceit, reputation, honour, will be mixing—and, as I suppose, hath now as formerly rendered your meeting of little purpose. Indeed there is much to be undone one way and another, before you can be united; especially the forwardness of an unhumbléd spirit among the preachers, who, however highly they may think of themselves, are but poor judges of what they are called to confer upon, and will make a very sorry figure at the head of a separation, should they obtain it. I fear the meekness of wisdom is not among them. If it were, they would know their place better and be subject. It has been a great fault all along to have made these low people of your council, and if there be not power enough left in you brother's hands to do as he sees fit, they will soon show him they will be their own masters.

There is but one plan, I apprehend, on which matters of this nature can be adjusted. It may be set down as an axiom: "If it be not sinful to abide in a particular church, it must be sinful to separate from it." And if this be granted, it is not easy to be seen how a separation can be considered on the footing of *expediency*. For to question if it be expedient to abide or to depart is to ask if it be fit to do what is unlawful, or not to do what is a duty—seeing I ought to abide if it be sinful to depart, and I ought to depart if it be sinful to abide. Evidently this is the whole of the matter. When people therefore betake themselves to consult if it be expedient to abide or depart, if by "expediency" they mean anything more than lawfulness, they are but consulting whether they shall abide by duty or no, and setting themselves to determine what God has determined for them. In such a conference, the only determining rule being laid by, the reasonings of one will be set up against those of another. The particular aims of corrupt hearts have a loose given them, and nothing follows but heat, obstinacy, and alienation of heart and affections. Everyone should consult his own conscience with much fear and prayer. And to prevent mistakes that might arise, all might confer upon the duty or sinfulness of abiding. Which done, such as are satisfied in conscience before God it is sinful to abide, should depart; and they who judge it not sinful to abide, must remain.

If this plain method were followed, debate would be excluded and love maintained. And withal every man's conscience would be easy. But though this be a plain method, yet it is not easy to pursue it, because of our own will and worldly respects, which will be exceeding apt to rise up and blind or bias the judgment, under the colour of bad or good consequences to be expected from this or that conduct. To leave the management of the house to the master, without apprehension he will suffer his interests to

¹See CW to Walker, Aug. 21, 1756.

receive hurt, and simply to do what he bids us, enters into the heart of true faith.

I have said the more on this head, that if you have been driven to make certain declarations in consequence of the dictates of your own conscience, you may not be uneasy at having done so. For you will easily apprehend, if the rule I have laid down be right, and your preachers be not guided by it, there can be no manner of dependance upon them. Because at bottom they do not make it a matter of conscience whether they shall abide or depart, and so your conduct will have been a bearing witness for the truth, a leading the way to others of like simplicity, and a seasonable reproof of those whose will is their guide. In short, I would wish you to do what your conscience requires without respect to consequences, although I do not presume to direct what you should do. Consequences we know nothing of, nor have we anything to do with.

I have been thinking what good might be expected by a separation, in the judgment of those who press for it. I see many benefits in prospect from the Methodists' closer union, and a thousand ill consequences from a separation. But one good one I cannot see—unless this be mistaken for one, that the preachers will then become ministers. I should wish to know what is designed by it. To separate for the sake of separating is strange work! To separate because it is sinful to abide is something. But to be fishing for reasons to justify a separation, when one means nothing by that separation but to please one's self, or raise a party, this is strange work.

I shall be expecting to hear from you again in a post or two. Meantime, may the Lord strengthen and comfort your heart, and direct you, as I am sure he will do, into that which shall be most for his glory. Forget not how he has placed you in the gap.

Believe me,

Your sincere though very unworthy brother,

S. Walker

Source: manuscript transcription in Walker's records; Pitts Library (Emory), Samuel Walker Papers (MSS 437).²

²The holograph is again not known to survive, only Walker's personal manuscript copy. A (rather free) previous transcription was published in Edwin Sidney, *The Life and Ministry of the Rev. Samuel Walker, B.A.* (London: Seeley and Burnside, 1838), Sidney, 216–20.

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

Clifton
November 27, 1756

Dear Sir,

I have been prevented seeing you yesterday and today, but have the pleasure of hearing you are better, which I trust in God will increase to the establishment of your health.¹ I believe the enclosed may be acceptable, which will be a great joy to me.² Let me add that I could wish you did apply to your brother, since I consider myself engaged to fulfill a conditional promise when those circumstances require it, and this being tried three ways must determine it. First, a kind and explicit remonstrance with your brother. Second, a legal interposition from Mr. [Marmaduke] Gwynne. And thirdly, the books proposed to be taken by you, and these to go as far as they shall admit towards the raising of that sum of £100 a year agreed to be given you by your brother, arising out of the books. These all failing you, I consider myself engaged, while I have it, to prevent every difficulty to you from such a situation with every help and comfort within my reach for dear Mrs. Wesley and you. On any other footing, it is giving my little mite to Mrs. John Wesley, not you. And therefore [I] shall be extremely anxious to have this matter cleared up both to your satisfaction and mine. For as I should be faithful in fulfilling my engagement, so would I be in knowing it answered my intention by doing it. And this I know you will agree with me is but quite reasonable, as it cannot be supposed I would do that for her. That at any rate I would rejoice to do for you and dear Mrs. Wesley. I am, my dear sir, most truly and affectionately ever

Your faithful friend,

S. Huntingdon

Address: "To / the Revd Mr Charles / Wesley."

Endorsement: by CW, "N.B.! L. H. Nov. 27. 1756 / [[of the money]]."³

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/62.⁴

¹CW had returned from his tour of the northern circuit somewhat ill.

²LH was sending money to assist in light of JW's threat to discontinue CW's £100 a year support.

³Also written on overleaf:

[[Jones]]	6. 6. 0
[[Wednesbury]]	2. 0. 0
[[me]]	5. 5. 0
[[Sally]]	<u>7. 7. 0</u>
	20. 18. 0
[[I'Anson]]	<u>22. 0. 0</u>
	43. 0. 0

⁴Cf. the previous transcription in Tyson, *Correspondence*, 100.

William Perronet to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

London
December 19 [1756¹]

Dear Madam,

Your last obliging letter gave me the most sensible pleasure, as it brought me the agreeable news of your recovery, and as the same time gives so good an account of Mr. [Charles] Wesley.²

Mr. [James] and Mrs. [Elizabeth] Waller are so very friendly and obliging to me that the few leisure hours I have are generally spent there.

But these are really very few, for besides my more public business I have some few patients of my own. But you will readily believe me when I assure you that they are not such as ride in their coaches and sip, and consequently not such as will enable me very soon to ride in mine. However, they are very good people, and tell me that they will pray for me as long as they live—and I am far from despising such a return.

One of my patients is a little boy with a fractured thigh. I gave him a penny to keep him quiet while I set it; and he told his mother after I was gone that indeed the gentleman had given him a penny, but he thought that he ought rather to have given me a penny, and often says that he will pray for me when he gets to heaven.

I hope as soon as Mr. Wesley is quite well that you will both come to London. Everyone will rejoice to see you. But none more than, dear madam,

Your very *obliged* friend and servant,

W. Perronet

P.S. Could a wish convey me to Bristol, Mr. Wesley and you would often be troubled with my company for half an hour. I am sorry to hear that Mrs. [Susanna] Stonehouse and her husband [George] are ill. But she is a doctress and can cure herself and her friend too. My compliments to all who are so kind as to remember me, particularly Mrs. [Elizabeth] Vigor, Mrs. James,³ Mrs. [Anne] Davis, and Mr. and Mrs. Stonehouse.

I hope Mrs. Wesley will be so good as to excuse my troubling her with the enclosed letter, as I cannot bestow a separate frank on it.

Address: "To / Mrs. Wesley."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/472/31.

¹William Perronet (1729–81) was another son of Vincent and Charity (Goodhew) Perronet. He had recently completed training in Bristol as a physician, where he helped care for SGW in a pregnancy. He had just moved to London as an army physician, serving through the Seven Years War with France (1756–63). He then settled at Stoke Newington in civilian medical practice. Here he cared for John Fletcher. Fletcher in turn nurtured William's conversion, and a deep friendship ensued. In 1779 William accompanied Fletcher on an extended trip to Switzerland. He fell sick and died in Dec. 1781. See Batty, *Perronet*, 89–100.

²This letter is not known to survive.

³This is likely Mary (Samuel) James, who lived at and operated a furrier shop in Lewin's Mead, near the New Room. Her son John (b. 1724) helped her continue the business and is likely the John James who was one of the first trustees of the New Room in Bristol (Best, *Cradle of Methodism*, 187).

1757

Joan (Gwynne) Price to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley¹

[Llanynis, Breconshire, Wales?]
Monday night [c. April 1757²]

Dearest Sister,

The bearer is sent with my horse, which I am satisfied will carry you much easier than sister Beck's.³ William is well acquainted with him, therefore [I] would advise you to ride behind him.

My aunt had not received the silk when I left Swansea, but she returned the money for you by Captain George Davies. Nurse desires you would send to her daughter, to enquire if the silk is gone. I beg you would not forget it for my aunt is impatient to have it.

All here join me in love to you and brother [Charles] Wesley and wishing you a safe journey.

I am, dearest sister,

Yours most affectionately,

J. Price

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 7/77.

¹Joan's husband Hugh was currently rector of Hendre, Glamorgan, Wales, one mile west of the town of Pencoed, and 19 miles east of Swansea. However, the family appeared to reside at Hugh's ancestral home in Llanynis, about three miles southwest of Builth Wells, Breconshire.

²The letter comes after Joan Gwynne's marriage to Hugh Price (c. 1727–82) in Sept. 1755, and before the birth of CW Jr. in Dec. 1757. The most likely date is early April 1757 when CW was ministering in London and wrote to SGW, asking her to give greetings to Rebecca Gwynne and their other friends (CW to SGW, Apr. 10, 1757).

³I.e., Rebecca Gwynne.

William Perronet to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

Wells
April 27, 1757

Madam,

I should not have deferred so long inquiring after your health, as I had the honour of being your surgeon when last in Bristol, but that I hoped before this time to have had an opportunity of waiting on you. But I have been prevented by a multiplicity of business. Surely never was a regiment better furnished with invalids than ours; and what is a little remarkable, I found no less than six or seven who had met with some accident from bleeding. I hope—nay, I do not doubt but—before this time you have got the letter of this little troublesome accident.⁴

The colonel found out by my coming round by Bristol that I had some particular friends there and was so obliging as to offer me one of his horses whenever I chose to take a ride, which indeed will be as soon as I can find an opportunity.

I have sent the receipt⁵ for the toothache which I promised you and Mrs. Gwynne,⁶ but I hope that neither of you will have occasion to make use of it. It must be made up by the apothecary. The manner of using it is to dip a piece of lint and apply it to the tooth, changing it now and then.

I am, dear madam,

Your obliged friend and humble servant,

W. Perronet

If you should favour me with a line, please direct to me, surgeon in General Wolf's regiment, at Wells.

[The receipt]

*Elix[ir] Paregoric[o]
cum camphor et opii quantitat. duplice.*

Address: "To / Mrs Wesley / in Charles Street / Bristol."

Postmark: "Wells."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/472/27.

⁴This letter is not known to survive.

⁵I.e. a recipe or prescribed treatment.

⁶Apparently Marmaduke and Sarah (Evans) Gwynne were spending some time in Bristol with CW and SGW; see also LH to SGW, June 30, 1757.

From the Rev. John Fletcher¹

London
May 10, 1757

Dear and Reverend Sir,

I am very glad that you and those that the Lord has committed to your care remember the absent brethren, and among them him who by his weakness wants most the prayers of all faithful people. May the Lord reward you for that labour of love according to the riches of his mercy! We are not altogether wanting in this important part of Christian fellowship and brotherly love. And I doubt not that, by the grace of God, the assistance of your prayers, and the good example you set us, we shall be enabled to abound more and more. O may we strive continually to outdo each other in love and in all the duties and means that conduce to love!

I am not sure whether I shall be in town on Whitsunday [May 29]. I am afraid I shall be upon the journey on that glorious day. It has been my lot for these three last years, notwithstanding my earnest request to be left behind and keep the feast according to my conscience. If you are in London the 26th of this month, it will not be too late for me to ask your blessing by word of mouth, and to answer any question you shall think fit to ask me concerning God's dealings with the chief of sinners. In the mean time, read over this short account and weep with him that weeps for his unfaithfulness.

I have often heard from my friends that there never was a child prouder, more passionate, and stubborn than me from the cradle. The sin by which it pleased God to begin the work of conviction was fighting in a great rage one of my brothers. I was no sooner put to bed after it in the evening, and left alone, but I began to feel the wrath of God abiding on me. The pangs of hell compassed me round about and I question whether I should not have dropped into hell under that burden that very night if the Lord had not come to my relief. He came and heaven came with him. My proud heart was melted and I began to love and weep much because much was forgiven me. I was about seven years old when the Lord made thus his goodness to pass before me for the first time. I did not know what to make of it, nor what power I then received to conquer the world, the flesh, and the devil. And I had almost forgot it, when I began to hear your preaching. I cannot remember how long the clear sense of that pardon lasted. Only for some months. After I find that I often went into a retired place to beg of God to let me die a martyr, a prayer in which I found an unspeakable sweetness.

When I was about ten years of age, I began to give up all and to sell myself under sin, being surrounded on every side by temptations and drawn in by bad examples. But the Lord still strove with me. I had frequent returns of repentance and sometimes fresh assurances of my forgiveness, but without minding it much. I sinned it away as often as I received it. When I was sixteen the Lord showed me that it was not possible to serve two masters, and that if I would sin on I should soon have the wages of sin. I began to look about me, to strive in earnest to grow in holiness, and for eight months I think I walked as became a follower of Christ. About that time I was also convinced of the necessity of having a Christian friend, and after many useless trials to find one I at last met with three students who formed with me a religious society. We met as often as we could to confess one [to] another our sins, to exhort, read, and pray. And we would perhaps have been what the Methodists were at Oxford, had not one of us been led away by a deist and drank so deep of the poison of his arguments that all endeavours to recall him were useless. And as he was remarkable for his great parts, and made much of on account of his wit and learning, he had such an ascendancy over our companions that I was soon left alone. And happy would I have been still, had not I provoked the Lord, grieved and quenched his Spirit by a relapse into sin.

¹This is the first surviving letter of Fletcher to CW, devoted to Fletcher's account of his spiritual pilgrimage.

The time was come when I was to choose a way of life. My friends would by all means have me be an officer. And though I had often vowed to the Lord that if he would accept of me I should rejoice to be the least of his ministers, I yielded to their importunities, as wanting both gifts and grace to carry me through the duties of a clergyman, which I saw not as they were but as they ought to have been practised. And setting out for Germany, I spent a year there to learn high Dutch² and fortification. The peace was made as I was thus occupied, and the body of engineers into which I was to enter disbanded, so that I came home disappointed. All that while I saw from whence I was fallen. Sometimes I mourned, sometimes endeavoured to divert my thoughts by studying without interruption, and at all times resolved since I did not love God that I should not love the world. Fool that I was! As if one who lives in any known sin, though it should be committed but once in a year, could have any reason to expect mercy from the God of purity because he does many things and avoids many.

Being come home, I was often laughed at by my friends for loving so little the diversions of the world. The uneasiness their usage gave me, and much more the anguish of my sin-sick soul, made me resolve to embrace the first opportunity of leaving my country. Soon after I was offered to go into Brasilia as surveyor and engineer to the king of Portugal. I greedily embraced the proposal, and was just setting out, notwithstanding many checks of conscience, when one let fall on my legs a pot of boiling water and scalded my legs in such a dreadful manner that I lost for a considerable time the use of them and was forced to stay in Europe. He that will not turn at a check of God's Spirit must turn at the stroke of his rod—or what is worse, must run on till he falls down the precipice. When I was cured an uncle offered me a commission in the Dutch service, upon which I set out for Holland; where I stayed some months, waiting for what he had promised me. Till seeing too much of a military life to like it, and tired out by the promises of deceitful men, I resolved to go to England. For six years, I did not know how, I had entertained a secret design of seeing that country. And even learned a great many words, not to be at a loss when I should arrive there. But in this, as in many other things, I have since seen the finger of God and the unspeakable goodness of his providence.

By this time I was a strict legalist. I spent part of the day in reading the Scriptures and in prayer, thinking that my repenting, added to those duties, would screen me from the wrath to come. But my eyes were soon opened to see my hypocrisy. I acknowledged it before God, perceived my danger, and resolved to give up all mine idols. But now, though I was willing, God did not give me back the power which I had had so long without using it. Then began an horrible struggle between the flesh and the Spirit. None but God know what I endured for five months. Three times I was pardoned and sinned my pardon away. At last, driven to despair by the sin I had committed against so merciful a God, I resolved to make away with myself, that he might the sooner be glorified in the torments of so bold an offender. But his pity interposed. He bid me again go in peace, and added that blessed word I had so long refused to hear: "Sin no more."

This was about five years ago, and I do not think that I have ever felt a temptation from that time to that sin which for eight years had so often overcome me. This enemy being destroyed, another no less terrible stood against me. I thought myself both meek and patient, but the frequent proofs which my calling obliged me to make of those Christian virtues showed me soon what little share I had of them, and how much anger and peevishness lurked in my heart. For two years I was in the fiery furnace, struggling with principalities and powers, and what is more with my wicked heart. Satan generally got the better in the day, and I at night. He made me sin, but I obtained the pardon of my sin generally before I durst go to sleep. How many prayers, groans, fastings, tears, sighs, watchnights did I go through, and all in vain. Christ alone was to overcome for me.

All that while, as almost all my life, I was looked upon as a very odd sort of a man, and the reason of it was that I kept to myself all my thoughts and shunned company as much as possible. "The children of God are [de]minished from the earth," said I. One I had met in 22 years (and that was a

²I.e., German.

woman I had seen abroad); it would be a folly to seek for another. However I exhorted and reproved as I had an opportunity. And four years ago, as I was going into the country, my performing this duty was the cause of my finding another Christian and of hearing of a body of people among which there is several. The family had baited, and while they drank tea I went to take a walk and get out of the way of the world. I soon met a poor woman who seemed to be in distress, and asking her what was the matter, I soon saw by her answers that she was a Christian. The pleasure and profit I found in her conversation made me forget that I was upon a journey, and when I returned to the inn I found I had been left behind. However taking a horse, I overtook the family and told the reason why I had stayed behind. Don't go, says a Lady talking so to old women. People will say that we have got a Methodist preacher with us. I asked what she meant by a Methodist, and when she had told me I said that I would be one of them if there was really such a people in England.

The next winter I was no sooner in town [i.e., London] but I enquired after the Methodists and came to West Street [chapel] and to Hog Lane every Sunday. I soon could trace all my experience in your preachings. Only one thing I could not account for; you preached forgiveness of sin and power over [it] as being given at the same time. This brought me to examine the point. I [sought] the doctrine of faith out of Scripture and other books, and at last was convinced that, though I had had repentance towards God, and though he had often forgiven my sins and made me taste the powers of the world to come, I was yet a stranger to the merits of him by whom I had received these benefits. So that it was no wonder if I had fought so long as beating the air, since I fought without him, I was convinced of unbelief in God the Son, and was brought into bondage through fear of death. But about ten weeks after, as I was in prayer at one o'clock in the morning, I was enabled to cast my self upon Christ, so as to have peace, assurance, and power over sin. I have gone and still go through many trials since. But of them, another time. I am, reverend sir,

Your unworthy brother and servant

John Fletcher

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr Wesley / at the Horsefair / Bristol."

Endorsement: by CW, "May 10, 1757 / Mr Fletcher's experience."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/495/65.³

³A close transcription of this letter, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 42–46. Published previously in *City Road Magazine* 2 (1872): 511–14.

Lady Huntingdon to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

Clifton
June 30, 1757

My Dear Mrs. Wesley,

As I fear I cannot wait upon your and Mr. [Charles] Wesley before you leave Bristol, I have ventured to send you a remembrance of me. It has no pretensions to recommend it to you unless you should have any partiality to anything of my working. I do most sincerely pray God to send you a safe journey, and bring you through every trial of your faith and patience with the conquest so gracious a Saviour as ours can give you. I beg both your prayers when I shall be ever brought to your remembrance. I send enclosed in the handkerchief a trifle given by a friend of mine for any of the poor colliers who through sickness or providential distress are most in want, or their families—begging Mr. Wesley, before he goes, will know how it is distributed and to whom.

I hope you will not fail to make my most kind remembrance and best service acceptable to Mr. and Mrs. Gwynne, and my old friend your sister,¹ who will ever have my best wishes. And believe me, my dear Mrs. Wesley, I shall ever retain the most affectionate regard till we meet, whether it is in heaven or on earth again. Let us only be found ready to enjoy the one and leave the other and then all is well. Assure Mr. Wesley of my most sincere and faithful regards. And with a heart abounding in every wish of blessedness for you and him, I am, my dear Mrs. Wesley, ever

Your most affectionate and obliged friend,

S. Huntingdon

My love to dear Mrs. Hunter.

Address: “To / Mrs. Wesley / Charles Street”

Endorsement: by SGW; “D[ea]r Lady H[untingdon]s with a work’d / handkerchief, June 30 1757.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/63.²

¹Marmaduke and Sarah (Evans) Gwynne, and Rebecca Gwynne were visiting CW and SGW.

²Cf. the previous transcription in Tyson, *Correspondence*, 100–01.

From William Perronet

From the Camp near Dorchester
Sunday, July 24, 1757

Dear Sir,

Probably before this reaches you I shall be embarked with the rest of our regiment. We march tomorrow for the Isle of Wight.¹ But to what part of the world we are destined, none of us know. As my father and mother were so much adverse to it,² I had determined not to go abroad. But this order came so suddenly, so unexpected by the colonel and even the general himself, that it is impossible to provide anyone in my room. The distress which I know my father and mother will be in on my account would prevail on me to break through almost anything to get home. But when I am told by many of the officers and men, “We have intrusted our lives in your hands; if you leave us now, it is when we stand in most need of you,” I submit the matter to God and forget all other connections. My post is next to the chief surgeon, or rather physician, for he owns that he understand but little of the former, which makes me rather more necessary.

As I may possibly never see you again, I take this opportunity of returning you and Mrs. Wesley my sincerest thanks for all your kindness and love to me. I am sorry to say that your repeated admonitions never truly affected me till now. The sea was ever terrible to me, and the thoughts of leaving my father and mother in distress afflicts me beyond measure. Was I to regard some of these thing which the sage amongst the other sex call “ominous,” I should hardly expect to return again to my native country. But as I never regarded times, or sought after divinations, these things do not affect me. My only grief is that I have suffered every shadow to divert my attention from the most important subject in the world, and to draw me from him who is the fairest among ten thousand. But I have thrown myself at his feet and here I had rather lay, undeserving and wretched as I am, than have the whole world as mine. Dear sir, pray for me. My love to Mrs. Wesley, and let me desire her prayers also. I am, dear sir, with the greatest respect,

Your sincere friend

W. Perronet

P.S. Mr. Anstruther (the gentleman who supped at your house with me) sends his compliments to you and Mrs. Wesley.³ As he belongs to the new battalion, he does not go abroad with us. He desired that I would tell you that if you and Mrs. Wesley should come this way before their camp breaks up, he shall be extremely glad to accommodate you in the best manner he is able.

If you are in Wales, pray give my compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Gwynne, and to Miss Becky.

Endorsement: by CW, “W. Perronet – going abroad / July 24. 1757.”

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/33.

¹Orig., “White.”

²Rev. Vincent and Charity (Goodhew) Perronet, of Shoreham.

³Possibly Lieutenant General Philip Anstruther, of the 26th. Regiment of Foot, who died Nov. 11, 1760.

Sarah (Evans) Gwynne to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

Brecon
November 11, 1757

I am thankful to my dearest Sally for her letter,¹ and am much rejoiced at finding you continue in as good health as can be expected in your present condition. I would (if age and affairs would admit of it) readily attend my dear girl in her approaching trial, but can't in the least flatter myself in indulging such a thought. I apprehended Beck intended you a visit about that time, and hope she will be permitted to attend you. Juggy wants me to Hendre,² but I fear I can't go even there, which is so much nearer than Bristol. The concern I have for my children often carries me to wish my abilities were equal to my inclination, but yet ought and hope shall submit to the wise Disposer of us and all that belongs to us.

The hare and goose I sent hoping they would be acceptable. I am glad they were not left to spoil as the turkey formerly was.

Little Beck and her nurse are well, the child thrives very much.³ I hope she will continue to do so. I heard from her poor mother [Elizabeth] today, who complains of her bowels and the noise of the town [i.e., London].

You dear aunt,⁴ cousins, and the girls join me in dues to your partner and self, with service to all enquiring friends. I am,

Dearest Sally's very affectionate mother,

Sa: Gwynne

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 7/5.

¹This letter is not known to survive; SGW was in the last stages of pregnancy with CW Jr.

²Joan (Gwynne) Price and her husband Hugh lived in Hendre, Glamorgan, Wales; one mile west of the town of Pencoed, and 19 miles east of Swansea.

³Rebecca Waller (c. 1757–93), the infant daughter (and second child) of James and Elizabeth (Gwynne) Waller.

⁴Joan Gwynne (1703–86), the unmarried sister of Marmaduke Gwynne Sr.

From Howell Harris

[Trevecca]
December 21, 1757

My Dear Brother Charles Wesley,

I am glad that one attempt more against the reformation has proved abortive.¹ But outward amendment without removing the inward cause does but heal the wound superficially and lays a foundation for a greater breach at last.

Self is the very god of the whole world, and it is but scarcely the church escapes its wiles, art, and enchantment. It is but few dread it and turn from it, or know it—though the terms of our Saviour's favour turns on our renouncing it. I fear it is but few can say that the burden of it is intolerable. I fear that most reckon it their liberty not to be freed from it but to love it, hide it, obey it, and live in peace with it—growing wiser and bigger in their own eyes, instead of becoming more like little children.

Hold fast the views of love to the brethren that our Saviour gave you. Stumble not at their infirmities. Our Lord has certainly honoured them, nor has he taken his Spirit from them. Was not he full of mercy, what would be come of us all? His will is we should maintain the unity of the Spirit and love one another and let brotherly love continue. Each esteeming the other indeed better than himself. Rejoicing indeed that he is preached. Though we grow less thereby when we can't really rejoice in the success of others as well as our own. And when we are not willing to be last as well as first, to decrease as well as increase, it is not right with us and we should see lest our hearts be not found right with God. Satan has a particular enmity against true faith, pure love, and real (undissembled) poverty in the bottom of the heart.

I fear, whilst preaching and preachers abound, the spirit of the Bible and the Reformation is dying, if not lost. I am surprised I don't see your brother and yourself in all the public papers. Do not all symptoms of a decaying, falling state appear? Have we not too long ago been ashamed of our Saviour's gospel, godhead, truth, and death? As a people have we not openly renounced him as our teacher, priest, and king? Have we not seen the fruit of departing from him, so as to make our sober heathens prophesy destruction on such a nation? And don't the mobbing, rebellious spirit of the land, joined with the corruption, bribery, cowardice, and unfaithfulness of the great, denote destruction at the door if some be not raised to stand in the gap, to lift up their hands and heart and voice in faith?

We are fallen by unbelief and a total apostasy from the gospel faith, and we must be raised by faith alone. And in order to that a testimony must be borne. The truth must cry aloud through some tongue and pen guided by the Holy Ghost. Throw salt to every fountain, still having the great point in view: the awakening and saving the whole land. Societies and exhorters are good for the present, till a wider door is opened. Shall the fathers of the church always sleep? No, they must either bow to persevering persecuted truth and fall before it now as of old, or join against—which God forbid. Your brother's pen speaks loud. Let it carry the sound of a slighted gospel and the groans of a dying God to a deistical, licentious, self-righteous generation. O speak to the heart. I fear the head and affection, and nature reformed and refined, pass for living faith and real regeneration. Let the spirit and simplicity in which the work was originally ushered in be kept up and maintained. Let the real oneness of the whole church be indeed nourished. And in that oneness you'll meet, whether in or out of my [body].

Your brother and servant,

H. Harris

Source: manuscript transcript (not in Harris's hand) for records; National Library of Wales, Trevecca Letters, #2214.²

¹Harris is replying to CW's letter of Nov. 18, 1757.

²A transcription was published previously in *Trevecca Letters (1747–94)*, 67–68.

1758

Joan Gwynne to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley¹

[Brecon]
January 8, 1758

Dearest Niece,

I am in great hopes you are by this time got *pretty* well, the account of which will give me more pleasure than I am able to express. I wish you and Mr. Wesley much joy of your dear little boy.² I have by the bearer sent you a hare. I hope it will come good to you.

I am, with my best respects to Mr. Wesley and yourself, dearest niece,

Yours most affectionately

J. Gwynne

My brother's family are all pretty well.

Endorsement: by SGW, "Aunt Juggy / Ans[were]d Jany the 12th."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 1/75.

¹The writer is Joan Gwynne (1703–86), the unmarried sister of Marmaduke Gwynne Sr.

²Charles Jr. had been born Dec. 11, 1757.

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

[London?]
February 3, 1758

My Very Kind Friend,

Your letter was great comfort to me.¹ For sometime I have been called to know what that means. My sorrows have taken such hold upon me that I was not able to look up from whence cometh my help.² But yet do I find it is best I should so sorrow. For I find [being] ready to die is a great and hard work, and that true circumcision of the heart ties us alone to him who will and must create its peace. And I would not have had one sigh or tear less for the peril(?) of the world these days Israel journeys in. And we find that in all their travelling they had fresh proofs of deliverance, and that their greatest trials had those effects of new mercies and exercises of power and love. My greatest is that I begin to see some poor that will I hope receive the gospel gladly. One of these as a leaven would more than [re]pay all the groans of my spirit, and I own I do hope a blessing will be among the most poor, ignorant, and miserable I have met with.

My leaving this place seems not yet. I don't care to stir till some call points out my way. I am at present as one held down and know not where my lot is next. Upon proposing other views I have been so refuted that I will abide in quiet and be content with any portion the Lord will farther give me here, for stir I dare not at present. His way is in the sea and his footsteps in the deep waters,³ and I desire nothing but a simple faithful heart to follow him with. My poor son's sight grows worse, but [he is] insensible to the terrible event.⁴ And I am in the midst of much I wish otherwise than from all that is past. And I have laid up in my heart that something is beyond all this which will show the gracious hand [of God] to hold forth mercies instead of judgments for me. Neither have I felt the worst, yea I must yet suffer more, deeper, and further sorrow. And I believe you must remember that many months before I told you something was coming. And many sorrowful days and nights I passed upon the sight of the shadow before the substance came.

Mr. Lindsey has been a kind friend, indeed.⁵ He begs his affectionate compliments to you. He has a heartfelt love for you. We often talk of you and dear Mrs. Wesley with a faithful and Christian regard. Should you see Mr. Charles Perronet, assure him I did not forget his application; but it is as impossible to obtain things of that sort at present as it is impractical to make them. It was a place for his brother-in-law.⁶

And I will also trouble you with my services to Mr. Brown and beg he will tell Jacks, his clerk, that it is not in my power to make an application to the admiralty for such a thing. And that I did, upon his first letter, recommend it about the share in the prize money. It would be too little a commission to apply so high for. And that he will have his proportion when the prize money is settled. And that, by any friend he has in the ship speaking when they are paid, and acknowledging him as one of the crew, he must have it.

Shall I beg you to offer my affectionate remembrance to Mr. and Mrs. Stonehouse.⁷ I long to

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²See Ps. 121:1.

³See Ps. 77:19.

⁴Henry Hastings was ailing; he would die Sep. 13, 1758.

⁵Rev. Theophilus Lindsey (1723–1808) was the namesake and godson of LH's husband. Ordained in 1747, he currently held the living of Piddletown, Dorsetshire and was chaplain to LH's son Francis.

⁶Possibly referring to William Briggs (1722–88), who married Charles's sister Elizabeth in 1749.

⁷Rev. George and Susanna (Burdock) Stonehouse of Dornford

know how she does and wish them in true love all blessings. Don't forget my thanks to Mrs. Jones for her prayers. Commend me to him and her.⁸ I wish I could pray for anyone, but I appear so vile and so much worse than all the world that I think I am as one alone upon earth, void of all things but the love and mercy that is in Christ for the work. My love to dear Mrs. Wesley, and tell her I trust that dear little Charles [Jr.] will be her joy and comfort. May he be blessed with a long and holy life and may he receive from Jacob the blessing he had for his Joseph. My poor son's eyes are very bad, but his heart and spirit conquered by grace is my wish about him now. O could this be given me, my heart would rejoice in the midst of my present grief about him! My daughter, Rawdon, has been happily brought through the birth of a son, who lived just to suffer much for a few hours and then died.⁹ Lady Selina is, I praise God, well. You see how I speak of blessings with thankfulness to you as I would my Saviour's. With patience, I am truly

Your ever affectionate friend,

S. H.

Endorsement: by CW, "L. H. Feb. 3. / 1758 / son worse / pray[e]r for Cha[rle]s."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/64.¹⁰

⁸Dr. John and Sarah (Perrin) Jones.

⁹Elizabeth Frances Hastings (1731–1808), the oldest daughter of LH, married John Rawdon (1720–93) in 1752. Currently Baron of Moira, in 1761 John was elevated to Earl of Moira. The couple had four children that lived to adulthood, and supported Methodists in Ireland for some time.

¹⁰Cf. the previous transcription in Tyson, *Correspondence*, 101.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

London
February 18, 1758

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Besides the reason you mention of my silence,¹ another has kept me from writing this month. I mean the design I had of sending my letters by Mr. [Thomas] Walsh. Also the state of my soul it is very middling, Oh that I was but as much in earnest as when I wrote to you last. My desires were truly towards the Lord and my soul fled to him as to its center. But alas the pressure being removed, *rursus ad ingonium redii*,² the edge of my desires was blunted. And I remained some times at Kadesh Barnea³ as before, or sometimes even drew back towards Mount Sinai. Oh if I was truly willing to go and take possession of the good land at once, the Lord would help me. He never suffered anyone that trusted him to be confounded or disappointed of his hope. It is true, both to will and to do come from the Lord. But as he often gives me to will, if I have not power to do, I see it and must give God the glory, I am the cause alone. I do not cherish the will. I do not carefully cultivate it. So that it is no wonder if it sometimes languishes and never bears fruit unto perfection.

Oh dear sir, I find more and more that it is not an easy thing to be upright before God. Many boast of their sincerity, and perhaps they may. But as for me, I am forced to smite my breast and to say, "From all hypocrisy good Lord deliver me."⁴ Oh when I shall be sincere I shall walk on with an even pace. I shall neither stop, nor turn aside. If you ask why then are not you sincere? Ah why is the carnal mind so deeply rooted in my soul? All the fibers of my heart must shrink or break if, by the assistance of God, I will tug and pull the cursed root till it shoots no more; and I want faith and sincerity to set about it, or not to give over till it is out. I see that nothing (humanly speaking) will make me continually willing to take a whole Christ for my only portion, but repeated strokes of God's rod. I am afraid I shall cleave to creatures in some measure till they all turn against me and drive me to God in spite of myself. I am afraid I shall cleave to self till it is hell to me, to rob the Lord of one thought to bestow it upon me. O may I be willing to enter this hell now, that I may hasten to the pure love of God.

I find however that it is good to hold fast what one has, let it be never so little. When I fought with anger, oh how happy would I be thought if the Lord did give me power over it outwardly. If he has done it and subdued it inwardly so that it does not even push at me. Were I but thankful for this, were I but as willing to be delivered from self and unbelief as I was from anger, I should not cry so often, "O my leanness." The sight I have of this want of sincerity greatly damps my joy in the Lord and sometimes destroys it. In a word, my walk towards Sion is slow beyond expression. And what is worse, I do not always walk upright. Sometimes I am bowed down and ready to stumble every moment, Sometimes I cannot walk at all, but must crawl along through the dust or the mire. And even then I have reason to praise God that my face is still turned towards his holy mountain. I want a Christian brother who might be always with me to lash me on, as they do a sluggish horse who is more willing to lie down than to run post. But where shall I find one so charitable as to say without fainting, "Run for thy life"? Lord Jesus, thou must be he, or I shall never attain.

As for my labours in the gospel, if faint endeavours deserve that name, they are upon the same footing as I mentioned in my last. I still preach at Spitalfields [chapel] in French, and the Lord brings some hundreds to hear. Oh may he preach to their hearts. A few seem to see men walking as trees.⁵ Deep

¹CW's letter to Fletcher is not known to survive.

²"I have returned again to ignominy."

³The place where Israel delayed on the outskirts of entering the promised land; see Num. 13.

⁴BCP, The Great Litany.

⁵See Mark 18:24.

conviction takes place with none as yet. However the devil is not well pleased, and stirs up many to cavil [and] revile this foolishness of preaching and the poor preacher. I still preach at West Street [chapel] three mornings a week to a few people (generally 20 or 30), whose ears can bear the word delivered even by me. My pride, more than the honour of God, made me think it strange at first to preach to so many empty pews. But the Lord will give me, I trust, more and more to look unto him and to seek him only. And now, by his grace, I am resolved to preach though it should be but to one soul, till that soul leaves me by myself. And then I shall call on the Lord to preach to my heart by his Spirit.

I know not Mr. Venn.⁶ Mr. [Martin] Madan I know only for having spoke to him once last winter. So that I shall have no opportunity of doing your commission. I do not make haste to get acquainted with those that are on high. Methinks it suits me better to converse with the poor and illiterate. I have more freedom to say before them, “Have mercy on me, a miserable sinner.”⁷ I see Mr. Bernon⁸ sometimes. I trust he is in the way, and should be glad if by any means when I shall leave London he would take upon him[self] preaching to the French in my place. You could not do less than to send brother [John] Jones to supply the lack of so excellent a workman as brother Walsh. Another [time] I shall answer the article of your letter concerning the prophecies.⁹ Pray for me, and may Christ powerfully intercede for you.

Address: “To / The Revd. Mr Wesley / in the Horse fair / Bristol.”

Endorsement: by CW, “Mr Fletcher / walking humbly.”

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/35.¹⁰

⁶Rev. Henry Venn (1725–97) received his BA from Jesus College, Cambridge in 1746, and MA from Queen’s College in 1749. Mirroring these degrees, Venn was ordained deacon in 1747 and priest in 1749. After brief curacies in Cambridgeshire and Surrey, Venn accepted the curacy of Clapham in 1754. During his time there he was drawn into the evangelical wing of the Church of England and became close with JW, George Whitefield, and LH. See *DEB*, 1137–38; *ODNB*; and Vickers, *Dictionary*, 363.

⁷Cf. Luke 18:13.

⁸James Bernon (d. 1758), a member of French congregations in London.

⁹The Seven Year’s War (1756–63) heightened CW’s interest in prophecies, and nurtured an apocalyptic tone to many of his hymns published at the time.

¹⁰A close transcription of this letter, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 46–49.

Mary (Degge) Manners to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

[Grosvenor Square, London]
March 3, 1758

My dear friend's reserve to me I own I think unkind when I reflect how much otherwise we were formerly, as I cannot recollect anything to occasion it. Nothing I am sure was done with such a design; conscious of which I take my pen which the severe formality of your last was almost enough to make me drop.

I hope you succeed in your nursing, and the little boy [CW Jr.] continues to thrive without impairing the mother's health. Both [of] my little ones are perfectly well.¹ I have been as well all the time as it is possible in that situation.

When your partner comes to town I must insist on seeing him, as I have something to say to him. Any time from 1:00 to 4:00 he may meet with me, in all probability alone. If the first time of his calling I should be out, I will desire he will leave word with the porter what day he can come. It will be unlucky should it so happen, as I am generally at home and alone at them hours. He must recollect last time he came my Lord [Robert] was confined.

I still desire a part in your prayers and remain
Your sincere and affectionate friend,

M. Manners

My Lord just came in and, being told who this letter was to, desires it may convey his proper compliments to them both.

Endorsement: by SGW, "L[ady] Robert / Mar. 3. 1758 (rec[eive]d ye 5th) / Res[ponde]d ye 11th."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/428/1/95.

¹Robert and Mary (Degge) Manners had currently two children: Mary (b. 1756), and Robert (b. 1758).

From Ann (Skrine) Barlow

[London]
March 4, 1758

Dear Friends,

I do not doubt by this will find you very happy. A letter I received by yesterday's post from dear Mrs. [Anne] Grinfield is a strong testimony that the Lord is with you of a truth, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, peace, and joy. I trust that you continue to remember your friends in town [i.e., London], who though they are not of the world, live at present so near its influence as often to feel great weakness and languidness from it. Our chief comfort is from the two dear Bowles,¹ who we are with generally twice a week, Wednesdays and Sundays; and in hearing Mr. Gambold,² whose preaching is very close and deeply experimental. I know it will not offend you to say (whatever objections you may have to that church in general) that there are amongst them those who are in very real communion with their God and I sincerely think he is one who enjoys that privilege in a very high degree. Mr. and Mrs. Barham advance exceedingly, and are very solid blessed people.³ They have been in a little house at Chelsea all this winter, for the sake of their children, who have been ill, and are just returned to Bedford.

We have likewise passed two very happy evenings with dear Mr. [Martin] Madan, who is a miracle of grace, and goes on very solidly. He has an humble, sweet spirit. He has promised to favour my young people with a visit next Monday morning, but they, alas, are at present entirely engaged by the great world. I believe my dear girl will be tired of it soon,⁴ but her retreat will be difficult. Why do I say so? When the Lord's time is come, he will open a way for her to escape. She is this evening going to the oratorio with Lady Robert Manners, who she says is so different in her manner from what she first apprehended her to be that she doesn't appear the same person. There seems to be now a growing intimacy between them two, and the other night Lady Robert mentioned my mother and I to her with great respect, and said she would have visited us if she had thought it would have been agreeable, but did not offer to do it. But I shall take advantage of her obliging speech, and the first opportunity I can possibly take will wait upon her. I reckon that when Lady Huntingdon is come to town I shall have a clear opening, and then dear Mrs. Wesley may be assured that, though visiting young people, particularly those who are in the midst of health, beauty, and prosperity, is the most irksome thing in the world, yet I will do it. You cannot think, now I shrink from the world. I could not return one of its civilities with a tolerable grace. It is a want of Christian courage which makes me afraid of them. And how contrary is it to that declaration of the psalmist: "I will speak of thee even before kings; I will not be ashamed."⁵ But indeed I find myself so weak and unable that I am glad to get out of their sight.

I rejoice that dear Mrs. [Anne] Grinfield has so gracious a welcome into her little cottage. As I shall not know how to write to her this post, will you, with my affectionate love to her, tell her that I both congratulate and console with her on the death of Mr. John Prowse; the former because I believe he is very happy, the latter on account of his poor dear parents. But they, as a token of their child's happiness,

¹Edward Bowles (1732–1800) married Bridget Downing (c. 1735–71; sister of George) in June 1755 (see letter of George Downing to CW on Nov. 15, 1758, mentioning birth of their daughter Bridget on Nov. 11).

²Rev. John Gambold, now minister to the Moravian community in London.

³Joseph Foster Barham (1729–89), heir of plantations in Jamaica, married Welsh heiress Dorothea Vaughan (1721–81; sister and Ann and John Vaughan) in 1754. They were being drawn into Moravian circles at this time.

⁴Catherine Barlow (1738–83), daughter of John and Ann (Skrine) Barlow, married William Hamilton (1731–1803) on Jan. 26, 1758.

⁵See Ps. 119:46.

are most amazingly supported under his loss. The reason that I believe his heart was prepared for, and that he was appointed, to die was from Mrs. Earl's telling us, about two months since, the extraordinariness of his case, which she looked upon as entirely bodily, but my mother and I saw it quite in another light and have frequently spoke to each other about it since. She told us that about eight months ago, or longer, he was seized instantaneously with such a damp upon his spirits, and what they called a dejection of mind, that he lost all lust for everything that before [he] delighted in. They quickly observed this change, and was very uneasy about it, as he was always one of the most amiable young men in the world. They could not imagine the reason of it. He first owned to them it was so, but was entirely ignorant of the cause. They applied to physicians. They travelled about with him and took every method to amuse and divert him; and they hoped he was recovering his spirits. About three weeks ago, we happened to meet him at Mrs. Earl's, and so composed, so bright, so sweet a countenance I new saw. He did not look as if he belonged to this world. There was a most remarkable alteration in him indeed, which we then observed. About ten days after he was seized with the small pox, had every favourable symptom addressing them, but sunk away without making any resistance, and died the eighth day. Now I cannot doubt, but all the circumstances, but that the work was complete in him and that he is happily taken home.

Mrs. Hamilton is come in,⁶ and therefore excuse my concluding abruptly. She desires her most affectionate love to you and Mrs. Wesley. She is quite in love with Lady Robert and desires me to say so. My dear mother desires me to say everything that is affectionate and kind.⁷ We unite in begging your prayers. I am,

Your most unworthy yet affectionate daughter,

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 7/49.

⁶That is, her recently wed daughter Catherine.

⁷Elizabeth (Weston / Christmas) Skrine.

Mary (Gwynne) Baldwyn to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

[Diddlebury]
March 5, 1758

My dearest sister Wesley has my unfeigned thanks for her last obliging epistle, a favour I did not expect till I had returned you and my brother Wesley thanks for your kind enquiries after mine and the children's welfare in the small pox and your sisterly congratulation upon our recovery.¹ Not that I would have wrote to you myself till you desired it, lest you should be anyways apprehensive of infection on your dear Charley's account, whom God preserve to be a comfort to you both. His mercies are great, and very great they have been to me. And I hope I shall always be truly thankful to him, for their inoculation has been very successful. In and near this town few short of 300 have undergone that operation and but one died—and that person it is feared, through her own want of care. In the natural way it is very fatal.²

But my dear sister, I hope you will excuse me for giving you a particular account of one melancholy funeral of a young man. His name was Muscott. He married Mrs. Greenly of Titley's youngest daughter last September.³ It was a match of love on their part, and the approbation of friends on all sides, and never was there greater appearance of their being one of the happiest couples in the world. But this young man was always assured by his parents that he had [had] the small pox. But they were mistaken, for he fell ill of it and lost his life. But the most melancholy part of it was the care each took to alleviate the other's concern. She always fainted before she went to him and after she left him. He begged all his friends to comfort her. But instead of comforting her, notwithstanding her condition (for she is four months gone with child), his father and mother have behaved monstrously to her. Her settlement is conveyed away and all the goods in the house assize a few days after their son's funeral. (I forgot to tell you he was an only child.) Could you have imagined that there could be such unnatural parents in a Christian country? Poor Mrs. Muscott's life was greatly feared, but it is hoped that she will recover. Her sister and brother-in-law are in the town and I hope they will see justice done to the poor creature. She is not above two-and-twenty.

I can now only add our loves, etc; the post is going out. I am,
Yours, dear sister Wesley,

M. Baldwyn

I never hear from London.⁴
Direct the next to Mrs. Baldwyn, in the Broad Street.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 7/47.

¹Neither of these letters from CW and SGW to Mary (Gwynne) Baldwin are known to survive.

²Recall that CW and SGW's first son John had died of small-pox; and CW resisted having SGW or his children inoculated.

³William Muscott married Catherine Greenly (1736–86) in Ludlow on Sept. 20, 1757. Baldwyn spells "Muskot."

⁴I.e., her sister Elizabeth (Gwynne) Waller.

Ann (Skrine) Barlow to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

[London]
March 13, 1758

My Dear Mrs. Wesley,

I could not help giving you the pleasure of knowing that I have had a visit from dear Lady Robert Manners. She sat with us near two hours Saturday morning. She is as little spoiled by the world as any young creature in her situation could be; and our dear Lord has not left her but I trust will in his own good time show forth himself in her. You cannot think how I love her and wish for her happiness. She has desired to visit Lady Huntingdon, and I hope to wait upon her tomorrow morning to settle the time.

She spoke with much regard to you and Mr. [Charles] Wesley, said you must not be angry with her if she was not so punctual in writing as she ought to be, and wish you would follow her with your letters. O my dear Mrs. Wesley, if you did but know what a vicious and dissipated world these poor young creatures are in, you would be thankful that they were in any degree saved from the pollutions of it, or had any the least feelings left them.

As to my dear child, she and Mr. Hamilton are at present so corrupted by the world that I see very little of them.¹ This is good for me. It is such a fate as I wanted, for I live too much in them. I reckon it will not be long before we see Mr. Wesley in town.² I congratulate him upon his brother's being let into two churches. I wish it may be an opening to many more. My affectionate services attend him, and I beg a continuance of your prayers at all times. But particularly when those are gathered together in his name, lay us often upon the arms of your faith before him.

I rejoice with you over your dear little boy. That he may ever be a comfort and blessing to you is the hearty prayers of

Your ever affectionate and obliged friend and humble servant,

A. Barlow

If my dear child [Catherine] knew I was writing to you, I know she would desire your affectionate remembrance.

Address: "To / Mrs. Westley."

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/400a.

¹William and Catherine (Barlow) Hamilton.

²Due to an injury, CW did not arrive in London until late April 1758.

From John Nelson

Birstall
March 17, 1758

Dear Sir,

This is with my best love to you and your dear companion, and earnest prayer for you and your son [CW Jr.]. May God make him his son and raise him up to stand in the gap when you are called to take up your place above. I am glad to hear from you, but I have been abroad two months.¹ I have been quite through Manchester round, and several received the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins while I was in the round, and some just before I went. And I have received a letter from Congleton that tells me that two found peace soon after I left the town. I believe the work goes on about Birstall by what I hear, but I have not been in the round yet. I met your brother at Epworth, and the people flocked to hear from every quarter.² There hath been a great famine of the word in these parts.

We have had four that died in the Lord since I wrote to you before. One of them lies dead now, and I am to preach over her corpse tomorrow. It is about fifteen years since she first knew the Lord, and I have had much acquaintance with her ever since. In the former part of her illness she “rode in the chariot of love.”³ But toward the middle the enemy was let loose on her, and she was tempted to think she should faint at last. But I visited her on Monday last week, and as I prayed with her the cloud broke, and she said she never had so much of God’s love in her life before, and she continued to praise him for ten days together. Then she said to her husband and daughter (who both know the Lord), “I am going to my dear Jesus. O do not shed one tear for me, for why should you weep when I am going to eternal happiness?” Then she gave a smile and departed.

There is one that hath been acquainted with the Lord twelve years that lies a-dying of a mortification in her foot. But God is with her in exquisite pain, and I trust she will come out of the furnace as gold refined in the fire. My wife⁴ joins in love to you and all friends there, and we desire an interest in your prayers. Our daughter is very poorly,⁵ I think much as Miss Burnel was. I have never been at Leeds since I came home, but I hear brother [William] Shent is hard used after all he has done and suffered for the gospel.

I pray you tell my friends in Stokes Croft,⁶ and the Square,⁷ that their old friend that told them of Mr. oyaty⁸ is gone to God as a shock of corn fully ripe. I was with him a few days before he died, and he said, “John, God is good to me, and he will take me to himself. And I would have thee go on, and do all the good thou can, for time is short here.” This is with my earnest prayer for you, and them, and all the church of God in that place. From

Yours to serve as a son in the gospel,

John Nelson

[on next page of leaf]

¹No recent letter of CW to Nelson is known to survive.

²JW preached in Epworth on Mar. 12, 1758; see JW, *Journal, Works*, 21:138.

³Cf. CW, “Hymns for Christian Friends, #41,” st. 1, *HSP* (1749), 2:313.

⁴Martha (Webster) Nelson.

⁵Dorothy Nelson, daughter of John, was baptized in Birstall in Dec. 1741.

⁶Bristol neighbourhood of CW’s family, and Elizabeth (Stafford) Vigor and her sisters.

⁷Likely Devonshire Square in London, where Samuel Lloyd resided.

⁸The spelling and lack of capitalization is clear; the person intended is not. “Yates” has been suggested, but the grounds for this suggestion are unclear.

This part I would have you keep to yourself, for if I be hurt I would not have anyone to be hurt with me. I think you will sympathize with me and pray for me, for I am cut off from ever coming to Bristol or London again without God work[ing] a miracle. For that [money] I had towards supporting my family from London is taken off, and the stewards have sent me a letter that I must expect no more help from them. And we have but ten shillings per week in all, and that is to keep a servant out of, and wages to pay to her, which takes four shillings at least out of it. And we have coals and candles for the house and soap to find, which will take two more. And also the good[s] of the house to find and keep in repairs, and my meat when in the round; and in my absence another preacher for it. So that my family hath not one shilling a week to find them both meat and clothes. So that I am going to hew stone again. And I think to quit the house,⁹ for after near 18 years of labour I find it will be meat and clothes.

O sir, pray for me that I faint not! At least this keeps my head above water, to see that God continues to convert sinners by my word, and that so many finish their course with joy. So that I think he will either provide or take us to himself. I desire that noone may know of this but yourself, till I see how matters will turn.

Address: “To the Rev Mr / Charles Wesley at / the New Roome in the / horsfaire / Bristoll.”

Postmarks: “Ferrybridge” and “20/MR.”

Endorsement: by CW, “March 17. 1758 / J. Nelson / Births & Deaths.”

Source: holograph; MARC, PLP 78/53/3.¹⁰

⁹A preaching house Nelson helped build in Birstall in 1750.

¹⁰A transcription showing Nelson’s own spelling can be found in *WHS* 4 (1903): 104–06. See also the polished transcription in Laycock, *Haworth*, 183–85.

Mary (Degge) Manners to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

[Grosvenor Square, London]
March 20, 1758

I have received my dear friend's last letter and am extremely sorry to hear of Mr. Wesley's accident, though I rejoice it was no worse.¹ I hope he is recovered from his bruises. I do not wish him to come immediately, because I imagine he wont stay long. And I am going into the country for a fortnight. I set out tomorrow.

I saw Lady Huntingdon twice. She is in daily expectation of Lady Selina's arrival. Mrs. [Ann] Barlow I have seen often and like her very much, think her on of the most agreeable and amiable persons I have ever met with. Her mother seems a worthy woman.²

I am much obliged to you for your kind enquiries after my family. The little ones continue well.³ As for my aunt, I think I never saw her better in my life.⁴ She is by herself in a small house in Park Street. Mr. [Samuel] Gumley has been in town only two days (when she was very ill).

I am really concerned Miss [Rebecca] Gwynne should have been in town two months and not have let me known of it. I again repeat that she is too suspicious of me, especially as I know but of one letter I received from her on my marriage and which some time after I answered.

I heartily wish the continuance of your little one's and your health, and still desire a share in your prayers. Remember me to your partner. I desire still you will look on me to have a sincere and affectionate heart to my friends, and as I have always really esteemed you both in that number, it hurts me not [to] find the same on your side I have been used to. I have no more to say but desire we may be remembered in your prayers as

Your sincere friend,

M. Manners

Endorsement: (by SGW?), "L. R. / How fleeting / Human Friendship."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/428/1/96.

¹The letter of SGW to Manners, noting that CW had fallen and was laid up for a time, is not known to survive.

²Elizabeth (Weston / Christmas) Skrine.

³Mary Manners (b. 1756) and Robert Manners (b. 1758).

⁴Martha (Meighen / Colvill) Gumley.

From Thomas Walsh

Cork
April 17, 1758

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

God has all power; therefore we arrived safe here on the Saturday next after I left Bristol. We were tossed with tempest. I must say “a day and a night in the deep”,¹ for the sea ran over the vessel. But as you prayed, Jesus was in the ship. He was my support and did strengthen and comfort my heart. O that I could praise and love him, and live more to the glory of his name. Trials make Christ precious to us.

Dear sir, how shall I sufficiently thank you for all your kindness? I know it is God that gave us union and love. To the prayer of faith nothing is impossible. I trust love will abound.

Mr. [Christopher] Hopper is here and is well, and God has prospered him. Mr. [John] Wesley is still in Dublin, but intends to leave it next week.

It would give me a singular pleasure to hear from you and to hear dear Mrs. Wesley and the child [CW Jr.] are well. When you write to her I request you would give my best respects, and to any of those good friends I saw at your house, especially Mrs. [Anne] Grinfield. I found such union with Bristol people as I never found before; and as to London saints, they are written in my mind. Yet it is very uncertain whether I shall see them till the resurrection of the just. If you please to write me, direct, for me, at Mr. Thomas Jones, Merchant, in Cork.

Dear sir, requesting your prayers and advice, I remain

Your truly affectionate and dutiful son,

T. Walsh

Address: “To / The Revd. Mr. Charles Wesley / at the Foundery in / London.”

Postmark: “1/MA.”

Endorsement: by CW, “April 17, 1758 / T. Walsh’s voyage / and love.”

Source: holograph; MARC, DDP 2/62.

¹Cf. 2 Cor. 11:25.

From Bridget Carteret¹

Oxford
April 18 [1758]

My Dear Friend,

I find myself *very unworthy* of those lines you so kindly address to me in particular.² But I hope they produced the effect you proposed of leading me to an examination of my own heart, and by that means humbling me to the dust. For I found nothing there to be in the least satisfied with but my gratitude to you, which indeed my heart is full of.

I hope and trust that our adorable Redeemer will give his blessing to your prayers for us, that we may daily grow in grace and in the knowledge of our dear Lord Jesus [and] his dying love; that our hearts may be filled with love and thankfulness for his amazing, long-suffering mercy, and with hope and trust; that he will perfect the work he has begun in us, that we may with our hearts believe unto righteousness, and with our mouths make confession unto salvation, and go on from strength to strength till we are perfected in glory.

I am charged with the warmest expressions of love to you from all this family, and we all desire to be most kindly remembered to dear Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley. You and your happy colliers are often the subject of our conversation. The head learning here is very different from theirs. We heard last week what is called a fine sermon at Christ Church. I know not who was the preacher, but I believe one of the most considerable and admired here. O what glorious things are revealed to babes, while they are hid from the wise and learned in their own conceit.

Dear Sir Charles is so much better that I hope, but the blessing of God, he will in a short time perfectly recover his health.³ Our stay here is still uncertain, but whenever we remove I will acquaint you of it. And I hope we shall be within reach of you, which will rejoice us all unspeakably. My best wishes attend you and yours, my dear friend. I am

You very faithful, humble servant,

B. Carteret

Address: "To / The Reverend Mr Westley / at Bristol."

Endorsement: by CW, "Mrs. Carteret childlike / April 18, 1758."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/428/2/88.

¹Bridget Carteret (1700–92), the unmarried daughter of Admiral Edward Carteret (1671–1739) and his wife Bridget (Exton) Carteret (1667–1735).

²CW's letter to Anne (Carteret) Cavendish, which contained these lines, is not known to survive.

³This would be Lady Gertrude (Stanhope) Hotham's son, Sir Charles Hotham (1735–1767), 6th Baronet of Scarborough. See A.M.W. Stirling, *The Hothams* (London: H. Jenkins, 1918), 1:273.

From Anne (Carteret) Cavendish¹

[Oxford]
April 18 [1758]

Your prayers and discourses, my good friend, have been greatly blessed to my soul.² Oh continue the for me, for I stand in need of help.

The Lord has showed me that he is gracious, full of compassion and tender mercy. O praise the Lord with me, and let us magnify his name together. He is my strength and my salvation, who then shall I fear?

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.

The following text was brought to my sight upon first opening the Scriptures this morning. “Behold, I make all things new. ... And he said unto me, ‘It is done, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.’”³ O Lord, my God, evermore give me of this water. My soul thirsteth after thee. Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. O Lord, increase my faith.

I beg my most kind love to Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley, and believe me most gratefully

Yours,

A. Cavendish

I will write to you as soon as I get home. I write this in a hurry, and fear you will hardly be able to read it.

Endorsement: by CW, “April 18 1758 / Loving Mrs. Cavendish’s First.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/502/2/5.

¹Anne (Carteret) Cavendish (1703–92), the sister of Bridget Carteret and widow of Admiral Phillip Cavendish (d. 1743).

²CW’s letter to Anne (Carteret) Cavendish is not known to survive.

³Rev. 21:5–6.

Mary (Degge) Manners to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

[Grosvenor Square, London]
April 20, 1758

Dear Mrs. Wesley,

I was greatly disappointed last Sunday, as I had heard one of my Bristol friends was to have been then in town, I sent to West Street appointing a time to see you but they there sent me word you was not expected till Whitsuntide. Two worthy persons are desirous to converse [with] you, and are to meet you some day. I have been happy in their acquaintance and intimacy. You perhaps have heard of Lord and Lady Dartmouth.¹ They are both earnest in the good way and have strongly withstood the reproach of the world.

Pray for me and remember it is your duty particularly to remind and instruct me. I shall be glad to see you and desire you will send me word when you set out.

I perceive I have been writing to your partner. However, it is the same thing. Do not put yourself to any inconveniency to write, as he may be your secretary. I shall be glad to hear how your little one [CW Jr.] does. They are strange attachments to this life, sure a family is. I have now concerns here and objects that engage my love. I earnestly beg of God to turn it right and to give me that love superior to all here on earth. Join in your private prayers to beg a blessing for me. I have a belief that “the fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”² I beg yours for myself and those with whom I am most concerned with. My heart is much pressed for them. Pray the great Redeemer to make us both one in him. I am tottering singly. My best wishes attend you both. As you have been instruments for my good, I beg you will remain striving for me, who am

Your sincere friend,

M. Manners

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/402.

¹William Legge, 2nd Earl of Dartmouth (1731–1801); and his wife Frances Catherine (Nicoll) Legge (d. 1805).

²James 5:16.

From Anne Grinfield

[Bristol]
Saturday, April 30, 1758

My dear Mr. Wesley's writing today¹ gives me an opportunity I cannot miss of thanking dear Mr. Wesley for the many privileges permitted me to partake of, which the Lord so blessed that I trust through your prayers will have the effect I'm assured you wished—of humbling me into a little child, teachable and obedient to the gracious call for a total surrender of myself into the Redeemer's arms of love and mercy.

And it appears to me by our Lord's late kind dispensation that his will is I should be more immediately under your direction, who are much better acquainted with the rebellion of my heart and the particular constitutional propensities of it than from an ignorant partiality I am able to inform you. If this be so, the Lord will give you light into my state. And I pray from the ground of my heart that he will also give you freedom and power to use great plainness of speech towards me. And that my spirit may be so subjected to his Spirit within you as to receive all his teachings in meekness and true poverty, that I may profit from every dispensation of his love, however sharp. Therefore be you faithful and pray that the constraining love of a crucified Saviour may make me obedient, simple, humble, and teachable.

You was present with your children on Wednesday who received the promise made to two or three meet in his name.² Though I was much fatigued in body by setting in the Quaker meeting after my early rising, from a little after 9:00 till 1:00, I did not find any temptation to prefer their mood to our own, and indeed saw many errors in a stronger light that I had ever done. Yet [I] could not help adoring that love which breaks through all mistakes in judgment to bless his poor creatures who seek in sincerity of heart.

As I trust the Lord has laid me on your heart to build up into a holy temple for himself to live and walk in, I need not desire to be remembered in all your prayers. May every blessing that attends a faithful minister of the Lord Jesus be poured out upon you. And in his time (not mine) may you be restored to health of body and your soul filled with the fullness of God.

My dear Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley and I have seen each other most days since your left us. I am charged with Mrs. Whittington's duty and love,³ as also her sister's. I have a faint hope you may be a means to turn my dear Miss B[osanquet?]'s course this way, but let me leave that and all things else to him who knows best and overrules all to his own glory and our happiness. As often as you have liberty, I shall be thankful to hear from you, and believe me

Your truly obliged and affectionate, humble servant,

A. (G.)

I was very much rejoiced to hear you was come safe to Hungerford. But did you not make too much haste to go so far in one day? Your partner thinks you did!

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr C. Wesley."

Endorsement: by CW, "April 30. 1758 / M[rs] Grinfield putting her / self under my Care."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/67.⁴

¹Grinfield likely saw CW's letter to SGW of Apr. 28–29, 1758.

²See Matt. 18–20.

³Likely Mary (Tandy) Wigginton, the second wife of Abraham Wigginton (they married in 1748).

⁴For a digital copy and "as-is" transcription, see:

<https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/services/digitisation-services/projects/rapture-and-reason/>

From Lady Gertrude (Stanhope) Hotham

Oxford
May 3 [1758]

My Dear Friend,

How can we all enough thank you for your work and labour of love in the Lord for our immortal souls? May you be rewarded sevenfold for having been the faithful and good steward in giving everyone of the Lord's servants their meat in due season. Happy season I trust it has proved to us all, and more especially to me, a poor vile sinner, unworthy of the least of God's mercies, or even the breath which I now draw—though it be to praise him for his unspeakable gifts. O my dear friend, pray that they may not all be lost, but that the barren fig tree which has hitherto cumbered the ground and fit only to be cast into the fire to be burned, may now [that] summer is nigh, cast forth leaves—if not fit for the Master's use, yet that it may bring forth some fruit meet for repentance, for having been so long barren and unfruitful of every good word and work, excepting the first work necessary to salvation, which is to believe.

And yet I may still say "Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief."¹ And yet, blessed be God, I can truly say if my heart does not deceive me, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And what is there on earth that I desire in comparison of thee?"² And still, how little do I love thee? Mary had much forgiven, and therefore she loved much. And how much more have I had forgiven, and yet how little do I love. I can only pray that my dear Redeemer, my All, would melt my stony heart into a heart of flesh, and write his divine law of love within. This is my daily prayer and the true state of my heart, which though deceitful above the weights and desperately wicked, yet if my Lord says but the word I know and do believe it shall be clean. And he will renew a right spirit within me and enable me to cry "Abba, Father."

If that peace which passeth all understanding, and which I would not part with for all things under the sun, is the forerunner of it, I trust I am now in the way to it by humbly waiting at my Saviour's feet till his still voice bids me arise and go in peace, for where he is, thither I may come. Indeed, blessed by God, I have had no discouragement of late, but every sentence to my heart has brought peace and joy in believing. Yet not as though I had already attained, but to enable me to press forward to the high prize and mark of my calling, high calling indeed, were it only to be admitted as a babe in Christ, for of myself I am nothing, have nothing, and can do nothing; only say "My God be merciful to me a sinner,"³ and as such hope you'll accept my grateful thanks for your timely and spiritual help and continue your prayers for

Your ever obliged friend,

G. Hotham

All your spiritual friends here join in grateful thanks for your letters and propose answering them when they get home.

Address: "To / The Reverend Mr Charles / Westly at the Foundery / Moorfields / London."

Postmark: "4/MA."

Endorsement: "May 3 1758 / Lady Gertrude / acknowledging."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/502/2/18.

¹Mark 9:24.

²Ps. 73:25 (BCP).

³Cf. Luke 18:13.

From Anne Grinfield

Kingsdown [Bristol]¹
Saturday [May 6, 1758]

I thank you most heartily my dear sir for your very kind letter which, though short, was full of great truths and brought its own evidence with it, as truth always does.² Help me by your good prayers to that willingness to suffer the will of our great Master to take place. For till that is wrought in us, the total change of heart (which can only produce that simplicity you speak of) cannot be received by us. And till that is, everything we do, speak, or say will and must have a tincture of pride, guile, selfishness, and every evil that the old nature is capable of, though perhaps more devilish by our own refinements.

I trust I shall be brought to your and our other dear friends' remembrance not only when you meet, but also in your secret breathing before the Throne of grace. I must desire you will say everything proper to Lady Huntingdon for thinking of me.

You have set me a most difficult task, and I fear more than I can succeed in without your help. That is, to get my dear Mrs. Wesley up this hill. Her fear of cold wind, etc., etc. for her son multiplies everytime I speak of it. I have a promise today for to eat her mutton here. But I see a cloud that I think will prevent her bringing my little friend with her!

Whenever you have time, give me a line. For it does more than oblige me, and I shall hope for the gospel news you promised me. Dear Mrs. Whittington walked up on purpose to inquire after you.³ Why do not you mention your health? I am very glad you have faith for Lady Dartmouth, both for her own as well as her Lord [Dartmouth]'s sake, as an unbelieving wife must be a heavy cross. I do not see good Mr. Hamilton farther off than when at Clifton.⁴ I hope you have cause to rejoice in Lady Robert [Manners].

You cannot be forgot here. Let me once more beg your prayer for the new heart, or rather in order to the receiving of it, that I may submit to the fiery baptism. For till that be accomplished, we must be straitened. This is what the heart shrinks from. Lord Jesus grant mine may no longer resent thee. After the many gracious calls, let me be also chosen to die and live with thee.

May the fullness of the gospel bless your labours.

Your truly obliged and affectionate sister I am afraid to call myself

Endorsement: by CW, "May 6. 1758 / M[rs] Grinfield, thankful / for advice."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/66.⁵

¹A park near the Wesley home in Charles Street.

²CW's letter is not known to survive.

³Again, likely Mary (Tandy) Wigginton, the second wife of Abraham Wigginton.

⁴Apparently William, the husband of Catherine (Barlow) Hamilton.

⁵For a digital copy and "as-is" transcription, see:

<https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/services/digitisation-services/projects/rapture-and-reason/>

From Anne Grinfield

[Bristol]
Tuesday Evening [May 9, 1758]

I thank you most heartily, my dear sir, for your truly kind and fatherly instructions.¹ I see my great deficiency in all, and the absolute necessity of all. Therefore trust they will lie with their due weight upon my heart, that on every occurrence they may be brought to my remembrance. How indeed would our Lord bless even the smallest incident that crosses our will, if we laid hold of it as a precious relic of that cross whereon all our sins and backslidings are hung and fastened to. O my dear Lord, how clear hast thou showed me this. And yet how does that mountain of unbelief raise up the spirit of rebellion within me against thy coming to sit in the spirit of judgment and of burning, to purge and sanctify this temple.

Lord Jesus bow me, humble me, by thy love. For nothing less powerful than thy almighty love can break through these bulwarks of pride, self, and unbelief. Grant, gracious Redeemer, I may be indeed, heart, will, and affections, what thy minister wishes for thy sake, and what thou wouldst have me to be. Hear thou his prayers for me, and seal his instructions upon my heart. Continue them to me and make them weighty and powerful. And reward him for all his labours of love to the souls committed to his care. And evermore feed him with the Bread of life, to the strengthening of both soul and body. Bless also the loaves and fishes for the multitude to whom thou sendest him, oh my most gracious Lord.

I am much rejoiced at the account you sent me of our dear friend, and that dear Mrs. [Ann] Barlow's distress in regard to Mr. [William] Hamilton is removed. I am afraid your warrant will have little force till the wind is turned into a warmer corner. But I will watch all opportunities to execute the authority lodged with me. I delivered part of what you said of Sarah P. to her. The other I keep back for my private use, which may not be altogether needless. I am obliged to you for it.

Dear Mrs. Wesley and your son were in good health about an hour since.

Adieu; most sincerely and truly obliged.

I hope you will omit no opportunity of letting me profit from you. I have not heard from Oxford.² I rather expect my information from you.

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr C. Wesley."

Endorsement: by CW, "May 9. 1758 / M[rs] Grinfield grow / ing, praying."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/65.³

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²I.e., from Lady Gertrude Hotham, et al.

³For a digital copy and "as-is" transcription, see:
<https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/services/digitisation-services/projects/rapture-and-reason/>

Anne Davis to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

London
May 26 [1758]

I should have returned my dearest Mrs. Wesley thanks for her last favour before now, had I not been surprised by an unexpected affair of my breast, which I find you have heard of.¹ I am obliged to my dear friend for her kind concern for me. What the event will be, God only knows.² It at times affects my mind and makes me very low.

It is not yet three months since I perceived a small lump not bigger than the end of my finger, and it is now as big as a large egg and very painful at times. I was ordered to drink my old drink sarsparilla for some time. I design to have more advice soon. Then I shall be a better judge what I am to trust to. I hope I shall be directed and enabled to cast all my care on him who careth for me and has hitherto supported me through all my troubles. And will, I cannot doubt, support me in this also.

I had concluded, before I knew of my breast, to have returned to Bristol at mid-summer. But this I believe will entirely put a stop to the thoughts of it, for if I must be under the care of surgeons, it will be more expensive and ill convenient at Bristol than here.

I rejoice to hear you continue so well with your dear little charge, who also is so hearty.³ May the Lord preserve him to you if it be his will.

Dear Mr. [Charles] Wesley is very kind and calls on me often. But I shall be soon deprived of that pleasure, for I expect he will shortly return to you.⁴ How do I long to see you. But I must give up that also, with every other thing that is agreeable to me in life. But I trust I shall be enabled to say from a feeling sense, "In all things thy will be done, blessed be the Lord." I often find his spirit with me. And how do I long for it to be in me, springing up as a well of water unto everlasting life. This new visitation I am often enable to receive with joy, rather than grief, hoping the Lord is in mercy hastening the time of my unhappy life. However I receive it as another call: "Be ye also ready."⁵

I am glad Mrs. [Susanna] Stonehouse is more easy in her mind. May her soul be full of Christ, then will life or death be gain. Pray give my love and respects to her and Mrs. [Elizabeth] Vigor.

I must conclude, for stooping hurts me. I hope my dear friend will be mindful of me before the throne [of God], and by letter when you can. I will always write to you as long as I am able. Don't forget me if we meet no more, til we meet on that happy shore where pain and sorrow and parting shall be no more. O that you and I may be found ready when the final summons comes is the earnest desire of,

My dear friend's ever affectionate,

A. Davis

Last Monday I had the pleasure of paying your sisters a visit.⁶ I was desirous of going to see them once more, as I may be too bad soon to bear the jumble of a coach.

Address: "To / Mrs Wesley."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/44.

¹SGW's letter to Davis is not known to survive; CW had informed SGW of Davis's cancer by at least late April; see CW to SGW, Apr. 28, 1758.

²Davis had her breast removed on June 14 and recovered. See CW to SGW, June 15, 1758; and Elizabeth Duchesne to CW, July 1, 1758.

³CW Jr., born Dec. 11, 1757

⁴CW stayed in London through June, to support Davis.

⁵Matt. 24:44.

⁶Elizabeth (Gwynne) Waller and Rebecca Gwynne.

From [Elizabeth Duchesne]¹

July 1, 1758

An account of Mrs. Davis[’s] behaviour during the operation of her breast being cut off.²

While the surgeon went to put his dress on, I was left alone with her. She said, “I wish he would come and do it now for I am quite ready, and am sure the Lord will be with me.” She was perfectly resigned and very composed, and asked if Mr. Davis was come. When I answered “no,” she seemed equally satisfied. I said, I’m sure God will be present. She said, “I know he will.” As I repeated these words, “Ye souls of the righteous appear, if any are waiting around,” her soul seemed filled with prayer. When the surgeon came in to make the operation,³ she gave me one hand and asked me if the other must not be held. But she stirred neither, but only to lift them up in prayer to God. She received the first cut without a groan. When her pain increased she groaned and prayed to God. She once said, “Its very sharp pains,” but did not complain. Three or four times she said aloud, “Lord Jesus, be thou my help. When the inside of her breast was taken out she asked if they had done cutting. I answered, “yes.” And some thread being called for, she immediately said, “There is some in my work basket on the table.” While they sewed up the blood vessel she said, “This pain is very great.” She called on the Lord to strengthen her and said, “I’m faint.” And while she was going to receive some drops from the hands of a friend, I fainted away. The cause of my fainting is quite hid from me at present, for during the whole time I found my soul entirely stayed on the Lord. I was assured if she died death would not separate us from Christ, and being confident that every pain she endured would be sanctified to the good of her soul, I felt no degree of fear. I was entirely happy and the language of my soul was, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”⁴ When I recovered my fainting, I thought I was with my redeemer and his love constrained me to praise him aloud.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/48.⁵

¹Elizabeth Duchesne (1724–76), daughter of Claudius and Elizabeth (Bosse) Duchesne, lived in St. Giles, Middlesex and became a long-time friend and coadjutor for both JW and CW. CW and his daughter Sarah were included in her will. CW named her as the witness of this operation in CW to SGW, June 15, 1758.

²See Anne Davis’s description of her breast cancer in her letter to SGW, May 26, 1758.

³The surgeon was apparently William Perronet; see CW to SGW, June 15, 1758.

⁴Luke 2:29.

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

From John Nelson

[Birstall?]
July 7, 1758

Dear Sir,

This is with duty to you and earnest prayer for you and yours, and all the church of God. I have been in the Chester round since I wrote to you before, and God is working mightily in many parts of the round. There is a fresh revival in Stockport and is likely to be a great work there; and Mr. [John] Bennet had quite given it up before we went this time. And there is a gathering society at Macclesfield. And several have been converted at Congleton since I was there the time before, and I left others crying “Oh Lord save or we perish.”¹ At Biddulf there was several seemed to be brought to the birth, and the master of the house, that is between 60 and 70 years old, was brought forth and felt his sins forgiven in the morning. Before I left the house we returned thanks on his behalf and I left several crying out as a woman in her throws. I did not find so much life at Ashbourne in the Peak. But I went to a place two miles off on Sunday noon and God was there of a truth.

The day after I went to see Mr. Charles Graves, and he insisted of me to preach in his town,² and attended himself, and said to me after “John, you have taken your life in your hand and gone through all dangers, therefore your soul is kept alive. But I fainted, therefore I have lost my life and power. Though I can say I have some hope since you called on me before, and more power to reprove then I had. And I meet with a few in a house every week. And I encourage them to go to hear your preachers, and I shall be glad that they would call and preach here sometimes.”

And I found a revival all through the Peaks. And at Booth Bank many that had left us came to hear me, and some of them told me after that their souls had been starved ever since they left us. They said that Mr. [John] Bennet had filled their heads with notions, but their hearts was emptied of love to God and man. The work goes on mightily at Carden Marsh. Several have received pardon since I was there before, and others brought to see want of an interest in the blood of Jesus. And I think I liked better at Chester then ever I did before, and I could have been glad to have spent more time there if I had had it to spare. Several is lately stirred up at Ducenheath,³ and I hope Alpraham⁴ is in a renewing way. There is a fresh gathering at Little Acton.⁵ But Warrington is in a dead way.

When I got to Liverpool I found great matter of praise. I believe that week your brother was there God made him an instrument to awaken 60 souls, and to convert several, and to recover many that James Scholefield had carried away.⁶ And God was pleased to give me some fruit there also. When I got home I found more was gone to glory near Birstall, so that 209 is got safe out of Birstall round. And sister Burket, one of the first fruits of your labour in Yorkshire, seems to be ripe for the sickle. The work goes on at Morley as it did. There is not one week scarce since the year came in but someone or more hath [been] born again in that place, and many other places God is increasing his children. Brother Jaco was

¹Cf. Matt. 8:25.

²Rev. Charles Graves was not perpetual curate of the chapel in Tissington, Derbyshire.

³Almost certainly Duckington, where a farmer called James Wooldridge encouraged a society to grow.

⁴Nelson spells “Alpream.”

⁵There was a society at Acton from at least 1752. It changed its name to Little Acton by 1757.

⁶JW had been in Liverpool Mar. 18–27, 1758. James Scholefield (b. 1702), of Todmorden, entered itinerant ministry in 1752, but was last listed in the Minutes in 1755 because he took over half of the society in Liverpool with him into an independent church; cf. JW, *Journal*, Apr. 21, 1757, *Works*, 21:93–94.

much blessed to the people while he stayed here,⁷ and brother Oliver is blessed to them now and God gives him fruit amongst them.⁸

The last week I spent in Lincolnshire. O sir, it would rejoice your heart to see how the people flock to hear at Grimsby and Great Coates, and several places there about, and what attention they give to the word. And I hear that several hath stepped into the pool lately. And I never saw the people more willing to hear then they are in the Isle in my life.⁹

When I got back to Wakefield I found that two had found pardon that night. But my wife had been to see sister Burket and had the misfortune to fall, and hath broke[n] her arm and is gone bruised in other parts of her body. Though I trust she is in a way of mending again, but its but slowly. Yet her soul is alive, thanks be to God for that. She says to me, “Fear not, for God will either provide for us or finish his work in us and take us to himself.” She saith that nothing can hurt us but sin, let us pray that God may keep us from sin, and let him do what seemeth good to us or with us. She desires to join in love to you and your spouse and to all friends, and desires an interest in your prayers and in the all the faithful people’s prayers where you are.

And I hope you will remember me at the throne of grace, for I never had more need since I knew God, for I am ready to turn to my hewing of stone, for preaching will not be meat and clothes after all. I had thought of coming to the Conference, but this thing happening and Samuel Mitchell proving such a traitor that I have ten pounds to pay for him, so that I see no way but to sell my horse and fall to work. I pray God that I may do his will whatever I or mine suffer in this present world. My kind love to all friends in London and Bristol, and if I see them no more in the flesh I hope to meet them and you at the right hand of God.

This from him that hath served as a son to you and your brother in the gospel and should be glad if I could to the end,

John Nelson

Dear sir, pray for me as I do for you.

Address: “To the Rd Mr / Charles Wesley at / the foundery Horsefair / ~~London~~ Bristol.”

Postmarks: “Halifax” and “8/IY.”

Endorsement: by CW, “July 7. 1758 / J Nelson on his / work prospering.”

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/48.

⁷Peter Jaco (1729–81) was given his first assignment as a traveling preacher in 1754 and continued to travel until 1779. See Vickers, *Dictionary*, 180; and CW’s epitaph in MS Funeral Hymns (1756–87), 113 [also in *AM* 4 (1781): 621].

⁸Likely John Oliver (b. 1732), who was formally accepted on trial as a traveling preacher in 1759. See his autobiographical reflections in *AM* 2 (1779): 417–32.

⁹The Isle of Axholme; Nelson spelled “Eyle.”

From Anne (Carteret) Cavendish

Weybridge
July 15, 1758

I can't let a packet go from this place without sending a few lines to you, my most kind and worthy friend. Though I feel myself very unfit to write upon that subject which I know can only be pleasing to you, and thanks be to the Almighty I can with perfect truth declare it is the only delightful one to me—notwithstanding the Lord is pleased to show me daily more and more the wickedness of my heart, and how greatly I have sinned against him, which makes me ready to cry out with the great apostle “O wretched creature that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?”¹ Yet oh, my friend, what unspeakable comfort arises in my soul when I can tell you “my spirit rejoices in God my saviour.”² It is to his atoning blood that I fly to be healed, and cleansed from all my iniquities. Oh unbounded love to a poor undone lost sinner! For he has showed me that I cannot help myself, and that I have nothing belonging to me but sin and misery. And yet the Saviour of the world bids me come to him, and he will give me life. What shall I say? No words can express what I feel. My soul is humbled in the dust, and I have hardly power to look up to my dear redeemer and comforter, when I think of those great things he has done for my soul, who am so unworthy of his grace and mercy. Oh may I ever with the holy psalmist declare him my all and that there is none in heaven or upon earth that I desire in comparison to him.³

Now, my friend, I instruct you to offer me up in your prayers and praises at the throne of grace, that the Spirit of the Lord may be always with me and that I may daily increase in faith and the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that when he thinks fit to call me hence I may not be found wanting; but having my lamp burning, I may be ready to meet the bridegroom, the Prince of peace, the Lord and giver of life, and enter with him into his eternal glory; where with the heavenly host, grant O Lord, that I may chant forth thy praises forevermore, to whom with the Father and Holy Spirit be all honour, glory, and dominion, in heaven and on the earth, now and forever, Amen and Amen.

I hope this will find you and dear Mrs. Westley, with her little boy [CW Jr.], in perfect health. And may every blessing attend you and them in the earnest prayer of

Your most grateful and most faithful friend and servant,

A. Cavendish

God grant that every soul may be blessed, as much as I have been, under your ministry. I beg my most kind remembrance to Mrs. [Anne] Grinfield.

Address: “To / The Revd. Mr Charles / Westly.”

Endorsement: by CW, “M. Cavendish. Prospering / July 15. 1758.”

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 1/81.

¹Cf. Rom. 7:24.

²Luke 1:47.

³See Ps. 73:25.

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

[London]
August 7, 1758

My Dear Sir,

I am much obliged by your kind letter,¹ and rejoice at our dear friend Mr. [Martin] Madan's access to the hearts of the Hot Wells and that you are all strengthened by his grace and love which is better than life itself. You are to be envied, could that be, in our father's house. I seem to stand upon that desert that the promise is made to: "I will open a way in the wilderness and a high way in the desert."² And here I wait to see his hand doing both for me. You know I always love and thank you for your advice, and all reproofs are welcome.

And I do assure you nothing can wish to be *more vile in my own eyes than myself*. And if I do not feel misery enough, to be sure it is only what I can feel of myself, it is not the Lord's fault. None ever felt the curse stronger, and I cannot fail hoping in him who came to deliver from it. But his tender heart will reach even such a worm who sees to the ground of that sad heart He has to deal with, and one who deeply knows she wants more mercy than any creature on earth beside to be kept for a moment. Such is my known and *felt* state. And yet I would even be more vile when true grace shines in me. And till then bear the sight of what I do see in hope, in faith, and in love to him whose name is more precious than ointment poured forth, and who—should he never save me from a misery—I love. He is still good, still excellent in letting me to know him, as to love him.

My family is in Kent for a short time, and I think to see our friends at Weybridge³ for a few days. I am engaged at present in carrying two young officers to the sacraments with me next Sunday, and after that I shall set forward. How long they stay in Kent I am not sure. But they will be in good company. I beg my affectionate remembrance to dear Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley and dear Mrs. [Anne] Grinfield, and may every spiritual blessing attend them. You know I did not avoid being spoke with by you, but all things are best appointed. My situation makes ⟨...⁴⟩ things difficult for me, but time explains ⟨...⟩ the meanings of the heart and so th⟨...⟩ is found upright and faithful. We may rest safe; all things work together for good, and in this blind hope, under all the most unintelligible events, I rest secure and am determined to make no explanation for myself or others. It is losing time, and what is worse, losing love—which is to have no cessation. And this I think you will never find wanting from the heart of her who is ever with an unalterable friendship evermore

Yours,

S. H.

Address: "To / The Revd Mr Charles / Wesley at his house / in Charles Street / Bristol."

Endorsement: by CW, "L. H. / recd August 7. 1758."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/65.⁵

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²Is. 43:19.

³Anne (Carteret) Cavendish and Bridget Carteret.

⁴Small portion torn away by seal.

⁵Cf. the previous transcription in Tyson, *Correspondence*, 101–02.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

[Tern]
August 16, 1758

My Dear Sir,

I have waited for the arrival of Mrs. Hill's father before replying to you. He was to come to invite our family to go to spend a fortnight at his country house in Lincolnshire, and I was counting that it would then be decided if this journey would take place, and if I would be left at Tern.¹ But as Mr. Noel has not yet come, I will no longer put off writing to you.² And although nothing is more uncertain than plans that are made in our house, I will tell you however that the hope I had conceived of seeing you in Bristol has begun to revive in the last few days. And if that does not vanish in smoke, I shall be at Bristol at the beginning of next month. If you receive me (in case it is possible to go there), you will have under your care a poor spiritual invalid—who expects to find solace not through a change of air, but in that of company.

I enjoy, thanks be to God, perfect health in respect of my body; but my soul, overwhelmed by infirmities, drags but a languishing life. Who would say that in this solitude where I am I give myself occupations which deprive me of the advantages that I could draw from retreat. God seemed to have placed me here solely to search for him, and yet I employ with Martha nearly all the moments that I should spend with Mary.³ I understood some German formerly, and I have made some progress in Hebrew; but without exercise, I have almost entirely forgotten both tongues. Reflecting that it would seem to the glory of God if I occupied myself in relearning them again, I took them up again and I spent the greater part of my leisure hours in reading Luther's hymns and the Old Testament in the original. The intention was good, but the execution is worth nothing. The capacity of my mind is so restricted, and my heart is so used to seize each opportunity to distance myself from God, that I perceive a thousand times my soul damps down the flame of divine love in endeavouring to light the torch of science. Or to speak more clearly, in making the efforts of memory and attention I forget to do acts of faith and love. What must I do? Shall I let go the study of words to think only of their significance, or pray to the Lord to show me how to fix my mind without letting my heart wander? This last part is assuredly the best. O God give me grace to follow it faithfully!

Yet despite these unfaithfulnesses the Lord does not abandon me to myself and often gives me the grace to worship him in spirit and in truth. But these very favours I have found the fatal secret of my corrupting them, and by this means what the Almighty gives me as a cordial intoxicates me and leaves me prey to security. I had a few days ago a very striking example. Having heard that Mr. Walsh was very ill, I prostrated myself before God to pray to him to restore this faithful labourer to his people.⁴ I ignore the effect of my intercession for him, but I know that in the time I was praying for him the Lord blessed me in a very particular manner. Upon that, transported by joy and imagining myself that I would no longer doubt, I over-estimated my own strength and obliged the Lord to abandon me to myself the next day. There is a little example of my foolishness and of my pride.

¹Fletcher was currently tutor to the sons of Thomas Hill (formerly Harwood; 1693–1782) of Tern Hall, Shropshire.

²Sir William Noel was the father of Thomas Hill's second wife, Susanna Maria Noel (d. 1760).

³See Luke 10:38–42.

⁴Thomas Walsh (1730–59), in a time of questioning, found spiritual assurance among the Methodists. In 1750 he met JW, who convinced him to become a travelling preacher. Over the next nine years he served mainly in Ireland, but with stints in England and Wales.

Moreover, if I do not make any more progress I cannot say (as some of our brothers do with reason) that too much work in the Lord's vineyard prevents me from keeping and cultivating my own—I mean to say, my soul. For I do absolutely nothing as a minister of the Lord. On my arrival I found everyone prejudiced against me, and above all the clergy of the neighbourhood, who are agreed to consider me as a dangerous man and treat me so in consequence. There is not a single one whom I can consider as a servant of God. And my intimate friend, who doesn't pretend to be obliged in conscience to refuse my assistance, was a month ago obliged to leave his cure for several days, and not finding anyone besides me to serve it, he preferred to leave his flock without food for a whole Sunday, rather than allow me to give it to them. As for the minister of our parish, having received several letters by which one was asking him to allow me to preach, he came here to make bitter complaints to Mr. Hill, and seems even more irritated than the others. I let them be and keep myself closeted in my room, waiting for the great Door-keeper himself to open the gate to preaching.

As regards the folly of my dealings with the widow,⁵ I hope that it will bring forth the fruits of wisdom in the end. I am towards her like a man who is relieved of a burden as cumbersome as it is useless. I nevertheless still fear the consequences for her. One of her neighbours has written to me to beg me to calm if it is possible the storm of her passions. I have done it, or rather I have tried to do it by sending her an open letter by Mr. [James] Bernon, where I flatter myself that your prudence would not have found anything to blame.

Preach for yourself and for me, and may God always pour new blessings upon your labours. Your hymns very often comfort and encourage me, and I turn away sometimes from the thoughts they inspire me with gentle transports to pray for their author and all that is his. Yet I blush to neglect it, as I am doing so excellent a duty, and I feel myself so unworthy of your prayers that I hardly dare ask them of you. Let me have them nevertheless, as well as the continuation of your care over my soul and my ways for the love of Jesus. The less I merit them, the more you will merit in not refusing me them. If my journey to Bristol takes place, I will let you know of it within a fortnight. Until then I want to be more than I am all for God and all for you. Goodbye.

I have again passed through great temptations of doubts on my state and my sincerity, and I always find that the Lord allows me to fall into them for having given in through something in the pride of my heart, or to the desires of my senses. I would like to search for God with all my soul. I wished to possess him without interruption. But my longings degenerated most of the time into vain wishes. Like the sluggard, I would like to see my field bearing a rich harvest, but I do not take the trouble to rake up the thistles.

Let the love of Jesus fill the whole of your soul!

J. F.

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr. C. Wesley / in the Horse Fair / Bristol."

Source: holograph (in French); New Room (Bristol), NR2001.136.⁶

⁵Hannah (Davenport) Englefield, of London, cf. Fletcher to CW, Mar. 22, 1759.

⁶A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 49–52. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 52–54). See also the translation published in *City Road Magazine* 2 (1872): 514–16.

From the Rev. Francis Okeley¹

[September 1758]

1. You say, “I cannot preach because I have not faith.”²
2. “I am not convinced, and cannot be so, that what *now passes* for faith [is true Christian faith] ... But I am not convinced, and cannot be so, that this is experienced by most that profess it [in the society at Bristol].”
3. “But they seem at best to have the *letter of the new covenant* and the *spirit of the old*.”
4. “But still you have not found what you expected among the Methodists, nor can you see your way clear to join them.” I think this was the sum of what you wrote to my brother.
5. “However, *the Brethren* are good men, and I dare not oppose them.”

Endorsement: in JW’s hand, “Oct. 8, 1758 / to Mr O.”

Source: extracts in letter of JW; MARC, MA 1977/609.

¹On his return to Bedford, after receiving a BA in 1740, Okeley had taken the pastorate of a Baptist church, but soon turned to the Moravians. Here too he proved restless and conveyed some of his struggles to the Wesley brothers.

²As JW states later, he is quoting from and replying to a letter that Okeley wrote to CW, which does not appear to have survived.

From Sarah (Perrin) Jones

Bristol [sic; i.e. London¹]
September 13, 1758

Dear and Honoured Friend,

May our God give success to your labours wherever you are. Many in this place praise the Lord for your last visit.² It has left a lasting blessing and they much desire to see you again.

I can rejoice in the work of the Lord here. Yet I believe this people have still need of the refining fire. I long for the grace and liberty some enjoy, but I know not any who so abides in Christ as to walk even as he walked. Neither have I seen that person yet whom I think is filled with the fullness of God.³

I think there is a state promised to those who believe and obey our Lord Jesus and continue to do that which is pleasing in his sight beyond transgressing his holy law. But whether there is any unconditional promise that we never can nor ever shall grieve his Holy Spirit any more, I do not know. I think not.

Has Satan power while we are in the body in some measure to deceive the most perfect, by darkening the understanding or moving the imagination, and so cause it to mistake the mind of the Spirit, and consequently act contrary to it? Might any person made perfect in love form a wrong judgment of another, and acting or speaking of that person according to their judgment, break the law of charity and cause others so to do? If this can be, surely such a one will not dare to say they have attained to a state beyond Adam's innocency.

Who is to be found amongst those who think they are made perfect that offend not in word, or that judges not another? I believe a soul that is preserved unblameable in perfect love will not be found faulty in this. Therefore I do not see any person which ought to be set up for a standard of gospel liberty. And I think it would be far better to acknowledge we do not yet know any who have attained all those privileges promised in the gospel, than to bring down those great and precious promises to the appearances of our perfect sisters.⁴

O may the Lord keep his people little in their own eyes. May he humble us in the dust before him. I long to sink into nothing. I want truth in the inward parts, to dwell in Christ and Christ in me, that I may do his will on earth as it is done in heaven. But alas, how far am I from this! How little do I know and how little do I do worthy of the name of a disciple of Christ.

Since I have been in London,⁵ my hopes are increased for the prosperity of Sion. Here is great earnestness to hear the word, and I believe in many a readiness to do it. May the Lord increase them more and more.

I find a cry in my heart that those who are anointed to teach may every moment themselves be taught of God. May the Lord preserve the pillars from leaning on any broken reed. O may he be their wisdom and strength, till he becomes their full salvation.

I was at Councillor Gilberts last week.⁶ I think Mrs. Gilbert seems willing to forsake all.⁷ For all

¹While Sarah writes "Bristol" at the head of the letter, she is clearly writing from London, to CW in Bristol.

²CW spent late April and all of June 1758 ministering in London.

³The roots of the controversy over "perfection" that would soon roil the society in London are evident in Jones's concerns that follow.

⁴The group gatherings around Mary Bousanquet, Sarah Crosby, etc.

⁵Sarah's husband John Jones had recently been moved to London, to assist the society there.

⁶Nathaniel Gilbert (c. 1721–74) had succeeded his father as a representative of the Assembly in Antigua (and was hence a Councillor) prior to being persuaded by his younger brother Francis to come to England and experience Methodism. In 1759 Nathaniel would return to Antigua, serving as Speaker of

she says, she does not know you. I believe you will be comforted in her when you see how her soul is waiting for redemption in the blood of Christ.

Mrs. [Susanna] Boulton sends her love and duty. Her husband is so bad as to be confined to his bed.

I have heard today you are returned to Bristol through indisposition of body. I hope you are better, but should be glad to hear from you how you do.

I suppose you have heard of the sudden alteration in Lady Huntingdon's family.⁸ I hope this and every dispensation will work together to her a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

The person waits for my letter. Therefore I must conclude with duty to you and love to dear Mrs. Wesley and all friends as if named.

From your affectionate, unworthy friend,

S. J.

My husband [John Jones] is at Deptford. He intends to write soon.

Address: "To / The Revd Mr Charles Wesley / at / Bristol."

Endorsement: by CW, "1758 Sept. 13 / S. Jones / of perfection."⁹

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/46.

the Assembly from 1763–69, and helping pioneer Methodist work in the West Indies. See Frank Baker, "The Origins of Methodism in the West Indies: the Story of the Gilbert Family," *LQHR* 185 (1960): 9–17; *DEB*, 439; and Vickers, *Dictionary*, 135.

⁷After the death of his first wife relatively shortly after their marriage, Nathaniel Gilbert married Elizabeth Lavington (1716–77) about 1750.

⁸LH's son Henry had died; he was buried the day Sarah wrote this letter.

⁹Two lists also appear, in CW's hand, on the address page. The first is a set of names: "S[ister]. Sprag / S[ister]. H. Rose / S[ister]. Hodges / S[ister]. Lyon / S[ister]. Johnson / S[ister]. Burdock / S[ister]. Rigby / Davis / [[Mr]] Jones / [[sister Burgess]]." The second list is entirely in shorthand: [[Michael]] / [[Sister in slqt?]] / [[perfection]] / [[the lvsr?]] / [[Account of books]] / [[best leaders discredited]] / [[brunt]] / [[Dr Robertson's account]] / [[Gallatin?]]."

From James Bernon¹

Lisson Green,² close to London
September 16, 1758

My Dear Sir and Reverend Father in Christ,

Why don't you write to me in French when you do me the honour of writing me? You can do it; and our correspondence would be more useful to you. Henceforth, I exhort you to take profit of all the occasions you will have of writing and speaking French. *Fabricando fit faber.*³

I am not at all surprised of your silence. A man like you who is continually working in the vineyard of the Lord has hardly time to devote himself to simple dealings with literature. It is true that you know to intersperse it with friendship and the saving doctrines of Christ. Concerning these last two articles, I am deeply thankful to you. Alas! I would like to be able to respond, but my heart is neither receptive to thankfulness nor to friendship. I feel all the power that the corruptions coming down from Adam have on our nature. I sigh for freedom; but it has not yet shown a favourable eye on me. The temptations which beset me are without number. May the holy will of God be done! In his time, he will know to deliver me.

Not long ago, he has granted me a great deliverance with regard to the body. Sir, you remember when you were in London I was very weak. I complained of weariness and a big weakness of stomach. These symptoms of illness slowly degenerated into a violent effusion of gall; and in consequence into a gall colic, which brought me on the verge of death. The Lord, during the strongest of my illness, granted me his peace and a firm hope of salvation in his Son Jesus. But it has not yet pleased him to take me back to him. He has blessed the cure and has brought me back to a world that I do not love, and where I am bored by everything. I have since then been in the country for six weeks; from there I have returned to town without delay.

After the particulars that I shared with you, you will certainly understand that I do not anymore think of the ministry. Being a prey to a thousand weaknesses, to temptations, and to sin *peccanti similis*,⁴ what would I go to do in the pulpit? Dishonour God in his priesthood? That those whom heaven loves may take into their hands the censor! For me it fits well to be only a hearer and no more pretend to teach others. You know how many times the door has been shut to me. The God of heavens is just and does nothing in vain. He puts men in the conditions that favour most his glory. If it were suitable that I would be in a very different state, then Providence would without doubt place me or would have placed me there. I do not want any more to look for something new in this world. I ask Jesus my divine Saviour to lead all my steps and all my thoughts towards Heaven, *ubi Fata sedes ostendunt quietas.*⁵ I ask you, when you approach the throne of grace to remember me in your supplications. Miss Voileau, who is very sensible to your remembrance, sends you her very humble greetings. She beseeches you to remember her in your prayers.

I have heard from Mr. [John] Fletcher a few times⁶ since your departure. This line in English has just slipped in, because I had intended to write to you a letter all in French. I ask you to respond to me in this language. Friend Fletcher is well and from what I believe is very impatient to come back to town, because he has a lot of difficulties to preach where he is. I hope that we will see him again, filled with the

¹James Bernon (d. 1758), a member of French congregations in London and close friend of Rev. John Fletcher. He would die two months after writing this letter.

²Bernon spells "Leissen"; this is the area now known as Lisson Grove.

³"Engaging in the work creates the worker."

⁴"Like a sinner."

⁵Cf. Virgil, *Aeneid*, i.205–06; "where the fates give us the prospect of peace (or quietude)."

⁶The beginning of this sentence, to this point, is written in English.

blessings of heaven.

Allow me to make my wishes for the well-being of all your family. May God who unites you here below unite you all in Heaven! I am, with true respect and sincere attachment, sir,
Your most humble and most obedient servant

Bernon

Please direct your letter to London, as usual.

Endorsement: by CW, “Sept. 16. 1758 / Bernon’s Last

Source: holograph; MARC, DDP1 1/6.

[This translation was provided by Patrick Streiff; as was the following transcription of the original French (showing underlining that is almost certainly by CW):

Mon cher Monsieur & Reverend Père en Christ,

Pourquoi ne m’écrivez-vous pas en François quand vous me faites l’honneur de m’écrire? Vous le pouvez; & notre Correspondence vous en seroit d’autant plus utile. Je vous exhorte desormais de mettre à profit toutes les occasions que vous aurez d’écrire & de parler François. Fabricando fit Faber.

Je ne suis point surpris de votre silence. Un homme comme vous, employé continuellement dans la vigne du Seigneur n’a guère le temps de s’adonner à un simple commerce de Littérature. Il est vrai que vous savez y entremêler l’amitié & les Doctrines salutaires de Christ. Touchant ces deux derniers articles je vous remercie beaucoup. Hélas! je voudrois bien pouvoir y répondre; mais mon cœur n’est sensible ni à la Reconnoissance ni à l’Amitié. Je sens toute la force qu’ont sur notre nature les corruptions descenduës d’Adam. Je soupire pour la liberté; mais elle ne m’a point encore regardé d’un œil favorable. Les Temptations qui m’assaillent sont sans nombre[.] La sainte volonté de Dieu soit faite! en son temps il saura bien me délivrer.

Il m’a accordé, il n’y a pas long temps, une grande délivrance par rapport au corps. Vous vous souvenez, Monsieur, que pendant que vous étiez à Londres, j’étois fort infirme: je me plaignois de lasitudes & d’une foiblesse d’estomach. Ces symptômes de maladie ont peu à peu dégénéré en un violent épanchement de bile; & en conséquence en une colique bilieuse qui m’a emmené à deux doigts de la mort. Le Seigneur, pendant le plus fort de ma maladie, m’a accordé sa paix & une ferme espérance du salut en son Fils Jésus. mais il ne lui a pas plu me retirer encore à lui: Il a béni les remèdes & m’a rendu à un monde que je n’aime pas & ou tout m’ennuye. J’ai été depuis près de six semaines à la campagne; d’où je reviendrai incessamment en ville.

Après le détail que je viens de vous faire, vous devez bien penser que je ne songe plus au ministère. En proye à mille foiblesses, aux tentations & au péché peccanti similis qu’irois-je faire dans la chaire? deshonorer Dieu dans son Sacerdoce? Que ceux que le Ciel aime prennent entre les mains l’encensoir! Pour moi il me convient d’être seulement Auditeur & ne plus prétendre à enseigner aux autres. Vous savez combien de fois la porte m’a été fermée. Le Dieu du Ciel est juste & ne fait rien en vain. Il place les hommes dans les conditions qui rendent le plus à sa gloire. Fut-il convenable que je me trouvasse en tout autre état, sans doute la Providence m’y placeroit ou m’y auroit déjà placé. Je ne veux plus rien chercher de nouveau pour ce monde. Je prie Jésus mon Divin Sauveur de diriger tous mes pas & toutes mes pensées vers le Ciel, ubi Fata sedes ostendunt quietas. Je vous prie, quand vous vous approcherez du trône de la Grace de vous souvenir de moi dans vos supplications. Mlle. Voileau, qui est très sensible à votre Souvenir, vous présente ses très humbles respects. Elle vous supplie de vous souvenir d’elle dans vos prières.

I have heard from Mr. Fletcher a few times depuis votre depart. Cette ligne d'Anglois vient de m'échapper; car j'avois dessein de vous écrire une lettre toute en François. Je vous prie de me répondre en cette langue. L'ami Fletcher se porte bien & à ce que je crois est fort impatient de revenir en ville, car il a bien des difficultés où il est à pouvoir prêcher[.] J'espère que nous le reverrons, comblé des bénédictions du ciel.

Permettez moi de faire des vœux pour la prospérité de toute votre famille. Que Dieu qui vous unit ici bas vous unisse tous dans le Ciel!

Je suis avec un vrai respect & un sincère attachemen[t] Monsieur,

Votre très humle & très obeissant serviteur

Bernon

Leissen Green proche de Londres le 16^e. de Septembre 1758.

Dirigez s'il vous plaît votre lettre à Londres comme à l'accoutumée.

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

London
October 10, 1758

Dear Sir,

Could anything increase my obligation to you, it must be the kind share you bear in my sorrows.¹ Indeed, did not consolations abound when afflictions do, I must have sunk beneath my late and present sufferings. Should I live to see you, I think the most extraordinary circumstance of my experiences under my distress must lead you to magnify that love that fits the richest of pain's tears. And I must truly say he wipes mine away many times a day.

My love to dear Mrs. Wesley and my prayers and thanks unceasing to all who thought of me in the day of my visitation. My servant brings this and I shall expect from her any particulars of all my dear friends at Bristol. And in haste [I] must assure you how faithfully and affectionately grateful she is who is ever

Your friend,

S.H.

Address: "To / The Revd Mr Charles / Wesley."

Endorsement: by CW, "Poor (L. H.) Rachel! / Oct. 10. 1758."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/66.²

¹Her son Henry Hastings died on Sept. 13, 1758. CW's letter of condolence is not known to survive.

²Cf. the previous transcription in Tyson, *Correspondence*, 102.

From Anne (Carteret) Cavendish¹

Weybridge
November 12, 1758

I much fear my most kind and worthy friend will think it neglect, or what is worst, ingratitude, that I have not sooner owned the receipt of his most comfortable and edifying letter.² But if I know my own heart, I can truly say it is neither. But in short, worldly affairs have taken up my time, but I trust no my thoughts, have been greatly blessed with a constant desire that the will of the Lord only may be fulfilled in my heart, and that I may ever more follow my crucified Saviour. But oh my friend, continue to remember me at the throne of grace. For your prayers will have great power, and I stand in need of great help. For I am poor and needy, but I trust that my dear Redeemer careth for me, and that he will strengthen me more and more in grace and the knowledge of him, who is the fountain and foundation of every good and perfect gift, the Lord of life and the King of glory, the only Saviour of all that come to him in faith and trust, casting all our cares upon him, emptying ourselves of this world's goods, and thirsting after that living water which flows from him and can only cleanse us from all iniquity.

Oh that he may perfect his strength in my weakness, which is great indeed; though unworthy of the least of all his mercies, I trust he will continue his unspeakable goodness, by giving me that power and grace which can only come from him, that I may overcome all things here below, be wholly resigned to his blessed will, and fix my thoughts, words, and actions upon the one thing needful, giving up all to him, who is all in all, and who the heaven of heavens cannot contain. And yet he does not disdain to receive a wretched sinner like unto me. O gracious Lord, O heavenly Father, how can I praise, adore, and magnify thee enough for all the benefits thou has done unto me? I will take the cup of salvation and will call upon the name of the Lord. Oh praise the Lord, oh my soul, and forget not all his benefits. For he of his wonderful mercy has showed me great kindness. Therefore will I magnify his glorious name forever and ever. And may the Lord God of our salvation bless you in all your endeavours, and that his Holy Spirit may be ever with you, abiding and assisting you in preaching his word and setting forth his glory, that by turning many to righteousness you may shine like the stars for ever and ever, that all who hear the glad tidings of the gospel word from you may be blessed as I have been, that our love in Christ may be joined to in one voice ever to praise and magnify the Lord of hosts, the King of glory, to whom, with his Holy Spirit, be all might, majesty, and dominion for ever and ever. Come Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen. Amen.

My most kind remembrance to dear Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley. I hope she and the little one [CW Jr.] is well. And whenever you are at leisure, I shall be very glad to hear from you.

My sister³ desired I will say everything that is most kind from her to you and Mrs. Wesley, and we both beg to be remembered to Mrs. [Anne] Grinfield.

Endorsement: by CW, "Mrs Carteret / ~~or Cavendish~~ / friendly, zealous, devoted."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/50.

¹Although CW's later endorsement is uncertain, comparison of this letter to the handwriting of other letters from both sisters makes clear the author is Anne Cavendish.

²This letter is not known to survive.

³Bridget Carteret.

From the Rev. George Downing¹

Lewisham
November 15, 1758

Reverend and Dear Sir,

God has been pleased to remove my dear mother from this vale of tears and misery.² She departed on Friday last at 12:00 at night. I had been at her bedside for several preceding hours, but she knew not me, nor Mr. Hunt, nor anyone about her, for she had not enjoyed her senses for many hours before her death. Had it been the Lord's will, I should have rejoiced to have heard her triumphing in Christ. But God knows the dispensation that is most suitable for us, and he has, I trust, in this case allotted it. She went off very easily, without a groan or sigh. I could have liked to have gone with her, to be ever with that gracious loving Lord who bought us. But God did forget us in the midst of our trouble, for at the very time that my mother was departing, my sister Bowles was happily brought to bed of a girl,³ with so little previous pain that she was delivered before the midwife could arrive. Oh, how tender and indulgent is our heavenly Father!

I must tell you, because I know it will rejoice your heart, that the dear partner whom God hath given to me is, in the fullest and most comprehensive sense of the word, *a help-meet* indeed for me. God is all love and mercy to me. Oh that I could in return love him with all my heart, soul, strength, and understanding! I thank you most heartily for your kind and affectionate letter on our marriage,⁴ and beg the continuance of your prayers.

My wife and sister Chambers⁵ join with me in presenting our best respects and love to Mrs. Wesley and yourself. We hope your little one [CW Jr] is well. Give me leave, my dear friend, to subscribe myself,

Your faithful and affectionate younger brother ,

Geo. Downing

Endorsement: by CW, "Nov 15 Downing 1758 / θανατηφορου [death account]."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDPPr 1/22.

¹Rev. George Downing (c. 1729–1809) was currently a curate in Lewisham. He would be appointed rector of Ovington, Essex in 1761. He also served as chaplain to William Legge, 2nd Earl of Dartmouth. Downing was sympathetic with the Evangelical revival, at least with its wing who stressed conformity to church law. See *Alumni Oxonienses*; and CCed.

²George Downing's father Dickson Downing (c. 1700–45) married Bridget Baldwin (c. 1704–58) in 1721.

³Bridget Bowles, the daughter (and third child) of Edward and Bridget (Downing) Bowles was born Nov. 11, 1758, and baptized Dec. 12 at St. Andrew, Holborn.

⁴CW's letter commending the marriage of Downing and Catherine Chambers on July 17, 1758, is not known to survive.

⁵Eliza Maria Chambers (1730–87), Catherine's old sister; who would marry Bryan Broughton in 1761.

From the Rev. George Downing

Lewisham
November 23, 1758

My Dear Friend,

I have this day received the favour of your letter, and am extremely obliged to you for the kind enquiry you make after my spiritual welfare.¹ It would be a happiness to me to be able to give you such an account of it as you could wish. But alas! I behold myself in such an insignificant, despicable light, so ungrateful to God for his mercies, and so void of a proper zeal for his glory, that I begin sometimes to doubt whether I should not quit the ministry. But my dear Master, whom I would love with all my heart and serve will all the powers and faculties of my soul, carries me on from day to day, and supports and in some degree enlivens me with hopes that I shall one day be more truly devoted to his service and labour more abundantly for his honour. But then again, I think that these are vain, fruitless hopes, and why do I not eagerly embrace the present moments. Such, my dear friend, is my present state; and were not the Lord now and then to grant me an imperfect seal to my ministry, I should be quite weary and faint in my mind. Pray evermore for me, that I may be better enabled to glorify him who have bought me with the price of his own precious blood.

Poor [Henry] Venn has lately been attacked with a sudden stroke of the paralytic kind. Were he to be taken from us, we should lose a dear, valuable friend; and the church of Christ, a truly humble and useful minister.

I have not seen any of Mr. [Ebenezer] Blackwell's family since I received your's. They are, all of them, inexpressibly kind to dear Kitty and me.² Sister [Eliza Maria] Chambers is at Hackney. She has lately not been very well. But, thank God, she is much better. Kitty joins with me in best respects to you and Mrs. Wesley. I am, reverend and dear sir,

Your faithful and obedient servant,

Geo. Downing

Address: "To / The Revd Mr Charles Wesley / at the New Room / near the Horse-Fair / Bristol."

Postmark: "25/NO."

Endorsement: by CW, "Nov. 23. 1758 / G. Downing / humble."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/51.

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²Catherine (Chambers) Downing.

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

Brighthelmstone [i.e., Brighton]
December 5, 1758

My Dear Friend,

You usual indulgences to my weakness will not be denied me. And much more, could you have known the distressed state of my heart, would you now gladly rather add to your Christian pity for me. I have had above all I could ask or think of: comfort, strength, and consolation from the tender compassion of my Lord and my God. And oh how inexcusable are these mere animal affections which weigh me at times, even unto death! And these subside only as they are overpowered by divine [affections]. So distinct have I felt those of heaven and of earth, and well for me that my best friend took part of the same. I shall surprise you more when I tell you my testimony of my dear child's happiness was not, nor is not transient. No, I see him, I feel him in that inseparable union with God that neither time, place, or frame, or temper alters. And yet when the sensation of joy in that union abates, his death, his manner of death, his long and sore affliction is felt with a sensibility that nothing but the like feelings can describe. Thus have I told you in that simplicity of heart I am in the state of, [which] is quite new to me, perhaps not so to you. But the inward and the outward man so distinguished that both are *equally* real to me in and under the continual subsisting condition of each or every event, whether spiritual or material. Thus do I see the head bruised but the heel deeply wounded, and bruised even unto a taste of temporal death. But why do I trouble you with this little testimony of love, [you] that feel and see hourly the overflowings of it? But supports are given and suited to our complexional distress, and what would be sufficient for one would be emptiness to another.

I am got to this place which reminds me of much grief. But yet a few that are thriving since I left them. I hope you will find out for me if Mr. [Francis] Okeley had my long letter which I wrote in an hour I felt much for him. But I fancy it might be stopped from him. And I should be glad to know, as I have not heard from him since and I must appear unworthy of the freedom of his communications had I neglected my poor sentiments upon them. I wish you could let me know.

I hope to see you both in London, if that should be my appointed station, having as yet¹ in the most uncommon manner been overruled and opposed in every step I have taken to go there. My nieces Whelers are both with me. You would be charmed with them. They are pure and dear devoted souls and have been great comfort to me and send their love to you, and with me, to dear Mrs. Wesley. I long to know how she and her little boy does. Pray God spare him to you both, if it shall be best, and bless you both with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. Ever, ever,

Yours in sincere love,

S. H.

My love dear Mrs. [Anne] Grinfield. Pray send me word of her health, for she always forgets that when she writes.

Address: "To / the Revd Mr Charles / Wesley in Charles / Street /Bristol."

Postmark: "7/DE."

Endorsement: by CW, "L. H. [[in comfort unconsolable!]] death of son / recd Dec. 9. 1758."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/67.²

¹Orig., "yet been."

²Cf. the previous transcription in Tyson, *Correspondence*, 102–03.

From Thomas Walsh

Rosmead¹
December 9, 1758

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

Your letter was very refreshing to me;² and while I read it the power of God rested on me. But truly I was ashamed that *you* should speak in such language to me. It is certain I pray earnestly for you, being moved thereto not by a mere sense of duty but by hearty love and a remembrance of your kindness.

My spiritual state is this: First, I have a constant assurance of the favour of God. Secondly, a steadfast confidence that my present afflictions will work together for my good. Thirdly, if whenever God calls me home, Jesus will receive my spirit. Fourthly, I am tried to the uttermost; all the grace that God has given me can hardly bear the pains I feel. Indeed, my soul is often sorrowful. I grieve (though not enough) that my love to God is so little and that I do not desire more earnestly to be with Christ. Yet I live by faith and constantly pray for submission and thankfulness. In prayer my soul is often enlarged and I am led much to pray that the God of patience and consolation would give all his children to be like minded—I mean chiefly that they should love one another. Ah Lord, why do not thy children love and agree, as thou hast give them commandment, and even prayed that they should do? When will thy prayer be answered? Well, blessed Jesus, we shall all agree in thy presence.

It is long since I wrote a letter, but you have constrained one. I am worse and worse as to my disorder. I have a violent cough, profuse night sweats, a high and almost continual fever, wind in my stomach, finally every part is pained in its turn. But to this day the Lord has not shown me clearly whether this sickness be unto death. O that I may be always ready. My strength fails me. I can only add a thousand loves and respects to my friends at Bristol. Upon you, dear sir, and your kind wife of your bosom, and all that belong to you, may the blessing of God forever abide.

Shall I hear again from you? I am, reverend sir,

Your affectionate servant,

T. Walsh

[written on the back side]

Dear sir, excuse my putting you to cost. I could not get a frank here and I was afraid if I sent the letter by London you would not receive it for a long time, if at all. O forget not to pray for me. I believe really you do make intercession for me. I often with pleasure told my friends “Mr. Charles Wesley prays for me; yea, and sings a verse for me.”

Address: “To / The Revd Mr Char. Wesley / at the new-room in the / Horse Fair / Bristol / via Gloster.”

Postmarks: “19/DE” and “Country.”

Endorsement: by CW, “Dec. 19.³ 1758 / Walsh ripening apace / for glory – his last.”⁴

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/47.

¹Rosmead, Co. Westmeath, Ireland; 9 miles southwest of Kells.

²This letter is not known to survive.

³CW dates by the postmark; when the letter reached London.

⁴Walsh died shortly after.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

London
December 12, 1758

My Dear Sir,

If my silence was owing to forgetfulness, I should blush at not availing myself more frequently of your permission to write. But the idea I entertain, that nothing but your great condescension can make my correspondence supportable, makes me sometimes act in a manner quite contrary to the sentiments of my heart.

Before I left Tern the Lord gave me a medicine to prepare me to suffer what awaited me here. ...¹ This humiliation prepared me so well that I was not surprised to learn that a person in London had spread abroad many false and scandalous things of me during my absence, and that the minds of many were prejudiced against me. In one sense I took a pleasure in thinking that I was going to be rejected by the children of God, and that my Saviour would become more dear—under the idea that, as in heaven so now on earth, I should have none but him. The first time I appeared in the chapel, many were so offended that it was with difficulty they could forbear interrupting me in my prayer to tell me, “Physician heal thyself.”² I was on the point of declining to officiate, fearing I should only give fresh offence. Indeed, I should have done so, had it not been for my friend [James] Bernon, who pressed me to stand firm, representing the triumph my silence would give my enemies, etc. His reasons appeared to me so cogent that, as you brother did not reject my assistance, I read prayers and engaged to preach sometimes of a morning, which I have accordingly continued to do.

The same day I arrived in London our poor friend Bernon took to his bed, as if the Lord had waited my presence to give the blow. Three days after, the fever increased and appeared to be dangerous. The next day, which was Wednesday, he settled his temporal concerns. Friday evening he was free from the fever, and I had some hopes of his life. But on Saturday it appeared that the fever was the lightest part of his malady, and the physician said he would die of an inflammation in his bowels—which was the case on Monday, after an illness of eight days. I sat up with him three nights, and saw him as often as I could by day; and blessed be God, I did not see him for a moment without the *full assurance of faith*. His soul was, in general, divided between the exercise of repentance and of faith in the blood of the Lamb. However, from time to time repentance gave way to rejoicing. And when he appeared better, he express much fear of returning to life. Nevertheless, one day when I was not with him he had a conflict with the Enemy of his faith, which continued an hour or two, when he came off conqueror. The violence of the fever sometimes threw him into a delirium, and that was the case some hours before his dissolution. The last words he uttered, before the strength of his disease deprived him of speech, were: “O, what love! What love!” I have in my heart a clear testimony that he died *the death of the just*. Thus to recompense me for the injury Satan has done me by a false friend, the Lord has taken to himself a true one, whom he will restore to me again in the last great day. Such a loss is a real gain.

I presently rejoice in the health of Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley. Present my compliments to her—not those of the children of this world, but those of the servants of Christ. And do not forget to give your little Charles a kiss of peace and prayer for me.

Adieu,

J. F.

Source: published transcription; Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 78–80.³

¹This elision is indicated in the published transcription; it apparently described the humiliation, and likely related to Hannah (Davenport) Englefield, mentioned in Fletcher to CW, Aug. 16, 1758.

²Luke 4:23.

³An abridged transcription was also published in *AM* 17 (1794): 322–23.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

London
December 26, 1758

Reverend and Dear Sir,

As you promised me your advice in any case of importance, I'll lay one before you with the simplicity of a child who desires the directions of an experienced father.

A living in the gift of Mr. [Thomas] Hill at Shenstone, about four miles from Litchfield, being vacant by the removal of the incumbent, he offered it me—nay pressed me to accept it, insisting much upon the pleasantness of the place and the sure income of 80£ a year for life. Which was so far from tempting me that I thanked him for his offer at once, resolved to have nothing to do with it. But recollecting himself, he told me that, suppose I did not like the living of Shenston, he had it in his power to procure me that of Madeley in Shropshire, where I was appointed curate.⁴ "I have a living at Chester," pursued he, "which will be vacant one of these days by the death of the decrepit incumbent, and I promised it some time ago to the vicar of Madeley, who gave you a title. So that he will soon remove to Chester and my nephew, in whose gift the living of Madeley is, will give it you at my desire." "Nay," added he, "he has promised me to do it. But I offered you Shenston first because you would be presented to it immediately. And besides, the living of Madeley is only 60£ a year, or 70 at most; less profit and more trouble."

Thus reasoned flesh and blood. But grace, I trust, made me consider this last proposition in a different light: The extent of the parish, containing near 2,000 souls, which are as sheep scattered without a shepherd, and mostly of those who enter first into the kingdom—poor labourers and colliers. The nearness of the parish of Broseley, whence some began to come to listen to the gospel, and where there are thousands of souls ready for destruction and consequently ready for a saviour. The apparent success which attended my preaching there while the door was open. The pity I conceived for those poor souls, which put me then upon praying often I might be suffered to be curate there for nothing, for I would almost as soon have thought of being pope as of being presented to the living myself. The prayers of many of these poor people to have a gospel minister. And the tears of some who, when I was discharged by my rector, ran after me crying out "Who should now show them the way to heaven?" All these considerations made me pause before I refused the offer, and I asked some time to try whether the enemy or the Lord offered to open that door.

On the other side: The thought of leaving the Methodists, to which I find my heart strongly attached. The fear of standing alone in the midst of so many dead people. The persecution I should be exposed to from the neighbouring clergy, and probably the bishop too. The fear least a desire to avoid it should cause me to act contrary to my conscience, with the consideration of the care of 2,000 souls committed to one so poor in gifts and so weak in grace, make me doubt whether I should do anything there but destroy my own soul. This engaged me to answer that I was not quite determined as to refusing the offer he made me of the living of Madeley. And as he did not want immediately an answer with regard to this last proposal, I asked some time to consider it.

Now what I think of it is this: If God opens this door in answer to the prayers of some souls in that place, he would stand by me there and enable me to fight my way through all outward and inward temptations. If it is a snare of the enemy, there is time enough for the Lord to hear the prayer of faith and break it before I am caught therein. My master's mind may alter. I may die. The incumbent at Chester, at whose death the removal of the minister of Madeley will happen, may outlive us all if the Lord orders it so. And the bishop to whom I am, or shall be, known for a Methodist may refuse to institute me after all.

⁴Rev. Rowland Chambré (1728–96) was vicar of Madeley 1753–60; then rector of Dunham-on-the-hill, Chester, 1760–93.

As Mrs. Hill pressed me to give a direct answer,⁵ I said I doubted whether it was according to prudence to tie myself down for life to a country so far from my native land, where I might probably have some desires to return. To which she answered I should be at my liberty to resign the living, suppose I did not like it. This made me to it. I accepted their offer. And the Lord permitted that, the affair to pass without being stopped, I should be able to fly for the life of my soul, was it to suffer loss in that place. And perhaps to get a servant of God into the ministry and set him to overlook these many souls which else will be committed to a man twice dead, as I have great reason to judge.

If I know anything of my own heart I have no will in this matter, wholly desiring that the will of God may be done, and expecting to see plainer intimations of it in your advices and the turn his providence will give to the affair. Your brother is out of town [i.e. London], flying perhaps from the snare I have so narrowly escaped, else I would lay the case before him also. He desired me to translate into French the sermons of *Salvation by Faith* and *Awake Thou that Sleepest*. The first I have done; the second I leave for you to do, and hope you will hasten your journey to London to perform the promise you made me for the French, to publish it for them.⁶ I was very near falling a few days ago, through being offended at the brethren who still continue to condemn me without hearing me. But the Lord has brought me out of that pit, blessed be his holy name. This shows me that there are also dangerous rocks among the children of God.

May the Lord persist to save you, your partner in tribulation [SGW], and the pledge of your mutual love. May he save you to the uttermost, and grant me to rejoice at last with you as partaker of the same great salvation. Advise and pray for

Your foolish unworthy brother and servant,

J. Fl.

Pray direct the answer to this directly to me, without cover.

Address: “To / The Revd. Mr. C: Wesley / at the New Room / in the Horse Fair / Bristol.”

Endorsement: by CW, “Fletcher consult- / ing Dec. 26. 1758.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/495/2.⁷

⁵Susanna Maria (Noel) Hill.

⁶The French translation of *Salvation by Faith* was published in London, by Strahan, in 1759; a French translation of *Awake Thou that Sleepest* appeared from the same publisher in 1761.

⁷A close transcription of this letter, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 55–57.

1759

From the Rev. John Fletcher

London
March 22, 1759

My Dear Sir,

You should not have left without allowing me to say goodbye.¹ But that did not prevent me from wishing you a good journey, and I rejoice that all went as I had wished for you. I have shared the joy that your wife has had in seeing you again. [You are] more fortunate than Christ: You leave your own, and your own sorrow for you; you come unto your own, and they receive you.² You have not yet been made perfect through suffering. Your father and your mother have not yet abandoned you. But it doesn't matter. Doubtless you bear afflictions as others do, and the Lord in all probability puts you into the crucible in secret to draw you from there, as gold purified seven times. May his left arm be beneath you, and his right arm embrace you without ceasing! May he put his hand on you and fill you with his power!

He will not have forgotten your wife. I have been several times assured of this when I have had the strength to cast at the feet of Jesus the sweet burden that you have laid upon me in her delicate circumstances.³ If I was more humble, I would pray you to make her my humble compliments. And if I was as Elizabeth, I could say to her with all the fullness of the Holy Spirit, who will go unto her heart: "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit which is in your womb!"⁴ But it is not fitting for me to be so bold. Happy if my hopes can be found sincere before God!

I have lived more than ever in solitude since your departure. It seems to me that I am a useless burden upon this earth. I would want to hide myself. I tremble when the Lord gives me the grace to see myself. I tremble lest I seem only to dishonour his cause. I preached on Sunday at West Street [chapel] with the disposition of Jonah. Please God that this was also with his success. If the Lord had to any degree supported my feebleness, I think that I owe this to no small extent to your prayers. The enemy powerfully uses Miss Amirauld's enthusiasm to prevent the success of my preaching in French. But I believe that my indignity does more for him than ten Miss Amiraulds. I think however that it is my duty to resist the discouragement, in praying God to provide for those poor people a pastor according to his heart, that his lost sheep wish to hear and who can lead them to him.

I have been told that Mrs. Eng[lefield] had admitted to Sally Clay that she poisoned herself only to deceive me, and that she substituted a bottle of gin for the laudanum. In one sense I am much relieved by this. But I doubt that this can justify her fully before men or before God. For the rest I am obliged to recognise myself as the biggest fool in London for letting myself be imposed upon for so long by that woman.⁵ She is a great actress and has played the part of Dido in a manner to deceive a man less simple and less credulous than myself for several hours in a month.⁶ But to be her dupe for years on end is hardly

¹CW came to London in early February to spend time with JW, seeking some reconciliation; CW returned to Bristol shortly after JW departed London on a preaching tour in early March 1759.

²Cf. John 1:11.

³SGW was in the last stages of pregnancy with their fourth child, Sarah Jr.

⁴Luke 1:42.

⁵The woman imposing herself is Hannah (Davenport) Englefield (b. c. 1723), who married George Englefield (c. 1714–54) in 1744. George appears in the Foundery Band Lists as a married man in 1745, and ran a bookshop near the West Street chapel. George was buried in Bunhill Fields on July 7, 1754, leaving Hannah a widow. She continued to run the bookshop, as a widow, through 1771.

⁶Dido, the founder of Carthage, was emblematic of a manipulative woman.

credible without believing me worthy of the little houses (Bedlam).⁷ I am bringing her son back from Yorkshire,⁸ since I am no longer able to pay his lodging, seeing that the rest of my income is just sufficient to pay my debts and to clothe me. Have I contravened in this the friendship of which you are guarantor? For the rest it is certain that my pupils are leaving me in one month. Our family is seriously alarmed since the conversion of young Mr. Hill (of which I have spoken to you) has become common knowledge.⁹ They tremble that I will corrupt his two cousins and that all the family will be ruined by this plague of Methodists. My great patron Madame [Susanna] Hill, who cried so much when my life was in danger,¹⁰ declared that I can starve to death without her being troubled. She had the goodness to forewarn me Saturday last in respect of Madeley, by assuring me that in truth the bishop will never institute me there.

I have been made another offer since yours, and that is to go to the [West] Indies with Councillor [Nathaniel] Gilbert, the brother of the one who is at the Foundery.¹¹ I have weighed the thing. But on the one side I sense that I have neither sufficient zeal nor sufficient grace and talents to expose myself to the temptations and to the toils of a mission in the Indies. And on the other, I believe that if God is calling me there the time is not yet come. I would wish myself soundly converted, before leaving my converted brothers to go to strengthen those who are not in that state. Mind you, I want to ask you what you think of it. If you would not condemn putting the ocean between yourself and me, the command would be hard, but I could perhaps bring myself to give you this proof of my deference to your firm views. Give me news of your wife and of the companion she has destined for little Charles. And so that she be not in any way deceived, tell her of the extent to which I am lacking in wisdom, and add that I have no less need of grace than of wisdom, and should she after all not wish to reject so unworthy a godfather,¹² remember that I have taken you for a father and a counsellor and that the charge falls on you in the last resort.

Farewell. May the fullness of Christ fill you and may some drops of that precious oil flow from you to me!

J. Fletcher

Address to Mr. [Thomas] Hill and if you have some other letter put it in with mine.

Address: "To / The Revd Mr Charles Wesley / at the Room in ye. Horse Fair / Bristol."

Postmark: "22/MR."

Endorsement: by CW, "March 22. 1759 / Mr. Fletcher [[of his widow, etc.]]."

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/81.¹³

⁷I.e., this hospital for the mentally-disturbed.

⁸George and Hannah Englefield, had a son Thomas (1747–70), also buried in Bunhill Fields.

⁹Richard Hill (1733–1808) was the son of Rowland Hill, 1st Baronet of Hawkstone, a first cousin of Thomas Hill. Richard experienced evangelical conversion under Fletcher's influence in 1758. He later became a Calvinist critic of JW and Fletcher.

¹⁰Fletcher had been seriously ill a couple of years earlier.

¹¹Francis Gilbert (d. 1779) came to England from Antigua in early 1757 and was converted to Methodism and served for a time as a travelling preacher. He was the agent of his brother Nathaniel visiting England and embracing the Methodist cause the following year. In 1759 Nathaniel Gilbert returned to Antigua, with Francis following two years later; together they pioneered Methodist work in the West Indies. In 1764 Francis would return to England in poor health, and in 1767 he married Mary (Walsh) Leadbetter. See *DEB*, 439; and Vickers, *Dictionary*, 135.

¹²CW and SGW had asked Fletcher to be godfather to their child about to be born: Sarah Jr.

¹³A close transcription of the French original is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 58–60. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 60–62).

From the Rev. John Fletcher

[London]
April 1759

My Dear Sir,

I have, I hope, with much sincerity united myself with those who have given thanks to God for the happy deliverance of your dearer half.¹ I had thrown my mite with them into prayer, and it is sweet to me to do the same in works of grace. Undoubtedly the faithful God, who has granted our supplications for the successful birth of the infant whom the Lord has given you, will also grant our prayers for her spiritual rebirth. Regenerate by the pure waters of grace, you will one day see it augment the number of spiritual children whom heaven has given you. Bear witness, I pray you, to your wife the tender manner in which I feel myself concerned for her perfect recovery, and the hope which I have that this new sign of the opportune help of our great God and saviour will have served not a little to strengthen her in the faith, and made her cast with confidence all her burdens upon him who takes them upon himself if it is right.

I have received your obliging letters,² and I feel that the love of Christ urges me to desire to bring you my reply to them myself; or rather, for me to present myself with you at the throne of grace. Providence has made you fix for my journey the very day which has been fixed for the departure of my pupils. All turns out for the best, even for those who desire to love God. I saw Mr. [Thomas] Maxfield yesterday, who talks of going to Bristol and who will perhaps be the bearer of this letter. If his stay with you alters in any particular the time or the arrangements for my journey, let me know.

I have searched for, and had others search for, the French bible which I had destined for you. But the edition is sold out, and you must resign yourself to waiting until others have come in, or content yourself with a bible in small print like my own or with a large one in quarto. I will await your orders on this matter.

Latterly I have seen so much weakness in my heart, both as a Christian and as an evangelical minister, that I do not know who is most worthy of pity, the man of faith, or the preacher. If I could at the least be truly humble, and remain humble forever, I would be happy to have made these discoveries. I preach to keep the chapel open until God sends a workman after his own heart. *Nos numeri sumus*.³ And that is almost all I can say of myself.

If I did not know myself a little better than I did formerly, I would say to you that I have ceased entirely from putting confidence in anyone at all, so as to be prepared to repent of it. But I know that my heart is full of deviations, that I am not conscious of myself. Therefore your advice is always necessary and always well received on this subject.

I can however assure you that insofar as I am able ... [manuscript incomplete]

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/58.⁴

¹SGW delivered Sarah Jr. on Apr. 1, 1759.

²No letters of CW to Fletcher of this time are known to survive.

³Horace, *Epistles*, l.i.27, "We are mere numbers."

⁴A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 63–64. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 64–65). See also the earlier (and looser) translation in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 83–85.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

April [17¹], 1759

My Dear Sir,

With a heart heavy with sadness and tears in my eyes because of the loss which we have sustained by the death of Mr. Walsh,² I take up my pen to pray you to intercede for me. That this sincere, hardworking, zealous servant of God has only been saved as by the fire, and his request has only been granted when the twelfth hour had almost expired; and where shall I appear, I who am a useless servant? O would to God that my eyes were a spring of water, to weep over my sins. Would to God that I were able to pass the rest of my days in crying out, “Lord have pity on me. All is vanity—graces, talents, works—if one compares them to the great step that we shall take from time into eternity! Lord remember me now that thou art come into thy kingdom!”

I received your letter within an envelope to Mr. Hill on Saturday, and I have not replied to it immediately as I have not had the time, and because Mr. [Thomas] Maxfield has doubtless given to you a letter in which I replied to yours. If you have addressed two letters to Mr. Hill for me, I have only received the letter dated April 11. Could another have been intercepted?³

I have preached and administered the sacrament at West Street [chapel] several times during the holy days.⁴ May God water the poor seed that I have scattered and grant it increase in at least one soul! You have not been forgotten in the prayers of your children.

You will be surprised when I tell you that Mrs. ⟨E[n]glefield⟩⁵ believes at present that our examination before you adds considerable strength to her claims. One of our brothers and his wife, to whose house she goes sometimes, have been turned against me more than ever since our interview. About which, she has said to them that you have so well understood the strength of their reasons that when I described the help which I have given her as charity, you were not able to stop yourself from showing your surprise at such an unjust proceeding by giving me a slight blow to the head with some signs of indignation; and in adding that I should call them not charity but debt; and several remarks of that nature. With the result that you have been her dupe as well as me. I am going to send her 25 shillings, to pay the fare of her son who arrives in London the 21st of the month.⁶

My pupils will leave for Cambridge the 23rd of this month. I have not yet taken a place on the Bristol coach because, as you said to me in your last that Mr. Maxfield must come to relieve me, I am unable to fix my departure without a new order from you.

You are not well; are you also to leave us as poor Walsh? Oh look after yourself, and let me depart first, so that when my soul leaves my body you will be able to recommend it to the mercy of my saviour.

The day that Mr. Walsh died the Lord gave to our brothers the Spirit of supplication, so that several sighs which could not be expressed in words were offered up for him at Spitalfields [chapel] where I was. Who will render us the same service? Is our hour not near? My God, when you come prepare us and we will be ready. You owe it to your children to be a congregation unto death. You could not better employ your talent for poetry.

¹Forsaith specifies the day.

²Thomas Walsh died in Dublin on Apr. 8, 1759.

³The first letter from CW to Fletcher for which any indication of the text is known to survive is CW's shorthand record of a letter in Nov. 1759.

⁴Holy week and Easter week.

⁵A corner of the manuscript is torn away, leaving only what looks like the bottom portion of a capital “E.”

⁶See Fletcher to CW, Mar. 22, 1759.

Give me your news and that of my god-daughter [Sarah Jr.] and of Charles [Jr.]. I would wish to be Isaac, to bless him with fruit. Give my respects to your wife. May the Lord strengthen her in body and in soul, if my prayers rise up to his throne. And believe me

Your poor brother and servant in your prayers

Farewell

Mrs. [Elizabeth] Duchesne has written to you ...⟨torn edge⟩ ... enclose in another what Mr. Cart[h]y has sent you.⁷

Address: “To / The Revd Mr C: Wesley / at the new Room in ye Horse Fair / Bristol.”

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/93–94.⁸

⁷Clayton Carthy was currently assisting JW in his publishing ventures in Bristol and London; see JW to Carthy, June 12, 1759, *Works*, 27:163–64. He was buried at St. George church, Bristol on Dec. 23, 1759.

⁸A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 65–67. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith’s English translation (pp. 67–69).

From the Rev. John Fletcher

London
June 1, 1759

My Dear Brother; or rather, My Dear Father,

Allow me to reproach you that you have been forgetting us. I hope that this letter will arrive after you have left, and that you will come in answer to it before receiving it.¹ But I do not know what to think. I am not ignorant about what detains you.² I approve your prudence, but don't rejoice in it. How is your health, [and] that of your dear wife and the little family? I don't forget them and I know noone who is dearer to me than them. The Lord has restored my bodily health, and from time to time I feel some vigour in my soul. O when shall the *witness* who is dead be raised up again? When shall *the Spirit enter into him* and fill him with wisdom, power, and love? Pray for me. Sustain my feebleness as much as you can. I am here *umbra pro corpore*.³ I preach in your place; come and fill with dignity an office of which I am unworthy.

My pupils return from Cambridge next Monday, and all the family leaves for Shropshire the 11th or 12th of this month. Will I not see you before then? I have spent an hour by chance this morning with Mrs. [Hannah] Engl[efield]. Her son [Thomas] has returned from Yorkshire. I have refused Dr. Taylor's offer, and have no temptations other than that of a wretched heart.

That's enough, you will say. I agree, but it is necessary to fight before vanquishing. O pray that the heart does not fail me.

Come and the Lord be with you.

Address: "For / The Revd. Mr. C. Wesley."

Endorsement: by CW, "June 1. 1759 / Fletcher."

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/82.⁴

¹CW was back in London, to assist in ministry at the Methodist chapels, by June 5, 1759; cf. his letter to SGW of that date.

²In part CW had remained in Bristol for two months after the birth of his daughter Sarah, to make sure mother and daughter were well. But there was also some kind of rumour being spread by Mary (Goldhawk / Vazeille) Wesley about CW; cf. *ibid.*

³"Shadow rather than substance."

⁴A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 69–70. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (p. 70). See also the earlier (and looser) translation in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 85–86.

Joan (Gwynne) Price to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

[Breconshire]
June 28, 1759

My dearest sister Wesley should have received my sincere thanks for her letter,¹ and also for the trouble she took in buying the cottons (which I like very well), had not illness prevented me. I have been extremely bad since I wrote to you, but I thank God I am now much better.

Mama desires her love to you, and says she hopes next week she shall be able to send you a bill.

A very melancholy affair happened here last week. Poor Mr. Joshua Thomas came here this day sennight, and looked better in health than I have seen him [in] some time. He went that night to Cribart, lay there, got up well the next morning, and a little time after he came downstairs was seized with a pain in his stomach and died in less than half an hour. This has been a heavy stroke to his wife and children. She is now here and bears her loss with surprising resignation.

My hand shakes so much that it is pain[ful] to me to use a pen. Therefore I hope you'll excuse the shortness of this. Mr. [Hugh] Price joins me in love to you and brother Wesley, not forgetting your little ones.² Can your little boy walk alone? Mine can.³ Dearest sister,

Yours most affectionately,

J. Price

Address: "Mrs Wesley in Charles Street / Near Stoke's Croft / Bristol."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 7/76.

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²CW Jr. and Sarah Jr. (born Apr. 1, 1759).

³Howell John Roderick Price, born about the same time as CW Jr. and baptized at Hugh Price's home parish in Llanynys, Breconshire, on Jan 15, 1758.

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

Paddington(?)
Tuesday night, 9 o'clock [July 10, 1759]

My Dear Friend,

I have yours this moment and intended writing to let you know that Miss Cheyne¹ is dead of the scarlet fever at Mrs. [Catherine] Edwin's house after three days illness only. It is a striking and an afflicting situation for Mrs. Edwin and the fever so infectious that I have insisted upon her becoming a cottagem[ate] with me for some days, till the carnival is over and her own house fit for her to return to. As she will like to see nobody, I must not think of anything but, poor thing, to comfort her. She loved Miss Cheyne better than anything upon earth, and indeed she is in deep affliction. May our Lord bless it to her. I am every moment expecting her here. I shall long for our conference. You shall hear of me by some means soon again. I have not sent to Mrs. [Lucia] Gallatin, so uncertain for the sake of others is my situation. My dear friend, I know I have your prayers, and I desire them even more than you can imagine. Knowing that your poverty wants all supplies,

Ever yours in true Christian affection,

S. H.

I have wrote today to our friends at Weybridge²

Address: “<T>o / <The Rev>d Mr Charles / <Wesley> at the / Foundery / Moorfields / London.”

Endorsement: by CW, “L. H. July 10. 1759.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/68.

¹Margaret Cheyne (c. 1713–59), the daughter of the Dr. George Cheyne and Margaret (Middleton) Cheyne; Margaret being the sister of CW's physician John Middleton.

²Anne (Carteret) Cavendish and Bridget Cavendish.

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

Thursday evening, July 12,¹ 1759

My Dear Friend,

I can only just tell you Miss [Margaret] Cheyne will not be buried before tomorrow night, and the infection of the fever so great that it will not be safe for Mrs. [Catherine] Edwin to return to her house after she leaves me to go to the sea (which will be soon). The first moment you shall know, that we may have our comfortable conference. And Mrs. [Lucia] Gallatin shall then know also. I am most truly begging your prayers.

Ever more your affectionate friend,

S. H.

Address: "To / The Revd Mr Charles / Wesley at the / Foundery / upper Moorfields / London."

Endorsement: by CW, "July 11. 1759 / L. H."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/69.

¹Orig., "July 11"; an error.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

[Tern]
July 19, 1759

My Dear Sir,

Rather than apologise for my silence, which I have twenty times tried to break but in vain, I will recount simply to you the cause, relying on your recalling to mind your own temptations, for the patience that one must have with a feeble and tempted soul. This is the fourth summer that I have been brought here in a particular manner, to be tempted here, as in a desert, by the devil. And I have so little profited by my past experiences that I have defended myself no better than in the first year.

Having arrived here, I began to pass my time as I had planned—one part in prayer, the other meditating on Scripture. The Lord blessed my devotions, especially the second Sunday after I left you, and I advanced from conquest to conquest, bringing each thought captive in obedience to Jesus Christ, until it pleased God to show me several hidden recesses of my heart. As I was expecting nothing of the sort, it surprised me extremely—to the point that I forgot Christ. You will already judge what was the consequence. A spiritual languor took hold of all the powers of my soul, and I allowed myself to be gently carried away by a current whose speed was unknown to me. Neither doubts nor despair disturbed me for a moment. My temptation took another course. It seemed that God would be glorified much more by my damnation than by my salvation. It seemed to me entirely contrary to holiness, to justice, and the truth of the Supreme Being that so obstinate a sinner could be allowed into his presence. I could do nothing but be amazed at the patience of God, and I would have gladly sung these verses of Des Barreaux if I had had the strength to;

Thunder, knock, it is time, give me war for war
I adore in perishing the reason which embitters you.¹

But don't go imagining to yourself that I was in a state of evangelical repentance. No; a man who repents would wish to be saved, and I did not wish for it. I was even impatient to depart into my proper place, and I secretly hoped that God would give me for a moment the use of his rod of iron to have the satisfaction of breaking myself this pot of disgrace. A bitter and cruel zeal against myself and against the sinners who are with me filled all my thoughts and all my desires. I was not able to read, nor write, nor pray. And to tell you the truth, I had barely the will to do so. The devil, who knows how to fish in troubled waters, profited from the occasion and blew without respite on the sparks of several corruptions which I had thought extinct, or on the point of being so, and the fire began to appear outside. This made me open my eyes and I sensed it was time to ask for help. It was a week ago that I tried to pray, but almost without success. Yesterday, however, while I was singing one of your hymns, the Lord lifted my head and ordered me to face my enemies. By his grace I am already conqueror, and I don't doubt that I will soon be more than conqueror. Although I do not deserve it, nonetheless hold up my hands, until all the Amalekites are put to flight.

My pupils give me more concern than one would easily conceive. They often threaten to have me chased from the house, by slandering me to their mother. If they do so, I will see you sooner. What can I do with them? They do not want to study any more. While I am useless both for the Spirit and for the heart.

I have read prayers at our parish church but I do not count on preaching there.

I would have no further external occupation, other than seeing the laziness and suffering the insults of my pupils, if I had not been teaching French to their sisters for several days. This stops me from eating nothing but the bread of idleness. [remainder torn off]

¹Jacques Vallée Des Barreaux, "Recours du pécheur à la bonté de Dieu," concluding quatrain.

Address: “To / The Revd. Mr. Charles Wesley.”

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/3.²

²A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 71–72. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith’s English translation (pp. 72–74). See also the earlier (and looser) translation in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 86–88.

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

Saturday night [July 28, 1759]

My Dear Friend,

I am returned from Weybridge, and there found our excellent friends too afflicted and depressed beyond reason. I mentioned your enquiries after them, and though they see no creature and don't go out, [they] will be glad to see you any moment you can spare. Do call upon me, that we may not lose the conference, and indeed if visiting the afflicted is one office that you share, you will fulfill it in the just accepting of the word. Continue your prayers to us all, and believe me ever more truly

Your faithful friend,

S. H.

Address: "To / The Revd Mr Charles / Wesley at the / Foundery / Moorfields / London."

Endorsement: by CW, "L. H. July 28. / 1759."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/70.

From Hannah Handy¹ [via John Haughton]

[Templemacateer, Ireland]
August 9, 1759²

My Dear Friend and Brother,

I would be willing to gratify you to the utmost of my power, in acquainting you with the loving kindness of the Lord towards me and my dear companion in the trying hour, as I have been a fellow sufferer with him in the kingdom and patience of our Lord Jesus Christ these twelve years, and have more to tell of the mercies of my Lord towards us both than it is possible for me to express. It is true all that knew him allowed him to be a real Christian. But I knew him to be truly such, and he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was not ignorant of Satan's devices, and continually stood upon his watchtower. He never lost the sense of God's pardoning love for one moment, since he was graciously pleased to entrust him with that divine secret; nor ever had one easy moment longer than the countenance of the Lord shined upon him, but often cried out, "I am in hell." He warned every man of their danger when it was possible for him to have a word with. He had his conflicts with the grand enemy of souls, till the last two or three months of his life. And then I think I may say he entered into rest, and he cried, "Verily there is a rest for the people of God; but I was long an unbelieving wretch, but it is all over. Through the blood of the Lamb, the martyrs overcome."

He never ceased from his labour for the good of all that came near him, as his bodily strength permitted, endeavouring to strengthen what he had so often delivered unto us. He would say, "For your soul's sake believe the words of a dying man! You have need of all diligence and thirst for your salvation in the bowels of the Lord Jesus Christ. My eyes are open. I see your danger. This is a great work to be done upon you all or you are forever undone. Believers and unbelievers, time is short. Let not your trifling, your care, nor your stubbornness stop the work of the Lord upon your souls."

To a friend who came to see him from Dublin, complaining of his misery [in] not being able to lay hold of the Lord, and said to him, "My brother, have you no word of comfort for me?", he lifted up his hand and said, "My brother, you have been a long time hearing of the word that is able to save your soul and have not one word of comfort for you till you are able to give up your will unto the Lord. He is worthy."

To me he would say: "My dear, don't you see, with pain, the miserable state of a poor disordered world? But what is worse, don't you see the vanity and trifling amongst the Methodists? O I dread that our light will be removed! O Lord make the preachers faithful and diligent, and add to the number daily. Mr. Wesley is a wise and gracious master builder; blessed be God for that burning and shining light. It is true Paul may plant and Apollos water, it is God alone that giveth the increase.³ But mark, the Methodist who saith one disrespectful word of that faithful and indefatigable labourer, that man is fallen from grace or is in great danger. But Satan has many devices."

To a few friends, a little before his departure, whom he was exhorting to faith and patience, he said: "I shall soon be looking down upon you all, struggling upon your journey." "Why," said he, "it is so already, for I am walking the golden streets. Behold a Christian dying, triumphing over death, hell, and the grave."

To me he said: "My dear, do you see anything here worth the staying for? Would you not be willing to go with me?" I said I would, but I was willing to suffer and do the will of God. "It is good,"

¹Hannah (maiden name unknown) was the second wife of Jonathan Handy (1704–59); they lived near Horseleap, Co. Westmeath, and hosted CW at their manor house, Templemacateer, in 1748, during CW's first preaching tour in Ireland (see CW, MS Journal, Feb. 9, 1748).

²The original month is obscured, but Handy's will was proved in Aug. 14, 1759 and "Aug." seems the likely letters under the markings.

³See 1 Cor. 3:6.

said he, “to have patience. But beware of being entangled even in your duty.” A few moments before he fell asleep his desires grew very strong to depart, and he seemed to apprehend that I was detaining of him in the body by my prayers, and [he] said: “My dear, can you now willingly let me go to your Father and my Father?” I was just then examining of myself in the matter and said cheerfully, “I can.”

He said, “Glory be to God for that” and said, “My dear, pray for a speedy release, if you don’t think it sinful. Let it not my Lord displease that I would die, to be his guest.”

I said I chose to leave that to God. “You suffer little pain. He deals graciously with you.”

“True,” he said, “but I am in the pangs of death. Lord make me faithful. Lord make me faithful.” That moment the little panting and shortness of breath ceased, which was all that he complained of. He reached me out his hand to help him to turn on his right side, and put his hand under his head upon the pillow. I thought he was going to sleep and fell on my knees by his side to that the Lord, for that he enabled him to breathe so easy; but soon found he was fallen asleep in the Lord Jesus, to rise with him into life eternal.

My time was so taken up about him in what was necessary that I believe others who visited him in his last illness can declare more of his gracious sayings than I can at this time recollect. But I trust they have made a lasting impressions upon my mind. My bodily weakness at this time hinders me writing on of this account of my dear companion more clear and perhaps more fully. But my son Oakes told me that you required it immediately, to send it to Mr. Wesley.⁴ I therefore send it as it is, begging of his and your prayers, that for the little time which I have to stay behind him, I may be faithful and walk in all things worthy of the relict of such a companion.

I am, my dear brother,

Yours most affectionately,

Han. Handy

[In the hand of John Haughton]

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I thought good to send you the enclosed. I and [my] companion are in tolerable health. I am, with love to you and Mrs. Wesley,

Yours in the gospel,

J. H.

The enclosed is an account of Mr. Jonathan Handy, one of the first fruits of Ireland, whom I doubt not you remember very well.

Address: “To the Revd. Mr Charles Wesley ~~To Mr. John Haughton.~~”

Endorsement: by CW, “Jonathan Handy / Translated / 1759.”

Source: holograph; MARC, DDPr 1/35.

⁴Theophilus Oakes (1724–63) married Joanna Handy (daughter of Jonathan) in 1752.

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

[London]
September 1, 1759

I have been quite unrallied, that I should omit when you was here the bolster(?) I promised for Mrs. Wesley. I send it hoping you will receive it safe. And assure her of my true affectionate remembrances, and may our Lord comfort you with the joy of finding all at home well. All my Christian friends that ask after me, assure them of my true cordial heart love for them. Last Friday I was most pleased—most so with your sermon.¹ Mrs. [Sarah] Crosby is surely a holy woman, but makes too much of the state she is in. I think she will be well shook yet, and that her greatest trial is to come. May my blessings attend you. Don't forget me in your prayers. None want them more, could you know all I feel. But believe in Jesus(?), who can only help.

Ever yours in all Christian affection,

S. H.

Address: "To / The Revd Mr Charles / Wesley at ~~West Street~~ / ~~Chapel~~ / ~~near Soho~~ / Bristol."

Postmark: "4/SE."

Endorsement: by CW, "L. H. Sept 1. 1759."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/71.

¹CW's last sermon on a Friday in London that summer was Aug. 24.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Tern
September 4, 1759

My Dear Sir,

I accept with pleasure the proposition which you so kindly make me for the coming winter.¹ And I pray you to look upon it as less of a proposition than an engagement into which you have entered, and whose fulfilment I shall have the right to claim. Allow me to add to it only one condition, which is to make our readings, etc. bear as directly as possible upon a poverty of spirit, of which I have great need.

The Lord gave me two or three lessons [on this topic] several days ago. But alas, that I have forgotten them already! I saw, I sensed, that I was wholly void of wisdom and virtue. I was ashamed of myself, and I was able to say with that sentiment which one can never describe, “*Nil ago, nil habeo, sum nil, in pulvere serpo.*”² What Lopez was able to say at all times, I could then have said: “There is no one of whom I do not think better than I do of myself.”³ And I would have been able to fall at the feet of the greatest sinner and acknowledge him a saint in comparison to myself. If ever I am humble and patient, if ever I enjoy a solid peace, it needs to be in that state. Why am I not in such a state now? Because I am full of self-sufficiency and have that self-esteem that blinds me and prevents me from doing justice to my blameworthiness. Pray that the Spirit of Jesus makes the scales fall from my eyes for ever, and forces me to return to my true nothingness.

What a *monstrous* idea you almost put into my mind! What? The labours of my ministry, under you (*si ulli sint*⁴) should merit a salary? I who have done nothing until now other than dishonour God, and who am in no state to do anything for the future! If I am permitted to stand up within God’s walls, isn’t it for me to offer a recompense, rather than to receive it? If I am therefore ever to receive anything of the Methodist Church, it will be as an unworthy beggar receives those alms without which he would perish. Such were some of the thoughts which passed through my Spirit on the matter of the proposal you made to me in London. And I doubt whether my vanity, or your goodwill, would be able to efface the traces they have left there.

Moreover I need your opinion on the subject of the letters that I have received one after the other from my relatives, who are agreed to urge me to return to my country—one [says], to set my business in order; another, to preach there; another, to help him to die; etc. They are pressing me to make clear whether I have renounced my family and the claims I might have on it. And my mother wants me to at least go to see her, and actually orders me to do so in the most pressing terms. What [should I] reply? If she thought as you do, I would write back to her: “*Ubi Christiani, ibi patria.*”⁵ “My mother, my brothers, my sisters, etc. are those who do the will of my heavenly Father.”⁶ But she is in no state to stomach such an answer—a mother is always a mother.

On the other hand, I have no wish to lend myself to desires which seem to me purely natural:

¹CW was preparing to return to London in Dec. and proposed spending time with Fletcher in studying spiritual writings. CW’s letter with this offer is not known to survive.

²“I do nothing, have nothing, am nothing; I crawl in the dust.”

³Fletcher may have been reading the original of Francisco de Losa, *The Holy Life of Gregory Lopez*, trans. Abraham Woodhead (London, 1675); but more likely he was reading JW’s abridgement (published in 1755) where this quote distills Chap. 12, §4, *Christian Library*, 50:385.

⁴Cf. Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, iii.70, “*si modo ulli sint*”: “if there are any.”

⁵“Where there are Christians, there is my homeland.” A reformulation of a proverb tracing back at least to Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes*, v.108, “*Patria est ubicumque est bene*”: “My homeland is anywhere it is well for me.”

⁶Matt. 12:49–50.

1) because of the time wasted; 2) and of the expense of the journey; 3) since my presence is not absolutely necessary for my business; 4) since there is a greater likelihood of their perverting me to vanity and to [self-]interest than there is of my converting them to Methodism; [and] 5) because I will have no opportunity to exercise my ministry. The [Swiss] ministers, who only preach once a week, will not view me with a more favourable eye than our own; and irregular preaching there is impracticable, and would only serve to have me put in prison or banned from preaching at once.

I can do nothing with my pupils. I have complained of them to their parents, who begin to be sorry for having sent them among the wolves to avoid the dog. Mrs. [Susanna Maria] Hill has spoken to me two or three times of Madeley, as if it was always in their plan to procure it for me. I do not respond yes or no, and I let it be. There will always be enough time to refuse when the offer is actually made.⁷

How have you found your family? Is the smallpox as far off as the French? And is your wife worried when all the nation is reassured? In greeting her from me, tell her that her brother, the Captain,⁸ who is very well, gathers together here as many men as he can for her defence. May the Almighty be your defence day and night! Whoever he guards is well guarded. Let me thank you for the sentence of á Kempis with which you close your letter, by returning to you another: You run no risk in looking at yourself as the worst of men; but you are in danger if you prefer yourself to anyone.⁹

I await a reply in French

Address: “To / The Revd. Mr. C. Wesley / at the Room / in the Horse-Fair / Bristol.”

Endorsement: by CW, “Sept. 4. 1759 / Mr. Fletcher.”

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/4.¹⁰

⁷This paragraph is omitted in Fletcher, *Posthumous*.

⁸Capt. Richard Baldwin, husband of Mary (Gwynne) Baldwin.

⁹This is a loose rendering of Thomas á Kempis, *Imitation of Christ*, Bk. I, Ch. 7, §3.

¹⁰A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 74–76. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith’s English translation (pp. 76–78). See also the earlier (and looser) translation in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 88–91 (which includes an opening paragraph from Fletcher’s later letter of Nov. 28).

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

[London]
September 7, 1759

My Very Kind Friend,

Your letter greatly obliged as well as occasioned a sense of thankfulness to find dear Mrs. Wesley was well.¹ May she and her little ones increase abundantly in all grace and peace. Her care is multiplied, but if she can cast all upon him who more tenderly cares for her and hers, she will have an increase of blessings without that of burdens. I say “Amen” for her to this both.

As to public matters nothing but success yet attends us, but I find no difference from my cold heart upon these points than if adverse effects happened in their place. I cannot account for a death so deadly and yet it is universal. The storm, the real storm I believe must only awake us; and that does not, I think, appear nearer.

I believe your being in town was blessed.² Your brother’s ministry this last time was dry to many,³ and the oil preserved alive in your lamp plainly supplies [the lack]. I do fancy London is the Jerusalem—they are vastly alive here, and the work prospers without so much of man’s labour as usual. And this I like extremely. I hope you will be fully directed, as I am sure you will be faithfully. And if you are not made to quicken them, rely upon being sent elsewhere. I wrote you word I liked Mrs. [Sarah] Crosby. She is an excellent person, I most truly believe; though perhaps not a perfect one. O to forget ourselves, so much as not to know what we are, is what I want! All excellings that can be told are of the earth really. But I am poor, evil, knowing nothing, and therefore a fool in judging. The teachings of God excludes all other knowledge in divine things. And this I so little know that I can but just say *he does teach hearts*, and he will teach mine when I am poor, poor enough to be caught in his poverty.

I hope to hear soon from you. My love to dear Mrs. Wesley and tell her that sweetening powders and rhubarb mixed are best in her little girl’s case, in small doses and often repeated. I beg you will say nothing of this letter to Mrs. [Anne] Grinfield. I have not wrote [her] this three months. Not that I love her the less. O no! None can love her so well, or she could not have hurt me if I did not. But she is too wise and wants not the love and friendship of me. And I do not wonder at her. I approve her judgment and shall honour any supplications(?). I hope to write so soon, and to convince her [that] want of love did not hinder, but want of usefulness to her is the solid cause. Believe me unalterably in all Christian affection,

Yours ever,

S. H.

Address: “To / The Revd Mr Charles / Wesley at his House/ in Charles Street / Bristol.”

Endorsement: by CW, “L. H. Sept. 7. 1759.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/72.⁴

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²CW had been in London from early June through late Aug.

³JW had been in London most recently Aug. 7–27.

⁴Cf. the previous transcription in Tyson, *Correspondence*, 103.

Anna Maria (Bosanquet) Gaussen to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley¹

[London]
Monday [September 10], 1759

Dearest Madam,

I have just time to say I received a message from Mrs. [Sarah] Crosby this morning which I could not rightly understand, but am grieved to hear of my dear friend's relapse.² I am now tried by everything. The Lord preserve me from sin and then I care not. It is all I ask for myself.

I shall write very soon to Mr. [Charles] Wesley, but think all I have to say will not be proper to trouble him with now, so only beg his earnest prayers for my partner and myself. I greatly need them indeed. Yet the Lord careth for me, I know.

You want the receipt for the tincture of rhubarb I gave Mr. Wesley. Take two ounces and [a] half of the best rhubarb you can procure (it is hard to get the true sort). Slice it as thin as you can. Put it into a dry quart bottle. Fill it up with good brand, the best you can get. Cork it well; only leave just room in the bottle to shat it, which should be done once a day for three days, during which time leave it in the corner of [a] chimney so as to be as warm as it can without endangering the bottle. Then pour off all the clear part and cork it for use. Write on it "first tincture." Fill up the bottle a second time with brandy, letting it stand in the chimney, etc. as before. This second tincture you may pour off a little at a time as you want it, giving a double dose to what you would give of the first. I forgot to say you should put a fresh half ounce of rhubarb in the bottle when you fill up with the thick bottom for the second tincture. When the bottle is exhausted you may fill it a third time with clear small beer.

Of the first tincture a large tablespoonful with a little warm water is a purge for a grown person of middling strength. To stop a flux, give one or two teaspoonfuls, no water, according to the person's strength every 24 hours till the bowels have recovered their proper strength.

The second tincture will do for common cases, but [I] would not trust to it for a bad flux at first.

The second tincture is strong enough for a flux in children, a teaspoonful every day with a teaspoonful of warm water. For a purge for young children [you] could prefer the powder. The third sort a spoonful, or a desert spoonful if the child be not strong. Put into their beer at dinner time. Every day is good for purging, worms, weak digestion, etc.

I hope yours do not need any medicines at present. My little ones [I] apprehend are going to have the small pox.³

Dear madam, believe me,

Your ever affectionate friend, in all outward changes,

A. M. G.

My love to your dear partner.

Address: "To / Mrs C Wesley / at ye Horsefair / Bristol."

Postmark: "13/SE."

Endorsement: by CW, "M. Gaussen's Rec[eip]t / for Sally / Sept. 1759."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/52.

¹Anna Maria Bosanquet (1734–1804), sister of Mary Bosanquet, married Jean-Pierre (or Peter) Gaussen on Jan. 16, 1755. She became acquainted with CW and his wife Sarah in 1756–57, possibly through a common connection to Mrs. Lefevre. Her relationship with the Wesleys, and sympathy for Methodism, waned over the next decade.

²Referring to Sarah Jr's illness; see LH to CW, Sept. 7, 1759.

³Peter (b. 1756), Jane (b. 1757), Paul (b. 1758), and Samuel Robert Gaussen (b. 1759).

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Tern
September 29, 1759

My Dear Sir,

Your silence was beginning to worry me, and your letter was about to cross one by which I wanted to ask you the cause.¹ The Lord afflicts you ... that is enough to make me silent. And I will only open my mouth to beg him to hasten in you and your family the production of the fruits of justice which come with the trials of his children. Look after yourself—for the Lord's little flock, and for me who counts the days with all the eagerness of brotherly love until I am able to be near you.

Run, fly, you hours too slow
Which hold back the happy day!²

If I know anything of real charity (which I very often doubt), it harmonises with divine love, as the sounds of different parts in music harmonise with each other. Their unison comes from the exactness of their difference. And they are sometimes all the more delightful as they appear more conflicting. The conflict between sentiments of brotherly love and those of divine love, and the subordination of the former, shape the sweet struggle in the soul of the faithful. This *συνεχομαι εν των δυο*³ of the apostle, which concludes with a sacrifice of renunciation of which the unfeeling man is not capable. The expression “spread the moral sense all o'er,”⁴ which you somewhere use, gives me the idea of that charity which I seek. That of [Gregory] Lopez seems to me too stoic, and I no longer recognise there that vehement desire, those tears of love, that ardour of seeing and of possessing one another in the bowels of Jesus Christ, which I find so often in the epistles of St. Paul. If this sensibility is a fault, I avow that I would rather be guilty of it than exempt. Tell me what you think.

While reading *Telemachus* to my pupils a few moments ago I was struck by this expression “He blushed to have been born with so much hardness towards men, and to appear to them so human.”⁵ I easily applied the first part to myself, and the son of Ulysses⁶ gave me there an example of Christian repentance which I would wish to be able to follow until my heart is circumcised. Give me some remedies or some advice against this hardness which makes me weep.

While on the subject of hardness, what you say to me in your letter of reducing a mother to despair has made me consider seriously what I have often thought that the particular fault of the Swiss is to be. Because my mother summons me rather than her other children, I readily discover that I am indebted to the distance which prevents her from seeing my failings for almost all the affection which she shows in her letters. Thus I am easy on that aspect of it. I often reproach myself nevertheless for not being able to interest myself so keenly over what concerns her as I could for my late father. And I am struck by the difference. I believe the time is not yet come when my presence may be of some use to her. And I flatter myself that she will not be shocked at my refusal, which I will soften as much as is possible.

I doubt that you understood rightly what I said to you in my last on the proposal that you made

¹CW's letter is not known to survive.

²Fletcher quoted in French from Jean-Baptiste-Louis Gresset, *La Chartreuse* (1735).

³Phil. 1:23, “I am constrained between the two.”

⁴CW, “For a Tender Conscience,” st. 5, *HSP* (1749), 2:231.

⁵This passage appears in Book XVII of the French original (which Fletcher was surely using with his students) of François de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon, *The Adventures of Telemachus, the son of Ulysses, in ten books*, 2 vols. (London: Churchill, 1701), 555.

⁶Telemachus was the son of Odysseus; which latinizes to “Ulysses.”

me in London.⁷ So far from making conditions, I do not find myself worthy to receive them. Be that as it may, I give thanks to God that I do not encumber myself with anything. My only fear is more of having too much, rather than too little, of the necessities of life. I am weary of abundance. I would wish to be poor with my Saviour. And those whom he has chosen to be rich in faith seem to me deserving of envy in the midst of their needs. Happy if a subtle pride did not disguise itself in my heart under the appearance of humility. Happy if that dangerous snake did not hide itself under the flowers nor feed on their sap.
[remainder torn off]

(marginal addition)

... so lively when I awake that I do not for a moment doubt that the one who aids our weakness is not part of it. I am certain that I will understand your answer if you make it in French. My experience with the widow has spread as far as Shrewsbury.⁸

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr. Charles Wesley / at the Room in the Horse-Fair / Bristol."

Endorsement: by CW, "Sept. 29. 1759 / Fletcher."

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/5.⁹

⁷See opening paragraph of Fletcher to CW, Sept. 4, 1759.

⁸Hannah (Davenport) Englefield; cf. Fletcher to CW, Aug. 16, 1758 & Mar. 22, 1759.

⁹A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 79–80. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 80–82). See also the earlier (and looser) translation in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 93–95.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

[Tern Hall]
October 24, 1759

For several days the hope of receiving news of you has been balanced in my heart by the fear that you were in no state to send it to me. The latter finally gained the upper hand, and I am taking up my pen to beg you to release me from the anxiety into which your silence casts me. If gout is preventing you from breaking it, use another's hand. If you are in the third heaven of contemplation and love,¹ let brotherly love release you for an instant! If you are wandering in the desert of temptations,² may fellow-feeling draw you towards an unhappy soul who finds himself lost there!

Since my last I have moved forward on the road towards self-knowledge. There you are, asking me what I have learned. That I am denuded of all except my pride and my unbelief. The whim of writing verse took hold of me yesterday. I have rhymed my sentiments on my state in a hymn, of which I have transcribed the beginning. If the poetry is not worth the reading, the language will always bring back your French. I should be in London, God willing, the 10th November, or at the latest the 15th. When are you proposing to be there? How are your wife and the little family? The rumour here is that the French are in Liverpool. I am happy that they are not looking towards Bristol. In greeting your nervous spouse on my behalf, tell her of my joy that your quarters have been in safety up till now, and my hope that they will be so until the end of the war.

The manner of reading the following verses is to observe the rest after the four first syllables.

I Partie

- 1 Pour m'endormir par un Philtre odieux
Pendant trente ans entre les bras du Crime,
Qui, juste Ciel! a versé sur mes yeux
Le suc fatal des pavots de l'Abysme?
- 2 Quoi, de mes jours l'inutile flambeau
Le quart d'un siecle a brulé pour moi meme,
Depuis trente ans je cours vers le tombeau
Sans aimer Christ and sans savoir s'il m'aime!
- 3 Quel crime hélas! quel crime plus affreux
Que de marcher au gré de son Caprice,
Et sans connoître un Sauveur genereux
De s'appuier sur sa propre Justice?
- 4 Culte mondain, Masques de piété,
Devoirs forcés, Vertus imaginaires,
Je vois je sens votre inutilité;
J'ai négligé les Vertus nécessaires.
- 5 Divin *Foi* qui montres Dieu présent,
Unis à Christ, and scelles les promesses,

¹See 2 Cor. 12:2.

²See Matt. 4:1.

Pour te chercher d'un cœur agonisant
J'étois trop fier de mes propres richesses.

- 6 Casque céleste, Ancre du vrai Chretien,
Divin Flambeau, ferme, pure *Esperance*,
J'ai négligé ton solide soutien;
Enflé d'Orgueil, and rempli d'Arrogance!
- 7 Et toi doux feu, vif *Amour* d'un Sauveur,
Ciel ici bas, Présence de Dieu même,
Jamais ... Jamais, ni ta vive Chaleur
Ni ton Eclat ne m'ont prouvé que J'AIME.

II Partie

- 1 Tout occupé d'un Reve men songer
Je négligeois and Jesus et sa Grace:
De ces mépris le Ciel pour se vanger
Me scut *donner de l'Erreur l'efficace*.
- 2 L'Erreur commune, au printems de mes jours
Dans mon Esprit vint déjà s'introduire,
Et me menant par cent divers detours
Près de l'Abyrne enfin ma sçu conduire.
- 3 Moi Chretien ... Moi! loin de ta Face exclus!
Seigneur mon Dieu, pardonne l'Insolence.
Moi Chretien ... Moi! sans Amour pour Jesus!
Retien, O Ciel, les traits de ta Vengeance.
- 4 Moi, vrai Fidele! ah le Presomptieux!
Moi ... sans Pardon, sans ta Paix consolante!
Moi qui jamais dans mon cœur ténébreux
Ne vis briller ta Face ravissante!
- 5 Un Elu ... Moi! quelle étrange ferveur
Voile à mes Yeux ta divine Parolle?
Un Elu ... Moi! sans ton sang sur mon cœur!
Quel vain Orgueil! Quelle Esperence folle!

III Partie

- 1 Mort au Seigneur, and vivant au péché,
Je sens mon Ame à Satan asservie:
Loin de Jesus, and dans mon Sang couché,
Je gis encor, sans secours, and sans vie.
- 2 Enfant du Siecle, Esclave de mes Sens,
Errant toujours dans une nuit profonde,
Je brule encor à la Chair mon encens
Je crains, je fuis, and j'aime encor le Monde:

- 3 Aux traits malins de son cruel mépris,
Je suis hélas! je suis toujours sensible;
Et les appas de ses trompeurs Souris,
Trouvent toujours ma Foiblesse accessible.
- 4 Avec raison, la modeste Douceur
Fuit mes dépits, fait ma triste Colère;
Sur ses Parfums je verse mon Aigreur;
Fol Artisan de ma propre misère!
- 5 Jouët des Sens, par Satan ébloui,
Je veux en tout vain chercher l'Être Supreme
Par l'Amour propre et par la Chair trahi
En tout, par tout, je me trouve moi-meme.
- 6 En les fuiant, j'aime encor les plaisirs
De vains soucis je suis encor la proie
Inquieté par mille fous desirs
Des Saints j'ignore et la paix et la joie.
- 7 Ma Raison saine a perdu tous ses droits;
Et de la Chair l'Affection subtile,
M'ayant soumis à ses indignes Loix,
Traîne à son Char son Esclave docile.
- 8 À Christ, en vain, je me croiois uni,
De mon pardon n'ayant point l'assurance,
Hélas! encor, loin de mon Dieu banni,
De son Esprit j'ignore la Puissance.
- 9 Sacré Transport, Plaisir délicieux,
Amour divin, pure, éternelle Flâme
Sceau de l'Esprit, Present digne des Cieux,
Jamais hélas! tu n'entras dans mon Ame.

The rest another time

May the care which you take of your health have the effect that I want. While waiting, may he who made St Paul say, "When I am weak it is then that I am strong,"³ support you in all your infirmities and fill you inwardly with his strength! I appreciate the kind sentiments from your wife. And as far as concerns Charles and my goddaughter [Sarah Jr.], I hope that no news is good news. I will write upon my arrival in London.

Farewell.

I have received this instant your dear letter and I am about to seal my own to which your have already made a reply.⁴ I have no further news of your brother. You will see by my hymn, in which I have

³2 Cor. 12:10.

⁴CW's letter is not known to survive.

tried to depict my heart, that I have plenty of other things to do at present than to dream of my own perfection; even less of that of others. I shall therefore take care not to write again until matters change.

Address: “To / The Revd. Mr. Charles Wesley / at the Room, in the Horse Fair / Bristol.”

Postmark: “Shrewsbury.”

Endorsement: by CW, “Fletcher / Oct. 24. 1759.”

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/7.⁵

⁵A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 83–87. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith’s English translation (pp. 87–88). See also the earlier (and looser) translation in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 91–93.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

The Foundery [London]
November 10, 1759

My Dear Sir,

My soul is in the same state as it has been found since I wrote you my last, except that a sweet hope assures me some day I shall hear distinctly the voice of the great Shepherd of the lost sheep. I left Tern on the 2nd of this month. Nothing in particular happened to me on the journey, apart from Mr. [Thomas] Hill remarking to me, in the strongest of terms, his surprise over what I had said of leaving the family on my arrival in London. And saying to me that if I would not at least lodge with them, they would take that as a mark of contempt, etc. I thanked them, without promising anything. But at present I am resolved to refuse their obliging offer in the most polite manner of which I am capable, because: First, I am useless to the family both temporally and spiritually. Second, I will soon be a burden to it, if I am not already. Third, I will always be there in a sort of slavery. Fourth, I do not have sufficient resolution over a long period to see and support the behaviour of my poor pupils, who would spend half the year (holiday times) at home. Fifth, I have completed all the duties for which I was engaged in their respect, and they have just left me to return to Cambridge. Sixth, my soul suffers in a house where belief in God is banned, etc. I am determined therefore to settle my accounts and retire as soon as seems possible to me.

For Madeley, which is still under discussion, I leave it in *statu quo*. Providence will tip the balance for the affirmative or the negative. The article on which I beg you to write to me your view, if you do not want to come to me immediately to give them by word of mouth, is this: Should I seek to gain my upkeep by taking several pupils like Mr. [James] Bernon? Or [should I] accept food and clothing for the services which I will do my best to render to the Methodist church? Should the latter option have less inconvenience, do I lodge in that house as your brother seems to propose to me? Or shall I rent a room nearby to be within reach of that place without my being absolutely confined there? This last seems to me the wiser. What do you think? Should I have a choice to make, shall I eat at the Found[ery], or should I ask for some money for my private upkeep—e.g., five shillings each week, with two or three pieces each year to provide me with the clothing when I may need it.

In giving me counsel, consider that the health of my soul, poverty of spirit, and a Christian liberty are the three torches which I choose to shed some light upon this little problem, and give me the advice that your sincere friendship for me and your experience of the world would suggest to us.

I lovingly embrace your little family from the bottom of my heart, and offer sincere wishes for your perfect recovery in body and in soul. And for the true happiness of your dear wife, whom I pray you to greet on behalf of

Your unworthy brother,

Address to me your prompt reply directly to Cleveland Court without cover

Address: “For / The Revd. Mr. C: Wesley.”

Endorsement: by CW, “Nov. 10. 1759 Mr. Fletcher.”

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/66.¹

¹A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 88–89. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith’s English translation (pp. 90–91).

From the Rev. John Fletcher

[London]
November 15, 1759

My Dear Sir,

I believe you have received a letter which I wrote to you last Saturday, by which you will have readily been able to conclude that your own had not yet reached me.¹ Effectively it was only given to me yesterday, a week after my arrival in London. I took the enclosure to its address this morning, and I spent three hours with a modern prodigy, a humble and pious Countess [LH]. I only went there trembling and in obedience to your orders. But I soon sensed a part of what the disciples sensed when Christ spoke to them, “It is I, be not afraid.” She has proposed to me what you said something of to me in your garden; this being to celebrate communion at her house every morning, and to exhort there when the occasion presents itself. And making it clear however that she would accept any arrangements which would not restrict my liberty, or prevent me from assisting you, or preaching to the French. And this for only as long as providence may need to set out clearly for me the way that it wishes me to take. Love, politeness, and reason accompanied her proposition. And I acknowledge that, despite the resolution that I had almost formed to flee absolutely *limina potentum*² (without excepting her house), I found myself so strongly changed that I would have accepted there and then her proposal, which would have put me to flight if it had been made by any other person or had not been accompanied by such reasonable terms. But my commitment to you restrained me, and in thanking the Countess I said to her that after having reflected upon her gracious offer I would have the honour of seeing her again at the first opportunity.

I see however two difficulties in that choice: Does it accord with the poverty of spirit that I seek? Am I able to accept an office for which I have so few talents, and do I not dishonour the cause of God in stammering the mysteries of the gospel there where ministers approved by the Lord have preached it with power and success? I suspect that my vanity gives more weight to the second objection than really exists. What do you think of it?

I abandon myself to your wise counsels. You have wasted your efforts in writing to me that they will be disinterested. I could never doubt this. I feel that I do not merit them, and even less so the title of friend that you take with me. You are an indulgent father to me, and the title of son suits me much better than that of brother.

You ask of me if I am able to abandon you with confidence at the mercy-seat of God? Ah yes, I am able. And I feel for you what I do not feel for myself. I am so certain of your salvation that I demand no other place in heaven than that which I may find at your feet. I even doubt whether paradise will be paradise without you sharing it with me. And the mere idea raised in my mind by your question whether we might one day be separated cuts me to the heart and bathes my eyes in tears. These tears are gentle tears and seem to water and bring to flower the hope—or rather the certainty—that I have that he who has begun a good work in us will bring it to completion, and unite me to you in Christ by the ties of an eternal love. And not only to you, but to those who come from your loins, and to your wife, whom I greet in Christ with you.

Farewell.

Reply to me as soon as you are able, addressed to Mr. Hill’s.

Endorsement: by CW, “Nov. 15. 1759 / M. Fletcher.”

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/61.³

¹CW’s letter is not known to survive; neither is the enclosed letter to LH that Fletcher mentions.

²Virgil, *Aeneid*, xii:519; “the thresholds of the powerful.”

³A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, etc. is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 91–92. See also the translation in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 97–99.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

[London]
November 28, 1759

My Dear Sir,

I thank you for your prompt reply, which only lacks the assurance of your prompt arrival to make my satisfaction complete. Your final lines have drawn tears from me, and I do not want to wait for your end to ask you to give me the blessing of which you speak.¹ I charge you in the name of Christ to give it [to] me when you are reading these lines, and to repeat it each time that you think of a poor brother who has need of the prayers of everybody and who is not able to do without yours. I pray you to urge your wife to come. I have a presentiment that I shall see her soon. The French will prompt her, as well as my prayers and those of Lady Huntingdon.

Farewell.

P.S. Your brother has been out of London for eight days and I have met with no opposition.²

Endorsement: by CW, “J Fletcher *anima[e] dimidium mea[e]*³ / Nov. 28. 1759.”

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/8.⁴

¹CW’s reply to Fletcher’s letter of Nov. 15, dated Nov. 17, survives in the form of CW’s copy for his records in shorthand. It does not include a blessing. Apparently Fletcher replied to the Nov. 17 letter c. Nov. 21, and CW answered about Nov. 25—neither of these letters known to survive.

²JW was out of London on a short preaching trip Nov. 22–27.

³Horace, *Odes*, I.iii.8; “half of my soul,” as in my dear friend.

⁴A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 94. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith’s English translation (pp. 94–95). This letter is merged with Fletcher’s letter of Sept. 4, 1759 in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 88. See also the translation published in *City Road Magazine* 2 (1872): 517–18.

From Christopher Hopper

Newcastle
December 16, 1759

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I waited with some degree of impatience for your answer, but your long stay in London was a sufficient plea for your silence.¹ Therefore I am well satisfied. I know it is much better to dictate than to practice, but I think, if my friends will judge with righteous judgment, my practice will plainly evince so far that a good wife does not slacken my zeal for God and his cause, or lessen my usefulness in our dear Lord's vineyard.² I believe some of our little ones within Sion's gates prophesied my downfall when I changed my life again, and got a fixed home. I understand you have forgot your informer, therefore I shall not have the pleasure to look them in the face, or to know where they live. It is no great matter I think. They are not worth one fourth of a dozen(?). And I know (blessed be God for it) it is your happy temper never to believe the accuser till you hear the accused make his defence. You give me all the liberty I desire: "Not immediately, no so much." That is all I want, sir. Wherever I settle, I hope I shall never settle upon my lees or bury my small talent.

Whether I may turn a dissenting person, I cannot tell. But this I'll presume to say: If you'll find me a loving converted bishop, who will ordain me upon honourable terms—viz., to preach when, where, and as often as unerring providence shall direct; to believe and subscribe nothing but what is agreeable to the will and word of God; and to keep up a close connexion with the happy people called Methodists—I think I'll never turn [a] dissenting person. But dear sir, give me leave to ask you, "What will the end of Methodism be?" If a Methodist preacher lives till he be weak and worn out with travelling, I apprehend he must either be ordained, or turn dissenting teacher, or sit down by his own fire (if he has one), or be cast out and rejected like an old surperannuated Hottentot left in his hut to die in mercy to his old age.³ Now, sir, if matters should come to this conclusion, I ask you in the hear[ing] of God, which of these would you have a poor worn-out brother to choose? All this and more has been answered with one word, "You want faith. You've lost your zeal." This may soon be said, but still I'm to believe that true faith, though above, never contradicts sound reason. However, be as it will, I'm a Methodist yet.

And if my brethren will do me justice, I think they never say anything in my whole deportment very bad. But there are some born to find fault, and those are the unhappy men. I've preached since I was married as I did before. But those men say "He is silent." I've kept my circuit constantly, which I suppose is near three hundred miles in a month, as before. But these men say, "Christopher Hopper will travel no more." Therefore those men will say what they please, or rather whatever an evil spirit dictates. But blessed be God, all this is nothing to me. I've nothing to do but please my dear Lord and Master. And if I stand approved in his sight, I shall enjoy peace in my way, victory over death, and then a crown of glory.

We enjoy great peace without Pilgrim's Gate, and in all our borders. I can say little for Scotland. The north Britons are full of words, but little power. Yet I believe there are a few precious souls in Dunbar and Musselburgh. We revive in Alnwick. We revive and increase in Plessey; no house in the place will contain the hearers.

We hold our own at Newcastle. We've no reason to complain. The Master of the vineyard removes now and then one to his eternal house. You've heard of sister Millener's death. I visited her. She had many violent storms in her passage, but calm uninterrupted peace in the end. I think your old friend

¹CW's letter to Hopper is not known to survive.

²Hopper's first wife, Jane (Richardson) Hopper, died in 1755. He married Ann Twizell in Newcastle on Apr. 25, 1759.

³Hottentots were one of the Khoisanid subgroups, closely related to the African "bushmen." Hopper relies a one of the descriptions of this group like "An Account of the Cape of Good Hope, by Mr. John Maxwell," *Philosophical Transactions* 25 (1706–07): 2423–34.

Henry [Jackson] will bury all his children.⁴ He still appears in the Orphan House under the pulpit, with his gray hairs. He can read the smallest print without his glass eyes. He's a wonder. We have many old saints in the church near the borders of eternity.

There is a good work in North and South Shields. Lions are become lambs, and God is glorified. We built a glorious house in Sunderland, and the work of the Lord prospers. Sinners are reclaimed, mourners are comforted, saints built up, Sion watered, and God glorified. We gain ground in Durham, where law and gospel reign. God has been on our side this year and has given us many victories. May we give him all the glory. Till this be done, all the danger is not past. But the Lord is our rock, may Israel say. Therefore we shall stand and be safe in the evil day.

My spouse [Ann] is greatly obliged to you for your present.⁵ I wish we had seen them before our thanksgiving day. They might have been reprinted. I still have gloomy days. But blessed be God, my comforts are not small. To him be all the glory forever.

The Orphan House salutes you. Mr. [Joseph] Cownley's house salutes you, together with my wife and many others. My dearest love to Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley and all inquirers and friends. And be assured I still remain

Your unworthy son, but I hope sincere friend,

C. Hopper

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr. Chas. Wesley / at the Foundery / London

Source: holograph; Pitts Library (Emory), Charles Wesley Family Papers (MSS 159), 1/7.

⁴Henry Jackson (1666–1766), a weaver in Newcastle, was an active supporter of the Wesley brothers and one of the trustees of the Orphan House.

⁵A copy of [CW,] *Hymns to be Used on the Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 29, 1759, and After it* ([London: Strahan, 1759]).

From James Jones¹

Handsworth
December 24, 1759

Reverend Sir,

I thought it might not be improper to acquaint you that we have built a preaching house at Wednesbury and [it] will be made fit to preach in in a little time. But the builders come so fast upon us for money that we are not able to pay them. Therefore I took this opportunity to beg the Bristol people's charity, and doubt not but they will cast in their mite, as I never troubled them before. I am not able to do all myself, or I would not trouble anybody. I have procured £100, but we shall want 100 more to pay only for the shell. Dear sir, I shall leave it to your consideration, as believing you'll see it is altogether for the cause of the exalted Redeemer. We shall all be exceeding glad to see you in these parts. O when will you come and help us? May the Lord incline you and make your way plain before you. We want some of the old fire to be cast in amongst us. Many hearts would dance to see you, as David [did] for joy before the ark.

We have just taken to the ground our poor sister Sally Sparrow, who has triumphed over death, hell, and the grave.² She was awakened about three years since by our preaching, which before she vehemently contradicted. But since that time I never saw a more earnest soul in all my life. She never missed any opportunity, morning, evening, or noon day. I have seen her morning and evening come five miles, middle-leg deep in snow, rain, and hail, to hear the preaching, and that for her constant practice, never missing band or class upon any consideration; until she so much impaired her health that she could go no long, and in a little time took to her bed. And having little or nothing to subsist upon, I took care she should want for nothing.

But I need not to have been in much care about her, as seeing the righteous are never forsaken nor their seed found begging their bread. For in a short time two or three of the head of the town came to see her often, and gave her weekly more than she expended. Yet all this while she knew not God, and often cried out, "I am lost. I am damned. I am undone forever." I laboured much to compose her, telling her the promises of God stood as firm as the pillars of heaven, and all that seek are sure to find. But all that I could say took no effect upon her, still crying out: "I am upon the brink of the grace—unpardoned and unreconciled to God!" I told her though I was so near, yet God was nearer, and that her eyes should soon see his great salvation! I told her to believe and cast her soul upon the Lord Jesus. But she cried, "I cannot, I cannot believe. My heart is as hard as a rock. Surely I am the greatest sinner in this world." I told her Christ came to seek and save such, and he was only then proving and trying the ground of her heart to do her good in her latter end. But still it availed nothing. And indeed, how should it until he who speaks in righteousness alone, mighty to save.

A few days after the last time I was with her, her sister lifted her up in the bed to give her a little juice; upon which she cried out, "O dear Peggy, how I love you! O I love all mankind, and I love God, and God loves me. For now I know that God for Christ's sake hath forgiven all my sins." She immediately began to pray for me, and all the preachers, and the society, with such energy and power that shook the very place and struck fire into every heart. She exhorted all that came to see her to be earnest with God and not to linger in the way to heaven.

A few days after, I went to see her. But oh what a change had God wrought since the last time I say her! At my first entering the room she was ready [to] leap out of the bed, crying, "O dear Mr. Jones,

¹James Jones (d. 1783), a man of some property, traveled for a time as one of JW's preachers, starting in 1743. He eventually restricted his work to Staffordshire where he was a greatly beloved and respected local preacher. Born in Tipton, he died in Birmingham in 1783. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 115; and Vickers, *Dictionary*, 184–85.

²Sarah Sparrow was buried in Wednesbury, Staffordshire on Dec. 19, 1759.

how I love you! I cannot tell you what God has done for my soul. Neither could I believe it if all the angels in heaven had declared it. Except God had both spake and sealed it upon my heart. O what manner of love is this that the Father hath bestowed upon me, the chief of sinners.” And with heaven in her face [she] cried out, “O the difference between lying upon a bed of guilt and a bed of pardon. I am now willing to live or die. The will of the Lord be done.” I told her not to think it strange if the enemy again should strive to disturb her peace before she died. She said, “He does thrust sore at me. But I find no more condemnation, glory be to God.”

I desired her to pray for me. She answered, “I cannot help prayer for you. But oh let me entreat you to go on in the work of the Lord, for you have been a very great instrument in the hands of God to many souls. And oh still be showing poor sinners the danger they are in. Persuade them to flee from the wrath to come.”

In this manner she continued praying, advising, and exhorting all that came near her, until she quietly returned unto the God of her fathers.

O where are the daring, hardened wits of the age that can call this delusion and hypocrisy and the like? Surely whatever deceit men in health and strength can show, yet souls hovering over the brink of eternity, just going nakedly to stand before God, can then play no part of a hypocrite.

Pray my kind love to dear Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley. I hope you do not forget unworthy me before the throne of grace, who am

Your unworthy son and servant,

James Jones

Address: “To / The Revd. Mr. Charles Wesley / in the ~~Horse-Fair~~ Foundery / Bristol London.”

Postmarks: “29/DE” and “3/IA.”

Endorsement: by CW, “James Jones / Death of Believer / Dec. 24 1760.”³

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/95.⁴

³CW mistakenly docketed “1760,” since he received the letter after the turn of the year.

⁴For a digital copy and “as-is” transcription, see:
<https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/services/digitisation-services/projects/rapture-and-reason/>

1760

From Lady Gertrude and Melusina Hotham

London
January 10, 1760

My Dear Friend in the Lord,

I should be very unworthy of your labours of love for me and mine did I not participate in all that concerns you and yours, temporal and spiritual. And [I] can truly say my prayers, unworthy as they are from such a poor sinner, have been surely offered up at the throne of grace for the sparing your dear son,¹ to be nurtured up in the admonition of the Lord, to live to his honour and praise and to be a growing comfort and blessing to you and your dear helpmeet, whom I know how to pity under this severe trial. But these are often sent to God's chosen for a trial of their faith and resignation, in order to give them back their Isaac again, with a ten-fold blessing. May this be your happy case! The Lord's arm is not shortened, who is mighty to save. He can say to this threatening distemper, "Thus far shall you come, and no farther."² And it is in this faith and trust alone I hope to receive a line of comfort from you that the Lord has been graciously pleased to show some token for good, by having blessed the means needed to this chis your dear child; which, that he may, is the daily prayer of, my dear friend,

Ever yours in the Lord,

G. H.

Pray assure Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley of my sincere love.

[On the back side of the second page]

I can't let my mother send her letter without assuring you, my dear and worthy friend, how much I sympathize with you and dear Mrs. Wesley in your present trying circumstances. May the blessed Jesus be with you, and enable you to cast all your care upon him, as knowing he ordereth all things well for those who love him. All your friends here will long much to hear from you. And I beg, my dear sir, you will do me the justice always to think of me as

One of our constant well-wishers, and much obliged friend and servant,

Melusina Hotham

Endorsement: by CW, "L. Gertrude & Melly / Jan. 10. 1760 / on Charles sick."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 1/82.

¹CW had rushed back to Bristol from London on hearing that CW Jr. had smallpox. He would soon inform those in London praying for his son of his recovery.

²Job 38:11.

From the Rev. Walter Shirley¹

Loughrea
January 12, 1760

Reverend and Most Dear Sir,

It has not departed out of my mind the happy hour I passed with you at Bath.² And I consider it as the earnest of repeated blessings from your correspondence, and perhaps (as God shall order it) from your company.

I have been returned to my living about three weeks, and found the spiritual state of things here in that woeful dismay that I cannot be reconciled to my passage and journey to England, even on the most plausible excuses that the flesh can suggest. I have cried, however, to the Lord in earnest prayer, and my hopes begin once more to revive. I think I discern the appearance of the seed breaking forth from the earth.

I have upon my late coming here assumed that resolution which your council inspired, and no longer making use of a formal written discourse, I only plan out the heads, and so trust to the Lord for the rest. What is wanting of correctness in this method of preaching will be amply, I hope, made up in power. And it is certain that one often finds a boldness of expression in an off-hand discourse which the cold chastity of a written one would shrink at. I thought as I had been absent from Loughrea some months, this was only time to break the ice. And I think I observe that the word thus delivered makes stronger impression than formerly on the hearers.

You was pleased to comfort me by a kind of promise that you would sometimes bestow an hour on my sister at Bath, who is dearer to my heart than she seems to be to her own.³ O that you may be blessed to her soul! That you may point out to her the hidden deceitfulness of her heart, and how highly she hath injured the cause of God in the vain pretences she made to piety, without any real sincerity at the bottom. I am assuredly convinced that her foundation was never right. When the tempests therefore came, and the floods descended, how ill could she sustain the shock.

I wrote to Lady Huntingdon and was favoured with a most obliging answer, which induced me to trouble her Ladyship with another letter. And as this was some time ago, and I have not again heard from her since, the very great respect and esteem I bear her make me anxious beyond measure. Pray tell her Ladyship (if you see her, or by letter if you write) that if she waits till she as agreeable things to write me concerning our family, she may wait long enough. I am here, dear Mr. Wesley, full of private troubles and a public dispensation committed to me, to which I cannot presume I am equal. I have no one to whom I can unbosom my griefs; nay, not anyone with whom I can converse with satisfaction. My whole consolation therefore must consist in the hope that I am not utterly rejected by God or his children. And whenever this comfort is administered from those I love, I find my soul rise superior to every earthly consideration and trample these meaner sorrows under foot.

I wrote to your dear brother [JW] this post.⁴ I flatter myself that you will both bear me in your memory when you come before the throne of grace, and that your prayers will obtain for me some portion of those rich gifts and graces with which you yourselves so much abound.

¹Rev. Walter Shirley (1725–86), first cousin of LH, became rector of Loughrea, County Galway, Ireland in 1746. About 1758 he experienced an evangelical conversion (possibly through the agency of JW), and was initially quite warm in relations with CW. However, he turned sharply against the Wesleys in the controversy over the rejection of Calvinism in the *Minutes* of the 1770 Conference. See *DEB*, 1009; *ODNB*; and Vickers, *Dictionary*, 316.

²While CW in Bristol, Nov.–Dec. 1759.

³Elizabeth Shirley (1732–1803), sister of Walter and Laurence Shirley, who never married.

⁴See *AM* 3 (1780): 333–35.

If the good wishes, the prayers, and the affection of by far the meanest of God's servants can in any respect be acceptable to you, permit me to present you with mine from the warmest glowings of my heart, desiring to be acknowledged by you, not merely in form but in real sincerity,

Your faithful and most affectionate brother in the bands of Christ Jesus,

Walter Shirley

Be pleased to direct to me at Loughrea, Ireland.

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr. Charles Wesley / at the Horse-Fair / Bristol."

Postmarks: "Loughrea" and "Country"

Endorsement: by CW, "Jan. 12. 1760 / Mr Shirley pr[eaching] Extempore."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDP 1/69.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

[London]
Tuesday evening [January 15, 1760¹]

My Dear Sir,

I have been complaining about your silence, and hardly expected that you were waiting for me to break it first. Your letter has finally relieved me of my fear that you had found Charles [Jr.] in nearly the same state as you had found the blessed John.² I have immediately related its contents to my good neighbours Mrs. [Bridget] Carteret, etc.³ I filled your place yesterday as well as I could (that is to say very badly) at their house where Sir Charles [Hotham] was, you would not have been forgotten there any more than your Isaac. On Sunday I offered him and yourself on the altar with the little gathering at Snowfields, and I have good hope that the Lord will be satisfied with the oblation and will not demand the fullness of the sacrifice.

How is my god-daughter [Sarah Jr.]? You are so occupied with Charles that you do not speak of her. The omission is forgivable if you mend it by the first post. I assume that Charles's fate was decided in the moment that I wrote, and I flatter myself that it is for the best. You are perhaps rejoicing that he is out of danger, while we are still trembling for him. If you have left off worrying, set us also free from care likewise. My Lady [Huntingdon] sympathises with you more than you can possibly imagine. How is your poor wife? We commend her to your tender care, and to your wise consolations; but more than that to the great Consoler. May he fill her, as well as you, with the pious sentiments of Eli!⁴ May you be able to speak together with that divine power, that deep resignation which words hardly express. The Lord will fashion him as seems good to him. The offering is worthy of him who has not spared his own son for us. And if he accepts it, it is only to keep him in safety to render him up on the great day. Read your hymns and you will find there the sentiments which I wish from the bottom of my heart for you.

Mrs. Heritage,⁵ whose house I have just visited, suffers with your wife. I have not seen Mrs. [Susanna] Boulton since your departure. My pupils are no longer going to riding school. I am doing penance, insofar as I pass the mornings with them. Your brother [JW] has agreed that I can go on Friday to look for Mrs. Heritage's book, which you have left in Christopher's Alley. Mrs. [Sarah] Jones, your brother, and I were at my Lady [Huntingdon]'s house on Saturday. I realised that you were not there. Your brother seemed vexed when I told him that I had taken a room near St. James. He said that he would prefer to pay the rent for nothing, rather than see me lost among the rich. In seeming to have yielded, I satisfied him. And I am fully occupied in removing.⁶ The time is fully come. No one speaks of my staying. To the contrary, they say, "We shall at last get rid of him." My pupils leave next Saturday, and I count on departing from the house the same day as them.

I will speak to you another time of the consequences of your last sermon at Spitalfields.⁷ And I

¹Date established by CW learning of CW Jr.'s smallpox and departing London on Jan. 8; see CW to SGW, Jan. 8, 1760. CW's letter to Fletcher say CW Jr. was safe is not known to survive.

²I.e., CW's first son John, whom he rushed back from London to find dead of smallpox in 1754

³Fletcher had taken a room near Carteret's London home on St. James's Place.

⁴See 1 Sam. 3:18, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good."

⁵Hannah Parsons (1712–86) married widower William Heritage (1706–57) of St. James parish in Jan. 1744. She was widowed in 1757. She had provided housing for CW during his last stay in London.

⁶I.e., leaving the employ of the Hill family.

⁷There is no surviving record of the exact date or topic of this sermon in early January at Spitalfields.

will conclude by wishing you the faith of Abraham, his resignation, and his success. All is before us, life, death, things present and things to come. All things work together for good for those who love God. And if our father, our mother, or our son abandons us, it is only so that the Lord can gather us with greater tenderness. May you and your wife be able to enter into that sweet experience.

Farewell and may the peace of God keep all your thoughts in the knowledge of Christ and resignation to his Holy will.

Mrs. [Bridget] Carteret has given me this frank to write to you. You can always address letters to my patron as usual. Reply, although it be only a line.

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/63.⁸

⁸A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 95–96. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 96–98).

From Anne (Carteret) Cavendish & Bridget Carteret

St. James's Place
January 18 [1760]

My Dear Friend,

Oh how good and gracious is the Lord to them who put their whole trust in him. Unbounded love! He has given you a favourable answer to your prayers and tears. He spake the word and you dear son lives. Blessed and forever blessed be his great name. I join with you and your dear partner in praise and thanksgiving for this his unspeakable mercy to you. May he keep him whom he has been pleased to restore safe under the shadow of his wings and bless him with every good and perfect gift. And may you and his dear mother live to see him a faithful disciple of his blessed Lord and saviour, into whose hands I am sure you will commit him. And may the same Lord bless you and yours, in time and in eternity, is the sincere prayer of

Your most unworthy but faithful friend in Christ Jesus,
to whom be all glory [and] all praise,

A. Cavendish

My kindest love to dear Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley.

[in another hand]

I shared with my dear friends in their grief, and now desire to join with them in blessing the Lord, whose compassion fails not. Your letters rejoiced us all yesterday.¹ Mr. [John] Fletcher brought them, and found Lady Huntingdon here with us. Your hymn is very sweet.² May the Lord restore your Isaac—with thousands and thousands of blessings to him, your dear partner, and yourself—is the prayer of

Your affectionate friend,

B. Carteret

Lady Robert Manners has been here once since you left us; but I find, and she must find too, my insufficiency to be of any use to her. Therefore, come again soon.

No address page

Endorsement: by CW, "Mrs Cavendish / & Carteret Jan. 18 / 1760 / congratul. on / Ch.'s recovery."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/502/2/6.

¹These letters are not known to survive.

²CW had likely sent an initial manuscript version of one of the two thanksgiving hymns for a son who recovered from smallpox that he later published in *Family Hymns* (1767), 78–80

From Samuel Lloyd

London
January 24, 1760

My Very Dear Friend,

Do not wonder at my silence. I too sensibly felt for you and your dear partner when you called to take your leave of us; to suffer you to share in my afflictions, which then almost overwhelmed me, having just then received the first advice of poor Jacky Lowe (Benny's brother) being lost with the captain and six English sailors near Venice getting ashore in their boat, whilst five Italians were safely wafted there on a raft. I had no hand in advising his going, and it would appear childish or presumptuous to relate my gloomy forebodings. On the back of this came letters from Jamaica of the death of our mutual good friend E. Montague. Thus it pleases providence to exercise me. May his mercy supply me with resigned patience to all his dispensations. Amen.

I see not yet that my temporal concerns suffer in either of these cases. Yet my grief for the loss of both is more than prudent. Mr. Henry Livingston of Jamaica had my power of attorney provisionally, by virtue whereof he has take the needful steps to secure my property there, and Ralph Montague,³ the younger brother, to act under him. The deceased made a will long ago, leaving the said Ralph and his brother John united executors. He lay about six days of the fever, and died at Montego Bay the 5th of October last.

Mr. and Mrs. Robinson's departure approacheth.⁴ How are the occasions multiplied for you to bear us on your mind before the throne! To whose paternal affection commending ourselves. We greatly rejoice in your comfort for the restoration of your Isaac.⁵ May it be for good! And may the great God sanctify all the incidents and accidents that before us. We all unite in love to you both. And Miss Darby being here for some days on a visit to Mrs. Robinson,⁶ brings me the enclosed letter to convey.⁷

I am, my dear sir,

Yours most affectionately,

S. Lloyd

Endorsement: by CW, "Mr Lloyd Jan. 24. 1760 / poor Montegue gone!"

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/102.⁸

³Ralph Montague (c. 1740–1827).

⁴Pickering and Mary Ann (Lloyd) Robinson, returning to Jamaica.

⁵I.e., CW Jr.'s recovery.

⁶Little is known of Louisa Darby (1733–1824) except that she was a niece of Martha (Meighen / Colvill) Gumley, who never married.

⁷This letter is not known to survive.

⁸For 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 Fletcher

[London]
January 30, 1760

My Dear Sir,

I have received all your letters. And if you have not had replies to all of them, it is that I have had nothing of importance to report, nothing that is worth a frank. But to justify myself, I am ready to sacrifice all my little allowance.

That [letter] in which you urge me to do nothing in haste, and not to leave Cleveland Court before providence has signed and sealed my discharge, has been very useful to me.¹ I went to consult my Lady [Huntingdon]. I laid the whole situation before her and she advised me to talk with Mrs. [Susanna] Hill, to clarify matters before leaving the house. Providence gave me the opportunity the same day, and the thing turned out as I would have wished. She did not again make the proposal that she made to me before, to have stayed with them for my lodging and board on condition that I would promise to go to Tern this summer; which I was far from accepting, seeing that I would have been swallowing a hook without bait, solely for the pleasure of swallowing it. She began to reproach me about my way of thinking in the matter of religion. Then she passed on to lively remonstrations as to my folly of not having anything saved from their employ, and of leaving them poorer than I was nine years ago, then becoming ⟨...²⟩ told me that she would do everything she could for me, and added that their table would be always open when I wanted to take advantage of it.

Two or three days afterwards I found the occasion to speak also with Mr. [Thomas] Hill, who, without making me a further offer to stay, thanked me with great civility for my services and allowed me always to make use of his address as if I was in his house. So you can continue to address your letters to his house and under his envelope.

I have hardly seen your brother at all since we have finished the Acts.³ He is visiting the classes with Mr. [John] Jones. He seems very calm about me, and does not speak to me of anything.

I am in my little room from yesterday for good. I find outward peace there and I expect to find it there inwardly. I have been this morning at my Lady's, who greets you. And who joins with me in telling you that we have need of you to make the three-fold cord, and for you to pray to hasten your return if providence leaves you free so to do. Our conversation has been deep and full of the power of faith on her side. For myself, I was as Saul at the feet of Gamaliel.

Mr. [Thomas] Jones the minister has taken Snowfields, and preaches without notes. So that he and Mr. [Thomas] Maxfield are able to take the two chapels during your absence. Mrs. [Hannah] Heritage greets you, and asks you to remember the "soon" of your letter. [incomplete bottom portion missing]

Endorsement, by CW, "J Fletcher Jan. 30. 1760."

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/9.⁴

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²A portion of the bottom of the manuscript is torn off, likely containing 2–3 lines.

³JW was working through and published the revised 3rd edn. of *NT Notes*.

⁴A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 98–99. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 100–01).

From John Johnson¹

Dublin
February 7, 1760

Reverend Sir,

John Johnson has not forgot his friend Charles Wesley. I wrote twice to him and had not answer. I should [have] wrote again but, having so much sickness, it hindered me. At Limerick I had a violent fever. My life was despaired of. I had two physicians attended me. One was a papist, the other a Quaker. They attended me very well and seemed much concerned that so young a man should die. When one of them told me with much caution [that] I had the fever, I desired I would not be surprised. I told him I was not afraid to die. He looked as in amaze[ment]. His answer was, “Young people are desirous of life.” I told him I saw nothing here worth living for, but if God would give me my life I would accept of it. I told them I looked to God for a cure through their medicines. They thought I had soon lost my reason. But glory be to my Lord, I never lost it; though some part of the time I was somewhat stupified. If anyone spoke to me of God, I then soon forgot all pain. My stupidity left me. In short, it was a blessed time to my soul.

But when all hope of life was gone, the papist doctor, knowing I was one of their community in time past, thought (I believe) to bring me back to mother Church again. [He] began after this, “Mr. Johnson, was you educated in the Protestant religion?” I answered, “No, I was not, but I will tell you the whole [of] how I came to be a Protestant.” I told him I always read my Bible, but knew nothing what true religion was. He answered that was [a] pity. He then thought I did not know what his religion was. But I told him I did not mean that. I told him I thought religion consisted only in externals, but when I heard the people called Methodist I found it was a change wrought in the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost. I told him I sought it and found it. And then, ignorant as I was, God sent me to preach; and these signs followed: sinners were turned to God. He then answered, “Every man to his trade. That was the priest, to his Bible.” My answer was if I saw a man in a fever and had a medicine that would cure him, must I not give it [to] him because I was not a physician? I told him I would, and on the same principles was resolved to preach. I told him I had preached, and determined so to do as long as I had breath (God grant I may keep my word). He found me steadfast in my principles. My pain was gone and all weakness. He then desired me to cease speaking and keep my confidence, for fear of my head. He then left me and never after spoke to me on that head. He refused a fee, as did the Quaker.

When I was able to preach again, I found it a happy time. I gained more by that fever than by anything that ever befell me. I soon had a flux. As soon as I was able to ride, I went to Cork—where I hope never to go again unless there is a great alteration. There are many serious people there, but many evil speakers among them. Party spirits, I believe, do hinder the work of the Lord amongst them. When I first came I had a prospect of much good being done. But I was laid by. I had an inflammation on the diaphragm. [For] six weeks I did not preach. As soon as I was able to ride, I set out for Dublin. In Cork I found many drunkard[s]; I read out [of the society] seven. [Also] three adulterers. O my heart was grieved to find these had often been detected yet bore with. I had some small fruit of my labour, but the least appeared in this place as I have yet found. A Limerick there is the best society according to their number.

Dublin has this winter been very badly served by James Deaves.² They almost lost their congregations; no morning preaching scarcely. O dear sir, I fear he has no grace. He is soon expected in

¹John Johnson (1725–1803), a native of Somerset, became a Methodist travelling preacher in 1753 and spent most of his career preaching in Ireland. He was for a while General Assistant for the Irish work, but in the late 1750s became the center of some dissent. See Vickers, *Dictionary*, 182.

²James Deaves (fl. 1750–90) entered the itinerancy in Ireland in 1753 (see JW, *Works*, 10:267), and served at intervals through 1767 (10:344). He remained associated with Methodism after he ceased to itinerate, settling for a while in Wexford and later in Waterford.

town. The place appointed for him is without a preacher. I was in hopes his marriage would have helped him, but it has not yet. But I hope it will. Sufferings may, which he has no other prospect.

I hope we shall recover ourselves again at Dublin. Our congregations are very large at present. The people will bear plain speaking and good discipline. This would be a glorious society if they were well attended.

I hope sir to have a line from you, while I remain
Your unworthy son in the gospel,

Jno. Johnson

My kind love to Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley.

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr. Chas. Wesley / at ye Foundry / London."

Endorsement: by CW, "Febr. 9. 1760 / J. Johnson sick."³

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/91.⁴

³There are a few shorthand notes on the address page that do not appear to relate to the letter.

⁴For 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 Fletcher

[London]
February 9, 1760

My Dear Sir,

Your little narration is not less amusing than instructive. And I smile in reading it, as your wife did in hearing it. It is some years since the Lord permitted that my proud heart should loose itself not only for some minutes, but during many weeks. I, who was troubled about nothing, felt all at once the progress of a thousand horrible cares, which inclined my heart to envy. This had however a happy result. I learned in some measure to know myself, and to feel my littleness of faith in divine providence. If the Lord should put me to the same trial now, I know not how I should sustain it. I know only that I never either see or feel myself so much a heathen as I really am.

I am very comfortable at Mr. [Thomas] Hill's. The whole family received me in the kindest manner possible. And the Lord gives me peace in this respect also in an unhopd for manner. Mrs. Hill is very ill.¹ She took to her bed two days after I left the house, and when I went to see how she was I had permission to read some collects to her.

I find myself very quiet in my little retreat. I fear however this calm foretells a storm. And I suppose that it comes of the distrustful charity of our brethren, many of whom feel scandalized because there is a sister in the house.

I know not what news I can give you concerning my soul. I know not what to think myself. It is a chaos. It is without form and void. All I discover of it tells me that darkness is yet upon the face of the deep. I sometimes gain at Paddington a ray of light or a movement of divine love. But alas this feeble ray, or this momentary movement, soon loses itself in the frightful void of my soul. Come and groan with me, or teach me to rejoice with you. Messrs. [John] Jones and [John] Downes are this morning come to my Lady [Huntingdon]'s. And although the Lord was in some degree present with us, we felt that you were not there, and we besought him to open the way for your return.

I have nothing particular to acquaint you with except the death of Mr. Smith, the neighbour of Lady [Cornelia] Piers,² who you should have seen. He expired yesterday, and the day before I hastened to the execution of his will, by which he leaves to 60 or 70 poor of the society £30 sterling each. I have in this almost acted the part of the Jesuit. But bless God, I have acted disinterestedly, although the world might, if the affair gets wind, think differently. My conscience does not reproach me with sinister designs.

I leave the pen in order to go and pass the evening as Mrs. [Anne] Cavendish's, where I cannot go on Mondays because I preach at Spitalfields. We shall there, if it please God, remind ourselves of you. Will you bring Mrs. Wesley? You know that your friend near St. Paul's has offered her her apartments. If she comes, that will perhaps detain you too long in London. Assure her of my respects and embrace the little family. I should not have been sorry if my god-daughter had taken the small pox with Charles. But at present I desire that she may escape, since your return depends upon her health. Come quickly and bring with you the answer of this letter, and a heart full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, capable of inflaming mine.

J. F.

Source: secondary translation (from French); MARC, MAW Fl, 36.5.³

¹Susanna Maria (Noel) Hill died Feb. 14, 1760.

²Cornelia Gertrude (Pigott) Piers (1721–77), widow of Sir John Piers (d. 1747), 4th Baronet..

³This letter is known only from a translation sent to Thomas Jackson now in MARC.

From Samuel Lloyd

London
February 19, 1760

Reverend and Dear Sir,

As my nephew Robinson advised me by his letter from Postrout(?) dated Sunday last to have wrote you since his being there,¹ I have been the less mindful to advise you of their motions, and to thank you as I ought for the salutary advice contained in your last favour to be mindful of and prepare for eternity.²

But I have last night experienced a loud call indeed, having been kept for about three hours in the most agonizing terror, by a pistol, a large butcher's knife being held over me, ready to cut the thread of life every moment, with the bitterest imprecations and the light of a dark lantern³ held to my face by a ruffian. [He was] one of a daring gang, it is impossible to say how many, who had found means to get into my house and who came into my chamber in the habit [i.e., cloths] of a sailor, accoutred as before, with a most terrifying mask on, and waked me in a dismal low tone to give him all my jewellery(?), and further to tell him in what part of the house was my cash. For that they wanted it, and being sailors should receive their pay soon—when [they] would honourably return it. And that if I made a noise or spoke aloud to alarm the servant, he would cut my throat, etc.⁴

God gave me (praised be his name) great composure and presence of mind. I turned out of bed, told him that I would give him all I had, with all my heart, and took up my breeches, feeling in my gold pocket, and then in my silver pocket, but to my surprise found none therein. (But he did not seem uneasy thereat, having before rifled my pockets). But [he] then demanded where I kept my cash. I told him chiefly at the bankers. "What, none in the house?" "Yes, a little." "Where?" "In my desk in the comptnigh(?)." "Where's the key?" "On the green table there, all three keys. And I will go with you, if you please, to show you." And [I] rose to my feet, to get the keys for him. But he went and took one of the three that lay there himself, and bid me go into bed. And with great imprecations threatening that if I mentioned anything of the matter to anyone for four days, that I and all my family should be murdered. I promised that I would not, and in going out of the chamber he returned and asked if the cash was in a drawer, box, [or] what? I told him and then he adjured me to lay quiet and went out of the chamber door. I laid down very still, lifting my heart to God that no blood might be shed, for I trembled for my poor family, whom I feared were either gagged or massacred. But if otherwise, that his mercy would forgive our sins and cut short his work in our souls, including ejaculations and broken sighs to heaven. I passed near half an hour, when I turned out of bed, went softly towards the door, and pressed quietly against it with interest to get up to the men's room, when to my great consternation he was standing sentinel in the passage with his dark lantern and implements of death in his hand, and with bitter imprecations threatened my life. I retired trembling to my bed, commending my soul to God, every moment expecting the execution of his threats, which in mercy were withheld from being executed. I heard over my head somebody turn out of bed and walk about the room when the clock struck 4:00, which gave some hopes. But alas, [he] never came down until near 5:00, his usual time of going out to refreshing, it proving to be the coachman. And as he did not come into my room, as usual to alight his candle, when he went down (as his custom was) without his shoes, I was doubtful it was not the ruffians, without shoes, in which

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²This letter is not known to survive.

³I.e., a shrouded lantern.

⁴The thief turned out to be Robert Tilling, a coachman employed by Lloyd. Tilling's indictment included attempted murder. For this and other offenses, he was executed on April. 28. See "Ordinary's Account, 28th April 1760," Proceedings of the Old Bailey.

manner they walked up and down the house. So that in the same agony of spirit I lay until half an hour after 6:00, when John the footman came into my room. When I rushed up into the clerks' rooms and alarmed them. The whole of this trial lasting till then from a little after 3:00.

But I should tell you that about a half an hour after 4:00, or nearer 5:00, one of them brought up the keys, came just within my room door, laid them on the green desk, and in a much more pleasing voice than before said, "There's your keys. But if you speak of this for these four days, expect to be murdered. But in a little time you will have your money again."

The thought how that the wicked are a sword in the hand of the Almighty came strong into my mind, and nothing but mercy, mercy free, mercy all could have prevented its sending me quick into hell. But I am spared. May in not be in vain! And may I be truly thankful, both in heart and life.

Help me, dear sir, to send forth united to the great congregation a tribute of humblest adoration and praise for this singular deliverance of an undeserving family, who seemed destined for a carnage. Praise the Lord my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Amen. Shall we not be present in spirit, though absent in body, where you bear us in mind in this public thanksgiving?

Lady Robert [Manners] wrote me last week that Mrs. [Martha] Gumley was setting out for Bath. So I hope you would have seen her ere this. But it is prolonged, I heard yesterday, on account of her moving her about into Hasley Street.

Salute your dear partner and little ones, wherein Nelley Robinson⁵ joins with, dear sir,
Your truly affectionate friend,

Sam. Lloyd

Address: "To / The Reverend / Mr. Chas. Wesley / Charles Street / Bristol."

Postmark: "20/FE."

Endorsement: by CW, "Feb. 19. 1760 / Sam. Lloyd robbed."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/53.

⁵Mary Ann (Lloyd) Robinson, Samuel's niece, and Pickering Robinson's wife.

From the Rev. Walter Shirley¹

Loughrea
February 23, 1760

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Blessed by the great God who hath enriched your heart with love and filled your mind with divine wisdom. and blessings upon blessings [be] on thy head, thou sweet messenger of comfort, for thou hast refreshed my bowels and caused me to rejoice even in tribulation.

O my worthy friend, how infinitely am I obliged to you for the tender attention you paid to the deep affliction of my sister and your earnest endeavours (which I behold as if I had been present) of turning all to the advantage of her precious soul.² O may those falling tears that trickled down unto her bosom be as the dew of heaven to dissolve all that is stony about her heart, and sweetly prepare it for the more durable impressions of God's grace.

What shall I say of my unhappy brother? What of my poor mother?³ What of the innumerable evils in array before me? In the strength of the Lord I am about to oppose myself to this mountain of griefs, seeing plainly that it is God's will I should go to England. Committing myself to the care and disposal of my ever gracious God, I purpose to set out on this melancholy journey next week, and wish above all things that I may either meet with you or your dear brother on my arrival in London. My excellent friend Lady Huntingdon has wrote to me very affectionately on this occasion. May God reward her sweet, loving soul.

I find this wretched man has refused to see any of his relations and friends. I am determined, however. I will not be easily repulsed. I will carry him, spirt of himself. I will yet carry him the message of everlasting peace, if now at length he may be brought to accept it. As to his life, I doubt it is past hope. But if the Lord will hear me, and grant to my earnest petitions the saving of his poor soul, I think I should not in the least repine, whatever should be determined concerning his fate. I know, my dear sir, you at least will not leave me to pray alone. O let us raise an army of blessed saints, that we may besiege the throne of God and be mightily prevailing with importunate wrestlings. Surely, surely we shall not be cast out. I have his encouraging words yet sounding in my ears, "As yet have ye asked nothing. Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."⁴ O what a mighty something have I to ask. But the Lord says our joy shall be full. "Ask and ye shall receive." Lord, I believe. Lord, I ask in faith, for thy name's sake grant me the request of my lips. O turn the heart of this disobedient man to the wisdom of the just. Grant me but this, and then whether unto life or death dispose of him as thou seest good.

I think I perceive in myself even now a token for good. If I may not expect the happiness of seeing you in London, at least for God's sake let me hear from you. And direct to me at The Honourable Mrs. Shirley's in Half Moon Street, near Piccadilly.⁵ I am, with the greatest truth,

My dear Mr. Wesley's most sincere friend and affectionate brother in the Lord,

Walter Shirley

¹On Jan. 16, 1760, Laurence Shirley (1720–60), 4th Earl Ferrers (brother of Walter and first cousin of LH) shot and killed John Johnson, a steward who worked for him. The Earl had been taken into custody and was being held at the Tower for trial. He would be found guilty and hung on May 5, 1760. CW provided significant support to LH and the Shirley family throughout this ordeal. Cf. *The Trial of Laurence Earl Ferrers, for the Murder of John Johnson* (London: S. Billingsley, 1760).

²Elizabeth Shirley (1732–1803), the unmarried sister of Walter and Laurence.

³Anne (Clarges) Shirley (1695–1782), was the mother of Walter and Laurence.

⁴John 16:24.

⁵The residence of his brother Robert Shirley (1723–87).

Address: “To / The Revd. Mr. Cha. Wesley / at the Foundery / Bristol [sic].”

Postmark: “Loughrea.”

Endorsement: by CW, “Febr. 23. 1760 / Mr. Shirley humble / loving, thankful.”

Source: holograph; MARC, DDPr 1/70.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Dunstable
March 1, 1760

My Dear Sir,

I have had a happy journey for the body but unhappy for the soul.¹ All demanded that I cry without ceasing, “Lord have mercy on a miserable sinner.” But alas, I have not done so. The good weather invites me to complete a plan that I had half formed of making a forced march to spend next Sunday at Everton, the parish of Mr. Berridge.² May the voice of God there be heard by a poor descendant of Adam, who like him is still behind the trees of his stupidity and his impenitence. If I do not lose myself going across fields before I arrive there, and if God gives me the spirit of supplication, I will pray for you and for our sister at Paddington [LH], while waiting to be able to pray with you. Don’t forget me, I beg you. If the Lord brings me to your memory, cast your bread upon the waters in my favour;³ perhaps you will recover it after many days. I want to be with you on those great occasions that you have to raise a thousand voices to heaven in unison to obtain those graces which I have not. But God’s will be done: I hope myself to see your brother on Monday at Mr. Berridge’s,⁴ and to see you on Sunday [next] week, or perhaps sooner, depending what providence ordains for me.

If you do not scorn my little dwelling, I ask you to go there, though it only be to sound out there my landlady, who I ask you to greet on my behalf and tell her that I am counting on being back before the end of next week unless providence denies me this.

Farewell. The Lord strengthen you in soul and in body (you and yours).

Don’t forget to present my respects to the Countess. If I stay some time at Everton, I will take the liberty of sending her news of the work of God in these part. Otherwise I will bring it myself.

Endorsement: by CW, “Mar. 1. 1760 / J Fletcher.”

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/83.⁵

¹Fletcher had taken his final leave from the Hill family at Tern Hall and was headed to London.

²Rev. John Berridge (1717–93), vicar of Everton, Bedfordshire, was a supporter of the evangelical revival. At this point his parish was a center for the work of JW’s preachers in the East Midlands, with Berridge often joining in itinerant preaching. See Vickers, *Dictionary*, 28.

³See Eccles. 11:1.

⁴While JW left London on Monday, Mar. 3, there is no indication in his *Journal* that he went through Everton or saw Berridge.

⁵A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 103–04. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith’s English translation (p. 104). See also the earlier (and looser) translation in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 99–100.

From Francis Gilbert

Bristol
March 15, 1760

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Although I think a lay-preacher may lawfully give the sacrament, without the imposition of a bishop's hand, yet I in no wise judge it prudent for any of those to do it who are in connection with your brother and you.¹ It is exceeding probable that if such a thing was allowed, it would throw us into great confusion, involve us (your brother in particular) in many difficulties, perhaps do little good and much hurt. If such a thing was proposed in Conference, and be put to the vote, I think I must lose the grace I now have before I could give my voice for it. However were I to preach the gospel in any distant part of the world, where there was no plan of a church yet laid, and where the sacrament was not given more than once or twice in the year in the Church after the English establishment, I am now apt to think it might then be my duty to give the sacrament as well as to preach.

It has been for some years impressed upon my mind that I shall return again to Antigua. Though I hope I shall never go till I have good reasons to believe that it is the will of God I should. I believe the way is clearing, and perhaps it will not be long ere I depart. Should I preach the gospel there, a necessity perhaps would be laid upon me to do the other thing also, as the sacrament is seldom given there. Now I have no objection to the being ordained by a bishop, if I may be allowed to explain two or three of the Articles mine own way. And perhaps no good bishop would object to my explanation of them. When I reflect on the smallness of my abilities either acquired or natural, and the littleness of my grace, I have no reason to expect success. But perhaps the bishop who ordained Mr. Haughton, if he knew of the likelihood of my going abroad, would not refuse me ordination.²

If you approve of this, and you were to desire your brother to speak to the bishop concerning it, perhaps he would do it and succeed. But let it be which way it will, this is my prayer, "Lord thy will be done, make me anything, send me anywhere." I must beg your prayers for

Your unworthy son though affectionate servant,

Francis Gilbert

If you should write to your brother concerning this matter, and you should judge it well that I should write to him also, perhaps your sending him this will do as well.

Address: "To / the Revd. Mr. Charles Wesley."

Endorsement: by CW, "March 15. 1760 / F. Gilbert honest."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/54.³

¹Three Methodist lay itinerants in the Norwich circuit—John Murlin (1722–99), Paul Greenwood (d. 1767), and Thomas Mitchell (1726–85)—had recently begun to administer the Lord's Supper, even though they were not ordained. Francis Gilbert had clearly received a letter much like the one CW sent to Nicholas Gilbert on Mar. 6, 1760 seeking to rally resistance among the lay-preachers to this practice.

²William Barnard (1697–1768), Bishop of Derry, ordained John Haughton in 1759 and appointed him rector of Kilrea, Londonderry.

³A transcription was published previously in *WHS* 27 (1950): 147.

From John Parry

[London]
March 29, 1760

Sir,

Being at Spitalfields chapel sooner than common on Sunday, March the 16th, I had the time to exercise my thoughts. But among the many things that came to my mind, that of our assembling there was uppermost. And after I had put my thoughts (as it were) on the tenters and had stretched them as much as I could, to find out what was that thing which you said was of the utmost importance, but still was at a loss, till you came and opened the matter yourself. And I must confess that all was very agreeable to me. Not only what your read, but also your very loving addition thereunto.¹ And as I am a man that was, in a very strict manner, brought up in the Protestant faith, it gave me the greatest satisfaction possible when I came fully to understand that there is two of you united together in the flesh and in the spirit that did, do, and will wish well to our Zion (I mean the established Church of this land) and are also willing workmen to build up her damaged walls once again.

As for my part, I little thought to have seen these days, to hear the things that I hear, and to see that things that I have seen. But above all, I little thought to have experienced the things that I do and have done. But in this I am brought to see that God's ways are not our ways. Neither are his thoughts as our thoughts. But this I see, that the right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass. And this is evidently seen by many of our society who is deeply taught of God and knows more of the mind of God towards them than I do. Yet with that little I have received, I do call upon them all to join with me to lift up their voices like trumpets and to be resolved together to give our God no rest, day or night, till he makes our Jerusalem the praise of the whole earth.

As for my part, sir, I cannot see any cause of excuse that man can make why he should forsake her communion, because (as far as I can see) her doctrine, discipline, and liturgy is such (if properly attended to) as leads to holiness of life here, and of consequence to live with God hereafter. Neither is there any man on the face of the whole earth but may find something or other in the litany or the other prayers that is agreeable to his state—let it be what it will. And as for my part, I do desire to be more and more thankful that I was brought up by so tender a mother [church]. And the more that I partake of the good that is within her walls, the more I do value her. And I trust that I have sucked at the breasts of her consolation and am satisfied. And as there is always some good to be bestowed on them that walks in the way that she points out, I am resolved, by the grace of God, never to forsake these ways, but to be like Solomon's house, such that cries "Give, give!"² And good reason have I to cry out continually when I see day by day that God is raining down his manna round about our tents, and if we don't gather our portion every day, it is our own faults. And if sir any of my brethren or sister of this society have been remiss in our duty, I trust all can more call upon our own God for his peace, to help in every time of need.

And now may the God of all grace so bless every member of this society that we may be all as burning and shining lights in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation in which we live. May we every on live the life of the righteous and then we may expect that our latter end will be like their's.

I hope, sir, you'll pardon this freedom, and give me leave to that I ask.

Your humble servant to command

John Parry

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/118.³

¹CW "read the *Reasons* against leaving the Church, enforcing each, then my hymns, and then prayed *after* God." Cf. CW to SGW, Mar. 17, 1760.

²See Prov. 30:13.

³For a digital copy and "as-is" transcription, see <https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk>.

From the Rev. William Grimshaw

Haworth
March 31, 1760

My Very Dear Sir,

Having an opportunity of sending you a letter by dear brother [Thomas] Colbeck, who sets out for London tomorrow, I was just sitting down to write to you when yours, as if divine providence had some special design in it, came to hand.¹ I write but seldom indeed, because I've seldom much to write to you about. But now, upon my word, you have furnished me with matter to write upon.

The preachers and preaching-houses are mostly licensed, you say. The evil that will follow up this may perhaps be worse than anything that you or your brother could have any cause to apprehend from poor William Darney. All I desired was only a year's probation of him, and then, as his behaviour should deserve, to be accepted by us or rejected. Whenever John Nelson (for him I suppose you meant) wrote to you, I am very well assured that the people in Birstall circuit were much blessed under his preaching. However, waiving that affair, this of the licensing of preachers and preaching-houses is a matter that I never expected to have seen or heard of amongst the Methodists. If I had, I dare say I had never entered into connection with them.

I am in connection, and desire to continue so. But how can I do it consistently with my relation to the Church of England? For as it is with you, so it is with us. Since the last Conference (when encouragement was there given to the preachers to license themselves, God and you best know) many of the preachers in these parts have got licensed at the Quarter Sessions. Several of the preaching-houses and other houses are got licensed. To be sure, the Methodists are no longer members of the Church of England.² They are as real a body of dissenters from her as the Presbyterians, Baptists, Quakers, or any body of Independents. How have I complained of this all this last winter to our brethren! Mr. Colbeck can tell you. I speak of my situation. Can I justify before my provincial or a consistory court my preaching in a meeting house, or my connection with a body of dissenting ministers? Am I not liable to supervision *ab officio* as well as *beneficio*?³

About 12 years ago Archbishop Hutton, when Archbishop of York,⁴ amongst other arguments to stop me from preaching abroad, made this one, that I had preached in a licensed meeting-house (meaning the Boggart⁵ House) at Leeds. And if his Grace could have proved it (as he upon enquiry into that thing could not) it is not improbable that he had then suspended me. I promised his Grace at that time that I never would (though determined to preach abroad) preach in a licensed house. No, not even in that at Leeds, if it should appear to be licensed. And not many months ago, it being reported that I was to preach at a fixed time in a licensed building, the minister and the wardens of the parish had determined to present me; but it fell out providentially that I preached in a barn near to it, and so no more was said of it.

I have indeed preached now and then in a licensed house, when I was a stranger to it, or thought no notice would be taken of it. But at the rate we go on, all the nation must be alarmed with our present proceedings. And no doubt the spiritual courts will shortly animadvert upon our doings, and perhaps other powers too so soon as the war ceases. At present they have] something else to do. I little thought that your brother approved or connived at these things, especially at the preachers' doings at Norwich. If it be so, to your tents, O Israel!⁶ It's time for me to shift for myself. To disown all connection with the Methodists.

¹See CW to Grimshaw, Mar. 27, 1760.

²CW has underlined this sentence.

³In cases that hinder, as well as those that benefit.

⁴Matthew Hutton (1693–1758) served as the first Archbishop of York 1747–57.

⁵Orig., "Buggard."

⁶See 1 Kings 12:16.

To stay at home and take care of my parish, or to preach abroad in such places as are unlicensed and to such people as are in no connection with us.

I have no intention to preach the less, but to exert myself, as far as I am able, for the salvation of sinners. I hereby therefore assure you that I disdain all further and future connection with the Methodists. I will quietly recede without noise or tumult. No one mindful to continue with them shall be either directly or indirectly hindered by me. I have other reasons, sir, for leaving the Methodists besides the above, which I shall not mention now.

In general, as to the licensing of preachers and places, I know no expedient to prevent it. The thing is gone too far. It is become inveterate. It has been gradually growing to this, ever since erecting preaching house were first encouraged in the land. And if you can stem the torrent, but dint of persuasion, or some other influence your brother and you may have over some of the preachers, it will be only during your own lives. So soon as you are dead, the preachers all will then do as many have already done. And even while you live the licensed preachers, though they continue with you, will do worse than after your death. For now, even upon their six-penny license, they will dare to administer the sacraments; whereas then they will qualify themselves farther for it by obtaining Presbyterian ordination. Dissenters the Methodists will all shortly be. It cannot, I am fully satisfied, be prevented.

Nor is this spirit merely in the preachers, it is in the people also. That are so many inconveniences attend the people that in most places they all plead strenuously for settled ministry. They cannot, they say, in conscience receive the sacraments as administered in our Church. They cannot attend preaching at 8:00, 12:00, and 4:00 on Lord days, and go to Church, etc. They reason these things with the preachers and urge them upon ordination and residence. They can object little against it, how little soever their minds are inclined to it. Therefore they license.

For my part, though I do not approve of everything in our liturgy, yet I see nothing so material amiss in it or our Church constitution as to disturb my conscience to that degree to justify my separation from her. No, where shall I go to mend myself? No, I believe the Church of England to be the soundest, purest, and most apostolical, most constitutioned national Christian church in the world. Therefore I can in good conscience (as I am determined God-willing to do) live and die in her. But my conscience is not another man's. I believe the Methodists (preachers and members) have so much to say for their separation from our Church as will not easily in a conference or otherwise be obviated.

The doctrine of perfection seems very high just now in these parts. About Otley and Leeds, I am told, not fewer than thirty profess sinless perfection. And thirty more I expect will pretend thereto shortly. If it be of God, it is well. Time will prove it. I wish they knew their own hearts. My perfection is to see my own imperfection. My comfort, to feel that I have the world's flesh and devil to overcome, through the Spirit and merits of my dear Saviour. And my desire and hope is to love God with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength to the last gasp of my life. This is my perfection. I know no other, expecting to lay down my life and my sword together.

May the God of all grace and peace be with your and yours. Pray for me and I'll pray for you. I am

Your sincere and affectionate brother,

W. Grimshaw

P.S. I'll circulate, you may depend upon it, as many as I can of the *Reasons against Separation*. Send me a hundred of them.

Address: "For / The Reverend Mr. Charles Wesley / at the Foundery / near Upper Moorfields / London."

Endorsement: by CW, "Faithful Mr. Grim / shaw against separa / tion Mar. 31. 1760."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDPr 2/63 (and copies DDPr 2/64 and MA 1977/428/2/93).

From William Turner

London
[April 11, 1760¹]

Reverend Sir,

Under your preaching on Monday last [Apr. 7] in the forenoon, I was set at liberty from the spirit of bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God; for which I desire to give humble and hearty thanks to Almighty God (my reconciled Father) for the same, through Jesus Christ my once bleeding but now exalted Saviour. Behold, on Good Friday [Apr. 4] I abstained from my usual diets for Christ's sake and my comfort, which I found to increase greatly, and whilst you was preaching peace by Jesus Christ, I by precious faith found that peace of God that passeth knowledge. It is to me something remarkable that God should bless me with his pardoning love in a manner near the same as was happy Cornelius by the same word preached and the same number of days abstinence.² I doubt not your joy for the same, and desire to remain

Your humble servant for Christ's sake,

W[illia]m Turner

I think it incumbent on me to make known the manner of my being convinced of sin and the manner of my small progress in the divine life, such an instance perhaps you do seldom hear of.

About a year ago a friend lent me a book of Mr. Romaine's published out of the Song of Songs.³ But first I must acquaint you that I had laboured hard early and late, being by trade a joiner, for some months, but my master broke and it was to me a great temporal loss. I had no friend living, and away from all old acquaintance in a strange place, thought I must seek happiness from God. So [I] began to amend my life by going to sacrament and fixing resolutions to lead a new life. But on perusal of Mr. Romaine's discourses, I found myself not right because I could not call Jesus Christ my beloved and my friend from my heart.

I soon began to see the want of a Saviour. I thought of the words of the most fairest, "Learn of me for I am meek and lowly."⁴ I endeavoured to copy after the example, and may the Lord be pleased to give me grace so to continue, and found much comfort.

My hatred to sin increased and love to holiness, for I had been shown the spirituality of the law. I did look up to the author and finisher of my faith and rested on him, relying on his righteousness and renouncing my own. I did see first the great want of faith. But by looking up to Jesus it was increased and I had power to die to all outward sins, but found a very stony heart. Jesus by his Spirit often knocked at the door of my heart to depart from creature comfort, which was my bosom-sin. Blessed be God, I have rich amends for parting with it. I have hated myself for my ingratitude to my God, but never was under much burden of sin. Under the word preached [I] oftentimes had great doubts whether or not I was deluded, but strongly relied on my Saviour's power and willingness.

Oh that the Lord may anoint you and all your fellow labourers in Christ's vineyard with his Holy Spirit; that you may not faint and that your prayers may be [answered]; that I, a youth about twenty-five, may be kept unspotted from this unhallowed world. Grace be to all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.

Amen.

¹Turner dates this letter "March 9, 1756." CW corrects the year in his annotation to "1760," but leaves the month as March. The true date is established in CW to Sarah, Apr. 13–14, 1760.

²See Acts 10:34–44.

³William Romaine, *Twelve Discourses upon some practical parts of Solomon's Song* (London: J. Worrall & E. Withers, 1758).

⁴Matt. 11:29.

Address: “To / the Revd Mr. Ch[arle]s Wesley.”

Endorsement: by CW, “W. Turner Mar 9 1760 / A Seal.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/130.⁵

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

From John Johnson

Dublin
April 17, 1760

Reverend Sir,

I am surprised my letters should not come to hand. I had not heard of our brethren until I received yours,¹ and then enquired. I was asked who I thought it was, but should never [have] suspected them above all. I remember brother Mitchell was highly offended when brother [Thomas] Walsh gave it at Bristol. But alas, what is man.

As for their license, it gives no authority to administer the sacraments. I am persuaded there always was some ordination before any person was suffered to give it. But you have answered for me at present. If all the preachers follow their example, it is my opinion we shall come to nothing. As for baptizing and administering the sacrament, I judge it separation at once. Or else what is it? I should be glad to be informed.

You tell me things are come to a crisis. You say when your brother and you are called home we must become dissenting or Church ministers. I sometimes fear the former. At other times I charge myself with unbelief for doubting the power of God, for I am fully persuaded in my mind we shall not do much good either in the meeting or Church. It seems clear to me that God at present designs us to go into the highways and hedges to call sinners to repentance. If I could be ordained on these terms tomorrow, I would. I say the same [as] Robert Swindells. I am afraid to speak my sentiments at present, lest like the others [they] should alter. However, this much I can truly say. I believe God at this time is reviving his work in the Church, and if God will accept of my weak labours, I am willing to contribute to that work. This I can say, I am, as I was when you saw me, not less affected to the Church, if not more so. But since this has happened I have more jealousy of myself than ever. As for your leaving your brother, if he left the Church, I think I should if you did not. Your kind promises in yours I thankfully receive and hope by God's grace always to be faithful to my engagement when at Bristol with you. Ireland has not yet hurt me. My zeal nor strength is not abated. The work of the Lord is at my heart. Your brother is much blessed at Dublin. He says he never had such satisfaction in this place before. I wish he may find it in the whole kingdom, but I fear Cork will not be so.

I hope you will answer my letter as soon as you can. I should be glad constantly to converse by letter with you until God brings us face or face, or where parting shall be no more.

I am going to the north next week. So is Mr. [John] Wesley. My kind love to Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley. Pray for

Your weak son in the gospel,

Jno. Johnson

P.S. Brother [Thomas] Lee desires his dutiful respect to you. I think the change is much for the better. I am glad M[ichael] F[enwick] is left behind. So are many in this kingdom.

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr. Chas. Wesley / at the Foundry."

Endorsement: by CW, "J Johnson ag[ains]t admin[isterin]g / April 17. 1760."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDP: 2/31.

¹CW to John Johnson, Mar. 7, 1760.

From Michael Fenwick¹

Kingten near Thornbury
April 22, 1760

Reverend Sir,

After our interview in London I spoke to Mr. [John] Jones and signified to him of my mind was not at all satisfied. However, before we parted Mr. Jones hinted in that of writing my mind at the time he moved me to Y[orkshire]. I did not think fit. Nevertheless, upon cool reflection I have at last taken up a cross. Therefore, sir, that which follows will, I hope, appear to be wrote late, not through a spirit of contention. Now sir, in this letter I mean to tell you all my mind fully and feely. It is now about nine years since I was informed that you were dissatisfied (but not a little) at my travelling with Mr. [John] Wesley, and that you was heard to say in a gentleman's house in Shoreham that "There was one Mr. Fenwick in Ireland with my brother who reigns over the preachers." But you added that you should yet live, namely to cut his comb at Leeds, the first sight of Michael [Fenwick]. Here it was you made choice in giving him the first blow.² You did not fail to cut his comb by instantly taking him off his fine horse and fixing him in a public barbershop. There Fenwick remained for a while.

But after he had laboured with his hands in making wigs and preaching, he was ordered up to London. There you supposed it to be impossible for him to preach ever. I laboured again with my own hands and again wise providence opened a way for my preaching. However after a while I went to Glasgow, where I remained for near eight weeks labouring with my own hands and teaching the people to sing our hymns, until a gentleman of the city entreated of my making his house my home. And having now full liberty, I was called to visit both high and low, teaching and exhorting from house to house. Here Mr. Wesley met me during my stay [in Apr. 1753]. No reproach was brought on the adorable gospel of God our Saviour. After leaving Glasgow, Michael again commenced an itinerant preacher, and with Mr. [Christopher] Hopper laboured night and day, until Mr. [John] Wesley wrote for me, adding that he did not see how he could do any longer without me. When we met, we had another foray round England. The year following we sailed for Ireland, travelling round the nation. But in travelling here I had no little trouble, with your brother having been at times extremely ill. However, at our return to England I promised myself no small comfort.

But on the reviewing of things, I quickly marked my mistake. For you had so ordered and posed things in such a manner as to have Fenwick again discharged. This was the scene. Mr. John Horton broke open my letters in Dublin, directed to S[arah] Clay in London. And after he had done that, [he] wrote notes on my letters and instantly sent them to Mr. Charles Wesley. On the reception of the letters, Michael Fenwick was absolutely cast off again. But sir, permit me to note here, and with lowliness or with reverence to ask, whether was John Horton or Charles Wesley the greatest highwaymen, and for the following reasons. For first, you did explore those letters that I wrote—one for the house keeper in London, the other for Sarah Crosby relating to poor Mr. Thomas Walsh. But let it here again be noted that God himself marks your behaviour. And from thus, of your unparalleled heathenish act of injustice, I say from the consideration of it, he entered into a controversy with you [... remainder missing].

Source: holograph (incomplete); MARC, MA 1977/501/143.³

¹Fenwick is reacting to his expulsion from the ranks of the travelling preachers, larger due to CW; see CW's public letter declaring the expulsion, Feb. 24, 1760.

²See CW to JW, July 22, 1751.

³For a digital copy and "as-is" transcription, see:
<https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/services/digitisation-services/projects/rapture-and-reason/>

From John Nelson

Heptonstall
April 24, 1760

Dear Sir,

This is with my duty to you and earnest prayer for you and yours and all the Church of God. I was not at home when you came to Birstall, for I have been near six months in Mr. Grimshaw's round,¹ where I am yet, and likely to stay longer. It is a hard round for man and beast. But God hath given strength for the day. So that I can say he hath not sent me a warfare at my own charge. And his right hand is visibly stretched out in many parts of the round, so that sinners is struck to the heart, and sometimes four or five crying out under one sermon as a woman in her throes. Since I wrote to your brother before, there is thirteen that professes to have received faith in the blood of Jesus that I have an account of, and there is an extraordinary work amongst the old steady believers. God doth visibly appear in the congregations, and strangers flock to hear daily more and more. The harvest truly is great in these parts, but the labourers are few, for James Wild hath taken his wife and is gone we know not where, nor for what reason.² Mr. [William] Grimshaw labours abundantly, but we want more help. O pray for us as we do for you. Among those that is lately converted God hath taken the highest twig and the lowest bough, for one of them is four score and three years old, and another eleven years old.

There is several that hath finished their course with joy lately in this round. One woman eighty-two years old that had had a work upon her several years. We preached in the house where she lived, and she said a few years before she died, "I have had many a conflict with Satan since I first set out for heaven, but God hath bruised him under my feet, and Jesus hath made me as he would have me to be, and he will shortly take me to himself, where I shall reign with him in glory forever."

And one was Paul Greenwood's cousin, a single woman that had professed faith ten years, and was a pattern to all the class, and a reprovor of the ungodly both by her words and works. About ten days before she died she sent for several of her neighbours to come to her, and told them how she had delivered her soul of them, and that she hoped that they would remember her words when she was laid in the grave. "You know that I told you ten years ago, and many times since, that God doth justify the ungodly that turns at his reproof and believes in the Lord Jesus. And now I can testify that he doth sanctify the unholy that continues to believe in him." And she continued to praise God and to exhort all that came near her till she fell asleep in the arms of God.

And there was a woman in Netherdall that is gone in peace after professing to know the Lord for eight years. And old Rose Mortimer, of Birstall, is gone as a shock of corn full ripe.³ She had known the Lord to be her God and Saviour nineteen years and some days, and now she is gone to sing praises to God and the Lamb forever. She is the first of that family that hath died in triumph, and makes up 238 that hath died so in Birstall round. O praise the Lord with us for all his wonderful works, and pray for us that we may not stop his hand by our unfaithfulness.

I can rejoice at the deliverance of your wife and children and all our other friends that escaped the flames. I suppose you saw the account I sent to your brother of sister Harrison's death. This from

Your unworthy brother and as a son to service in the gospel.

John Nelson

I should be glad to disperse them books, but how must I come at them? If you write to me, I

¹This suggests CW made a trip through northern England around Oct. 1759; there is no other surviving evidence of such a trip.

²James Wild (fl 1750s) was admitted as an itinerant preacher in 1752 (see JW, *Works*, 10:253). He was assigned as Assistant at Cheshire in 1759 (10:287), and disappears from the Minutes after that.

³Rose Mortimer was buried Mar. 30, 1760 in Birstall.

should be glad if you could send by my good friend, Mr. Greenwood, the bearer of this.⁴ He inns at the Swan with Two Necks in Lad Lane, or to direct to me at Mr. [Thomas] Colbeck's in Keighley.

I have showed your letter to Mr. Grimshaw,⁵ and we are both in one mind. That is, we cannot in conscience agree that anyone that is in connexion with us should act as a dissenting minister, either to baptise or to deliver the sacrament. If it be allowed, we must openly declare that they are no longer of us. As for my part, I think I would rather die today than live till tomorrow and break our covenant. And I have no more desire to license myself as a dissenting minister than I have to rob on the highway. For hitherto God hath delivered me from the hands of wicked men, and I trust he will deliver to the end. I believe that some of our brethren hath been drawn into it by others, and had no design in it but to protect themselves from the press⁶ and the Militia Act. But I could not do so for my part, and I pray God that the enemy may get no advantage over any of them by it. I think I love them all, and can pray for them as for myself, and that God may purge us all that we may bring forth more fruit to his praise and glory.

You speak of Mr. Grimshaw being at the Conference. You may be sure he will if he can. And if it be at Leeds, and that woman come there, she will do a deal of mischief.⁷ She hath spread a deal of poison into the mind of brother Colbeck while he was in London. But I trust it is all expelled, and he will know how to guard against her for the time to come. Your brother did not say that it would be at Leeds when he was there, or would not be there. Sir, if it is fixed where it is to be, I pray you let me know in your next.

My kind love to your wife and all friends at Bristol.

Address: "To the Rev Mr / Charles Wesley at the /Foundery near Morefields / London."

Endorsement: by CW, "April 24. 1760 Nelson / births & deaths."

Source: holograph; MARC, PLP 78/53/4.⁸

⁴Paul Greenwood (d. 1767) began itinerating about 1747, serving for some years as one of "William Grimshaw's men" in the Haworth round. The 1752 Irish Conference called him over. After that year Greenwood spent most of his ministry in the north of England.

⁵CW to John Nelson, Mar. 27, 1760.

⁶I.e., conscription into the army.

⁷Likely Mary (Goldhawk / Vazeille) Wesley.

⁸Transcription published previously in Laycock, *Haworth*, 212–14.

From Joseph Cownley

Newcastle upon Tyne
April 26, 1760

Dear Sir,

Give me leave also to speak my mind.¹ Anyone that thinks about it, and thinks closely, will find it extremely difficult to persuade himself that Methodism will continue to be always what it is just now. For my part, I think great confusion by and by almost unavoidable, and my reason for thinking so is this. The door to preaching with us is as wide as our societies, so that any ignorant or designing man that takes it into his head that he can preach may preach without any more ado, unless to procure somebody or other to inform your brother (which is not always needful) that he is well enough qualified for it. And there is no man that takes this work upon him, though ever so unfit for it, but may find at least some old women who will abide by it that he is the finest man they ever heard in all their life. Now these are to a man your brother's servants, and implicitly obey him, especially if he sets them on horseback. They make their parties among the people and your brother caresses them as the only men that have either zeal for God or love for him. Those men who embarked with him or soon followed him when there was nothing to tempt them to it for without—unless to be mobbed and abused almost as often [as] they preached—could do it because they cannot keep pace with him and continue regularly to ride the rounds are not only left behind but in a manner quite forgot by him. If they can live without him, well; if not, the Lord must pity them for he has no farther care about them. I know they need not thank him if their names are still left on the list.

His behaviour to me since I became an invalid, though I obeyed him as long as I was able and longer than I was well able, for I never went but where he bade me neither came away before nor stayed longer than he bade me, has been such that if I do not love and honour him out of principle I should have taken my leave of him long since, and in no very friendly manner. At present I have no thought of it, and am well content without his regard. Yet I do not forget what is due from me to him. There are several of my brethren who might make the like complaint with me, who have not fled either to the gown or cloak for succour. And who I would persuade myself have no thoughts of doing it, unless they could do it and be Methodist preachers still. Who, if we should survive your brother and you, should think ourselves obliged to oppose these intruders and suffer no man to preach in our connection who has not those abilities one of our printed *Conferences* supposes all our preachers to have.² And then, judge you, what will be the consequence? I see no way to prevent this but your doing it yourselves while you live. But who can convince your brother, supposing you should see the necessity of it, that this ought to be done? I am afraid he would think the man mere graceless who should propose such a thing.

I can easily believe too that many, if not most, of those who shall survive you and from right principles continue in the work will separate from the Church—except, as my friend [Christopher] Hopper says, you could get them fastened where they are by prevailing on one or more of the bishops to ordain them. Could this be done, it is highly probable that Methodism might continue as it is till death should remove them also. For they would be able, notwithstanding all the opposition of false brethren, to keep the bulk of the people where they are. But then, what bishop either in England or Ireland will ever do this, will ordain a Methodist preacher to be a Methodist preacher? For my own part, as poor and worthless a wretch as I am, I could not submit to it on the terms on which most of my ordained brethren hitherto have got it. Lord keep me from other presumptuous sins. I have now told you my mind, and I have done it freely, though not very accurately. If I am wrong, set me right and I shall thank you.

¹Cownley is replying to the letter CW sent Christopher Hopper on Mar. 27, 1760 (both Cowley and Hopper were assigned to Newcastle). Cownley's opening suggests that he was sending a response alongside that of Hopper; but if so, the Hopper response is not known to survive.

²Cownley is likely referring to the 1744 Minutes, which described the "office" and "rules" of the "assistants" (used of all lay preachers at that time); see JW, *Works*, 10:139–42.

What happened at Norwich we had no so much as heard of till Mr. Hopper received yours. We have heard since what was done there, and who were the doers of it. Who would have thought it?

Have you seen poor John Allen from Newcastle?³ We are sadly reproached here on his account, and not without reason. Some time ago he failed in the world. But instead of giving up his all to his creditors, as an honest man would have done, he concealed his effects what he could, and left the rest to be divided among them, which upon an equal division would not have amounted it seems to four shillings in the pound. The man he employed to carry off a part of his goods informed one of his creditors afterwards of it, which so provoked the man that he resolved to put Allen in jail, and accordingly had him arrested. The man who arrested him formerly belonged to us. Therefore as John Allen was a Methodist, and a preacher too, behaved with more tenderness to him than is usually shown on such occasions, of which he took the advantage and made his escape. But this is not the worst piece of his conduct. He is indebted to John Fenwick and his father,⁴ I suppose, to near the value of £50, for which he gave Jacky a bond in judgment, which had he been rigorous he might have executed and have seized on all he had and paid himself. But in mercy to John Allen he forbore to do it, contented to take what fell to his share with his other creditors, would they come to a composition. Besides this, John Fenwick is bound in a £30 bond for John Allen's appearance to try a cause depending between him and another man, which trial is expected soon to come on and at which if he does not appear John Fenwick forfeits his bail, which is more than he can well bear. John Allen promised solemnly he would appear to save Jacky's bail, but second thoughts determined him lately to leave the country. And I hear he is now in London. Should he not return to save John Fenwick's bail? And ought he not to deliver up to his creditors all his effects, and afterwards take the benefit of the law in that case made and provided?

Give me leave now to press you to do what I think is your bounden duty. I mean to visit the north this summer. We have excused you to the poor people, who long earnestly to see you, till we can do it no longer. If you refuse to come now, we can say neither more nor less about it (if you are neither sick nor lame) than that you cannot come because you will not. If you could not speak at all, it would do them good only to see your face. If it should suit Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley to come along with you, I have a tolerable house, prettily situated, that should be at your service as long as you pleased, and we would make it as agreeable to you as we possibly could. I am, dear sir,

Your affectionate son and servant,

Jos. Cownley

My kind respects to Mrs. Wesley.

Address: "To / The Revd Mr Charles Wesley."

Endorsement: by CW, "Jos. Cownly, sensible / loving April 26. 1760."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDPr 2/16.

³John Allen had a supervisory role in the coal mines and exhorted the workers there. Thus he was a "local" preacher. He considered leaving his employment to become a travelling preacher but CW dissuaded him; see the entry for Aug. 23, 1751 in CW, *Journal Letters*, 324.

⁴John Fenwick (d. 1787) was a person of some means in Newcastle, who served occasionally as a circuit preacher from 1750–56. In 1777 he sought admission as a traveling preacher and served in that capacity until his.

From Michael Fenwick

[c. May 1760¹]

6th

[...] however such cruelty God will never bless. Mr. John Wesley I know has a mind bent to help his preachers. But he says that you have done them more hurt than ever you will be able to do them good while you live. This I think is true. For some years I have looked upon Mr. Charles Wesley, amongst his brother's preachers, just like one that had caught the plague. And while God was increasing your number, Mr. Charles I would only compare to a wild bull in a net. For these ten years I have lain under a hedge,² permitting you to drive your chariot Jehu-like, raising a very great dust. Nevertheless, I have narrowly, by the eye of my mind, marked your actions. But as I saw God bore with you, so did your little friend. However in my second epistle, if my friend Mr. Charles Wesley will suffer, I mean and soon to date his fall. The Lord pardon thy soul; and when he does, remember me.

What follows I have reserved to stand by itself alone

And first, as for evil-speaking, together with tittle-tattle, this nation, sir, can't compare with you. NO! It really seems as if God had permitted Satan to devote you to everything. You have, sir, lately made a sad racket about your brother's wife showing letters not her property.³ But alas! How well or how justly may she retort upon her brother-in-law, supposing Michael was to lead her int(o your) lately past behaviour? Especially towards Mr. Thomas Walsh upon her cons[cien]ce.⁴ I have had a temptation to let her know it; only for your brother's sake I spare you. Pray write me very soon. Some advise me to make an example in public of you. Only as yet I am not clear in the thing. It is certain you fall under the eye of the law; consequently you fall under my power. But the time for this is not yet come that Fenwick should publish matters, for through Christ I can, with ease, pleasure, and satisfaction, bear all things.

Annotation: "A true Copy of Michael Fenwick to Mr. C. Wesley"

Source: manuscript copy; MARC, DDPPr 2/22.

¹The manuscript is undated, and not in the same hand as Fenwick's letter to CW of Apr. 22. Neither is it in CW's hand. Moreover the manuscript is clearly incomplete (only the last page remaining). It appears it was part of a compilation of letters that Fenwick wrote to CW (or about him) that were transcribed for CW by an amanuensis. The heading indicates either that this is the sixth page of the compilation, or is transcribing the sixth letter in the compilation. The letter of Apr. 22 appears to be the first in the series and we date this as following over the course of a few weeks.

²Fenwick first began serving as a travelling preacher on trial in 1749 (see *Works*, 10:237).

³Referring to an incident in Feb.–Mar. 1758; see JW to Mary (Goldhawk / Vazeille) Wesley, July 15, 1774, §9.

⁴Orig., "Whelch." Cf. JW's comment on Walsh in *ibid.*, §10.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

[London]
Tuesday Morning [May 6, 1760]

My Dear Sir

I am not able to go to see you today because Mr. [Thomas] Hill has engaged me to find him a tutor immediately for his sons, if I do not want to be that myself. Mr. [Nicholas] Gilbert promised me on Sunday that my place would be supplied at (the chapel.)¹ If you are able to come to see us Mrs. Heri(tage is taking) thought for you and offers to do all that lies within her power. If you receive this letter in time, go by horse to dine at her house with Mr. Reeves as you had promised her.²

The devil is again unchained in my Lord.³ I had received your note and I have given the required advice. We were praying for you yesterday at my Lady [Huntingdon]'s and at St. James.⁴ Pray for your poor brother, who is as a broken reed and has the pride of a tall pine. If you do not come, write me to tell me of your health, if only a single line.

Address: "For / The Revd. Mr C. Wesley / at Mr. Bolts in Christopher / Alley Moor fields."

Endorsement: by CW, "May 6. 1760 Fletcher."

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/59.⁵

¹A small portion of the manuscript is torn away.

²Jonathan Reeves (d. 1787) was one of JW's earliest lay preachers. In the mid-1750s he withdrew from JW's connexion, obtaining ordination as deacon (Sept. 1754) and priest (Dec. 1755) in the Church of England. In 1758 he was appointed the first chaplain of Magdalen Hospital, London, and for the last fifteen years before his death was lecturer of the parish of West Ham. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 344–45; CCEd; and Vickers, *Dictionary*, 291.

³Francis Hastings, 10th Earl of Huntingdon, LH's son.

⁴The residence of Bridget Carteret and Anne (Carteret) Cavendish.

⁵A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 105. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 105–06). See also the translation published in *City Road Magazine* 2 (1872): 518.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

[London]
Thursday morning [May 8,] 1760

My Dear Sir,

I found myself yesterday so tired when I returned from Deptford and Paddington that I was obliged to deny myself the pleasure of going to see you, as much by lack of energy as lack of time.

My Lady [Huntingdon] is again with the Shirley family and will not return home until this evening. She keeps as well as one would hope in these circumstances. I intend to see her tomorrow and to go to you straight afterwards to give you the news and to learn yours. I hope myself that it was the weather rather than some symptoms of illness that enfeebled you so much the last time that I saw you. It had such a great effect on me that I was on the point of falling into weakness two or three times on the way to Deptford.

May the Lord strengthen you in soul and body, and in Spirit, to the end that you are better able to strengthen

Your feeble servant and brother,

J. Fletcher

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr Wesley / at Mr. Bolt's / in Christopher's Alley / Moor Fields."

Source: holograph (in French); New Room (Bristol), NR2001.179.¹

¹A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 106. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (p. 107).

From the Rev. John Wesley

Coolalough
June 23, 1760

[[Dear Brother,]]

Where you are I know not, and how you are I know not, but I hope the best.¹ Neither you nor John Jones has ever sent me your remarks upon that tract in the late volume of *Sermons*.² You are not kind. Why will you not do all you can to make me wiser than I am? Samuel Furly told me his objections at once, so we canvassed them without loss of time.³ Do you know what is done, anything or nothing, with regard to the small edition of the Notes?⁴

Mr. [Bryan] I'Anson writes me a long account of the Sussex affair.⁵ It is of more consequence than our people seem to apprehend. If we do not exert ourselves, it may drive us to that bad dilemma, leave preaching or leave the Church. We have reason to thank God it is not come to this yet. Perhaps it never may.

In this kingdom [Ireland] nothing is wanting but a few more zealous and active labourers. James Morgan,⁶ John Johnson, and two or three more do their best; the rest spare themselves. I hope Sally and your little ones are well. Where and how is my wife? I wrote to her on Saturday last.

Adieu!

Where must the Conference be, at Leeds or Bristol? If we could but chain or gag the blatant beast, there would be no difficulty.

Address: "To / The Revd Mr C. Wesley."

Endorsement: by CW, "B[rother]. June 23. 1760 / Wants to be found fault with / doubts whether to leave the Church / Dreads the Blatant Beast."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 3/12.⁷

¹There is no surviving evidence of correspondence between JW and CW between December 1756 and early 1760. This is the first surviving letter of JW to CW after that hiatus.

²There were four tracts included in vol. 4 of JW's *Sermons on Several Occasions*, which had been published in early 1760, but JW is referring to 'Thoughts on Christian Perfection' (pp. 241–68 in that volume; *Works*, 13:54–80), which he had included to address growing debate within Methodist societies over the doctrine.

³Rev. Samuel Furly (c. 1732–95), a frequent correspondent of JW, was currently a curate in London.

⁴The first two editions of *NT Notes* were issued in the large quarto format. JW was inquiring about progress on the new edition, which he had decided to print in his favoured duodecimo size.

⁵A Methodist preacher had preached at the home of Thomas Osborne at Rolvenden in Kent, three miles from Sussex, on Mar. 13, 1760. The preacher and Osborne were each fined £20 by a local magistrate. The Quarter Sessions confirmed their convictions, but the Court of King's Bench overturned them; see Tyerman, *John Wesley*, 2:359.

⁶James Morgan (1736–74) James Morgan became one of JW's traveling lay preachers in 1755. By 1766 ill health led him to settle in Dublin. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 281–86.

⁷Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 27:199–200.

From William Lunell

Dublin
July 10, 1760

My Dear and Reverend Sir,

As your long silence has been productive of many fears that something to be amiss, or at least that my last never came to hand,¹ give me leave dear sir, after hearing that I have none of your unanswered, to remind you of the wished for favour, which for some weeks [I] have impatiently expected. Otherwise [I] shall conclude, though I look for the best effects attending the gent(?), that you or some of the family are unwell. [I] shall on that account avoid troubling you with a long epistle, the present being chiefly to enquire after your health, which beg to be instantly informed of. [I] had hope to have such accounts as shall dismiss every painful surmise.

And being vastly concerned on my daughter Grayson's return from London,² to find after making several inquiries for your lodgings, none was kind enough to inform her. She on that account missed seeing you there. As well as at Mr. Gratton's,³ who mentioned his desire, and for that purpose invited you to dine,⁴ when she expected to meet her dear Mr. Wesley. [You] may believe the disappointment noted, when a particular account from Mrs. Wesley and you was expected, could not fail of giving some chagrin. And [I] was ready to charge her with the fault, until she assured me of her uncle's particular invitation that the desired meeting might be at his house. And being from past experience convinced that your regards never diminish by distance either of time or place, have I not room to fear the want of health, which [I] beg to be informed of, prevented the wished for interview? But I trust we shall quickly meet above with joy, to part no more.

I had lately a letter from your brother,⁵ who I presume after the Conference at Limerick set out this day for Cork.⁶ But as I doubt not your having constant advices of what passes, I omit saying anything farther. Except to inform [you] of Mr. [Peter] Jaco's continued disorders, which occasions his lodging at the seaside, for sake of bathing. And that on that account Mr. Kead being our present supply,⁷ the congregation is thinner than ever, which hope may shortly be on some better footing. And as the preaching house is at last both floored and painted, expect the damp complained of being now removed, all fears of giving attendance in wet weather will in future cease.

Mr. Rutherford, so kindly visited by your brother, is by the order of the physicians now returned to his native air.⁸ And being judged impossible to have health here, the people formerly under his care are left to seek for another. And [I] think it somewhat remarkable that both Mr. Jaco and he date their disorders from the preaching at the camp, where by wet weather they got such colds as quite emaciated their constitutions

Finding I have as usual been shameful prolific, [I] must hurry to conclude with best regards to

¹This earlier letter from Lunell is not known to survive.

²Lunell's daughter Martha married Anthony Grayson (1727–1808) in Feb. 1754 in Dublin.

³Samuel Grattan (d. 1768), a wealthy goldsmith in Dublin and supporter of the Wesley brothers. See Crookshank, *Ireland*, 1:254.

⁴John Gratton was the brother of Anne (Gratton) Lunell, William's second wife. He married Mary Pittney in London in Oct. 1750. They resided in the parish of St. Peter le Poer in London.

⁵This letter is not known to survive.

⁶The Conference at Limerick was held July 5–8, 1760; see JW, *Journal, Works*, 21:267.

⁷Thomas Kead appears in the *Minutes* as a travelling preacher first at the 1752 Conference in Limerick (JW, *Works*, 10:251) and served through 1762.

⁸This is not the later itinerant Thomas Rutherford; evidently an Irish local preacher.

your and yours, who am,

My dear Mr. Wesley's very affectionate and much obliged servant,

Will Lunell

Address: "To / The Revd Mr Charles Wesley / at the Foundery / Uper Moorfields / London."

Source: holograph; National Library of Wales, Trevecka Letters, #2283.⁹

⁹A transcription published previously in *WHS* 16 (1927): 15–17.

From Nicholas Gilbert¹

[Bristol]
August 1760

A Short Account of God's Dealings with a Sinner from his Infancy

I had a real reverence for the name of God ever since I have any remembrance of anything, and death was dreadful to me always and my meditations on it have been very deep and frequently very disturbing. Religious persons, and religion itself, was amiable in my sight. And often have I wished to be good, when alas, goodness was far from me. For as I grew in years, sin grew upon me. Though my convictions and resolutions were many, yet my evil would not be restrained; but anger, greed and vanity captivated my whole soul and preyed upon me continually.

Sermons indeed would make impressions on my mind, and fixed good purposes in my heart such as determination to leave the company of the wild, unthinking boys with whom I was brought up. Of a Lord's day I frequently resolved to stay within and read the Scriptures, knowing that to be found trifling away my time was all wrong; and for it, shame has often covered my face. But my resolutions were like Ephraim's goodness, "they passed away."²

Thus I went on from my first dawning of reason till I was about 19 years of age. Then it pleased God (the Methodists being in Cornwall two years before) to bring me in the way of one who had known something of the goodness of God to his soul. And as I was before this convinced that the Methodists were the most religious of any people I had ever seen, was therefore easily persuaded to fix a resolution of going to hear them. And my first hearing after my mind was thus resolved was one Good Friday in the year 1744.

Soon after I joined the society of the Methodists, and near midsummer it pleased God to manifest to my soul the forgiveness of my sins by faith in Jesus Christ. And in the beginning of the year [17]46 the Lord opened my mouth to give a word of exhortation to a few of my neighbours who used to meet together to sing and pray then. Soon after I began to speak from a portion of Scripture. This I did two or three times a week, sometimes oftener, while I continued my business for about three-years' time. Then in February 1749, Mr. John Wesley sent for me to attend at his conference at Bristol, which was to begin in March. Accordingly I left Cornwall and came to Bristol and began work as an itinerant in the Wiltshire circuits, where I continued till August when I went to London. There I remained till in December I set out for Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

In these parts I laboured till July 1750. I came into Yorkshire, remaining in Yorkshire till May 1751. It was the determination of the Conference that I should visit Ireland. Being detained at Liverpool about a fortnight, I began preaching for the first time in the fields. I embarked for Dublin in the beginning of June and in three days landed at the end of the New Wall in Dublin Bay.

I continued in Ireland labouring principally in Dublin, Cork, and Limerick till May 1755. I came into England and, after spending a few weeks in Yorkshire, set off with Mr. [Paul] Greenwood for Cornwall, after being away upwards of four years. Here I continued till July 1756. I came to Bristol and in September embarked with Mr. Hopper, Mr. Massiot, Mr. Murlin and Mr. Olivers for Cork.³ We left

¹Nicholas Gilbert (d. 1763) had no close link with the Gilberts of Antigua. This account is our best source on his life, and when he became an itinerant See Atmore, *Memorial*, 156.

²Cf. Hos. 6:4.

³Christopher Hopper (1722–1802) became a full-time itinerant and 1750, and emerged as one of JW's longest serving and most trusted lay preachers. James Massiot (1710–58) began itinerating about 1751, and died in July 1758 in Cork, Ireland. JW performed his funeral; see JW, *Journal*, July 7, 1758, *Works*, 21:158. John Murlin (1722–99) became a traveling preacher in 1754, serving in that role until

Bristol on Tuesday and landed in Ireland the Sunday. After spending four months in Cork I went to Dublin where I continued till May 1757. I went into the north for well-nigh three months then returned to Dublin and soon after went to Limerick where in November and part of December I had a very severe fit of the fever which brought me very low, in as much that my life was despaired of by almost all that saw me.

I returned to Dublin in January 1756, where I remained principally till the beginning of August. Mr. [Christopher] Hopper, Mr. [Paul] Greenwood, Mr. Johnson⁴ and I embarked for Parkgate. We left Dublin Bay Sunday noon and landed at Parkgate Monday evening, in a few days came to Bristol, and in the beginning of September, went to Norwich. [I] continued in Norwich, Colchester, and London till February 1759, came to Bristol and in May returned to London where I continued till September. And after spending a little while in Sarum and the plains contiguous there to, I returned to Bristol where I remained principally till August 1760.

Endorsement: by CW, “Nicholas Gilbert’s Experience to Aug. 1760.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/63.⁵

1787. Thomas Olivers (1725–99) became a travelling preacher in 1753, and served faithfully throughout Great Britain and Ireland until 1776, when JW asked him to superintend the printing operation in London.

⁴Thomas Johnson (1720–97), a native of Wakefield, Yorkshire, was converted in 1748, and became a travelling preacher in 1752. He (rather than John Johnson) was currently stationed in Ireland.

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

Francis Okeley to Howell Harris¹

Bedford
August 29, 1760

.... “I lately wrote at large to Mr. Charles Wesley and told him I had seen and spoke with you, as also the substance of our discourse together, as far as I thought might prove any way serviceable to set a design on foot which we both have at heart” [a possible conference of the English Moravian bishops with the Methodists to explore possibilities of working more closely together]²

Source: holograph; Trevecka Letters, #2292; *Trevecka Letters, 1747–94*, 77–79.

¹While this letter is not to CW, it describes the content of a letter of Okeley to CW that is not known to survive.

²Coincidentally, such a gathering was being discussed this very day at JW’s annual Conference with his preachers in Bristol; see *Works*, 10:289, fn1014.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Tern
September 14, 1760¹

My Dear Sir,

One hour after my letter was put in the post I received the enclosed from my Lady [Huntingdon]. In reading it you will see why I take up my pen, and why I beg you for a prompt reply.

Summary of the matter:

1. Young Ingham has talents and piety; he is my Lady's nephew.²
2. The house is a Christian house.
3. I shall have the opportunity of preaching in several churches.
4. And I shall earn my board and lodging and £30.

Comment:

I have succeeded so badly in the education of the young men who were entrusted to me that I have conceived a particular aversion for the profession of tutor. It is in a sense to be married to a pupil, and I hate any kind of marriage. Art thou loosed from thy wife (pupil); seek not a wife,³ especially if thou hast smarted by the first.

To be a tutor is to have as master the parents of one's pupil. And the yoke of a Christian master is nonetheless a yoke, to be borne by those who are not able to do otherwise. But for those who have no need of it, the advice of St. Paul seems to have weight, "If you are able to be free, rather use it."⁴

Questions:

1. If he has talents and piety, will he not make his way under (almost) any master, above all in a Christian household?
2. Can I not say as much of the house of my host, Mr. Hughes?⁵
3. Am I able to preach more than two or three times in the churches in question?
4. Thus [do I] need 30 pieces besides my board and lodging?

Comments:

I have seen the young Ingham at Paddington,⁶ and his gentleness predisposed me greatly in his favour. I could resume the rod for him sooner than any other. If my Lady remained at her sister's, the offer would be more debatable.⁷ I love rest, solitude, and the shelter of my room; would I not be able to be satisfied in these respects at Aberford? My ministry is nearly useless; would it be a great wrong if I put myself into the shackles of tutorship?

¹While Fletcher was leaving the employ of the Hill family, he had agreed to be at Tern Hall for the summer months of 1760.

²LH is proposing that Fletcher take on the role of tutor for her nephew, Ignatius Ingham (1746–1808), the son of Benjamin and Margaret (Hastings) Ingham, who resided in Aberford, Yorkshire.

³See 1 Cor. 7:27.

⁴A summary of 1 Cor. 7.

⁵Likely the owner of the house near St. James Park in London, where Fletcher had a room

⁶LH's current residence in London.

⁷LS was apparently visiting the Ingham's in Aberford, and wrote Fletcher from there, but she would soon return to Clifton or Paddington.

Decide.

[marginal addition]

If you ask me what I think myself, I am without preference it seems to me. It is of great indifference to me where I am or with whom, when Jesus is not in my heart. I feel only one desire, that is to flee everyone. Happy if I could flee anybody <...⁸> Give my Lady's message to Mrs. Wesley and take from it what applies to you.⁹

Address: "For / The Revd. Mr. C. Wesley / in Charles Street / Bristol."

Note: "Sandwich" [denotes an enclosure, in this case Lady Huntingdon's letter to SGW.]

Postmark: "Shrewsbury."

Endorsement: by CW, "Sept 14. 1760 / J. Fletcher consulting."

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/11.¹⁰

⁸A word or two are torn away by the wax seal.

⁹This message is not known to survive.

¹⁰A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 107–08. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 109–10). See also the translation published in *City Road Magazine* 2 (1872): 516–17.

From the Rev. John Wesley¹

Redruth
September 21, 1760

[[Dear Brother,]]

I do not apprehend that letter to be any proof of L. A.'s understanding. I believe you had not time to consider it. Do you really think *she* was the indicter? That she was the transcriber of it I allow, but is not the hand of Joab in this?² Did you not take knowledge not only of the sentiments but the very language of honest James R.?³

Your message by John Jones seems to supersede the necessity of my writing, yet I think of sending a few civil lines without entering into the merits of the cause. Is it not an excellent copy of our friend's⁴ countenance to "beg leave to live apart"? *Quis enim negat?*⁵ If the unbeliever will depart, let her depart. But she will as soon leap into the sea.

I speak everywhere of bribery and run goods.⁶ I suppose John Jones has sent you the Minutes of the Conference.⁷ On Friday se'nnight I hope to preach at Shepton Mallet at noon and at Bristol in the evening. *Vive hodie!*⁸

[[Adieu.]]

I should think if you was *solus cum solo*,⁹ the point to be insisted on with John Gambold would be, "You went to the Moravians to find happiness. Have you found it? What have you gained by the exchange?" It is time enough, I suppose, for me to write; for you cannot go to London soon.¹⁰

Address: in JW's hand "To / The Revd Mr C. Wesley / in." Then, in a different hand, "In Charles Street / Stokescroft / Bristol."

Endorsement: by CW, "B[rother] Sept 21. 1760 / She asks to part."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 3/13.¹¹

¹JW is replying to a letter of CW that is not known to survive.

²See 2 Sam. 14:19.

³Apparently James Rely (1722–78), in which case JW is speaking ironically, for he viewed Rely as an antinomian; see JW, *Journal*, July 5, 1756, *Works*, 21:3.

⁴I.e., Mary (Goldhawk/Vazeille) Wesley.

⁵"For who denies [this]?"

⁶The expression "run goods" referred to items smuggled into coastal areas.

⁷The Conference had been held at Bristol on August 29–30, 1760. Unfortunately the official Minutes kept by John Jones are not known to survive. The most extensive surviving account is in the diaries of Howell Harris; see JW, *Works*, 10:288–90 fn.

⁸"Live today," the motto on his seal.

⁹"One on one."

¹⁰There is no surviving letter from JW to Gambold at this time; Nicholas Gilbert assumed the reason for the contact was to persuade Gambold to ordain some of the lay preachers (see next letter).

¹¹Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 27:208–09.

From Nicholas Gilbert

Redruth
September 24, 1760

Reverend and Dear Sir,

There is great willingness in the inhabitants of this county to hear the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and there are many who have already heard to good purpose, though lately they have been badly supplied. I believe your brother [JW] has heard enough of Mr. Gibbs¹ and Bryant² to sicken him, though there is great danger in listening to hearsay.

People may think what they will, but a Methodist preacher should be remarkably gracious or he will not be able to go on profitably and constantly in his work. When I consider his work, I see he should have the graces and gifts of an apostle. But alas, when I consider how far I am from this, my hands hang down and I am ready to faith.

I believe if my eyes were more to God than they are, it would be happy for me. I see others go on from year to year without fear or dread, having no doubt of their abilities, as to graces and gifts, being in their own esteem every way equal to the task. But I am forever fearing and reasoning. Surely thee is no one so unhappy as I am.

In my way down I called on brother Robarts, and stayed eight days in and about Tiverton.³ He is a cheerful happy man and goes on prosperously in his business; though I think far from being so useful as he might be in the church of God. Surely a man of his sense and natural good tempers, and gifts for preaching, would be of much greater service than but few, if he could be persuaded to give himself entirely to the work. Though this is now impracticable.

I am praying and striving to be of some use to my fellow creatures, but there must be much praying and striving or I find it will not do. I must be praying, preaching, or doing something like this, or I am miserable. My trials arising from real or supposed causes are so great at times that I could be content to be banished to the remotest part of the earth. By this, sir, you will see how unmortified my old man is, and consequently am I very unfit for the work I am employed in. Your brother says (and I think very rationally too) that they who deny themselves most, and do and suffer most, will have a greater reward in the kingdom of heaven. I acknowledge he seems to act on this principle. But surely he has not many of his kind in this thing.

It runs in my head that your brother and you intend to apply to Mr. [John] Gambold, who I apprehend is a bishop, for the ordination of some of the preachers. This is purely conjecture. Is there any reason for this conjecture? If it is so, I hope I may be a candidate.

I trust you find benefit by the Bath waters and that your disorder is removed out of your breast. It is the will of God we should learn obedience by the things that we suffer. When this is the case, we can thank God for all his afflictive dispensations towards us. I pray God bless you and give you health of body and health of soul. Please to remember me to Mrs. Wesley and all friends in Bath and Bristol. I am, dear sir,

Your real friend and servant in the gospel of Christ,

¹John Gibbs (fl. 1760s) was accepted as an itinerant at the 1758 Conference (see JW, *Works*, 10:282), and most recently assigned to Cornwall (10:286). He last appears in the Minutes in 1765.

²Thomas Bryant (d. 1797) also appears as a travelling preacher first in the Minutes of the 1758 Conference, where he was appointed to Cornwall (*Works*, 10:281 and 286). In May 1765, Bryant led a secession of members of the Sheffield society who built a chapel on Scotland Street. Their society would become one of the founding constituencies of the Methodist New Connexion in 1797.

³William Roberts (1728–97), who often spelled his name “Robarts,” was a native of Cornwall who became a travelling preacher in 1750. He left the itinerancy after a few years, settling into business in Tiverton, where he supported the Methodist work in this capacity. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 346–56.

Nichs. Gilbert

When may we expect your new hymns?⁴ We have two young clergymen, one in St. Agnes, the other in Perranzabuloe,⁵ who boldly preach the gospel. Probably I may be at Bristol soon after Christmas. I hope it will not be a crime.

Address: "To / the Revd Mr. Charles Wesley / At Mr. Hemins's⁶ / Avon-Street / Bath."

Endorsement: by CW, "N. Gilbert self-diffid[en]t."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDP_r 1/33.

⁴CW had begun work on a collection of short hymns on Scripture passages, which he was sharing with selected persons as it grew. CW's collection would grow into two volumes and not be published until mid-1762 as *Scripture Hymns*.

⁵James Walker, the brother of Samuel Walker, was vicar of Perranzabuloe; the young minister was likely his curate.

⁶Michael Hemmings (1723–87) married Elinor Naylor (b. 1717; the sister of Mary Naylor) in 1745 in Bath.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Tern
September 26, 1760

You have not replied to me at all, my dear sir. Have you not received my last letter with the enclosure from my Lady [Huntingdon]?¹ Or would you be so unwell as not to be able to reply to it? But it ill becomes me to complain, when I ought to have thanked you; rather, I do thank you for the consoling letter that I had received from you in reply to the first that I wrote you from Tern.² It would have comforted me if I had wanted, or had been able, to be comforted without Jesus. But I only ask the power of lamenting until I am able to say “*Totus mihi perplacet Christus.*”³ Without the experience of this device, yours will never raise me above a devil who can say, as I do, “*Totus displiceo mihi.*”⁴

Either engraved or printed, by you or by me, it is essential that your hymns see the light of day.⁵

Be more exact in telling me of your health. I cannot decide from all your letters if you are better when in London or if you are worse. I share the pleasure caused you by the good health of your wife and your children; and I take it anew in again charging you to greet the one and to embrace the others as warmly as you can from me. I will send you here the copy of a part of a letter which I have just written to Lady Huntingdon.

The light I expected from our friend at Bristol is come, though from a different quarter. A fortnight ago the minister of this parish, with whom I have had no connection these two years, sent me word (I know not why) that his pulpit should be at my service at anytime, and seems now very friendly. Some days after this, without any design, I ventured a visit of civility to the vicar of a neighbouring parish, who fell out with me three years ago for preaching faith in his church. He received me with the greatest kindness and said often he would have me take cure of souls somewhere or other. And last Sunday the vicar of Madeley, to whom I formerly was curate,⁶ coming to pay a visit here, expressed great regard for me, seemed to be quite reconciled, and assured me he would do all that was in his power to serve me (of which he gave me yesterday a proof in sending me unasked a testimonial signed of his own accord, adding he would sign it twenty times if necessary). He was no sooner gone but the news came that the old clergyman I mentioned to your Ladyship was died suddenly the day before. And that same day, before I had heard of it, Mr. [Thomas] Hill meeting at the races his nephew, who is patron of Madeley, told him that if he would promise to present me to Madeley,⁷ he would give to the vicar of that parish (who is relation to both) the living vacated by the old clergyman’s death; which was immediately agreed to, as Mr. Hill himself informed me in the evening, wishing me joy, as well as his family, on the occasion. This new promise, the manner in which Mr. Hill forced me from London to be here at this time, and the kindness of the three ministers I mentioned, whose hearts seem to be turned at this juncture to sign my testimonials for institution seem as so many orders to be still, and wait till this door be quite open or shut. I beg therefore your Ladyship would present my

¹Fletcher to CW, Sept. 14, 1760. It may not have reached CW because he was currently in Bath.

²This letter is not known to survive.

³“Christ pleases me in all things.”

⁴Terence, *The Heauton*, V.iv.20; “I am displeased in all things.”

⁵The growing collection that would become *Scripture Hymns* (1762).

⁶Rev. Rowland Chambre (1728–96).

⁷See Fletcher to CW, Dec. 26, 1758.

respects and thanks to Lady Margaret and Mr. [Benjamin] Ingham and acquaint them of the necessity which these circumstances lay me under to follow the leadings to decline engaging myself elsewhere. etc.⁸

This reply is based upon the advice that you have often given me not to resist providence, and to follow the paths it opens. However I am inwardly in suspense. My heart recoils at the idea of being here alone, opposed by my superiors, hated by my neighbours, and scorned by everyone; without grace, without talents, without resolve. How can I resist the attacks and surmount the difficulties that I foresee if I fulfil my duty at Madeley? On the other hand, to reject this presentation, burn this certificate, and leave in the desert the sheep for the herding of whom the Lord has clearly made me come into the world seems to me stubbornness, self-esteem, and cowardice. I will hold my hand between these two extremes. I will be entirely passive in respect of the steps that I must take, and active in praying the Lord to deliver me from evil, and to lead me himself into the way where he wants me to go. If you see something better, hasten to communicate it to me. And at the same time remember me in all your prayers, so that if the thing be not of the Lord, the inactivity of the Bishop of Lichfield, who must countersign my testimonial, the threats of the chaplain to the Bishop of Hereford, who caught me preaching at West Street [chapel], the objections that arise from my not being naturalised, or any other obstacle may stop Mr. Hill's plan.

Farewell, the post goes.

I am writing to Mr. [Thomas] Maxfield and to your brother. If he is at Bristol, tell him of my letter.

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr. C: Wesley / in Charles Street / Bristol."

Endorsement: by CW, "Sept. 26. 1760 / Fletcher offered a / living."

Source: holograph (in French); Wesley's Chapel (London), LDWMM 2000/7969.⁹

⁸The transcription of the letter to LH is given in English in the original.

⁹A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 110–12. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 112–13). See also the earlier (and looser) translation in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 103–06.

From the Rev. John Wesley

Plymouth Dock
September 28, 1760

[[Dear Brother,]]

I have no objection to the bestowing another reading upon Mr. Law's *Letters*.¹ But I think I have answered them *quantum sufficit*² by the letter in *Lloyd's Evening Post*;³ only, if need be, it may be inserted in some of the monthly magazines. Since I wrote that letter I have procured (which I could not before) the *Address to the Clergy*.⁴ It is amazing! Nothing is more plain than that he never read it. I doubt whether he ever *saw* it.

I care not a rush for ordinary means, only that it is our duty to try them. All our lives and all God's dealings with us have been extraordinary from the beginning. We have all reason, therefore, to expect that what has been will be again. I have been preternaturally restored more than ten times. I suppose you will be thus restored *for* the journey, and that by the journey as a natural means your health will be re-established,⁵ provided you determine to spend all the strength which God shall give you in his work.

Cornwall has suffered miserably by my long absence and the unfaithfulness of the preachers. I left seventeen hundred in the societies, and I find twelve hundred.

If possible, you should see Mr. [Samuel] Walker. He has been near a month at the Hot Wells. He is absolutely a Scot in his opinions, but of an excellent spirit.

Mr. [George] Stonehouse's horse performs to a miracle. He is considerably better than when I had him.

On Friday evening (if nothing extraordinary occur) I hope to be at Bristol between 5:00 and 6:00. Probably I shall leave Shepton Mallet at 2:00. My love to Sally. [[Adieu.]]

If John Fisher⁶ is at Bristol, pray desire him to send what Thomas Seccomb left (with an account) to his poor mother.⁷

Address: "To / The Revd Mr C. Wesley / in / Bristol."

Postmark: "Plymouth."

Endorsement: by CW, "B[rother]. Sept. 28. 1760 on Law / my health."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 3/14.⁸

¹William Law, *A Collection of Letters on the Most Interesting and Important Subjects* (London: printed for J. Richardson, 1760).

²"As much as is needed."

³JW's memory has failed him; his letter responding to Law, on Sept. 17, 1760, was published in the *London Chronicle*, not *Lloyd's Evening Post*; see *Works*, 27:206–08.

⁴JW, *An Address to the Clergy* (1756); Law had criticized it as "Babylonish" and "empty babble."

⁵JW is trying to persuade CW to return to take another preaching tour; see Walter Shirley to CW, Dec. 10, 1760.

⁶John Fisher, an Irish Methodist, was a travelling preacher between 1751–60.

⁷Thomas Seccomb, one of JW's preachers from Cornwall, had died recently in Ireland.

⁸Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 27:210–11.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Tern
November 7, 1760

My Dear Sir,

I have just received your letter,¹ which gives me as much pleasure as shame. You cover my faults instead of making me feel them more vividly, which is too generous. Although that is the duty of a Christian. If I was not incorrigible, this action would cure me of what you call “imprudent simplicity,” and which I rightly call “foolish ingratitude.” But what am I saying? Nothing can cure me but an ardent faith in this Jesus, made wisdom to us by God his Father. O may that become mine!

I preached last Sunday at Madeley, for the second time, to 80 people. And the liberty that the Lord gave me inwardly and outwardly counterbalanced the mortification of seeing my little assembly diminished by half. If some of our friends had seen my congregation, they would have triumphed in their own wisdom. May the Lord desire this to be natural and earthly wisdom as regards myself. Your letter is encouraging and it arrived most timely to strengthen my unsteady knees. I do not yet despair of seeing the fulfilment of the prophecy, “Behold a troop cometh.”² You will do well to set your Kingswood miners to praying for their poor brothers at Madeley wood. May these one day equal them in faith, as they now equal them in the irreligion for which they were so famous before you came among them.

My light luggage arrived from London yesterday at Madeley, where I was to receive it, and among my papers I found a letter from Mr. Buhet with two banknotes for £20 each, which he and three others of our brothers, Messrs. Osgood, [Thomas] Keene, and Crook are lending me themselves for six months, or one year, at my choice.³ So that your prediction (providence will take care of this matter) was accomplished before I had need even, as one might say, wished for it. I have been obliged this morning to buy for more than £65 the furniture and other necessary things from my predecessor, to whom I have given in payment the notes of our brothers. Having returned this evening to Tern, I have consulted Mr. [Thomas] Hill’s receiver over the manner of making out to them the obligation (the bond) which they expect from me in return. This man, questioned by Mr. Hill, informed him of the generosity of my friends in London, which pricked his own and he has given or lent the remainder of the sum (£25). I say “or lent” because the receipt which Mr. Hill has had drawn up for me led me to consider it as a loan. But however this receipt does not seem to demand that I repay it, at least formally. I am at this very moment turning the matter over in my mind. I shall ensure tomorrow that all is clear to me before going to Madeley, where I count on living altogether from now onwards. My predecessor recommends me his servant. But she is a flippant spendthrift and spiritually dead. I have extricated myself by telling him that I have employed in London a woman who meets my requirements. It is of Mrs. Wood whom I want to speak,⁴ who seems to me to have the tranquillity, the seriousness, the prudence, and the loyalty which I would hope for in a domestic (if the experience that I have had of her character during several months is not deceptive). I had already considered her, but [for] Mr. [Thomas] Maxfield’s suspicion regarding her, and the rumour that one of our “perfect” sisters has started that she heard the sound of a kiss that I have given her, all of which made me reject the idea of proposing to her to come here. But yesterday, seeing the expense to which someone less disciplined and less of a housekeeper would put me, my scruples towards her vanished, I have resolved to let the “perfects” judge as they will, and I have written to her this evening to beg her if

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²Gen. 30:11.

³William Osgood (d. 1767) and John Croke appear as married men in the Foundery Band Lists (1742–46).

⁴Sarah Wood was a widow near Fletcher’s age, whom he apparently anticipated he would soon marry; but the relationship did not work out—see Fletcher to CW, Sept. 4, 1762.

she would still consider (as she has mentioned earlier) accepting some peaceful and Christian employment in the country. If she accepts my proposal [I] think that I will be able to keep house without too much trouble and without a widow. I suppose by the proclamation which I have just seen in the *Gazette* that our young King will really deserve the title of Josiah!⁵ What happiness for the nation, even though it seems an accidental misfortune for the Methodists!

For the rest, I have a bed for you and providence will provide the sheets. While I await you, I shall take care not to invite anyone else. Sir Charles [Hotham] has written me a letter of congratulation, as Christian as it is obliging. I have not yet received any of my Lady's letters since I mentioned to him for the first time my Lady's absence. I wrote to her last week, and also to Mrs. Carter and with whom I sympathise greatly. The long letter which you have written to me makes me judge that you are better. The Lord restore you completely and give us pleasant and happy days in his love, that is the wish that I make for your dear wife and the little family.

Farewell.

Address to Madeley by Bridgenorth from Bristol; by Shifnal from London; Shropshire.

The bearer of this letter is the son of one of two women who are the only evident Christians in this parish. He has learned to work cloth. Being away at sea for five years, and being weary of this way of life, he has a plan to take up again his old work. He seems well disposed enough. He goes to Bristol to look for work. If you can be of any use to him, you will do a service to his mother, a poor Christian woman, and to his mother's friend, a man who wants to be a Christian.

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr. Charles Wesley / in Charles Street / Bristol."

Postmark: "Shrewsbury."

Endorsement: by CW, "Fletcher Nov. 7. 1760."

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/12.⁶

⁵The *London Gazette Extraordinary*, Oct. 29, 1760, was devoted to a proclamation of King George III, enthroned of Oct. 25, instructing that all persons in positions of authority should continue to fulfill their duties.

⁶A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 118–20. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 120–23).

From Thomas Brisco¹

Athlone
November 17, 1760

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Mr. Roberts² and I got safe into Ireland in about a fortnight after we left Bristol. We had an exceeding fine passage of about 23 hours long. Brothers Tobias,³ Coughlan,⁴ and Thompson⁵ were a little after us, and had a greater trial of their faith.⁶ For to all outward appearance they were as near being cast away as ever men could be. The storm continued all night. The sailors thought the ship could not keep about water (though the sails were lowered and bound fast to the yards). They lashed the helm and quit the deck. The captain desired the preachers to go to prayer, for in all probability they were just going into eternity. Some in the ship that had behaved themselves in a very wicked, contemptuous manner the day before now seemed to be exceeding humbled and earnestly desired that they might join in prayer with them. The preachers cried mightily to God alternately, and poor dear brother Tobias began to exhort, and continued his exhortation about three hours. He assured them he had no fear of death himself, that he could rejoice that he was going to paradise. But that he was troubled on their account, in that he was afraid that some of them were not prepared for their great change. All this time the ship was driving and they expecting to be wrecked—sometimes on the Isle of Man and sometimes on some part of the north of Ireland. Towards morning one of the sailors got upon deck to look out and cried, “A light.” Upon which the captain started up, expecting as they were so near land they should soon be staved to pieces on some of the rocks; when to his great surprise he found that the ship was going as regularly into Dublin Bay as though they had ever so even a gale of wind and had all been on deck working the vessel. Which caused him to cry out, “Truly God hath been at the helm this night.”

Dear sir, I should have wrote to you sooner, but that I was striving to get a frank. But not being able to get one as yet, I had patience to forbear writing no longer. Brothers Roberts, Tobias, and I are in one round. It takes us six weeks to get in. In that time we have 242 miles to ride. the Lord hath blessed me in my own soul and in preaching since I have been in this kingdom. The second sermon I preached in the round not only many were comforted but one was clearly justified. I have also the satisfaction to find many that were convinced when I was in Ireland last, who have followed on to know the Lord ever since. Glory be to my God that he gives me some little encouragement in the midst of my trials. The work of the Lord is on the reviving hand in this round, which has been sadly neglected. Since we have been in it we have gone our stages constant. The people depend upon us and are not disappointed. So that our congregations increase exceedingly.

I hope, sir, that you will have remembrance of me in your prayers. You know that I am one that at times am greatly tried. I can truly say that I love you, think on you, and pray for you. These lines I trust

¹Thomas Brisco (c. 1731–97) entered the itinerant ministry around 1751, and travelled until 1788. See Atmore, *Memorials*, 67; and Vickers, *Dictionary*, 43. He had recently served in Bristol.

²Robert Roberts (1731–99), a native of Upton near Chester, became a travelling preacher in 1759 and would serve for nearly 40 years. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 367–73; and *DEB*, 943.

³Thomas Tobias (d. 1767), a native of Wales, appears in the Minutes as a travelling preacher in 1755 (*Works*, 10:272) and served until his death in early 1767. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 428–30.

⁴Lawrence Coughlan (d. 1784), an Irish Roman Catholic convert to Methodism, was a travelling preacher by 1758. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 80–83; and Vickers, *Dictionary*, 80.

⁵William Thompson (1733–99) became a Methodist itinerant preacher in 1757 and served faithfully throughout the remainder of JW’s life. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 416–23; and Vickers, *Dictionary*, 351.

⁶See Thomas Tobias’s account in a letter to JW dated Oct. 3, 1760, *AM* 3 (1780): 391–93.

will find you in a better state of health than when I was in Bristol. I cannot help desiring that the Lord would spare you longer, on our account and his churches's. Be pleased to give my love and service to Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley. Mr. Roberts joins me in the same. I cannot help reminding you of your acknowledgment and promise when I parted with you that you was a letter in my debt and would write me a long one next. I shall be impatient till it comes. I am, reverend and dear sir,

Your affectionate son and servant,

Thos. Brisco

Mr. Roberts joins me in giving my love and service to Mr. [William] Hooper, who entertained us so well and behaved so affectionately to us all the time we were in Bristol.

Be pleased to direct to Mr. Matthew Moores, Merchant, in Tullamore.

Address: “[most torn away] Bristol / via Gloucester.”

Postmark: “Athlone.”

Endorsement: by CW, “Nov. 17. 1760 / Brisco of To / bias preaching in the / storm!”

Source: holograph; MARC, DDP# 2/8.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

[December 1760]

From a child she discerned great drawings of the Father. For want of improvements, they wore off. She then fell into sin. But God in mercy to her soul followed her with the terrors of Sinai,¹ which made her roar for a very disquietness of her heart. She was low in her own eyes. In this distress the Lord pointed out a remedy. She heard the word, was diligent in all the means of grace, till at length the Lord spoke peace to her soul. Herein she rejoiced for some little time in glorious light and liberty, till the Lord began to unveil and show her her heart, which made her groan day and night for deliverance, and that the Lord would renew her nature. In this state she lived for some time. Her love to the poor was unbounded. In her business she was always diligent. Her fervency of spirit was very great. Patience with and pity and love for her enemies. Integrity to her Lord and Master Jesus Christ. And faith unshaken, friendship so great, that nothing but an infinite degree of the love of God can compensate for her loss.

About nine months since the Lord was pleased to lay his hand upon her. In her affliction she was apprehensive she should soon depart hence, which made her more fervent in spirit. She was soon incapable of either performing her business or attending the means of grace, which last she owned she never found the loss of, being faithful when in health. At this time she was greatly tried and buffeted by Satan and her evil heart. But soon

Her faithful Lord appeared
And bid the tempter cease.

He brought a divine sweetness into her soul, which in her illness and dying moments was visible to all about her. Nevertheless the desire of her soul [was] that the Lord would give her a new heart and renew a right spirit within her. Through the goodness and mercy of God, her pain of body was not very great. But when within a few days of her being set free, she was almost continually delirious. One hour before she died her senses returned. Then she said, "I am going. I shall die. I shall die. I am going to heaven. I am going to heaven!" Stretching her arm abroad, she said, "Holy Jesus!" Starting a little, she cried out, "How faithful is God!" as though he had sealed all the promises to her soul. Turning herself to her friend, she said "You shall come soon," and desired those that were around to comfort her. Speaking a few more words which could not be understood, the Lord Jesus sweetly stole her life away.

O Jesus may I live her life,
And may her latter end be mine.²

Address: "To / The Rev'd Mr. Chars. Wesley."

Endorsement: by CW, "M[rs]. Clark's Death / Dec. 1760."³

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/46.⁴

¹See Exodus 19.

²CW, "Funeral Hymn," st. 7, *HSP* (1742), 125.

³This may be Elizabeth Clarke, who appears as a married woman in the Foundry Band Lists (1742–46). An Elizabeth Clarke (c. 1698–1760) was buried Nov. 25 in Spitalfields.

⁴For a digital copy and "as-is" transcription, see:
<https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/services/digitisation-services/projects/rapture-and-reason/>

From the Rev. Francis Okeley

Bedford
November 29, 1760

My Dear Brother,

Yours of the 22nd I received and that before about the cases.¹

December 6, 1760

You will see by the first date that I was going to write to you at that time. And if you ask me why I did not proceed, the truth is that I saw no possibility of forwarding your cases as I had hoped to have done, on account of the two reasons given you in my last²—and for chagrin, had no power to proceed.

Believe me when I engage to take a commission for a friend, nobody does it with greater pleasure, punctuality, and expedition. But here I am quite disconcerted and could not be satisfied, till I thought within myself that, as I have done as much and more for you in this case that I either should or could have done for myself, and am notwithstanding disappointed, I must acquiesce in the disposal of providence as well in little as greater things. And no, therefore, I will promise you nothing but all fidelity and accuracy on my part, and when I can procure them you shall have them immediately. To forward the thing, I paid beforehand—which, though no good policy in the world, I thought so with a brother whose heart can be touched with a sense of gratitude. Nor will I accuse him for defectiveness herein. Doubtless he has been hindered by sickness, and now by a multiplicity of affairs in his present proper sphere in the management of the children, which the departure of his colleague to Antigua(?) has loaded him with in an extraordinary manner. However I have hopes every day of getting them completed, and perhaps more than the number you bespoke, which I shall insist upon having with the rest for your use. I have drawn upon Mr. [John] Downes for the other guinea, which I would not have done till the cases were sent, had I not had a very good and proper opportunity of doing it, which might not occur again. As to his furnishing only the cases, it would expedite him very little. Neither could any do it so well as he. And why should you be put to such an additional expense? Let us then, both of us, lay aside our chagrin and be patient, and the more so as this is the best way to forward the matter. You must again be informed that what this person does in the book-binding way is quasi-allied agenda; for he neither can, nor will, neglect what he deems his proper daily, indispensably necessary functions with the children. Otherwise, was it a mere mechanic with whom I had to do, you should see that I could drive too—sometimes as phlegmatic as you may perhaps imagine me to be. But enough of this.

As I have an opportunity of conveying this to London, [I] shall not enclose it in a frank, but direct it as you desired I would a single letter.

I wish you would read what I pointed you to, and I have since reflected that there are some parallel sentiments in the first two of his lately published letters, which I would desire you to read also.³ Because as he there seems to decide for the conveniency and expediency of abiding as a private member of the Church of England, or any other corrupted or defective communion wherein one's lot may happen to be cast as a private Christian (which the first letter treats of), so he seems to apply the same principles to a clergyman desirous to be found faithful and useful in his station (in the second). You know I think a

¹Neither of these letters is known to survive. One of the practices in Moravian communities was to draw small cards containing a verse of Scripture from small black cases, read it (aloud if in a group) and reflect upon it or use it devotionally in some way—see C. D. Hardcastle, “Scripture or Draw Cards,” *PWHS* 4.1 (1903): 6–8; and H. J. Foster, “Scripture or Draw Cards,” *PWHS* 4.2 (1903): 40–43. CW had ordered some of the cases, so he could prepare similar cards; see the note on CW to SGW, July 3, 1763.

²This letter is not known to survive.

³Okeley's later quote makes clear this is a reference to William Law, *A Collection of Letters on the Most Interesting and Important Subjects, and on Several Occasions* (London: J. Richardson, 1760).

little mystically, Quakerish, or however else you will term it, and from that quarter my greatest objections to entering upon the ministry in the Church of England have arisen. I would neither have God nor man reproach me with acting contrary to my principles, which I have feared would be the case should I act in a way which I am far from thinking has all that *jus divinum*⁴ in it which some may be conscientiously persuaded it has. Nay, how good soever the constitution of the Church of England may be as a national establishment, which I am far from contesting with anybody, yet it does not appear to me to be even in theory, according to its original and best plan, that apostolic religion, that pure, universal, evangelical dispensation of Spirit and power, life and truth, that unshaken kingdom of God, that worship in Spirit and in truth, which Christ set up and which the Father seeks to have restored with all its true worshippers; but a good humanly devised, and in its measure blest, temporary economy, adapted to a certain time and place. In this view I can wish it God's speed with all my heart, and could conceive how I might myself be useful in it too, if I should not happen to survive the time when the Tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, shall be built again and the ruins thereof set up.⁵

Between friends therefore, I must tell you that nothing I have ever yet heard or read has seemed to satisfy my objections so effectually as what Mr. Law has there laid down in these two letters. He with great caution and yet very explicitly withal:

My answer (to his friend's objection) shall be only personal; that is, what I would do myself in these supposed cases. . . . I shall only add that as yet I know of no better way of thinking and acting than as above with regard to the universal *fallen state* of all churches; for fallen they all are, as certainly as they are divided.⁶

In your next I could be glad of your thoughts on this head, and to know how far you think these letters apposite to the case I refer to them for.

(In your last I don't take this paragraph right: "I trust you heard of Mr. F's deliverance from us. *Abiit erupit evasit*."⁷ Who is the person meant by "Mr. F."? Is it Michael Fenwick?

Pray give my kind love to Dr. [John] Jones and his good wife [Sarah] when you see them. I beg the same in particular to your helpmate and little ones. I am

Yours most affectionately,

F. O.

I have wrote again to Howell [Harris], and can get no answer. If you correspond with him, pray inform him of it.

*Quod te meliuscule habeas, mihi auditu perquam jucundum fuit. Utinam se Deo placeat integre restitueratur valetudo tua.*⁸

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr. Charles Wesley / at the Room in the Horse- / Fair / Bristol."

Postmark: "8/DE."

Endorsement: by CW, "Nov. 29. 1760 / Okely on ye Church."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDP 1/58.

⁴Divine law.

⁵See Amos 9:11 and Acts 15:16.

⁶Law, *Collection*, 18, 23.

⁷See Cicero, *In Catilinam*, II.i.1, "*Abiit, excessit, evasit, erupit*"; "He is gone, he has fled, he has escaped, he has burst through us."

⁸I am glad to hear that you are a little better. May it please God that your health be fully restored.

From the Rev. Walter Shirley

Loughrea
December 10, 1760

My Dear Friend,

*Veniam petimusque damusque vicissim.*¹ It has pleased the Lord to inflict me with such a rheumatic disorder in my head and stomach that I can read but little, write less. So that I am obliged to have recourse to your own plea for not sooner acknowledging your precious letter.²

God gives me continually to pray for you, and binds me to you with a love I think every day still stronger and stronger. Your brother [JW] informs me that you are better, and I must and will have it that the Lord hath heard me in your behalf. I rejoice at Mr. [John] Jones's recovery, and that not merely on his own account. I have remembered Mr. [Samuel] Walker in prayer with my family. May God restore him to his health and strength, and make his latter labours still greater than his former.

I ought to be beyond measure thankful to God for his blessed gift in enabling me to preach *ex tempore*,³ for under these heavy infirmities I should never be able to write a sermon for every Sunday. I am hardly ever well except in the pulpit or at my lectures. Many troubles have likewise lately come upon me. And yet, through the power of the Lord, I faint not. My heart is fixed. My heart is fixed. I will sing and give praise. His hand shall lead me, his right hand shall hold me. He shall take me out of the deep waters and set my feet upon a rock, and order my goings. Well may I boast of my infirmities, see the Lord's strength is perfected in my weakness. Well may I rejoice in the midst of tribulations, because where tribulation has abounded there hath the consolation of Christ Jesus much more abounded. O my friend, let not our spirits droop, for the day, the great and glorious day of the Lord, is assuredly at hand. We speak that we do know, even that which the Lord himself hath revealed unto us. Let these words sink deep into your heart, for I am as sure of what I say as of my own existence.

I rejoice much at Mr. [John] Fletcher's preferment,⁴ and doubt not but that God will make him an instrument of good to many souls.

My prospect of the increase of God's church is wonderfully enlarged by the blessed dispositions that appear in our young monarch.⁵ May God confirm him (in the most exalted sense) a defender of the faith.

My sister [Elizabeth] is much obliged to you for your kind enquiries. I even showed her your letter and she begs you will write to her. I doubt her state of bodily health is worse than she herself apprehends. And I attribute much to her infirmities of body and mind that she is not more alive to God than she is. If you understand me, pity me and be secret.

I love Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley dearly for your sake and her own. I am carried forth in Spirit to you both. The report of my changing my living was without foundation. Our dear Lady Huntingdon has, I fear, forgot me. I have wrote her three letter, but have been honoured but with one from her Ladyship. I will not however be discouraged from writing her again. Lord Rawdon's letter contains a very just and sharp reproof to the bishops. I send it according to your desire.

Your dear brother [JW] (to whom I present my most affectionate respects) will excuse me, I am persuaded, at least till next post. He talks of you taking a long journey next spring. Represent me to yourself like the Macedonian, saying, "Come and help us."⁶ Why may not this your designed journey be

¹"We beg for pardon, and we give in return." Cf. Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 11.

²This letter is not known to survive

³Shirley had adopted this practice at CW's urging; see Shirley to CW, Jan. 12, 1760.

⁴Fletcher had been appointed vicar of Madeley; see Fletcher to CW, Nov. 7, 1760.

⁵George III had taken the throne as King of Great Britain in Oct.

⁶Acts 16:9.

extended even this far? Believe me I long for you in the bowels of Christ Jesus. The grace and love of God in Christ Jesus be with you, your dear wife, and all the faithful. Amen.

Your very loving friend and brother,

W. Shirley

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr. Charles Wesley / at the Horse fair / Bristol."

Endorsement: by CW, "Shirley Dec. 10. 1760 / Prophet of good."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDP# 1/99.

From an Unidentified Male Correspondent¹

[near Portsmouth, Hampshire]
[c. 1760?]

[...] delight and satisfaction than I ever did before, and my soul seemed to be in such a sweet frame that I seemed to be swallowed up in love to God, which continued all that day and part of the next. But Monday, in the afternoon, I lost that happiness. But by what means I cannot recollect, but was very sorry I was bereaved of such a comfort. But after some time [I] satisfied myself with the thought that at the next opportunity of receiving the communion it would return again. But I was disappointed in this, for when I had another opportunity I was as barren as ever, and so remained for years afterward. Yet I continued to be very diligent at public and private devotion.

I had before this time come to a resolution not to marry till I was 23 years of age, nor give my company to any woman till I was 20 years of age. Yet I oftentimes found temptations to the latter before I was 20, which gave me some uneasiness. Yet I kept it all to myself. But when I was in my 20th year, there was a young woman in the parish who was a proverb for her pride in apparel, and I had great aversion to her on that account. But as she was a good needle-woman, my mother hired her to work, which when I heard of I was very uneasy, because she was so proud. But I could not prevent her coming, my mother being obstinate in that point. So she came to our house for a month, and as I had heard several things of her which were² scandalous, I was the more particular in observing her behaviour. After some time I found as I believed she was slandered, and that she seemed to be a sober person, only much addicted to the vanity of dress. Therefore I took upon me to talk to her on that head and to endeavour to show her the vanity and sin thereof. Which she seemed to take well and pretended to be convinced of her error. Whereby she gained in me a good opinion. And after she was gone, having done her work, she frequently came to my mother on one account or another, my mother having a liking to her. I took those opportunities to talk with her on religious subjects, to which she seemed to give her assent, and pretended to be reformed in many things and to be very religious. Which drew my affections toward her much, and on the Sabbath day I have sent for her some times, and used to read the Scripture to her and expound it, according to my capacity. I found my affection toward her. I thought hers might be toward me. I took an opportunity to tell her of my resolution concerning marriage, and added that when that time was expired, if she walked soberly and religiously in the meantime, I intended to marry her. But if she did not behave as became a Christian, I would not have anything to do with her. And she said she would.

[...³] could not succeed in my attempt. I then went to Bro-t,⁴ to get their place in order, but his mother, who was proprietor of it, refused to let him preach there. I endeavoured to persuade her to it, but in vain. So about 9:00 I was obliged to inform the preacher he could not preach. but as it was so late, he consented to tarry all night with us and the next day went for Portsmouth. I was sorry for this disappointment and determined to get a place for them to preach in as soon as I could. I being at Portsmouth soon after, I found out the person that received the preachers and consulted him about getting them to Winton.⁵ He advised me to it as soon as I could. About six weeks after the same preacher made

¹The manuscript is incomplete, lacking the initial portion, a middle section, and likely the ending as well. The correspondent is male, living near Portsmouth, Hampshire, perhaps in Winton. The text reflects an early stage of Wesleyan work around Portsmouth.

²Orig., “was.”

³This comes at the juncture of a verso of one page to the recto of another; while there is no clear remnant of a missing page, there is a major lacunae in the text.

⁴He may mean Brockenhurst, just west of Portsmouth in the New Forest.

⁵Now spelled “Winkton,” just southwest of the New Forest.

through our town and called on me, and stopped about an hour. We conversed about their preaching, but could not find a place suitable. A fortnight after came two men on horseback to our house and asked for me, but I was not within. They went to the public house and put up their horses, and ordered a dinner. Soon after I came home one of them came in, who was the man that received the preachers in Portsmouth. He informed me that he had a preacher with him. I invited them to dinner. He said they had ordered a dinner but would call later. They did so and my wife's mother, being without, heard what passed, and after they were gone she said if the preacher would have stopped, he should have preached in the summer house, the house that Mr. [George] Whitefield's preachers used. I was glad to hear this and said I would soon get them to come in. All this time I had many clear manifestations of the love [of] God, but was ignorant of justification as to the theory. But by considering of the expression I thought it was what I experienced three or four months before. I therefore asked one of the preachers and found it was the same thing. With regard to having the preachers here, I met with great opposition from all my wife's brothers except one, who was desirous of hearing them but did not seem willing to be at any expense towards their support. But notwithstanding, I was determined to have them. And having the above offer, I sent to them and soon after met one at Romsey, who promised to come in a week. He did so and preached to about 20 people, to their satisfaction, and informed us there would be another that day fortnight. I found the expense of having them would be about 2 shillings a time, which I determined to bear for one year unless any others would assist me before. [...]

Source: holograph (incomplete); MARC, MA 1977/501/150.⁶

⁶For a digital copy and “as-is” transcription, see:
<https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/services/digitisation-services/projects/rapture-and-reason/>